



**National Directorate for
Fire and Emergency Management**

**REPORT ON PROGRAMME TO
REVIEW AND ENHANCE
FIRE SAFETY
IN LOCAL AUTHORITY PROVIDED
TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION**

SEPTEMBER 2016

REPORT ON PROGRAMME TO REVIEW AND ENHANCE FIRE SAFETY IN LOCAL AUTHORITY PROVIDED TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

Contents

Chapter	Page No.
Executive Summary	
Preface, Acknowledgements and Dedication	
1. Introduction and Background	11
2. Approach Adopted to Enhance Life Safety from Fire	15
3. Status of Fire Safety Review at 1 July 2016	23
4. Status of Community Fire Safety and Pre-Incident Planning at 1 July 2016	36
5. Conclusions	42
6. Recommendations	47
Appendices	
1. National Steering Group Terms of Reference	50
2. Membership of National Steering Group	51

Executive Summary

This report describes the approach to auditing and enhancing fire safety in local authority provided Traveller accommodation that was undertaken (up to 1 July 2016) in the aftermath of the deaths of ten members of an extended Traveller family in the fire tragedy in Carrickmines, Dublin on 10 October 2015. The National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management in the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government was mandated to lead and oversee the process at the national level.

The report gives relevant background information and describes the methodology adopted for the assigned task of auditing local authority provided Traveller accommodation against fire safety benchmarks and undertaking necessary work to bring the accommodation provided in line with appropriate fire safety standards.

From the outset, a collaborative approach which incorporated the concerns, views, advice and knowledge of Travellers and Traveller Organisations was adopted, working together with fire safety professionals in the local authority Fire Service and staff in local authority housing sections.

While recognising broader issues related to Traveller accommodation, and working in a context of sometimes difficult relationships, this review process has focussed on the fire safety measures which are perceived to be the most effective in protecting life safety among the Traveller community. Three specific issues were identified from an early stage:

- The absence of smoke alarms which would alert families to the dangers of fire at an early stage and enable them to evacuate quickly;
- The danger posed in multi-unit accommodation by the layout of units where a fire in one could prevent people escaping to safety from another unit;
- The dangers of fire (and electrocution) posed by inappropriate extension of electrical connections between units.

This process has seen the required fire safety audit carried out in some **95%** of relevant accommodation. Improvement works to address the above key issues, and a range of other fire safety factors, have been undertaken as described in the later Chapters of this report.

In addition to the physical works, the report describes a parallel programme of “community fire safety” which has been undertaken incorporating training for key workers and engagement with community groups on fire safety awareness. Fire services have also carried out “Pre-Incident Planning” visits to ensure familiarity with the location of Traveller accommodation and to deal with access and water supply issues in case of response to future fire incidents.

Recognising that what has been done is a first stage in a process which needs to be mainstreamed into on-going work programmes, the report reflects on the aspects of the process that are considered to have worked well as well as those which were not so successful, and makes a number of recommendations to clarify recommended approaches and to embed the issue of fire safety in Traveller accommodation into future work programmes.

While there are no absolute guarantees in relation to fire safety, we hope the work undertaken in this programme reduces the probability of another fire with such disastrous consequences as happened on 10 October 2015 in Carrickmines.

National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management,
Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.
2 September 2016.

Preface

Mr John McCarthy,
Secretary-General,
Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

Attached is the Report on the Review of Fire Safety in Local Authority Provided Traveller Accommodation which you commissioned on 13 October 2015 in the aftermath of the Carrickmines fire tragedy.

Nothing in this report can alleviate the suffering of the families affected directly by the fire which claimed the lives of ten persons from an extended family on the morning of 10 October 2015. However, this report describes the work which has been undertaken in the intervening period to plan, audit and implement fire safety measures and improvements focussed on protecting Travellers from the dangers of fire.

It is poignant also that this tragedy came after a period when we recorded the lowest annual toll of life-loss due to fires in Ireland. In the years 2012 and 2013, the figures for fire deaths were at the lowest point for more than 40 years, and placed Ireland in the league of most fire-safe nations, with an annual fire fatality rate of some 6 deaths per million of population. However, the Carrickmines tragedy was a stark reminder of the speed with which a small fire can develop into a human tragedy of enormous proportions. It also reminds us that we need to focus our on-going fire safety efforts on those most vulnerable to the danger of fire.

The report highlights that there are very particular challenges in trying to improve fire safety for certain groups of society. This project was undertaken in a context where relations between Travellers and the broader community and the state organisations they interface with are sometimes characterised as testing, with lack of trust and suspicion about the motives underpinning plans and actions. Understandable tensions emerged in a number of situations, but a focus on the broader goal of life safety helped in resolving these.

This process focussed firmly on the measures which we believe contribute most to the protection of Travellers' lives from fire. A specific approach was developed in partnership with national Traveller Organisations in response to the perceived specific needs of their accommodation and living arrangements. Our experience is this collaborative approach worked well at national level. It was replicated widely at local level during the

implementation process also and full credit should be given to those who actively engaged to support the process.

This report describes fire safety work which has taken place in Local Authority provided Traveller accommodation right across the country up to 1 July 2016. This work is not yet complete in all areas and fire safety for Travellers will require to be mainstreamed into work programmes in the years ahead. There are no absolute guarantees in relation to fire safety, however, the measures implemented reduce the probability of a disastrous fire, but can never eliminate this risk entirely.

This has been a task in which we have learned much. We will endeavour to use the experience of the Carrickmines tragedy in our future work to protect those in our society who are most vulnerable to the dangers of fire.

Seán Hogan,
National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management,
Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.
2 September 2016

Acknowledgements

In undertaking this project to enhance fire safety for Travellers, the National Directorate has engaged with and drawn support from a wide range of organisations and individuals. We have encountered a willingness to participate and contribute in a positive way to the process which has been undertaken, and I would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation for all the extraordinary support and work which was so evident in the National Steering Group which we convened to assist us in our task. I attribute the very positive approach to a desire to honour the memory of those who died in the Carrickmines fire tragedy.

The representatives of the Traveller community at national level – Pavee Point, Irish Travellers Movement and the National Traveller Women’s Forum – have been central to shaping our work on this review. Local Traveller community leaders steered and facilitated the engagement of Travellers with the work of the review process.

A number of individuals, including Fr. Derek Farrell and Colin Thomson working with the Parish of the Travelling Community, have helped us in bridging the perspectives of the different participants who needed to be engaged in this process. We have learned much which has benefitted this review from our involvement with the Southside Travellers Action Group, who continue to undertake the co-ordination of support for the families affected by the tragedy.

The support of the local authorities and the City and County Managers’ Association and their representatives has been central in enabling this review process to be effective. Local authority staff in housing and Fire Services have undertaken swathes of work as part of this project and have patiently recorded and reported this for our report. The Chief Fire Officers’ Association has also been central in delivering on the tasks assigned.

I want to acknowledge the contribution of our colleagues in both the Housing and Community Divisions of this Department in facilitating this review, as well as the support of the Department’s Management Board.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the role of the National Directorate’s Management Board in guiding and supporting the process, as well as the work of the staff of the National Directorate who have been engaged since the immediate aftermath of this tragedy. I

especially want to thank the Directorate's Review Project Team Leaders, Paul Rock and Conor O'Sullivan, for their work in developing and bringing this process forward.

Seán Hogan,
National Director for Fire and Emergency Management

Dedication

This report is dedicated to the memory of the ten members of the Traveller community who died tragically in the fire at a halting site on Glenamuck Road, Carrickmines, Dublin on the morning of 10 October 2015.

Willie Lynch and Tara Gilbert and daughters Kelsey and Jodie;

Thomas and Sylvia Connors and children Jim, Christy and six-month old Mary;

Jimmy Lynch, a brother of Willie.

We hope their memory will continue to inspire the on-going efforts needed to minimise the probability of such appalling tragedies occurring in the future.

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

A fire at a halting site on the Glenamuck Road, Carrickmines, Dublin in the early hours of 10 October 2015 killed ten people from the same extended family, including five adults and five children. This tragic loss of life highlighted the critical importance of fire safety in local authority Traveller accommodation.

