



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Count of Traveller Caravans, January 2020 England

- The total number of traveller caravans in England in January 2020 was 22,710. This is 48 more than the 22,662 reported in January 2019.
- 6,506 caravans were counted on authorised socially rented sites. This is a decrease of 84 since the January 2019 count, which recorded 6,590.
- The total number of caravans on authorised privately funded sites was 13,461. This was 200 more than the 13,261 recorded in January 2019.
- The number of caravans on unauthorised developments on land owned by travellers was 2,049. This is an increase of 27 compared to the January 2019 figure of 2,022.
- The number of caravans on unauthorised encampments on land not owned by travellers was 694. This was 95 caravans fewer than the January 2019 count of 789.
- Overall, the January 2020 count indicated that 88 per cent of traveller caravans in England were on authorised land and that 12 per cent were on unauthorised land.

## Housing Statistical Release

June 2020

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### Date of next publication:

June 2021 (provisional – see page 2 for further details)

# COVID-19 Impact

Due to the coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) there will be some changes to the department's regular statistical production. Much of the data used as part of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's statistical publications are collected from local authorities and we are mindful of the additional pressures they are facing as a result of the outbreak.

As the demand increases for statistics and data to measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the department has had to change its data gathering and release practices, focussing efforts on priority and proportionate analysis and statistics.

Our statement, available online, explains this in more detail - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/883019/MHCLG\\_statistical\\_publications\\_2020-21.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/883019/MHCLG_statistical_publications_2020-21.pdf)

In line with official guidance from the UK Statistics Authority and the Office for Statistics Regulation, the decision has been taken to **suspend the Summer 2020 collection of Traveller Caravan data.**

Official guidance can be found online here - [https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OS\\_policy\\_rapid\\_assessment.pdf](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OS_policy_rapid_assessment.pdf)

However, as part of the Summer count, **data on new affordable residential pitches, which qualify for the New Homes Bonus scheme, is also collected. These data are still required** to produce the department's Affordable Housing Supply Statistics, which are one of the components of the New Homes Bonus calculations.

**A separate, one-off, collection will be created for local authorities to enter data only where new affordable residential pitches, which qualify for the New Homes Bonus scheme, have been constructed or opened since Summer 2019. This collection will go live on DELTA in the coming weeks.**

Registered data providers will receive separate notification on this in due course.

If you have any questions on this amendment to the upcoming collection please direct them to [housing.statistics@communities.gov.uk](mailto:housing.statistics@communities.gov.uk)

