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# ASSESSING CONDITIONS ON TRAVELLER SITES

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## A TOOLKIT

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**Combat Poverty  
Agency** working for a  
poverty-free Ireland

GALWAY TRAVELLER MOVEMENT  
FUNDED BY COMBAT POVERTY AGENCY UNDER  
THE BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE  
RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN BY TSA CONSULTANCY

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# ASSESSING CONDITIONS ON TRAVELLER SITES

## A TOOLKIT



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### WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

This toolkit has been developed in order to assist groups and organisations to assess conditions on existing Traveller sites and to describe the possible impacts of these conditions on the health and well-being of site residents.

It was developed as a result of the Health Impact Assessment commissioned by Galway Travellers' Movement in 2008 on the health impacts of living on low grade halting sites, as well as advice from public and environmental health experts, and consultations with national and local Traveller organisations.

The research was carried out as part of the Combat Poverty Agency Building Healthy Communities Programme. TSA Consultancy was commissioned to carry out the research.

### WHEN WOULD IT BE USEFUL?

This toolkit might be useful in the following circumstances:

- If an audit of conditions on Traveller sites and the health effects of those conditions is being carried out.
- If an organisation is concerned about the health impacts of a single issue, and wants to assess and highlight the effects of this issue.
- If a Health Impact Assessment of an old or a new site is being undertaken. In this instance, while this document provides a guide to key issues affecting Travellers, organisations should also use documents produced by the Institute of Public Health.<sup>1</sup>

### WHO MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL?

Some, or all, of the document could be used or adapted by anyone with an interest in conditions on Traveller sites, including social workers, local authority officials, environmental health officers, and public health professionals as well as Traveller organisations and residents living on sites.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

This document does a number of things:

1. First, the toolkit identifies the key issues in relation to site conditions that may present on low grade halting sites. These are related to site infrastructure (e.g. lack of electricity, sanitation and water supply); site facilities (e.g. community facilities); site location; transport and traffic issues, etc. Not all of these issues are of concern to Travellers on sites, so you can select the ones most relevant to your community.
2. Second, the toolkit outlines the health issues associated with these conditions. It does this by referencing previous research undertaken.<sup>2</sup>
3. Third, it provides a framework to assess how the conditions may be affecting families living on a particular site. It does this by listing a number of possible questions that could be asked by those wishing to i) describe the conditions on a site and ii) describe the impacts that these conditions have on those families that live on the site.
4. It also provides sample 'mitigation' factors that could alleviate negative health impacts or promote positive health impacts.

<sup>1</sup> For example, Institute of Public Health (2006): Health Impact Assessment Guidance. Developed by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland on

behalf of the Ministerial Group on Public Health. This document and a range of other tools and guides from the Institute of Public

Health in Ireland (IPHI) are available online: <http://www.publichealth.ie/publications>

<sup>2</sup> A more detailed discussion is available in the full Health Impact Assessment report available on [www.paveepoint.ie](http://www.paveepoint.ie) and [www.itmtrav.com](http://www.itmtrav.com)

## OVERVIEW

The table below gives an example of some of the key questions that might be asked when assessing conditions on Traveller sites, or other housing

and living conditions. It also provides examples of how this document can assist in the assessment process:

QUESTION	ACTION	HOW THIS DOCUMENT CAN HELP
<b>What conditions on site concern those that live there and other stakeholders (e.g. health professionals and Traveller organisations)?</b>	<p>Ask those living on the site what is it about the site that most concerns them?</p> <p>Draw up a list of these issues.</p>	<p>There is a list of site issues which may be relevant.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Also, look at the guidelines for Traveller sites developed by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for more ideas.</p>
<b>Are there any (positive or negative) health impacts associated with these issues?</b>	<p>You need to get evidence that establishes an association between the issue and potential health impacts.</p>	<p>This document provides an outline of what the research says about a number of common issues emerging on sites, e.g. lack of electricity, poor housing conditions, overcrowding and others.<sup>4</sup></p>
<p><b>What is the status of the site in relation to the issue?</b></p> <p><b>How does it affect people's daily lives?</b></p>	<p>Describe the site in simple terms. Take photographs to illustrate conditions, if possible.</p> <p>Ask the residents how the conditions affect their daily lives.</p>	<p>This document provides a list of possible questions which can be used to help describe the site, and can be used in discussing the effects of the site conditions on those living there.</p>
<b>What is the impact of all of this?</b>	<p>Take the information from the above stages and consider how the conditions directly impact on the residents who live on the site.</p>	<p>Consider the potential health impacts in terms of the health issues associated with each issue (drawn from previous research and from the site description and family interviews).</p> <p>Consider whether the health impacts affect the whole community, or some individuals only; whether the effects are once-off or ongoing/long-term; whether they have a particular impact on children, women or men; and how severe these health impacts are likely to be.</p>
<b>What should be done to address the issues?</b>	<p>Conditions that produce positive health impacts should be promoted and ones that produce negative health impacts should be alleviated.</p>	<p>In this document, some sample mitigation measures are given as examples of what could be recommended.</p>