On 13 October 2015, the Secretary General of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government wrote to the Chief Executives of local authorities requesting that a programme to review and enhance fire safety in Traveller accommodation should be initiated. The objective was to ensure that practical and appropriate fire safety measures, which contribute to preventing loss of life and serious injury in local authority Traveller accommodation, have been applied systematically across the country.

The National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) within the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government was mandated to lead and manage the development of the programme at national level and to report on its roll-out and implementation at local level. This report sets out the position at 1 July 2016. While work remains ongoing, and work on fire safety for Travellers will become a standing feature of future fire safety programmes, this report is prepared to enable the National Steering Group established to assist in overseeing the process to conclude its work and to make recommendations for the future.

1.2 National Steering Group

A National Steering Group (NSG) was established to advise and assist the NDFEM in carrying out its roles and to oversee the implementation of the review from the perspective of the different stakeholders. The Terms of Reference of the NSG are set out in Appendix 1.

The members of the NSG, through their own positions and various links, played a key role in shaping the review process. As it developed and progressed and they have become aware of practical/ implementation difficulties in the review process, they have assisted with resolving these through intervention with the NDFEM.

The NSG is chaired by the National Director for Fire and Emergency Management, with secretariat support provided by the NDFEM. Membership of the NSG consists of key stakeholders, categorised under four headings:

- Traveller community representatives
- Local government representatives
- National government representatives
- Independent overseers

The full list of NSG members is provided at Appendix 2.

The NSG held five meetings. The first meeting was held in November 2015 to establish the Group, and followed a series of previous working sessions in October and November. The initial formal steps were to consider the terms of reference and consider/ approve the draft documentation prepared by the NDFEM, including the draft Project Initiation Document, the Working Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation” and associated documentation.

The NSG met again in February, March, May and June 2016 to review progress and to consider the shape of the national project report. A meeting of the NSG was held on 6 July 2016 to consider a draft of this review report.

1.3 The “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation”

The NDFEM undertook the preparation of the “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation” to bring together into a single reference document relevant fire safety information, advice, guidance and fire safety standards applicable to existing Traveller accommodation.

The Guide was prepared to assist local authorities in conducting the review of fire safety in Traveller accommodation. It aims to provide information and guidance to the local authorities and the fire services that interface with Travellers in developing a consistent and effective approach regarding fire safety. The overall emphasis of the Guide is on **“Life Safety”** and it provides practical and appropriate fire safety information and standards which can contribute to preventing loss of life and serious injury.

The Guide was developed through consultation and engagement with all relevant stakeholders, including representatives of the various Traveller Organisations. The contribution of fire services and local authority personnel in the preparation of the Guide is also acknowledged.

The over-arching intention of the Guide is to:

- Facilitate a review of fire safety in all types of Traveller specific accommodation to ensure that it is appraised and that the appropriate fire safety measures are in place, commensurate with the fire risk;
- Improve Fire Safety Awareness, with an emphasis on life safety, among Travellers through a Community Fire Safety Awareness Initiative appropriate for Traveller accommodation, and underpin a fire safety training programme for key groups;
- Facilitate the Fire Services in responding to fire incidents in Traveller accommodation.

The fire safety advice detailed in the Guide is relevant and applicable in all forms of accommodation in which Travellers live, be it standard housing, the private-rented sector or caravans, mobile homes or other non-standard accommodation.

In particular, the Guide refers to the first principles of fire safety, including that smoke alarms are key to protecting life in Traveller dwellings, as in all dwellings. The purpose of the Guide is to draw attention to potentially dangerous situations which may have developed and to enhance safety from fire for persons living in the existing accommodation. It identifies what are perceived to be real risks to life and offers advice about managing/resolving these threats.

Promoting Awareness through Community Fire Safety

While there have been efforts over many years to improve fire safety in the home through promoting fire safety messages, most notably messaging regarding smoke detectors and alarms, there has been a move also towards what is termed 'Community Fire Safety' in recent years. The National Directorate's Community Fire Safety initiatives include:

- The Primary Schools Programme, where third class pupils in primary schools are engaged by specifically trained local fire-fighters in a fire safety awareness programme;

- The Community Smoke Alarms Scheme, whereby smoke alarms are provided to and installed by community groups who work with vulnerable persons e.g. elderly people living alone; and
- Fire Safety Week, where the promotion of public safety education/ messaging is undertaken mainly through National Fire Safety Week, with joint TV/ Media promotion.

It is recognised by fire services that the best and most effective access to many of those who are seen as being vulnerable to the threat of fire can be achieved through partnerships with existing community networks and other organisations who work with ‘at risk’ groups. The integration of all aspects of fire safety work – fire prevention, fire protection and fire service response – is key to achieving effective results, and the further development and enhancement of current arrangements to do this is a key objective of the National Directorate.

While nothing in the Guide is intended to be used to try to deal with overcrowding or other broader site management issues, the Guide does recognise a range of issues that are specific to Travellers and that protecting people from the dangers of fire is particularly challenging in the confined and cramped conditions that families living in caravans or non-standard accommodation may find themselves. Accidental fires can arise from a number of sources and, once started, may develop very rapidly, filling any confined space with lethal smoke. The Guide attempts to provide information aimed specifically at those living in these difficult conditions. As in standard housing, this guidance strongly advises the provision of a specific type of smoke alarm to alert persons to smoke/ incipient fire, thereby providing vital warning and enabling occupants to evacuate/ escape in the time available before conditions become untenable for life.

The “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation” was finalised following discussion at the National Steering Group’s meeting of 26 Nov 2015, and was circulated to local authorities on 3 December 2015. It was circulated with “Working Draft” status to allow for review and adaptation.

Chapter 2 – Approach/ Methodology Adopted to Enhance Life Safety from Fire

2.1 Initial Steps

After receiving its mandate to lead the Programme to Review Fire Safety in Traveller Accommodation, the NDFEM used the second half of October 2015 to research best practices and develop the review plan in collaboration with the various Traveller Organisations. The review focused on appraising fire safety in all Traveller specific accommodation and implementing improvements as per the guidance. It was recognised that there were significant factors impacting on fire safety among Travellers, and devising a culturally appropriate and practical approach was the challenge at this stage. The NDFEM aimed for a process which could be implemented readily and consistently across all local authorities.

Consultation with all stakeholders at both national and local level was seen as essential to generate confidence in the review process, as well as providing very important reassurance to Travellers. Accordingly, at an early stage, the NDFEM engaged with key stakeholders at both national and local level, including Traveller Organisations, Fire Officers and local authority staff, in order to identify the key issues which impacted on protecting life safety from fire. A number of issues emerged during these preliminary discussions which had to be clarified before the review could be launched. Over the weeks of October and November 2015, practical solutions to these issues were developed on a collaborative basis. On 21 October 2015, the NDFEM wrote to local authority Chief Executives requesting the authorities' views on a suite of draft material that had been prepared by the NDFEM to assist the review process. This included a draft Project Initiation Document, sample checklists and a draft Guidance document.

The NDFEM received positive feedback from local authorities on the proposed approach to the review and the draft documents provided. Comments were supportive of the overall plan as set out in the draft Project Initiation Document, while particular issues were highlighted as potentially problematic.

The NDFEM spent November 2015 carrying out further development work and consultation. Preliminary work undertaken by local authorities proved to be very helpful in identifying fire safety issues and potential solutions and the NDFEM continued to engage at national level

with Traveller Organisations to co-develop solutions to these issues as well as an approach on difficult implementation issues.

At the end of November 2015, the National Steering Group (NSG) established by the NDFEM to oversee the implementation of the review met formally and approved the supporting material/ documentation generated by the NDFEM. It confirmed the approach to the review by finalising and adopting the draft Project Initiation Document - and the Working Draft "Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation" and associated education and training materials.