# 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-january-2020>

# Count of Traveller Caravans

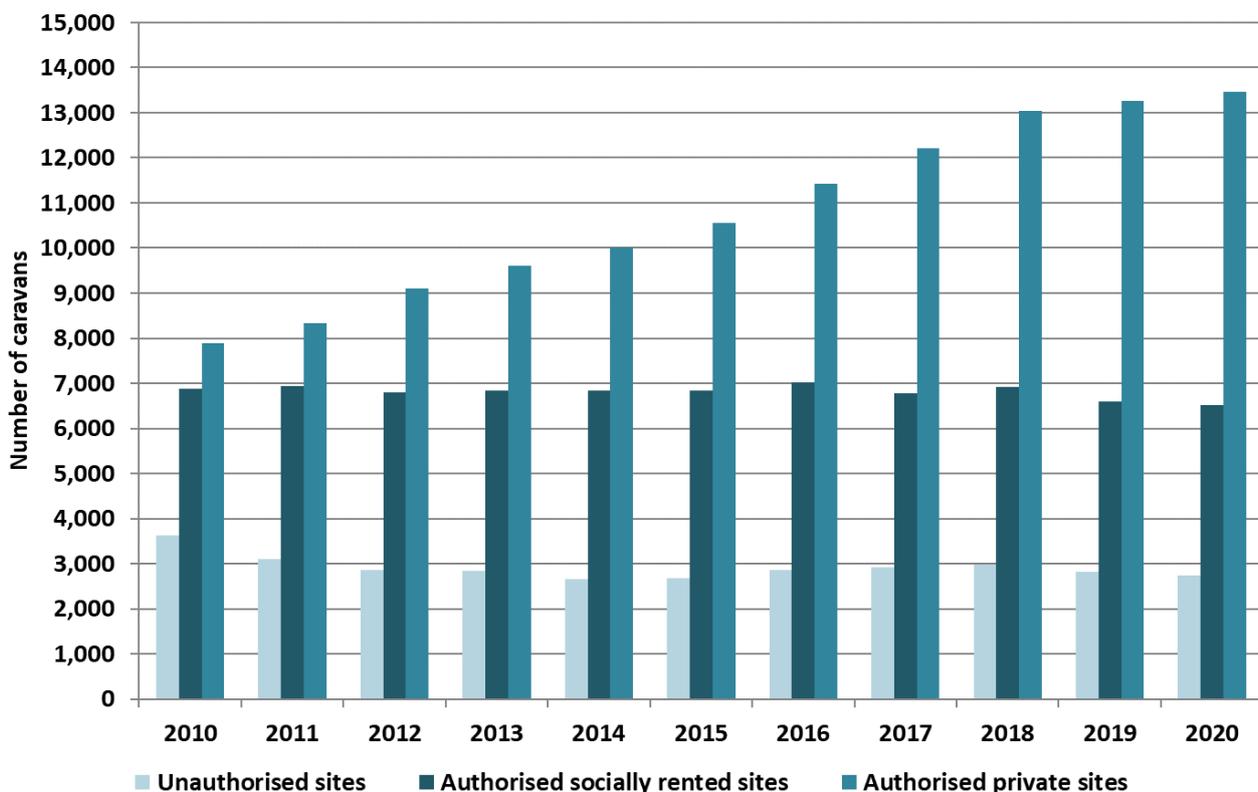
Local authorities carried out the January 2020 count on or around 23 January 2020. Aggregated totals by site type are presented in Table 1 below, together with comparative figures from the previous two July counts.

| <b>Table 1: Number of Traveller Caravans by site type, England</b>  |               |               |               |                            |   |   |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|---|---|
|   | <b>Jan-18</b> | <b>Jan-19</b> | <b>Jan-20</b> | <b>% of total caravans</b> | <b>Change from Jan 2019 to Jan 2020</b> | <b>% Change from Jan 2019 to Jan 2020</b> |
| <b>Caravans on Authorised Sites (with planning permission)</b>      | <b>19,962</b> | <b>19,851</b> | <b>19,967</b> | <b>88%</b>                 | <b>116</b>                              | <b>1%</b>                                 |
| Socially Rented Caravans  | 6,924         | 6,590         | 6,506         | 29%                        | -84                                     | -1%                                       |
| Private Caravans  | 13,038        | 13,261        | 13,461        | 59%                        | 200                                     | 2%  |
| Temporary Planning Permission                                       | 686           | 529           | 439           | 2%                         | -90                                     | -17%                                      |
| Permanent Planning Permission                                       | 12,352        | 12,732        | 13,022        | 57%                        | 290                                     | 2%  |
| <b>Caravans on Unauthorised Sites (without planning permission)</b> | <b>2,984</b>  | <b>2,811</b>  | <b>2,743</b>  | <b>12%</b>                 | <b>-68</b>                              | <b>-2%</b>                                |
| Caravans on sites on Travellers' own land                           | 2,179         | 2,022         | 2,049         | 9%                         | 27                                      | 1%  |
| Tolerated   | 1,011         | 910           | 921           | 4%                         | 11                                      | 1%  |
| Not Tolerated   | 1,168         | 1,112         | 1,128         | 5%                         | 16                                      | 1%  |
| Caravans on sites not on Travellers' own land                       | 805           | 789           | 694           | 3%                         | -95                                     | -12%                                      |
| Tolerated   | 294           | 255           | 275           | 1%                         | 20                                      | 8%  |
| Not Tolerated   | 511           | 534           | 419           | 2%                         | -115                                    | -22%                                      |
| <b>Overall Total</b>  | <b>22,946</b> | <b>22,662</b> | <b>22,710</b> | <b>100%</b>                | <b>48</b>                               | <b>0%</b>                                 |

