



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Housing

Statistical Release

November 2019

Count of Traveller Caravans, July 2019 England

- The total number of traveller caravans in England in July 2019 was 23,125. This is 463 more than the 22,662 reported in July 2018.
- 6,633 caravans were on authorised socially rented sites. This is an increase of 57 since the July 2018 count, which recorded 6,576.
- The number of caravans on authorised privately funded sites was 13,410. This was 417 more than the 12,993 recorded in July 2018.
- The number of caravans on unauthorised developments on land owned by travellers was 2,047. This is a decrease of 102 compared to the July 2018 figure of 2,149.
- The number of caravans on unauthorised encampments on land not owned by travellers was 1,035. This was 91 caravans more than the July 2018 count of 944.
- Overall, the July 2019 count indicated that 87 per cent of traveller caravans in England were on authorised land and that 13 per cent were on unauthorised land.

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Introduction

This statistical release presents official statistics on the count of traveller caravans in England. The count is carried out to provide local data on the number and seasonal movement of caravans.

This publication is compiled from information submitted by local authorities in England. Local authorities carry out the count of caravans on traveller sites twice a year, in January and July, providing a snapshot of the number of caravans on the day of the count. Information is collected about caravans on authorised socially rented sites, authorised privately funded sites, unauthorised developments (sites on land owned by travellers for which planning permission has not been granted) and unauthorised encampments (sites on land not owned by travellers and which do not have planning permission).

The traveller caravan count covers data on the number of caravans and traveller sites in England; it does not cover the number of occupants residing in these caravans or caravan sites or the potential drivers for any observed change.

The count takes place twice a year to reflect winter residence and summer travelling trends. Due to the strong seasonal differences between the January and July counts, all comparisons refer to year-on-year changes.

The information in this release is based on data returned to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by local authorities in England. Users should note that revisions may have been made to figures from previous counts in this release as a result of updated data being received. This release presents the most accurate data on the number of traveller caravans in England and the accompanying live tables should be used for historic comparisons.

Further information is given in five accompanying live tables, which can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/traveller-caravan-count-july-2019>

Count of Traveller Caravans

Local authorities carried out the July 2019 count on or around 18 July 2019. Aggregated totals by site type are presented in Table 1 below, together with comparative figures from the previous two July counts.

Table 1: Number of Traveller Caravans by site type, England						
	July-17	July-18	July-19	% of total caravans	Change from July 2018 to July 2019	% Change from July 2018 to July 2019
Caravans on Authorised Sites (with planning permission)	19,092	19,569	20,043	87%	474	2%
Socially Rented Caravans	6,722	6,576	6,633	29%	57	1%
Private Caravans	12,370	12,993	13,410	58%	417	3%
Temporary Planning Permission	581	398	463	2%	65	16%
Permanent Planning Permission	11,789	12,595	12,947	56%	352	3%
Caravans on Unauthorised Sites (without planning permission)	3,721	3,093	3,082	13%	-11	0%
Caravans on sites on Travellers' own land	2,197	2,149	2,047	9%	-102	-5%
Tolerated	1,239	1,067	904	4%	-163	-15%
Not Tolerated	958	1,082	1,143	5%	61	6%
Caravans on sites not on Travellers' own land	1,524	944	1,035	4%	91	10%
Tolerated	293	301	327	1%	26	9%
Not Tolerated	1,231	643	708	3%	65	10%
Overall Total	22,813	22,662	23,125	100%	463	2%

At the time of the July 2019 count, the total number of traveller caravans in England was 23,125. Of these, 6,633 (29 per cent) were on socially rented sites; 13,410 (58 per cent) were on privately funded sites; 2,047 (9 per cent) were unauthorised developments on land owned by travellers; and 1,035 (4 per cent) were unauthorised encampments on land not owned by travellers. This information is also illustrated in Figure 1 below and in accompanying Live Table 1a. Corresponding figures at local authority level for the previous seven bi-annual counts are presented in accompanying Live Table 1b.

