



Norman Baker MP
Home Office
Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Norman Baker MP

Impact of Scrap Metal Dealers Act on Gypsies and Travellers

We are writing to you regarding the serious concerns we have on the impact of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act (SMDA) on Gypsy and Traveller communities throughout England and Wales.

Traditionally many Gypsies and Travellers have provided a vital local recycling service to communities across the country removing unwanted scrap metal from homes, small businesses etc. We believe the measures in the new act will force many Gypsy and Traveller small traders out of business, especially those with limited capacity and education to adjust to the new requirements.

Having been in contact with the Home Office we have seen no evidence of Gypsies and Travellers being properly consulted on the SMDA, nor any effective measures being introduced at the strategic and local authority level to engage and support these communities during transition to the Act.

The key issues raised by people are:

- Financial impact of licence fees on mobile Gypsies and Travellers and those trading in more than one local authority area (requiring multiple licenses) and the large variation on the cost of the license fees set by local authorities.
- Impact on competition in local authority areas as a result of individual self employed collectors (many whom are Gypsies and Travellers) being required to have the same licence as companies with larger numbers of employees, all of whom are covered by the one licence.
- The time frame for obtaining new licences before the start of enforcement on December 1st has been completely unrealistic due to local authorities not being sufficiently ready or informed. Many have not had application forms available and the processing of applications is taking many months.
- The non-inclusion of Gypsies, Travellers and other small scale traders in the consultation and impact assessment carried out by the Home Office.
- Measures being taken by local authorities to help mobile collectors adjust to the changes in the context of the poor literacy skills and insecure accommodation experienced by many community members.
- There is little consideration or available information from each Local Authority on what the licences will look like and how best to display them in the vehicles.

In the absence of a proper consultation process, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you urgently the key issues raised above. It is important for us that the Government understand the implications of the Act from the perspective of people who make a livelihood in this industry. We understand that the APPG for Gypsies Travellers and Roma are seeking such a meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne MacNamara
The Traveller Movement

Joseph Smith
Scrap Metal Dealer, London

Siobhan Spencer MBE
Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group

Peter Mercer MBE
National Federation of Gypsy
Liaison Groups

Bill Kerswell
Licensed Scrap Dealer since 1964
Co-opted member of Shropshire
County Council (1975-81)
Co-opted member of Hereford and
Worcester Council (1978-81)

Patrick Mahoney
Scrap Metal Dealer, London

Win Lawlor
Irish Community Care Mersey

Tracie Giles
From a generation of Scrap Metal
Dealers, London

Marc Willers (Barrister)
Garden Court Chambers

Assistant Chief Constable Janette
McCormick
Cheshire Constabulary
National Policing (ACPO) Lead for
Gypsy / Roma / Traveller issues
Equality, Diversity & Human Rights
National Policing Business Area.

Breda Mahoney
Traveller Movement Advisory
Group, Family of Scrap Metal
Dealers, London

Keith Coughtrie
Lester Morrill Solicitors

Helen Jones
Leeds Gypsy and Traveller
Exchange

Marian Mahoney,
Mother of Scrap Metal Dealers,
London

Conn Mac Gabhann
Irish Chaplaincy in Britain

Debby Kennett
London Gypsy Traveller Unit
Christine Shepherd
York Travellers Trust

Isaac Blake
Romani Culture and Arts Company

Chris Whitwell
Friends Families and Travellers
Chris Johnson
Community Law Partnership

Lisa Smith
Partner of Scrap Metal Dealer,
London

Victor Bradley
Scrap Metal Dealer, London

Jennie McShannon
Irish in Britain

Patrick O'Donnell
Stableway Residents Association

Trudy Aspinwall
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