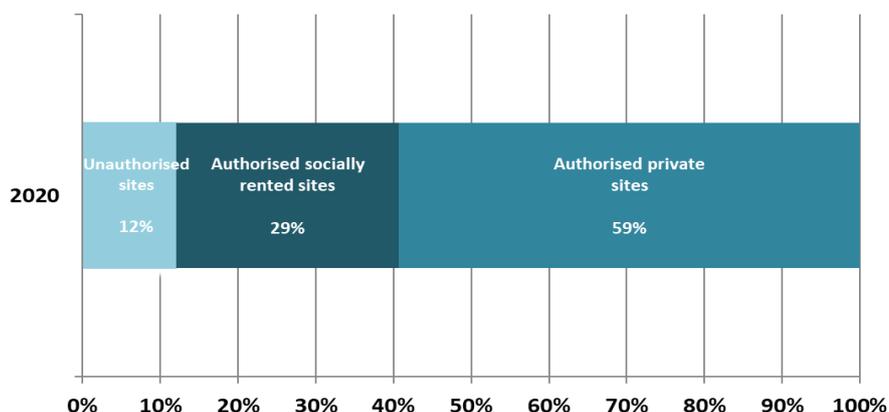
At the time of the January 2020 count, the total number of traveller caravans in England was 22,710. Of these, 6,506 (29 per cent) were on socially rented sites; 13,461 (59 per cent) were on privately funded sites; 2,049 (9 per cent) were unauthorised developments on land owned by travellers; and 694 (3 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 bi-annual counts are presented in accompanying Live Table 1b.

The total number of traveller caravans in England has risen from 18,370 in January 2010 to 22,710 in January 2020, an increase of 24 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 7,881 caravans were recorded in 2010 compared to a total of 13,461 in 2020. Figure 2 below shows that caravans on authorised private sites accounted for the largest proportion of the total number of caravans across England in January 2020 (59 per cent). Caravans on unauthorised sites accounted for 12 per cent of the total with caravans on authorised socially rented sites accounting for 29 per cent. This is consistent with proportions from the January 2019 count. 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