The total number of traveller caravans in England has risen from 17,437 in July 2009 to 23,125 in July 2019, an increase of 33 per cent. However, this increase has not been consistent year-on-year. Figure 1 illustrates that the number of caravans on authorised private sites has increased over the same period. A total of 7,105 caravans were recorded in 2009 compared to a total of 13,410 in 2019. Figure 2 below shows that caravans on authorised private sites accounted for the largest proportion of the total number of caravans across England in July 2019 (58 per cent). Caravans on unauthorised sites accounted for 13 per cent of the total with caravans on authorised socially rented sites accounting for 29 per cent. The underlying figures are included in accompanying Live Table 4.

Figure 1: Number of Traveller Caravans by site type, England

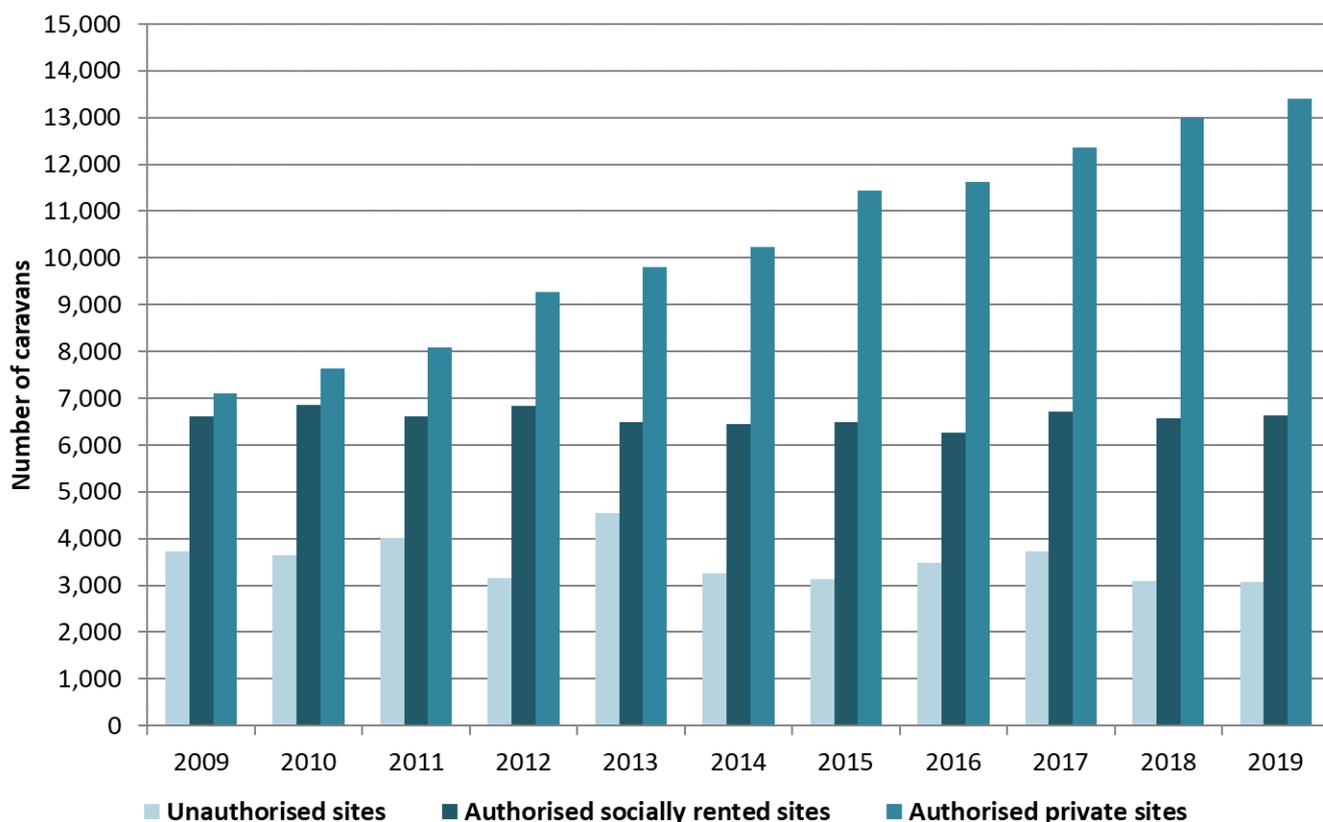
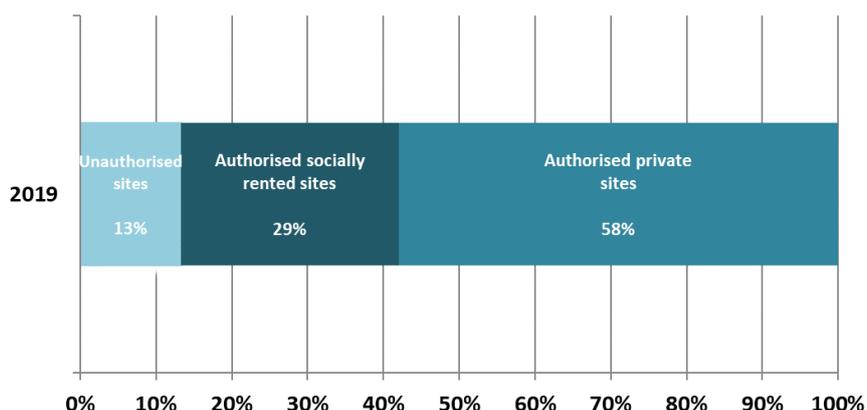


