

Procedure for the Assessment
of Housing Need and the
Allocation of Caravan Pitches
on the Sowton Site, Moor Lane, Exeter

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the detailed activities and working practices for the processing of applications, assessment of housing need and allocation of caravan pitches on Devon County Council owned Gypsy sites.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Devon County Council aim at all times to:-

- ◆ ensure that a fair and equitable system of allocation of caravan pitches is clearly established and followed
- ◆ ensure that caravan pitches are allocated on the basis of priority need and the sustainability of the caravan site
- ◆ provide an efficient and helpful service which is responsive and sensitive to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers
- ◆ acknowledge that Gypsy and Traveller families are a recognised ethnic group and to confirm that caravan sites are provided for their needs
- ◆ ensure that the County Council's policies in respect of Equal Opportunities and Customer Care are met

N.B whilst accepting the above the County Council also recognises that the security and well being of the site and its existing residents is of paramount importance

3. PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Applicants can express their wish to be included on the Waiting List for a caravan pitch by making contact with the County Council's designated officer or appointed management contractor, as detailed below:-

Miss Sabrina Thomas
Gypsy & Travellers Liaison Officer
Devon County Council
Alexandra Lodge
5 Old Road
Tiverton
Devon EX16 4HQ
Tel. 07967394618
Email: sabrina.thomas@devon.gov.uk

- 3.2 Referrals will also be accepted on behalf of the applicant from professional bodies and organisations such as, primary care trusts and health providers, social services, education, housing and other relevant parties.
- 3.3 A Caravan Pitch Application Form will be provided to applicants that have resided in Devon for a continuous period of three months or where a local connection can be demonstrated.
- 3.4 Under normal circumstances applications for a caravan pitch will only be accepted from people residing in Devon. In exceptional circumstances applications will be accepted from outside of the County at the discretion of the Council's designated officer.
- 3.5 General housing and planning advice and assistance will be provided to applicants from outside of the County about the Council and organisations that deal with the area in which they are residing.
- 3.6 Applicants must provide the names and addresses of two referees, preferably from recent landlords. Applicants may be excluded from inclusion on the Waiting List if they are unwilling to provide referees or the references subsequently received give serious grounds for concern.
- 3.7 A visit to the applicant will be undertaken to verify the information disclosed on the Application Form and in order to carry out an assessment of housing need.
- 3.8 Assessment of housing need will be carried out in accordance with the Housing Need Assessment Procedure and by using the Housing Need Assessment Points Calculation Table as set out in Section 4.
- 3.9 Applicants are required to renew their application every 12 months.

4. HOUSING NEED ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

- 4.1 An assessment of housing need will be carried out based on the information disclosed on the application form and any supporting information provided. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such information.
- 4.2 Eight main factors are considered for assessing housing need, which are:-
- (i) Location**
 - (ii) Family**
 - (iii) Compatibility**
 - (iv) Medical**
 - (v) Social**
 - (vi) Employment**
 - (vii) Education**
 - (viii) References**
- 4.3 Certain aspects of the assessment are subjective but the County Council will endeavour to ensure a fair and equitable approach in all cases.
- 4.4 The assessment of housing need will be carried out in accordance with the Housing Need Assessment Points Calculation Table as set out below.
- 4.5 Caravan pitches will be allocated to the applicant with the highest points score. In the event that two or more applicant's points scores are equal, priority will be given to the applicant that has been on the Waiting List the longest time.
- 4.6 Devon County Council's decision in relation to caravan pitch allocation will be final.

Complaints Procedure: In the event that you have a concern or complaint in respect of the processing of your application and/or assessment of housing need you must advise the Council by means of the Council's Complaints Procedure. A copy of this can be obtained by contacting the Council's Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer at the address referred to in Section 3.1

Housing Needs Assessment Points Calculation Table

FACTOR	POINTS	EXAMPLES AND COMMENTS
LOCATION	-25	Applicants with no local connection
	10	Applicants residing on 'roadside' within Devon for less than 1 month (must be verified)
	15	Applicants residing on the 'roadside' within Devon for 1 – 6 months (must be verified)
	20	Applicants residing on the 'roadside' within Devon for 6 – 12 months (must be verified)
	25	Applicants residing on the 'roadside' within Devon for more than 12 months (must be verified)
FAMILY	5	Pregnancy confirmed by doctor, community nurse or health visitor
	10	Children between the ages of 10 to 18 or a family member between the ages of 65 to 75 years
	15	Children under the age of 10 years
	20	Family member between the ages of 75 to 80 years
	25	Family member over the age of 80 years
COMPATIBILITY	-25 or Reject	High probability of conflict with other residents [may be grounds to reject application]
	-15	Doubts about compatibility and likelihood of conflict
	15	Relatives on site and no known reasons for potential conflict
	25	Close relatives (mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter) on site and no known reasons for potential conflict

MEDICAL	5	Knowledge of health issues but no referral from doctor, community nurse or health visitor
	10	Referral from doctor, community nurse or health visitor relating to temporary health issues that require care on site
	15	Referral from doctor, community nurse or health visitor relating to permanent health issues that require care on site
	20	Referral from doctor, community nurse or health visitor relating to health issues that will require hospital visits for a period up to 12 months
	25	Referral from doctor, community nurse or health visitor relating to health issues that will require hospital visits for a period beyond 12 months
SOCIAL	5	Knowledge of social needs but no referral from social worker
	10	Referral from social worker relating to support on site being beneficial to resolving social issues
	15	Referral from social worker relating to support on site being essential to resolving social issues
	20	Referral from social worker relating to short term social need requiring a base for a period anticipated to be up to 12 months
	25	Referral from social worker relating to short term social need requiring a permanent base
EMPLOYMENT	5	Offer of employment within Devon
	10	Existing temporary employment within Devon (minimum of 6 months)
	20	Existing permanent employment within Devon

EDUCATION	5	1 child attending local school
	10	2 children attending local school/s
	15	3 children attending local school/s
	20	4 children attending local school/s
	25	5 or more children attending local school/s
REFERENCES	Reject	Failure to provide any references or poor references relating to ant-social behaviour and/or licence fee arrears
	-25	No references with valid reasons
	5	Minimum of 2 character references from non-landlord
	10	1 fair reference from landlord
	15	2 fair references from landlord
	20	1 good reference from landlord
	25	2 good references from landlord