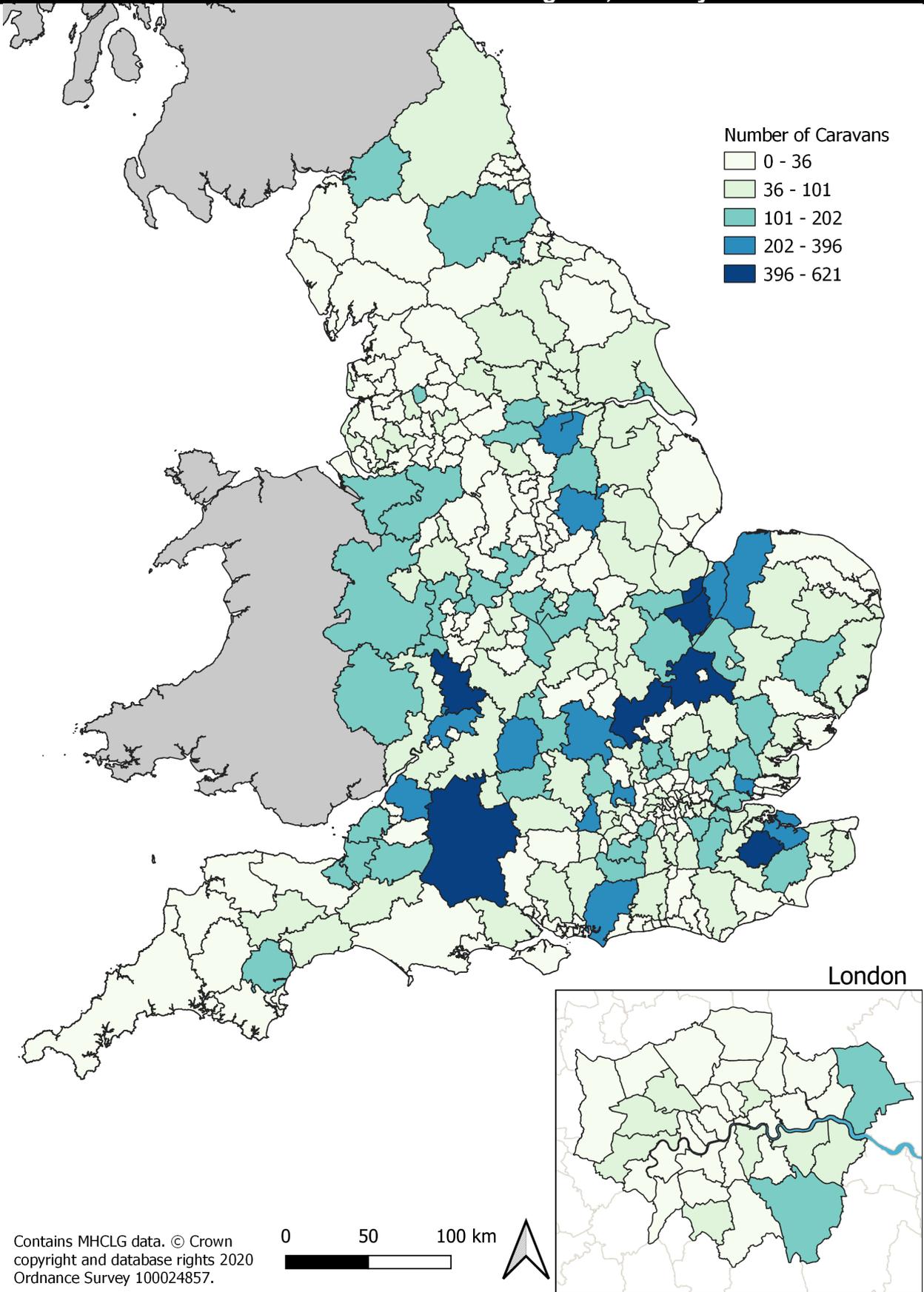
The spatial distribution of traveller caravans varies across England.

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.