Figure 2: Proportion of Traveller Caravans by site type, England



Spatial Distribution

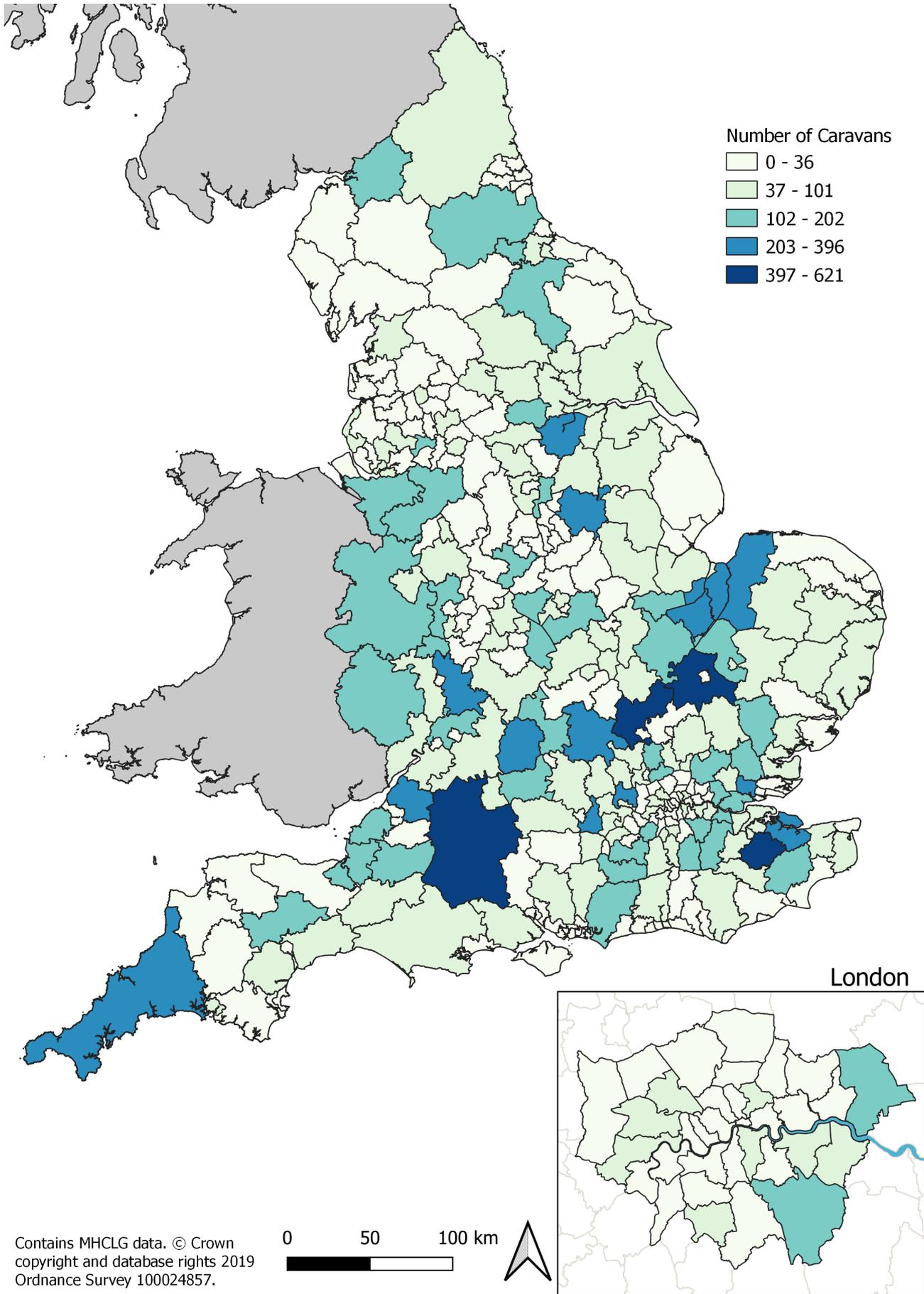
The spatial distribution of traveller caravans varies across England.