On 3 December 2015, the NDFEM wrote to local authority Chief Executives, asking that they arrange to proceed with the review, along the lines previously indicated, and in accordance with the approach in the accompanying documentation. A suite of material was provided to assist the local authorities in undertaking the review consistently, including:

- Revised National Project Initiation Document (Final)
- A Working Draft "Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation" (v1.6)
- Pictograph "Fire Safety for The Traveller Community"
- Leaflet "Traveller Fire Safety – Tips To Stay Safe"

The local authorities provided an update report on the review in their local authority at end of January 2016. It was anticipated that the review process, including implementation of significant enhancements and community fire safety, would be heading towards finalisation at the end of Q1, 2016. Local authorities were requested to provide a final report on the situation in April 2016 and this report gives the position at end of Q2, 2016.

2.2 The Emphasis on Life Safety

While societies strive to reduce the risk of fire, total safety from fire is not possible. The NDFEM sought to create a collaborative programme, designed in conjunction with the various Traveller Organisations, to review safety from fire, with a particular emphasis on life safety, aimed at local authority provided Traveller accommodation. An approach which is both culturally appropriate and fits with the needs of Travellers, was required.

Ultimately, the desired outcome of the project was to report that fire safety in local authority provided Traveller accommodation has been reviewed against an appropriate

national standard, necessary improvements have been (or are in the process of being) implemented, and that a programme to enhance awareness of fire safety issues and fire protection measures has been rolled out among Travellers across the country.

One of the intentions of this project was to alleviate undue anxiety about fire safety among Travellers by ensuring that fire safety issues and related measures which enhance life safety are known and in place and that people living in Traveller accommodation are as safe from the threat of fire as they can be.

There were three core objectives in the project:

- 1) Develop and oversee a programme to review fire safety in Traveller-specific accommodation, which ensures that relevant Traveller accommodation across the country is appraised and appropriate fire safety measures, commensurate with the fire risk, are put in place;
- 2) Develop and roll out a Community Fire Safety initiatives appropriate for the Traveller community; and
- 3) Provide Fire Safety Awareness training for identified key groups, such as Traveller and Community Organisations and health care workers, aimed at raising awareness and sustaining fire safety initiatives in the longer term.

2.3 Key Participants in the Review Process

2.3.1 National Level

The programme was led at national level by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) within the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The NDFEM co-ordinated the development and roll-out of the programme and is reporting on its progress, as well as offering support to the local level. The NDFEM established the National Steering Group made up of the relevant stakeholders to oversee the process.

2.3.2 Local Authority Level

The programme is being implemented across the country by local authorities. It was envisaged that there would be engagement with Traveller Organisations in each local authority area to assist in undertaking the review and implementing Community Fire Safety; in effect, mirroring the National Steering Group role at local level. It was suggested that this

could be achieved either through adding fire safety to the role of an existing Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee or by convening an ad-hoc group with appropriate membership for the purpose of this review.

The key task for the local authority was to undertake site appraisals and apply appropriate fire safety measures in accordance with the Working Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation”.

Local authority Fire Services were also required to prepare and deliver:

- A Traveller specific Community Fire Safety Programme
- Fire Safety Awareness Training of relevant stakeholders
- Pre-Incident Planning for Traveller accommodation sites

2.3.3 Traveller Organisations

Traveller Organisations played a key role in the review process by participating in both National and Local Steering Groups and assisting in discussions to identify issues and co-develop solutions.

2.3.4 Traveller Community

The 2011 national census indicated that there were 29,491 people in Ireland who described themselves as Travellers. The census showed that 12% (or some 3,500 persons) were living in non-standard housing.

An annual census of Traveller families is undertaken by the local authorities each year on the last Friday of November (last taken Friday 27 November 2015). The Annual Count is a relatively consistent measure of the accommodation position of Travellers and tracks changes to that position year on year. Table 2.1 below provides details of number of Traveller families in the different categories of accommodation.

TABLE 2.1**Annual Count of Traveller Families: Comparison 2014 & 2015**

	Number of Families in:	2014	%	2015	%
(I)	Standard Houses (including Voluntary Houses)	3601	35	3428	34.2
(II)	Unauthorised Sites	445	4.35	534	5.3
(III)	Permanent Halting Site Bays	581	5.68	553	5.5
(IV)	Group Housing	732	7.15	762	7.6
(V)	Own Resources	600	5.86	546	5.4
(VI)	Private Rented	2,672	26.12	2480	24.8
(VII)	Basic Service Bays/Transient HS Bays	104	1.01	137	1.3
(VIII)	Private Houses assisted by LA's	504	4.92	450	4.5
(IX)	Sharing Houses	727	7.1	862	8.6
(X)	Sharing Permanent HS Bays	223	2.18	210	2.1
(XI)	Sharing Basic Service Bays/Transient HS Bays	37	0.36	35	3.5
	Total	10,226	100	9,997	100

This report is concerned primarily with those 2,231 Traveller families living in the accommodation categories shown in Table 2.2 below. However, part of the ambition of the project was to engage on fire safety messaging with as many Travellers as possible.

TABLE 2.2**Annual Count of Traveller Families in Relevant Accommodation Types**

	Number of Families in:	2014	%	2015	%
(I)	Unauthorised Sites	445	4.35	534	5.3
(II)	Permanent Halting Site Bays	581	5.68	553	5.5
(III)	Group Housing	732	7.15	762	7.6
(IV)	Basic Service Bays/Transient HS Bays	104	1.01	137	1.3
(V)	Sharing Permanent HS Bays	223	2.18	210	2.1
(VI)	Sharing Basic Service Bays/Transient HS Bays	37	0.36	35	3.5
		2,122		2,231	

The accommodation in which Travellers live, be it housing, caravans or other non-standard accommodation, are the dwellings of Traveller families. As such, and like all other dwellings in Ireland occupied as a single dwelling, they are specifically excluded from the provisions of sections 18, 19 and 22 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003. These sections relate respectively to assigning statutory responsibility for fire safety in premises, and the enforcement and inspection powers of local authorities. In the case of dwellings occupied as a single dwelling, the primary responsibility for fire safety in each dwelling rests with those living in that dwelling.

A duty-of-care may exist in relation to aspects of accommodation provision where a local authority provides the accommodation. However, officials of State organisations are not authorised or empowered to enter any dwelling and direct or impose any fire safety provisions on the persons living in a premises occupied as a single dwelling.

Relevant State organisations, such as the Fire Service may, and do, offer fire safety advice and assistance to householders on the dangers of fire and the appropriate fire protection measures required. If invited, the Fire Service may provide fire safety advice for the occupants of a dwelling in accordance with the service's policy, and may provide or arrange for the provision and fitting of recommended fire protection measures, including smoke

alarms, in the dwelling. Responsibility for preventing fires and the effectiveness of fire protection measures remain with those living in the dwelling.

2.4 The Intended Scope of the Review

The scope of the review was focussed primarily on Traveller specific accommodation such as halting sites and group housing provided by the local authorities. However, as noted above the importance and applicability of fire prevention and fire safety measures needed to be communicated to as much of the community as possible, regardless of the type of accommodation in which Travellers are residing (including privately owned accommodation and private rented sector as well as Traveller-specific accommodation).

Where people are living in dwellings within general housing, these should comply with normal domestic fire safety standards and normal fire safety recommendations apply. Such domestic accommodation is excluded from statutory fire safety inspection, but Community Fire Safety Initiatives are particularly appropriate for the householder. Responsibility relating to provision and maintenance of normal fire safety facilities in private rented sector accommodation is usually set out in tenancy agreements, where relevant. Depending on the type of accommodation, it may be subject to the provisions of the Fire Services Acts and appropriate regulations and standards.

This review sought to clarify fire safety standards in different types of existing Traveller accommodation through the publication of the Working Draft "Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation". The review seeks to ensure that accommodation is benchmarked against a common standard of fire safety, based on principles of fire safety, and necessary improvements are made where required.

2.5 Resourcing the Review Process

It was envisaged that the finances and resources required for this project would be made available out of current allocations initially.

The NDFEM has made additional stocks of smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms and fire blankets available under the current Community Smoke Alarm Scheme. In addition, the NDFEM has arranged for the publication and making available of the new Traveller Fire Safety literature.

