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Graham Simpson MSP
Convener
Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee
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Dear Graham,

Definition of the term Gypsies and Travellers

Many thanks for your letter of 5 April 2019 regarding the definition of the term Gypsy/Traveller.

This is a complex issue because of the diversity of communities covered, with different groups speaking a range of languages, each with their own customs and traditions.

As you note, the Scottish Government does not currently have a definition of Gypsy/Travellers set out in legislation, but for policy purposes we use the following:

The term 'Gypsy/Travellers' refers to distinct groups – such as Roma, Romany Gypsies, Scottish and Irish Travellers – who consider the travelling lifestyle part of their ethnic identity.

I am not aware of any particular difficulties caused by the lack of a legal definition, and think it would be difficult to create a definition which would cover all of the communities and their current and future needs. For that reason, we have no plans to create a free-standing, over-arching definition of Gypsies and Travellers. We will of course keep this position under review.

Please let me know if it would be helpful to discuss this further.

Yours,



CHRISTINA MCKELVIE

cc. Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
Convener of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee.

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