

Traveller Accommodation

The 1995 Government Traveller Task Force Report acknowledges the need to respect Traveller culture when providing accommodation. Traveller specific accommodation allows for Travellers to live in extended family groups as is traditional.



The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 obliged local authorities to draw up five-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes which were also to allow for a certain amount of nomadism.

However, local authorities have consistently failed to complete their own Traveller Accommodation Programmes. When the economic crisis hit, funding for Traveller accommodation was cut from €40 million in 2008 to €4 million in 2013. Today funding is still returned by local authorities – unspent!

PRIVATE RENTED

During the economic crisis Travellers gained access to the private rented sector. But now increased rents are forcing Travellers out of this sector.

HOMELESSNESS AND OVERCROWDING

Increased demand for Traveller accommodation has now resulted in widespread overcrowding.

Traveller families are doubling or tripling up on halting site and group housing schemes in the absence of other accommodation

According to local authority figures for 2016

- there are 536 families living on unauthorised sites on the side of the road
- there are 159 families in basic service bays with just a cold water tap

REVIEW OF LAW

Traveller organisations have long lobbied the Government on the issue of accommodation. As part of dealing with the homelessness crisis, the Government undertook a review of local authority spending on Traveller accommodation in 2017. This led to demands for a review of the 1998 Traveller Accommodation Act. The Minister for Housing, Eoghan Murphy TD commissioned in 2018, an independent review of this Act by an independent expert panel.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EVICTIONS

In 2016 the Council of Europe's Committee of Social Rights determined that Ireland's law and practice violated the human rights of Travellers on the following grounds: inadequate conditions at many Traveller sites, insufficient provision of accommodation for Travellers, inadequate legal safeguards for Travellers threatened with eviction and evictions carried out without necessary safeguards. The Council of Europe continues to produce monitoring reports.