At the local level, local authorities are meeting the staffing and other costs associated with the process from existing resources. As this work has mostly taken place in the early Quarters of the annual budget cycle, finance is available to pay for necessary work. While

this may have displaced some other intended works, the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government is committed to working with local authorities on issues arising from the review, including cost issues, and displacement of other intended works.

2.6 Approach to Evaluating the Review Process

The effectiveness of fire safety campaigns are difficult to evaluate in the short term. The only true measure of effectiveness is the incidence of fire deaths among the community, but given the numbers, such figures are not statistically meaningful on an annual basis.

In the short term we rely therefore on evaluating the effectiveness of the process through a series of proxy measures. These include:

- The levels of engagement with Travellers
- The extent to which recommended measures have been applied
 - Fire Safety appraisals undertaken
 - Fire Safety Enhancements undertaken
 - Pre-Incident Planning by Fire Services
 - Specific Community Fire Safety measures
- The consistency in the application of the recommended approach
- The applicability/ appropriateness of the measures recommended

As part of the evaluation, local authorities were asked to complete a detailed questionnaire, derived from the headings of the Working Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation”, which describes the work they undertook as part of the fire safety review process.

In the medium/longer term, it will be appropriate to evaluate fire safety measures and fire safety awareness in the aftermath of any future fire incidents at Traveller accommodation. Data gathered over a period will provide insight on the effectiveness of current measures and may point to possible enhancements.

Chapter 3 – Status of Fire Safety Review

As of 1 July 2016

3.1 Report on Review Process

In April 2016, local authorities were requested to complete a detailed questionnaire as part of the evaluation process which described the work they had undertaken as part of their fire safety review of existing Traveller accommodation. The questionnaire was derived from the headings of the Working Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation”.

The data displayed in the following Chapters details the overall resulting trends as of 1 July 2016. Information regarding further fire safety enhancements carried out after this date can be obtained directly from the relevant local authority.

The information on the fire safety appraisals and the remedial work undertaken in accordance with each sub-section of the Guide referred to above is collated and summarised in the remainder of this Chapter.

In Chapter 4 information regarding the Fire Service initiative relating to Community Fire Safety and Pre-Incident Planning is collated and summarised.

3.2 Review Objectives

The over-riding emphasis of the review was on life safety, ensuring that practical and appropriate fire safety measures which do contribute to preventing the loss of life and serious injury in local authority Traveller accommodation, have been applied systematically across the country.

The desired objectives of the review therefore were to ensure that fire safety in existing Traveller accommodation had been reviewed, in accordance with the Working Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation” identifying and implementing fire safety improvements where necessary, thereby increasing life safety.

3.3 Local Level Structures Adopted to Facilitate the Review Process

One of the key steps identified to facilitate the review process was the establishment of a Local Steering Group (LSG) to oversee implementation at the local level.

It was suggested to local authorities that the requirement to establish an LSG could be achieved either through adding fire safety to the role of an existing Consultative Committee or by convening an ad-hoc group with appropriate membership for the purpose of this review.

From the local authority returns, it is clear that most local authorities decided to establish a new, extemporary group specifically for the purposes of the review. The membership of these Local Steering Groups (LSGs) varied from local authority to local authority but typically included the Chief Fire Officer and staff from the local authority Housing Division.

Most local authorities had a Traveller Accommodation Caretaker and/ or Council social workers, along with some primary care workers, as members of the LSG. These individuals provided the knowledge and expertise while being able to utilise the existing relationships with Travellers. This was highlighted as a benefit by the local authorities in advancing the initiative.

Local authorities that included local Traveller Organisations found this to be very beneficial to the review process as they were able to provide the inspecting officers with additional insight into specific exigencies which were present on individual sites. These relationships, where present, were also utilised in communicating with the residents on-site and making them aware of the purpose of the inspections, so as to allay any concerns. Local engagement was seen as a key contributor to the delivery of the review at the local level.

3.4 Local Level Engagement with Traveller Community

Engagement with stakeholders at the local level was seen as being essential to generate confidence in the review process, as well as providing very important reassurance to Travellers.

During the initial consultation phase, Traveller Organisations expressed that there was a fear amongst many Travellers that the fire safety review could be used as a means to force the closure of sites. However, the documentation drafted at national level sought to clarify this issue and local authorities, in collaboration with the Local Traveller Organisations, worked to allay these concerns by clearly communicating the terms of the review and its focus on life safety to Travellers at an early stage in the process.

Local authorities highlighted enormous benefit in the assistance provided by local Traveller Organisations in allaying concerns surrounding the review. In many cases, the local Traveller Organisations acted as an intermediary for local authorities, providing information regarding the scope of the review to individual residents as well as pre-arranging access for site inspections. Further, where invited, they worked with the local authority to identify problems occurring on individual sites and to co-develop beneficial, culturally appropriate solutions to these problems. The positive effect on the review process at the local level derived from active engagement with local Traveller Organisations is noted and welcomed.

While most local authorities are reporting positive engagement with Travellers, a number have reported having limited success in this regard and noted lower than expected attendance at organised fire safety awareness raising events. Developing working relationships can take time; however it is clear from this initiative that early and continued engagement with Travellers and local Traveller Organisations is key to improving working relations and ultimately fire safety. A strong approach to local engagement is recommended for adoption by all local authorities in continuing fire safety initiatives for Travellers.

It is worth noting that the cultural significance of gender has been raised by a number of local authorities in their reports. It has been reported that the presence of women on the LSG led to greater engagement with women Travellers in particular. A perceived lack of engagement and interaction between local authorities and Traveller men was noted in a number of cases. A number of local authorities have highlighted that practically all engagement was with women and children and, while there are a number of examples of successful inclusion of men in training programmes, that a lot of men were not successfully engaged in first round work. Where this is an issue, it is recommended local authorities should consult with local Traveller Organisations to identify opportunities to engage Traveller men on fire safety issues.

Overall, local authorities reported satisfactory engagement with Travellers. The review process itself is seen to have helped to enhance both communications and trust in the interactions between local authority staff and Travellers.

In order to sustain the progress made, and to further develop fire safety awareness among Travellers, it is seen as vital that local authorities continue to engage and work with the local Traveller community and their local representative organisations.

3.5 Number of Traveller Accommodation Units Covered in the Review

The number of Traveller accommodation units identified and covered as part of this review is set out in Table 3.1 below by local authority.

For the purpose of this review, a Traveller accommodation unit is considered to be a dwelling occupied as a single family and includes caravans, mobile homes, non-standard accommodation and Group Housing Scheme accommodation.

TABLE 3.1

Summary of Traveller Specific Accommodation Units, by Local Authority

	Local Authority	Accommodation Type					
		Perm	Temp	Unofficial	GHS	Roadside	Other
1	Carlow	20	0	0	0	0	0
2	Cavan	0	0	0	21	0	0
3	Clare	18	0	0	35	0	0
4	Cork City	41	26	11	30	0	0
5	Cork County	15	18	6	17	8	0
6	Donegal	29	0	0	0	0	0
7	Dublin City	165	25	34	144	0	0
8	DL/ Rathdown	23	9	5	29	0	0
9	Fingal	103	26	18	78	0	0
10	Galway City	43	13	4	0	0	0
11	Galway County	16	4	0	9	0	1
12	Kerry	27	0	0	0	0	0
13	Kildare	27	0	0	6	0	0
14	Kilkenny	13	0	1	12	0	11
15	Laois	2	0	0	9	15	0
16	Leitrim	14	0	0	0	0	0
17	Limerick	108	20	4	16	0	0
18	Longford	2	0	0	0	0	0
19	Louth	8	16	0	0	0	0
20	Mayo	6	1	11	19	1	14
21	Meath	24	0	0	0	0	0
22	Monaghan	20	2	0	0	0	0
23	Offaly	30	0	3	0	0	0
24	Roscommon	11	2	0	26	0	6
25	Sligo	30	3	15	0	0	0
26	South Dublin	103	34	5	93	0	0
27	Tipperary	41	22	18	24	2	0
28	Waterford	58	3	0	0	0	0
29	Westmeath	45	0	0	0	0	0
30	Wexford	13	0	0	37	0	0
31	Wicklow	23	14	15	10	0	5
	TOTALS	1,078	238	150	615	26	37

3.6 Number of Traveller Accommodation Units Appraised for Fire Safety

Table 3.2 below shows the number of Traveller accommodation units appraised by local authorities as part of the review process. The appraisals generally involved joint visits to sites by local authority fire service and housing personnel.