Map 1 below shows the total number of caravans on authorised sites within each local authority boundary.

The data has been grouped into five categories for the purposes of mapping using the Jenks natural breaks classification method. This method splits the data into intervals based on the natural groupings observed within. The class breaks identified work to minimise the variance or difference between individual cases selected in each group whilst also maximising the variances between each group taken as a whole. Maps created using this method allow trends in the underlying data to be accurately represented, aiding interpretation and further analysis.

As indicated in the key, darker colours represent those local authorities that have reported a higher number of total caravans on authorised sites whereas lighter colours indicate local authorities that have reported lower numbers of caravans.

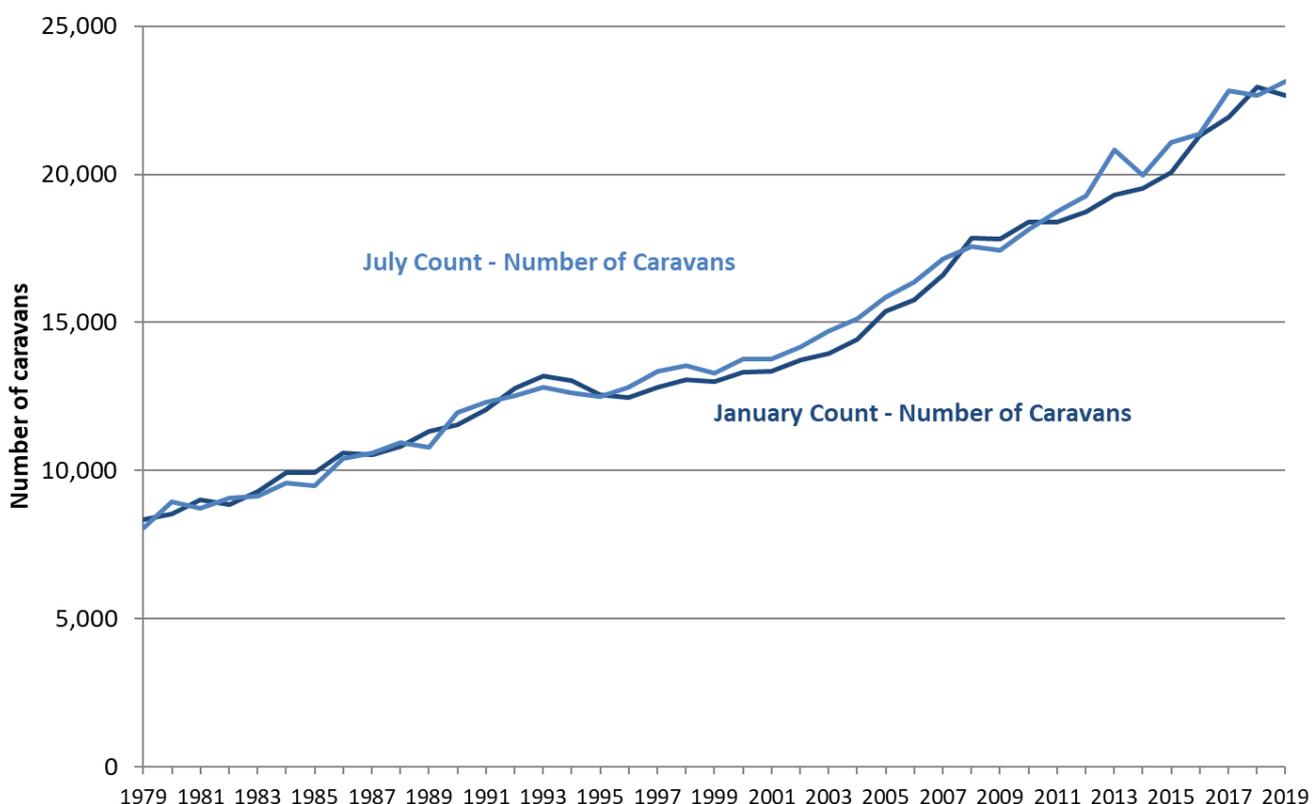
Map 1: Traveller Caravans on Authorised Sites in England, July 2019



Historic data

The traveller caravan count has taken place twice a year since January 1979. Figure 3 below shows how the total number of traveller caravans in England has changed over this period across both summer (July) and winter (January) counts. National totals from each count of the main categories of authorised and unauthorised sites are presented in accompanying Live Table 4. The figures show an increase in the overall total from 8,065 caravans in July 1979 to 23,125 in July 2019.

Figure 3: Number of Traveller Caravans from 1979 to 2019, England



New Affordable Residential Pitches

As part of the July count, local authorities are required to submit data on the number of new affordable rental pitches constructed since the previous year's count. The July 2019 count was the ninth July count to include the number of new affordable residential pitches in each local authority area in England. This has been reported to allow such pitches to be included in the calculation of the New Homes Bonus for individual local authorities.

Table 2 below shows that, altogether, local authorities reported that 57 such pitches on socially rented sites and three such pitches on privately-funded sites had been created between July 2018 and July 2019. Further details are provided in accompanying Live Table 5.

The next count of new affordable residential pitches is expected to take place as part of the July 2020 count of traveller caravans.

More details of the New Homes Bonus are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/increasing-the-number-of-available-homes/supportingpages/new-homes-bonus>

Table 2: Count of Traveller Caravans: new affordable residential pitches constructed between July 2011 and July 2019

Year (July count)	Number of new affordable residential pitches ¹		Total
	On socially-rented traveller sites with planning permission	On privately-funded traveller sites with either temporary or permanent planning permission	
2011	44	3	47
2012	96	88	184
2013	35	22	57
2014	49	0	49
2015	162	22	184
2016	27	26	53
2017	41	35	76
2018	44	0	44
2019	57	3	60