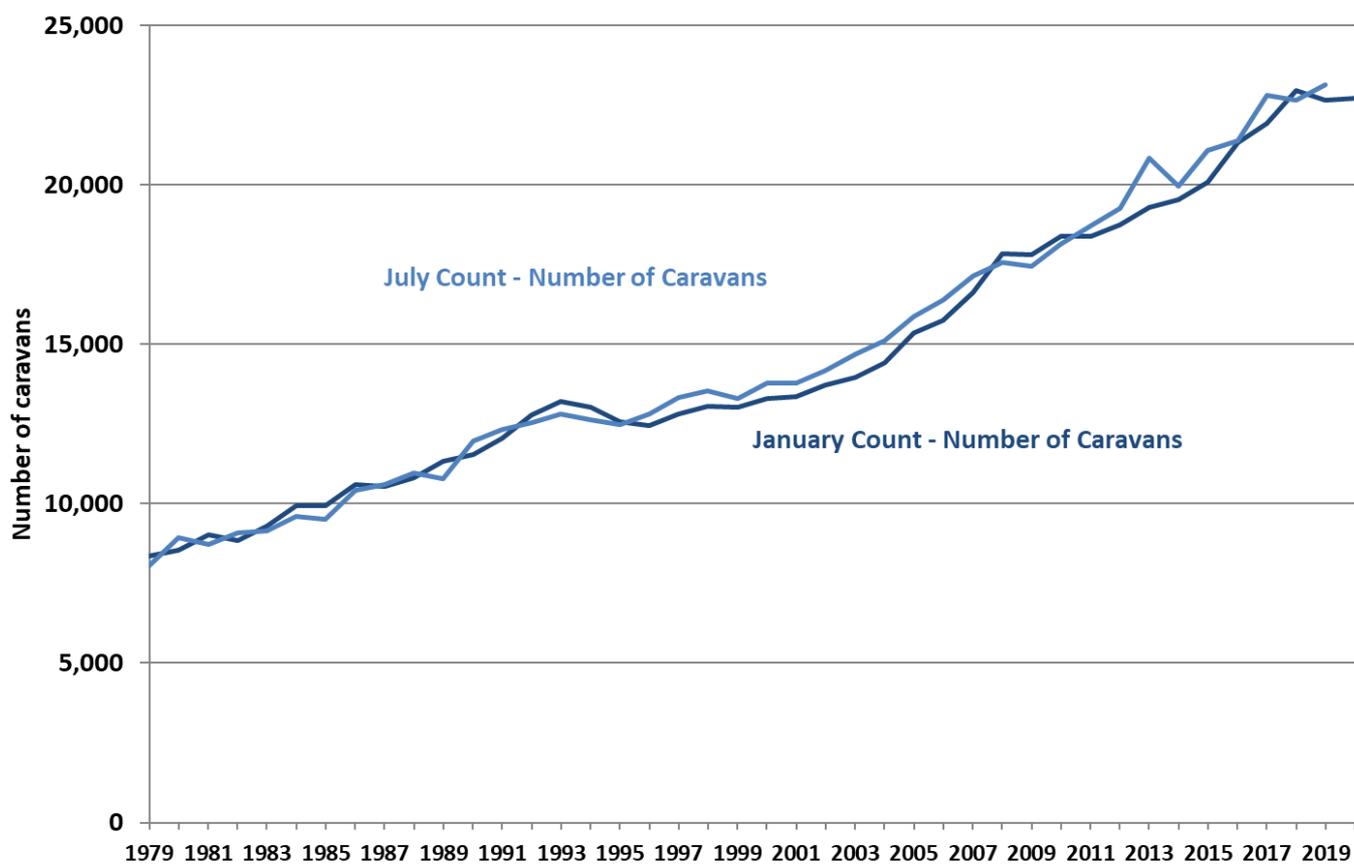
**Map 1: Traveller Caravans on Authorised Sites in England, January 2020**