TABLE 3.2

Number of Traveller Accommodation Units Appraised for Fire Safety, by Local Authority

	Local Authority	Accommodation Type					
		Perm	Temp	Unofficial	GHS	Roadside	Other
1	Carlow	18	0	0	0	0	0
2	Cavan	0	0	0	21	0	0
3	Clare	15	0	0	34	0	0
4	Cork City	41	26	11	30	0	0
5	Cork County	14	16	0	17	6	0
6	Donegal	26	0	0	0	0	0
7	Dublin City	165	25	34	144	0	0
8	DL/ Rathdown	23	9	5	29	0	0
9	Fingal	103	26	18	78	0	0
10	Galway City	43	13	4	0	0	0
11	Galway County	16	4	0	9	0	1
12	Kerry	27	0	0	0	0	0
13	Kildare	27	0	0	6	0	0
14	Kilkenny	13	0	0	12	0	11
15	Laois	2	0	0	9	0	0
16	Leitrim	14	0	0	0	0	0
17	Limerick	108	20	4	16	0	0
18	Longford	2	0	0	0	0	0
19	Louth	8	16	0	0	0	0
20	Mayo	6	1	0	3	0	0
21	Meath	17	0	0	0	0	0
22	Monaghan	20	2	0	0	0	0
23	Offaly	30	0	0	0	0	0
24	Roscommon	9	2	0	26	0	6
25	Sligo	30	3	15	0	0	0
26	South Dublin	103	34	5	93	0	0
27	Tipperary	41	22	11	24	2	0
28	Waterford	58	3	0	0	0	0
29	Westmeath	45	0	0	0	0	0
30	Wexford	13	0	0	37	0	0
31	Wicklow	23	14	15	10	0	0
	TOTALS	1,060	236	122	598	8	18

Based on the information to hand, local authorities report having appraised fire safety in **95%** of the **2,144** Traveller Accommodation Units identified in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.3

No. of Traveller Accommodation Units Identified Compared Against No. of Traveller Accommodation Units Appraised, by Accommodation Type

		Accommodation Type						
		Perm	Temp	Unofficial	GHS	Roadside	Other	Totals
	No. of Units	1,078	238	150	615	26	37	2,144
	No. Appraised	1,060	236	122	598	8	18	2,042
	Difference	18	2	28	17	18	19	102

The number of units identified under Group Housing Schemes (GHS) relates to the official record of local authority provided units for the GHS at this location. When carrying out site reviews the Fire Service assessed all units of accommodation present, where invited in by the occupant, including caravans and mobile homes etc.

The final **5%** or **102** accommodation units which were not subject to audit are accounted for by the following:

- Some units identified are currently closed and undergoing renovations
- Some Accommodation Units are currently unoccupied
- The local authority was unable to gain access to some Accommodation Units

It is evident that unofficial and roadside halting sites were the categories most likely to have been missed in the audit. However, overall, this level of audit in the initial round is considered to be very comprehensive.

Preliminary work before the review process commenced indicated a number of areas of likely difficulty from a fire safety perspective. These proved to be the case when the audits were undertaken, as follows:

- The absence of a working smoke alarm was identified as an issue in **81%** or **1,654** of Accommodation Units appraised
- The Configuration of Adjacent Units within pitches/ bays was determined to be an issue affecting **54%** of the sites appraised
- The condition of electrical installations generally and, in particular, the external use of multiple plug adaptors, was identified as an issue in **62%** of the sites appraised

3.7 Traveller Accommodation Units where Enhancements have been carried out

After the appraisal stage, local authorities set about implementing the necessary remediation works to bring accommodation in line with the recommendations in the Working Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller specific Accommodation”. This involved discussion with residents/ Traveller Organisations to agree a plan for carrying out the works.

Local authorities have prepared implementation plans for identified remediation works. In many cases, implementation plans set out short, medium and long term timeframes for action.

- Short-term typically included: Installation of Smoke alarms, CO alarms and Fire Blankets & Assembly point for all sites to be marked.
- Medium-term: Provision of appropriate electrical connections and adjustments in layout where feasible.
- Longer-term: Provision of alternative or additional accommodation where needed because reconfiguration of units not possible/ sufficient to address layout/ separation issues or where significant work is required.

Table 3.4 shows the overall number of Traveller accommodation units where local authority reports (and subsequent communications up to 1 July 2016) show that enhancements of fire safety have been carried out.

TABLE 3.4***Traveller Accommodation Units Where Fire Safety Enhancements Have Been Carried Out,
by Local Authority**

	Local Authority	Accommodation Type					
		Perm	Temp	Unofficial	GHS	Roadside	Other
1	Carlow	16	0	0	0	0	0
2	Cavan	0	0	0	21	0	0
3	Clare	1	0	0	0	0	0
4	Cork City	28	20	11	0	0	0
5	Cork County	14	16	4	17	6	0
6	Donegal	29	0	0	0	0	0
7	Dublin City	165	25	34	144	0	0
8	DL/ Rathdown	23	9	5	29	0	0
9	Fingal	103	34	5	93	0	0
10	Galway City	20	0	0	0	0	0
11	Galway County	1	0	0	0	0	0
12	Kerry	27	0	0	0	0	0
13	Kildare	27	0	0	6	0	0
14	Kilkenny	4	0	0	14	0	10
15	Laois	2	0	0	9	0	0
16	Leitrim	12	0	0	0	0	0
17	Limerick	82	20	0	14	0	0
18	Longford	2	0	0	0	0	0
19	Louth	4	6	0	0	0	0
20	Mayo	6	1	0	3	0	0
21	Meath	17	0	0	0	0	0
22	Monaghan	20	1	0	0	0	0
23	Offaly	27	0	0	0	0	0
24	Roscommon	9	2	0	26	0	6
25	Sligo	9	2	4	0	0	0
26	South Dublin	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	Tipperary	41	22	11	24	2	0
28	Waterford	58	3	0	0	0	0
29	Westmeath	45	0	0	0	0	0
30	Wexford	13	0	0	37	0	0
31	Wicklow	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTALS	805	161	74	437	8	16

*Figures above in Table 3.4 relate to the enhancements that have been completed as of 1 July 2016. Updated figures can be obtained from the relevant Local Authority regarding the enhancements completed after this date.

An analysis of the available information shows that local authorities report having carried out enhancements in **74%** or **1,501** of the Accommodation Units appraised.

TABLE 3.5

Percentage of Traveller Accommodation Units Appraised That Have Had Enhancement Works Carried Out, by Accommodation Type

	Accommodation Type							Totals
	Perm	Temp	Unofficial	GHS	Roadside	Other		
No. Appraised	1,060	236	122	598	8	18	2,042	
No. Enhanced	805	161	74	437	8	16	1,501	
Percentage	76%	68%	61%	73%	100%	89%	74%	

3.8 Main Issues Addressed

Smoke Alarms

In studies of fire safety worldwide, findings have indicated that a primary step in preventing the loss of life in fires is “early warning”. This early warning, coupled with fire safety awareness education, is key to avoiding/ reducing fatalities from fire. In Ireland a study by DCU staff in 2015 reported that over 97% of respondents had working smoke alarms. However, in contrast to DCU’s national study, this report found that the target population in this review are almost in the opposite situation, with few homes having the protection of smoke alarms.

- The absence of a working smoke alarm was identified as an issue in **81%** or **1,654** of Accommodation Units appraised
- Of these 1,654 Accommodation Units, **77%** or **1,274** have been supplied with a smoke alarms as of 1 July 2016

The occurrence of fire in a caravan could lead to a situation where conditions become untenable and escape routes become unusable. If people are asleep when a fire starts, they may never wake up or get the chance to escape. Optical smoke alarms with a hush feature are recommended as being particularly suitable for use in caravans. The number of smoke alarms provided within the accommodation depends on its size and general layout.