1. Policy guidance notes require these pitches to be new affordable residential pitches that met the 'affordable housing' definition in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Accompanying tables

Accompanying live tables are available to download alongside this release within a single workbook. These are:

- Table 1a** Count of traveller caravans on authorised and unauthorised sites for the July 2019 count, nationally and by local authority area, based on local authority boundaries as at the time of count
- Table 1b** Count of traveller caravans on authorised and unauthorised sites for the last seven counts, nationally and by local authority area, based on previous local authority boundaries
- Table 2** Location and size of traveller sites operated by local authorities and private registered providers in England
- Table 3** Number of Travelling Showpeople caravans on authorised and unauthorised sites for the January 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 counts nationally and by local authority area (updated as part of the January count)
- Table 4** National totals for the main categories of authorised and unauthorised sites for all counts since January 1979
- Table 5** Count of Traveller Caravans: new affordable residential pitches constructed between July 2018 and July 2019 (updated as part of the July count)

These tables can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/traveller-caravan-count-july-2019>

Statistical releases and accompanying tables for previous caravan counts are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traveller-caravan-count>

Definitions

Local authorities carry out counts of caravans on traveller sites in England which provide a snapshot of caravans on the day of the count. Counts take place twice a year, in January and July, to capture information about the number of caravans on:

- *authorised public sites* – operated by local authorities and private registered providers of social housing, including housing associations, trusts and cooperatives;
- *authorised private sites* – privately funded sites with planning permission;
- *unauthorised developments* – sites on land owned by travellers for which planning permission had not been granted at the time of count; and
- *unauthorised encampments* – sites on land not owned by travellers and which do not have planning permission.

Unauthorised sites are classified as either 'Tolerated' or 'Not Tolerated':

- A '*Tolerated*' site is one where the local authority has decided not to seek the removal of the encampment, and where the encampment has been, or is likely to be, allowed to remain for an indefinite period of time.
- Some examples of a site which would be classified as '*Not Tolerated*' are where:
 - A planning enforcement notice has been served (including Temporary Stop Notices),
 - The results of a planning enquiry are pending,
 - An injunction has been sought,
 - The compliance period has been extended.

The Traveller Caravan Count was previously known as the 'Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count', however, there has been no change in the coverage of the count. It continues to include caravans lived in by Traditional and Ethnic Gypsies and Travellers as well as members of the non-traditional New Traveller groups who live in caravans or other moveable dwellings. The department does not collect information on the ethnicity or any other characteristics of caravan occupants.

As of April 2019, the total number of local authorities in England changed due to restructuring and mergers of some authorities. At the time of the July 2019 count there were 317 local authorities in England. For the previous seven counts there were a total of 326 local authorities. This change as has been reflected in the accompanying live tables online, Table 1a containing count data from the July 2019 count and Table 1b data for the previous seven counts for historic reference. Current boundaries are also reflected in Map 1 above.

Technical notes

Symbols

* Imputed

Data collection and methods

The count of traveller caravans' publication is compiled on a particular count day. A local authority representative will visit traveller caravan sites and carry out a manual count. This information is then submitted by local authorities in England via a series of online forms accessed on the department's centralised data collection platform, DELTA. This data is collected and published bi-annually to take into account seasonal variation in the use of caravan sites. A count of Travelling Showpeople's caravans or moveable dwellings is included in the January count only and a count of New Affordable Residential Pitches is included in the July count only.

The data are collected by the department and undergo a process of scrutiny to ensure that the published count is as accurate as possible. The department follows up late returns and conducts validation checks which are outlined further below in the section on data quality.

MHCLG are continually improving the processes which allow data providers to submit data to the department. If you have any feedback on the DELTA system please email the team directly on housing.statistics@communities.gov.uk

Data quality

The quality assurance carried out by the department involves checking the data submitted by local authorities for duplicate sites, reviewing figures across different site types, ensuring that they sum correctly and checking for unlikely combinations of caravan counts, for example. Any large proportional or absolute changes in total caravans at site level between annual counts are checked with the relevant local authorities. However, there may be a degree of inaccuracy in reporting due to non-response and reporting errors by local authorities that have submitted data.

