

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Why we are engaging with Dumfries and Galloway Council (Dumfries and Galloway)

We are engaging with Dumfries and Galloway about its **services for people who are homeless and sites for Gypsy/Travellers.**

We have been engaging with Dumfries and Galloway for a number of years after we found a number of significant weaknesses in its Housing Options and Homeless Service.

Dumfries and Galloway started a large scale review of the Service in 2016 in response to our concerns about its capacity to improve. In December 2019 we published a report on our inquiry into its progress in improving outcomes for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Overall, we found that Dumfries and Galloway has significantly improved the service and has a clear plan to deliver further improvement.

In summary, our main findings were:

- It is working more effectively with strategic partners to improve outcomes for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- It has reduced the number of people waiting longer than a year for an outcome, the time it takes to achieve an outcome and the length of time people spend in temporary accommodation. It has improved how it keeps in contact with people who are homeless about the progress of their application and has reduced the number of people with whom it loses contact;
- It has significantly increased the number of settled lets made to people who are homeless through improved working with its RSL partners;
- It has improved its delivery of a person centred service, however, it is not always taking a homelessness application when it has a duty to do so;
- It does not always make offers of temporary accommodation when it has a duty to do so. This is particularly the case in emergency out of hours situations;
- Some of its temporary accommodation is not suitable for people's requirements; and
- It does not always keep an appropriate record of its assessment decisions and audit decisions.

Dumfries and Galloway accepted our findings, has committed to further investment in the Service, and has already made progress in implementing our recommendations within its wider of programme of work around Rapid Re-housing.

Dumfries and Galloway provides two sites for Gypsy/Travellers, neither of which comply with the Scottish Government's minimum standards for Gypsy/Traveller sites. The deadline for compliance was June 2018.

Dumfries and Galloway told us that it now expects its site at Glenluce to meet the standards by April 2020. It has identified that significant remedial work is required at the Collin site. It is assessing potential solutions and will consider the options early in 2020.

What Dumfries and Galloway Council must do

Dumfries and Galloway must:

- review and update its improvement plans to take account of our recommendations and provide us with the information we require in relation to its Housing Options and Homeless Service; and
- provide us with an update to its action plan for achieving full compliance with the minimum standards for its Gypsy/Traveller sites by the end of February 2020.

What we will do:

We will:

- monitor Dumfries and Galloway's implementation of its improvement plan; and
- review Dumfries and Galloway's action plan for achieving full compliance with the minimum standards for its Gypsy/Traveller sites and monitor its delivery of the minimum standards for its Gypsy/Traveller sites.

Regulatory returns

Dumfries and Galloway must provide us with the following annual regulatory returns:

- Annual Assurance Statement; and
- Annual Return on the Charter.

It should also notify us of any material changes to its Annual Assurance Statement, and any tenant and resident safety matter which has been reported to or is being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive or reports from regulatory or statutory authorities or insurance providers, relating to safety concerns.



[Read more about Dumfries and Galloway](#)

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