Separation and Layout of Units

There are a number of situations where a fire external to a dwelling could be a threat to the safety of its occupants. The Working Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation” sets out the general principles of fire safety which should be considered in this regard, looking at the individual circumstances of each halting site, rather than being a set of specific rules to be applied retrospectively.

The Guide acknowledges that, in an ideal world, site design & layout would comply with the established design criteria. However, even those sites which were originally designed in accordance with the specific criteria have changed and evolved, mirroring the occupants’ life stages. Consequently, an approach is recommended in each existing situation which looks at the potential effects of a fire occurring in any part of a halting site and the danger to life that this poses. This approach to appraising fire safety is also applicable for sites which have come into use or have evolved without the benefit of a design scheme.

- Separation distances distance between Traveller Accommodation units was identified as an issue of concern in **57%** of the sites appraised. Of these, **35%** have had remedial steps undertaken
- The Configuration of Adjacent Units within pitches/ bays was determined to be an issue affecting **54%** of the sites appraised. Of these, **42%** have had remedial steps implemented

Electrical Installations

The Guide recommends that electrical connections should be provided in each bay with certified waterproof connections as detailed in ET101:2008.

- The condition of electrical installations generally, and in particular, the external use of multiple plug adaptors, was identified as an issue in **62%** of the sites appraised. Of these, **51%** have had remedial works carried out

Access for Fire Services

Barriers to prevent unauthorised access are a feature of most halting sites. Arrangements were considered to ensure that emergency services vehicles can access the site without delay. One of the ways to achieve this is for the Fire Service to have keys for any barriers at the site entrance. Fire Services also carry an array of tools to enable them to gain entry to locked buildings and for other barriers which are not readily removable when keys are not available.

- Access restrictions were identified as an issue of concern at **31%** of the sites appraised. Remedial works have been implemented at **89%** of these sites

Other Issues

- The lack of a working carbon monoxide alarm was identified as an issue in **83%** or **1,695** of Accommodation Units appraised. Of these, **69%** or **1,170** have been supplied with a carbon monoxide alarm
- The lack of a fire blanket to assist with first aid fire-fighting was identified as an issue in **86%** or **1,756** of the Accommodation Units appraised. **63%** or **1,106** of these have now been provided with a fire blanket
- The absence of a Fire Safety Information Notice was identified as an issue at **77%** of the sites appraised. Of these, **29%** have now had Notices erected
- Of the sites appraised, **73%** did not have a designated Fire Point in place. Of these, **30%** have now had a Fire Point established on-site

3.9 Completion of Works

Where identified enhancements have not been completed yet, local authorities are working with local Traveller Organisations and in accordance with their individual implementation plans to address the remaining issues and deal with issues which have caused delays/difficulties in undertaking works.

Chapter 4 – Status of Community Fire Safety and Pre-Incident Planning at 1 July 2016

4.1 Community Fire Safety

The objective of any fire safety awareness programme is to prevent the event starting, or if a fire does start, to prevent it escalating to the point of causing death or large-scale loss. The probability of arriving at the point of disastrous outcomes is reduced significantly by fire safety activities, but can never be fully eliminated.

Community Fire Safety aims to communicate and promote general fire safety awareness messages to reduce the number of fires, together with targeting key groups of the population who are identified through research and statistics as being particularly vulnerable to fire. Current Community Fire Safety programmes are regarded as a significant contributor to the overall downward trend in the incidence of domestic fires and fire fatalities. Engaging people to take responsibility for their own safety in so far as they can is seen as a particularly effective approach.

4.2 Community Fire Safety Programmes for Travellers

One of the key objectives of the project was to ensure that Community Fire Safety Awareness initiatives appropriate for Travellers had been developed and rolled out.

Initiatives were developed through collaboration with the various Traveller Organisations so that they were relevant and appropriate to the target audience. The objective of the initiatives was to increase fire safety awareness among Travellers. The initiatives cover, among other things, prevention methods, early warning systems (smoke alarms) and how to react in case of fire. This knowledge empowers Travellers to undertake practical steps regarding fire safety issues commonly associated with living on sites.

Local authorities have made fire safety awareness training available to Travellers as part of the review. In addition, Fire Services have provided training for relevant local authority staff, and other appropriate groups that interact with Travellers, as a means of ensuring a widespread consciousness of fire safety. To assist with this process, Dublin Fire Brigade, in conjunction with the NDFEM, developed a Traveller Community Fire Safety Awareness

Course and a Traveller Community Fire Warden Course which was made available to all local authorities.

The NDFEM also finalised new Traveller Fire Safety literature specifically designed to address issues that were highlighted through its engagement with the various Traveller Organisations, who also endorsed these products. The literature has been, and will continue to be, distributed by local authorities during their various site visits and fire safety training, and has been positively received by Travellers.

4.3 Summary of Local Authority Community Fire Safety Actions

Information in relation to Community Fire Safety Awareness programmes and training carried out by local authorities as part of the review is set out in Table 4.1 below.

Based on the information to hand, the key findings are as follows:

- **90%** of the local authorities have carried out Community Fire Safety talks/demonstrations
- **55%** of local authorities have identified key advocates for fire safety awareness training
- **36%** of local authorities report having already provided training to key advocates
- Traveller Fire Safety Awareness has thus far been incorporated into the yearly training programme of **68%** of local authorities

The local authorities' reports contain a number of examples of very effective Community Fire Safety Awareness initiatives having been developed and implemented. In one county, for instance, the local authority proposed to the local Traveller Organisation representatives that it carry out its Community Fire Safety talks on-site and this idea was welcomed by the local Traveller community. From the local authority's perspective, the visual impact of the on-site fire safety demonstration aided in the reinforcement of the importance of fire safety in the home and it received very positive feedback from the participants in these Community Fire Safety talks. The approach adopted by the local authority has evidently worked very well.

Given the importance of working with Travellers in managing fire risk, it was suggested that Fire Services with a significant Traveller population within its functional area should consider

designating a liaison officer for its Traveller community. This liaison officer would be a point of contact for both Travellers and Traveller Organisations and would help Travellers develop and implement on-going Fire Safety initiatives such as Pre-Incident Planning and Community Fire Safety initiatives being provided for the Traveller community. Based on the returns received so far, **half** of local authorities report either having appointed a liaison officer prior to or during the review, or propose to do so to enable on-going contact regarding fire safety.

TABLE 4.1

Summary of Local Authority Community Fire Safety Initiatives

	Local Authority	Community Fire Safety Actions			
		Community fire safety talks/ demonstrations carried out	Key advocates identified for training	Course given to key advocates	Traveller fire safety awareness included in Fire Service yearly training programme
1	Carlow	Yes	No	No	Yes
2	Cavan	Yes	No	No	Yes
3	Clare	Yes	No	No	Yes
4	Cork City	Yes	No	No	No
5	Cork County	Yes	No	No	Yes
6	Donegal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Dublin City	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	DL/ Rathdown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Fingal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	Galway City	Yes	Yes	No	No
11	Galway County	Yes	No	No	Yes
12	Kerry	Yes	No	No	Yes
13	Kildare	Yes	No	No	Yes
14	Kilkenny	Yes	No	No	Yes
15	Laois	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
16	Leitrim	Yes	No	No	No
17	Limerick	No	Yes	No	Yes
18	Longford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
19	Louth	No	No	No	No
20	Mayo	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
21	Meath	Yes	No	No	No
22	Monaghan	Yes	Yes	No	No
23	Offaly	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	Roscommon	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
25	Sligo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
26	South Dublin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
27	Tipperary	Yes	No	No	No
28	Waterford	No	Yes	No	Yes
29	Westmeath	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
30	Wexford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
31	Wicklow	Yes	No	No	No

4.5 Pre-Incident Planning

One of objectives for local authorities in undertaking the review was to conduct Pre-Incident Planning for Traveller accommodation sites, using the newly developed National Traveller Accommodation Pre-Incident Planning survey form. Pre-Incident Planning involves the local Fire Service visiting a site to familiarise themselves with the location, how they will gain access, the likely situations they will encounter, specific hazards and what facilities may be available at the site. Pre-Incident Planning is conducted by local Fire Services on a planned annual basis.