Some figures are also imputed due to one of the following reasons:

- Local authority non-response
- Incomplete or insufficient returns
- Inability to carry out count due to not being able to access sites

Site and pitch level data are then aggregated to produce local authority figures as published in the live tables. Where data has been taken from previous years' counts rather than the most recent, this is also indicated in the accompanying live tables.

The Traveller Caravan Count is included on the Single Data List, a list of all the datasets that local government must submit to central government. The majority of local authorities do carry out the count and return information to MHCLG. Those that have not done so for this collection are listed below:

Arun, Ashfield, Boston, Breckland, Bristol, Camden, Cheshire East, Chiltern, Cornwall, Croydon, Dacorum, Enfield, Gloucester, Guildford, Hillingdon, Merton, North Devon, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Runnymede, Sandwell, Spelthorne, Sunderland, West Lancashire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Somerset West.

More detail about the Single Data List is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-local-councils-more-transparent-and-accountable-to-local-people/supporting-pages/single-data-list>

Overall, for this count, 92 per cent of the 317 English local authorities with housing responsibilities (at the time of the count) responded or submitted at least some figures for the July 2019 count. If a local authority did not submit a return for the July 2019 count, figures for the number of caravans across tenure type from the previous July count were taken without adjustment. If the local authority had also not submitted a return for the previous count before that, figures for the number of caravans are taken from the next most recent July count. This is repeated for three counts: July 2018, July 2017 and July 2016. If a local authority has not submitted a return within this period (i.e. for three consecutive counts) then the number of caravans is taken to be zero across the local authority area.

The count data are subject to the Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Order, which means that advance access to the statistics is controlled and publicised.

Revisions policy

Revisions policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Statistics and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy (found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-revisions-policy>).

There are two types of revision that the policy covers:

- Non-Scheduled Revisions

Where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process, the statistical release and accompanying tables will be updated with a correction notice as soon as is practical. Where a local authority notifies the department of an error in the information they have submitted after publication of the release a decision on whether to revise immediately, at the next publication or not at all will be made based upon the impact of any change and the effect it has on the interpretation of the data.

- Scheduled Revisions

We do not currently have scheduled revisions for this release. Revisions to historic data will be made only where there is a substantial revision, such as a change in methodology or definition.

Uses of the data

The data are collected to inform central government and local authority policy, the delivery of local services for the traveller community, and their sites and encampments. In particular, figures are used by MHCLG and other government departments to identify the need for site provision and in tackling unauthorised encampments and developments as well as by the sector to monitor change over time.

We are keen to know about how external stakeholders use these data and so would appreciate feedback from users sent directly to housing.statistics@communities.gov.uk

User engagement

Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and encouraged. Responses should be addressed to housing.statistics@communities.gov.uk

The department's engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engagement-strategy-to-meet-the-needs-of-statistics-users>

Notes

1. Details of officials who receive pre-release access to the count of traveller caravans up to 24 hours before release can be found in the section on 'Pre-release access to official statistics' at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics>
2. The next count of traveller caravans is provisionally scheduled to take place on or around 23 January 2020.

Devolved administration statistics

The Welsh Government collects and publishes statistics on traveller caravans in Wales. Published information is available at:

<https://gov.wales/gypsy-and-traveller-caravan-count>

The Scottish Government collects and publishes information on travellers in Scotland and further details are available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/gypsiestravellers>

A review of the evidence base is available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/GypsyTravellerScotland>

Information on traveller accommodation in Northern Ireland is available at:

<https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Housing-Help/Advice-for-Travellers/Accommodation-for-Travellers>

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Information on the UK statistical system is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/index.html>

Information about statistics at MHCLG is available via the department's website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics>

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