## 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 8,358 caravans in January 1979 to 22,710 in January 2020.

**Figure 3: Number of Traveller Caravans from 1979 to 2020, England**

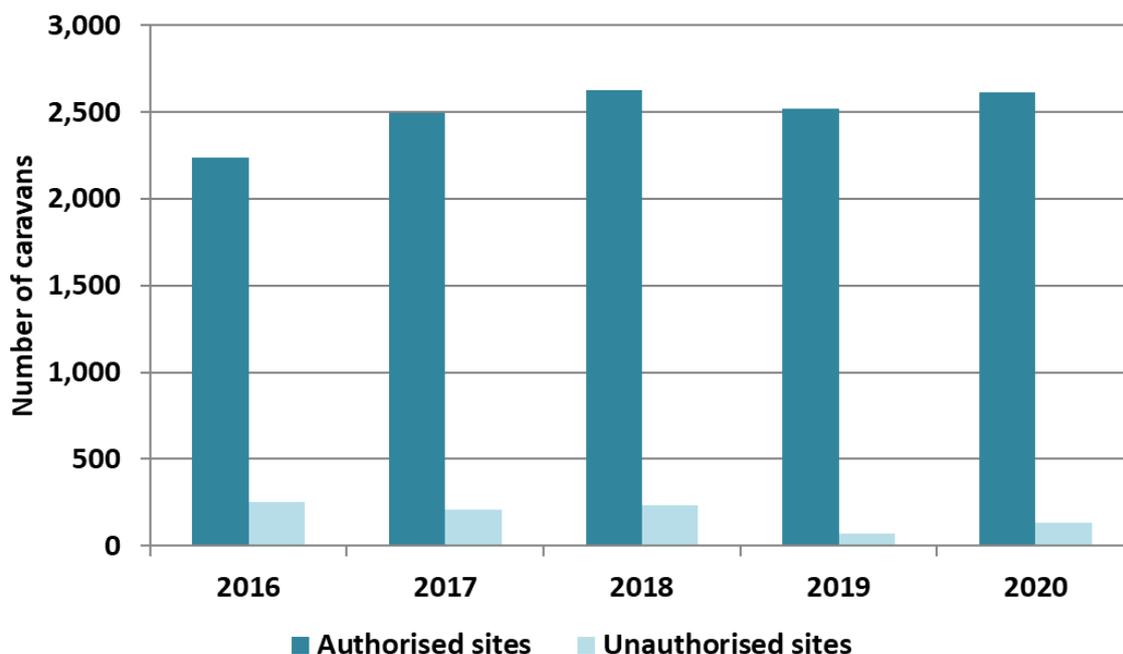


# Travelling Showpeople Caravans

The January 2020 count also included a count of the caravans/moveable dwellings occupied by Travelling Showpeople in each local authority area in England. The results from previous years are published in Live Table 3 as 'experimental statistics'. Further information about experimental statistics is available on the Office for National Statistics website at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/methodologytopicsandstatisticalconcepts/guidetoexperimentalstatistics>

The overall number of Travelling Showpeople caravans counted in January 2020 was 2,743, an increase of 6 per cent from the 2,592 counted in January 2019. This remains lower than the 3,159 caravans counted in January 2015, the highest total count recorded. Totals from the most recent five counts are illustrated in Figure 4 below. For full disaggregated data on Travelling Showpeople Caravans see accompanying Live Table's 3a and 3b.

**Figure 4: Number of Travelling Showpeople Caravans, January 2015 to January 2020**



# 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 January 2020 and 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 3a** Number of Travelling Showpeople caravans on authorised and unauthorised sites for the January 2020 count, nationally and by local authority area, based on local authority boundaries as at the time of count (updated as part of the January count)
- Table 3b** 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, based on previous local authority boundaries
- 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-january-2020>

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 and January 2020 counts, there were 317 local authorities in England. For the previous seven counts there were a total of 326 local authorities. These changes have been reflected in the accompanying live tables online, Live Tables 1a and 3a containing count data from the July 2019 and January 2020 counts and Live Tables 1b and 3b data for the previous seven counts for historic reference. Current local authority boundaries are also reflected in Map 1.

# 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](mailto:housing.statistics@communities.gov.uk)

## Data quality

This Statistical Release contains Official Statistics produced to the high professional standards as set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics - <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>. Official Statistics products undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs.

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. In order to reduce the burden on local authorities whilst they are dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak, the department has only conducted internal quality assurance and has not tested live figures with individual local authorities as part of this count.

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, Bolsover, Boston, Bristol, Camden, Chiltern, Cornwall, Cotswold, Crawley, Dorset, Enfield, Gloucester, Guildford, Halton, Hillingdon, Hyndburn, Ipswich, Isles of Scilly, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lancaster, Merton, North East Derbyshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Runnymede, Somerset West and Taunton, Southend-on-Sea, Spelthorne, Sutton, Torbay, Wandsworth*

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, 90 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 January 2020 count. If a local authority did not submit a return for the January 2020 count, figures for the number of caravans across tenure type from the previous January 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 January count. This is repeated for three counts: January 2019, January 2018 and January 2017. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 Summer 2020 count of traveller caravans has been suspended – see page 2 for further details. The next scheduled count is currently set to take place in January 2021.

## 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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