Based on the information to hand, all but one local authority (which decided that a site specific pre-incident plan was not warranted in respect its particular housing accommodation at this time) has conducted Pre-Incident Planning at Traveller halting sites.

Four local authorities report having not included Traveller specific Pre-Incident Planning in their annual Pre-Incident Planning programme as the risk profile, compared to other categories of buildings, does not merit it at this time.

Table 4.2 below shows a total of 217 Traveller accommodation sites where local authority's fire services have conducted Pre-Incident Planning.

TABLE 4.2
Summary of Pre-Incident Planning Actions, by Local Authority

	Local Authority	No of sites subject to Pre-Incident Planning						Annual Pre-Incident Planning for Traveller Specific Accommodation
		Perm	Temp	Un-official	GHS	Road-side	Other	
1	Carlow	3	0	0	0	0	0	Yes
2	Cavan	0	0	0	2	0	0	Yes
3	Clare	3	0	0	6	0	0	Yes
4	Cork City	2	0	2	2	0	0	Yes
5	Cork County	11	2	2	1	2	0	Yes
6	Donegal	1	0	0	2	0	0	Yes
7	Dublin City	14	1	0	0	0	0	Yes
8	DL/ Rathdown	12	2	0	0	0	0	Yes
9	Fingal	18	5	0	0	0	0	Yes
10	Galway City	5	1	0	0	0	0	Yes
11	Galway County	3	0	1	0	0	1	Yes
12	Kerry	4	0	0	0	0	0	No
13	Kildare	4	0	0	0	0	0	Yes
14	Kilkenny	2	0	0	1	0	0	Yes
15	Laois	1	0	0	2	0	0	Yes
16	Leitrim	0	0	0	0	0	0	No
17	Limerick	7	1	1	5	0	0	Yes
18	Longford	1	0	0	0	0	0	Yes
19	Louth	2	0	0	0	0	0	No
20	Mayo	1	0	0	0	0	0	No
21	Meath	2	0	0	0	0	0	Yes
22	Monaghan	2	0	0	0	0	0	Yes
23	Offaly	3	0	0	0	0	0	Yes
24	Roscommon	4	0	0	0	0	0	Yes
25	Sligo	2	4	3	0	0	0	Yes
26	South Dublin	20	2	0	0	0	0	Yes
27	Tipperary	0	0	0	0	0	18	Yes
28	Waterford	5	1	0	0	0	0	Yes
29	Westmeath	2	0	0	0	0	0	Yes
30	Wexford	2	0	0	0	0	0	Yes
31	Wicklow	3	0	3	5	0	0	Yes
	TOTALS	139	19	12	26	2	19	217

Chapter 5 – Conclusions

5.1 Approach

The Programme to Review and enhance Fire Safety in Local Authority provided Traveller Accommodation was the first such national fire safety campaign aimed at a specific section of the population and conducted under the aegis of the NDFEM.

The focus of the review was on life safety and ensuring that practical and appropriate fire safety measures, which could contribute to preventing loss of life and serious injury in local authority Traveller accommodation, have been applied systematically across the country.

It is considered that the overall approach to the review proposed by the NDFEM, developed in association with the National Steering Group and implemented by the local authorities, has worked well for the most part.

It is concluded, having reviewed reports from all local authorities, that this was an appropriate approach to adopt, notwithstanding that some of the work enhancement is taking longer to conclude than originally envisaged.

5.2 Engagement

Consultation with stakeholders at both national and local level was seen as essential to generate confidence in the review process, as well as providing reassurance about possible unintended consequences arising from actions taken as part of the review. At the national level, the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management engaged with a number of Traveller Organisations prior to launching the review and this process is seen to have been very beneficial to setting out the overall approach and scope of the review.

At the local level, the vast majority of local authorities report having a good level of engagement with Travellers and Traveller Organisations while conducting the review. Working relationships have been established between local authority Fire Services and Travellers and this should assist with the development and implementation of on-going Fire Safety initiatives into the future.

Notwithstanding the overall good level of engagement between local authorities and Travellers being reported, there were a number of instances where local authorities reported less than expected attendance at organised fire safety awareness events. In addition, a number of local authorities reported that there was a perceptible gender imbalance to their engagement with Travellers. There are a number of factors that may have contributed to the emergence of these issues and it is important that local authorities work with local Traveller Organisations to identify a culturally appropriate approach to improving further rounds of engagement on fire safety.

It is apparent from the local authorities' reports that the success (or otherwise) of harnessing the existing Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) or creating a new Local Steering Group are key determinants of successful engagement on which many aspects of this review process depends.

5.3 Appraisals and Enhancements

Ensuring that Traveller accommodation was benchmarked against a common standard of fire safety, and that practical and appropriate fire safety measures, which can contribute to preventing loss of life and serious injury in local authority Traveller accommodation, have been applied systematically across the country was the key objective of this review.

The combined information received from the local authorities shows that **95%** or **2,042** of the Traveller Accommodation Units identified nationally have been subject to fire safety appraisal. It is evident that unofficial and roadside halting sites were the categories most likely to have been missed in the audit. However, overall, this level of audit is considered to be very comprehensive.

Local authorities report that enhancements have been completed in **74%** or **1,501** of the Traveller Accommodation Units appraised. The goal of the project was to ensure that appropriate fire safety measures which would reduce the threat from fire and increase life safety had been applied to all Accommodation Units subject to the review.

The statistics do not fully reflect the work that has been undertaken by local authorities on the ground. The Questionnaire provided by the NDFEM to local authorities did not account for work in progress; a number of local authorities have reported that enhancement works are on-going but this is not reflected in their return which only details enhancements that have been carried out. A number of local authorities have reported in follow up conversations that either works have commenced or, following the completion of the appraisals, a schedule for the works is in the process of being finalised and that works are scheduled to be carried out.

The approach taken to the review emphasised life safety, taking account of the principles of fire safety in particular early detection and warning of fire. The Working Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation” states that smoke alarms are crucial to protecting life in Traveller dwellings. It is clear from the appraisals that the overall national figures in relation to presence of smoke alarms in dwellings (at more than 95%) is in complete contrast with Traveller accommodation, where it was reported that **81% or 1,654** of units appraised were lacking in this most basic fire protection measure. It is viewed as a positive development that smoke alarms have so far been provided to **77% or 1,274** of the Traveller Accommodation Units where the lack of a working smoke alarm was identified as an issue. Similarly, the provision of a carbon monoxide alarm to **69% or 1,170** of the Traveller Accommodation Units where this was identified as an issue is also welcomed. It is noted however that, in some cases, occupants informed the Fire Service that they did not wish to be provided with smoke alarms or to have them fitted. This points to the need for further work to raise awareness of fire dangers and the place of fire safety measures.

Electrical Connections

Outside of the lack of working smoke alarms, one of the big issues to emerge from the appraisal of Traveller Accommodation Units is the condition of electrical installations generally and, in particular, the inappropriate external use of multiple plug adaptors. This was identified as an issue in **62%** of the Traveller Accommodation Units appraised and is a matter of concern. Further, with only **half** of these Units having had remedial work undertaken, there remains a sizeable number of Accommodation Units where this is on-going issue.

While a very considerable amount of recommended work has been completed at this stage, there is still work to do to deliver on the goal of ensuring that appropriate fire safety measures have been applied to all relevant Traveller Accommodation Units across the country. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the approach and process adopted has been effective and, although a very small percentage will remain difficult to engage, has resulted in the desired enhancement of fire safety for Travellers.

The dangerous uncertified 3rd party connections between units are identified as a particular concern from both a fire safety and electrocution perspective. A number of local authorities have undertaken works to provide additional certified waterproof connections as detailed in ET101:2008. In other situations, discussions and communication between the Local Steering Group and the individuals involved to develop remedies or solutions to make safe these connections have taken place or are on-going.

5.4 Pre-Incident Planning

One of the objectives of the project was that fire services undertake Pre-Incident Planning at relevant sites identified for the purpose of the review, in order to enhance their knowledge and response should an incident occurs at a specific location.

Local authority returns show that this aspect of the review has worked very well. All local authorities report either:

- Having carried out Pre-Incident Planning, or
- Being in the process of completing same for all sites identified within their administrative area, or
- Having carried out a risk assessment to determine if Pre-Incident Planning is required.

5.5 Community Fire Safety Programmes for Travellers

Ensuring that fire safety awareness initiatives appropriate for Travellers had been developed and rolled out was another of the objectives of the review. Most local authorities are reporting that they have commenced Community Fire Safety Awareness and educational programmes, with **90%** reporting that they have carried out targeted fire safety talks or demonstrations. In most instances, local authorities report these initiatives to have been a positive experience welcomed by the participants, although there have been reports identifying a lack of engagement in certain areas and at certain times. As noted earlier, the success or otherwise in using an existing LTACC or creating a new Local Steering Group appears to be key in facilitating successful engagement between fire services and the Travelling community.

In addition to conducting fire safety talks and demonstrations, local authorities were requested to identify key advocates for fire safety awareness training, including Travellers themselves, and to have provided training to same. The returns show that, as of 1 July 2016, **55%** of local authorities have identified key advocates for fire safety awareness training, with **61%** of these having already provided training.

Local authority fire services were advised also to consider designating a liaison officer as a point of contact for its Traveller community where the scale of the community would merit this. Based on the returns received so far, **half** of the local authorities report having already

established or note the intention to establish a liaison officer and this is a welcome development.

As part of its normal processes, the NDFEM reviews its Community Fire Safety programmes periodically as well as looking at the potential of new social media in reaching a wider audience, and using more general public messaging, regarding fire safety awareness. Available material, without being necessarily Traveller-specific, deals with many of the issues surrounding fire safety within both the settled and the Traveller communities which can be utilised throughout the year to promote fire safety. It is considered that placing relevant audio-visual material on “YouTube” may provide access to a wider audience than could be reached by the more traditional approaches of the Fire Service. The NDFEM is working with Traveller Organisations, and other relevant stakeholders, to identify appropriate opportunities to progress the development of appropriate audio-visual material.

5.6 Consistency of Application of Recommended Approach

The approach adopted in this programme was based on the principles of fire safety and, in particular, fire safety awareness education, avoidance of fire, early detection and warning of fire and access for the Fire Service.

The NDFEM developed a number of documents and templates for use during the review process on a collaborative basis with the National Steering Group. These documents are seen to have been significant in ensuring that the review was carried out in a consistent and co-ordinated manner across the country.

Also, given its use in this first iteration, it is concluded that this material is generally beneficial and that the Working Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation” is generally appropriate for the task of setting out appropriate fire safety principles and standards for Traveller accommodation.

Chapter 6 – Recommendations

6.1 Approach

It is recommended that for any future national fire safety campaigns, a similar emphasis on life safety and ensuring that practical and appropriate fire safety measures, which will contribute to preventing loss of life and serious injury, is adopted.

There should be strong consultation and communication with all stakeholders at the earliest possible stage regarding when, how and by whom any review is to be carried out.

6.2 Engagement

In order to sustain the progress made, and to further develop fire safety awareness throughout the Traveller community, it is recommended that local authorities continue to engage and work with local and national Traveller Organisations and the community.

It is recommended that local authorities should evaluate the success or otherwise of the local consultation structure adopted and, given the successful experiences where the recommended structures were used, endeavour to enhance engagement as a foundation for on-going and further fire safety work.

In order to mainstream fire safety as an on-going item, it is recommended that it should be included as a standing item of Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (LTACCs).

At national level, it is recommended that oversight of the LTACCs' role in relation to fire safety in Traveller accommodation be added to the brief of the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (NTACC).

6.3 Appraisals and Enhancements

It is recommended that relevant local authorities revisit the possibility of appraising the very small percentage of Traveller Accommodation which was missed in the first round of the review.

The Programme to Review Fire Safety in Local authority provided Traveller Accommodation was intended to be action-orientated and outcome focussed, with safety issues being addressed as soon as possible after they are identified. Future national fire safety campaigns need to consider project timescales in light of the breadth of work to be undertaken to ensure that the timescales envisaged are consistent with the practicalities of delivering necessary work.

6.4 Pre-Incident Planning

It is recommended that local authorities continue to carry out Pre-Incident Planning and that Traveller Fire Safety is included in its annual Pre-Incident Planning programme where the scale and nature of accommodation merits this.

6.5 Community Fire Safety

It is recommended that local authorities include demonstrations/ talks as part of their Community Fire Safety Awareness and educational programmes.

It is recommended that Fire Services work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in developing and implementing Community Fire Safety Awareness initiatives for the medium to long term promotion of fire safety among Travellers.

It is recommended that local authorities work with Travellers and Traveller Organisations to identify ways to increase participation in prearranged Community Fire Safety Initiatives.

It is recommended that local authorities continue to identify key advocates for fire safety awareness training, including Travellers themselves, and to provide such training as part of on-going programmes.

It is recommended that Traveller Fire Safety Awareness is incorporated into the yearly training programme of all local authorities.

6.6 Consistency of Application

It is recommended that the approach outlined in the Working Draft "Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation" is applied by all local authorities when carrying out future site appraisals and enhancement works.

Also, given its use in this first iteration, it is concluded that the Working Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Existing Traveller Accommodation” is generally appropriate for the task of setting out appropriate fire safety principles and standards for Traveller accommodation. It is recommended that this document should be reviewed and adopted as a formal “Code of Practice” under the provisions of the Fire Services Act, 1981 and 2003.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – National Steering Group Terms of Reference

The envisaged roles of the National Steering Group were set out in the Terms of Reference as follows:

- To advise and assist the NDFEM in its roles of leading, supporting and project managing the review process
- To review the supporting material/ documentation generated by the NDFEM and confirm the approach to the review by finalising and adopting the draft Project Initiation Document - and the Draft “Guide to Fire Safety in Traveller Accommodation” and associated education and training materials
- To oversee and monitor progress with the review at national level
- To monitor the local implementation of the review and to flag issues of concern at national level and to participate in efforts to resolve these as required. It is envisaged that solutions will be developed on a collaborative basis and made available locally, ensuring that the review is carried out in a consistent and coordinated manner
- To assist the NDFEM in generating the concluding report on the review which will report on actions implemented and also to identify or propose further actions to sustain fire safety among the Traveller community for consideration by relevant stakeholders

Appendix 2 – Membership of National Steering Group

Representative Grouping	Name	Organisation
Chair	Seán Hogan	National Director – NDFEM – DECLG
Traveller Community Representative	Jacinta Brack Alt. Bernard Joyce	Irish Traveller Movement
Traveller Community Representative	Ronnie Fay Alt Martin Collins	Pavee Point
Traveller Community Representative	Maria Joyce	National Traveller Women’s Forum
Local Government Representative	Eugene Cummins	CEO, Roscommon County Council and CCMA Rep
Local Government Representative	Pat Fleming	Chief Fire Officer, Dublin Fire Brigade and CFOA Rep
Local Government Representative	Seamus O’Connor	CEO, Limerick Local Community Development Committee
Independent Overseer	Father Derek Farrell / alt. Colin Thomson	Parish of the Travelling People
Independent Overseer	Eoin O’Sullivan	NTACC Chairman
National Level Representative	Brian Kenny	Homelessness & Housing Inclusion Supports – DECLG
National Level Representative	Clodagh McDonnell	Local & Community Development Programme – DECLG
National Level Representative	Deaglán Ó’Briain	Traveller and Roma Inclusion Unit – Department of Justice and Equality
National Level Representative	Teresa O’ Mahony	Principal Psychologist Manager – HSE
National Level Representative	Sgt. David McInerney	Garda Racial, Intercultural and Diversity Office
National Level Representative	Carmel O’Connor	ESB
Secretariat / Project Team	Conor O’Sullivan Paul Rock Ian Murphy	NDFEM – DHPCLG