<sup>3</sup> For these in greater detail, please go to the full Health Impact Assessment report, available on [www.paveepoint.ie](http://www.paveepoint.ie) and [www.itmtrav.com](http://www.itmtrav.com)

<sup>4</sup> The HIA summary report also includes the information (see [www.paveepoint.ie](http://www.paveepoint.ie) and [www.itmtrav.com](http://www.itmtrav.com))

## STRUCTURE OF THIS TOOLKIT

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There are five main headings in this toolkit, which relate to the following features: site infrastructure, site facilities, site location, traffic and transport, and social capital.

Each feature is presented in terms of:

- Health issues associated with the feature
- Sample questions to consider for specific sites (and for Health Impact Assessments being undertaken)
- Possible mitigation factors to reduce potential negative health impacts and also to promote positive health impacts.

Each of these five main features or headings is outlined below.

### SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

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When we talk about site infrastructure, we mean things like electricity, water supply, drainage, site surface (e.g. concrete, gravel, etc.), fire safety equipment.

The issues of greatest concern identified by the residents who participated in the study undertaken by the Galway Travellers' Movement included:

- Lack of electricity
- Sanitation and water supply
- Overcrowding and condition of caravans/mobile homes
- Fire safety provisions.

### SITE FACILITIES

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When we talk about site facilities, we are talking about those facilities that are provided for community use, e.g. play space, community buildings, meeting rooms, etc.

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### SITE LOCATION

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In this document, site location is considered in terms of the following:

- Proximity to positives such as services, recreational areas etc.
- Proximity to potential negatives such as waste management facilities
- Many Traveller sites in the country are located in outlying areas of urban towns and cities, in areas zoned for industrial and uses other than residential, and have a poor visual environment. If a site is isolated, this can impact upon access to employment, social and educational opportunities and these are important determinants of health.

### TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

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Here we are concerned about issues such as access to public transport, signage, safety and access provisions.

### SOCIAL CAPITAL

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Social capital generally refers to the degree of connectedness in communities and the quality of social relations in a community of a given population.

It can be important to measure the impacts of social capital when considering the positive and negative health impacts of site conditions, as it is possible that some site conditions, such as those outlined above, can give rise to social capital impacts.

However, social capital cannot be described in the same way as the conditions on site, as it is not a tangible part of the physical environment. Therefore, impacts will be considered on the basis of the research on social capital as well as the views of site residents about the nature of social relations on the site.

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Some Traveller sites do not have 'mains' electricity supply. Residents who are unable to access mainstream electricity on site rely instead on self-generated electricity i.e. generators. In this section, we outline some potential health impacts of not having mainstream electricity. We

then provide a list of questions that could be asked in order to describe your own site and to describe how the families live and cope in such circumstances. On the basis of this, you need to report on what the potential health impacts of this might be. It is important to note that you can

HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEATURE	SAMPLE HIA QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>Not having access to a mainstream electricity supply each of which could significantly affect health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Economic impacts:</b> self-generated electricity is significantly more expensive than mainstream electricity.</li> <li>• <b>Fuel poverty<sup>5</sup></b> is linked to excess winter mortality (especially from cardiovascular disease) and respiratory illness.<sup>6</sup> Fuel poverty is also associated with mental health impacts and decreased quality of life.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• <b>Risk of increased Carbon Monoxide (CO)</b> emissions from un-vented kerosene heaters, with associated respiratory effects.<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• <b>Poor housing conditions</b> due to lack of electricity (cold and damp) can lead to respiratory conditions. Poor housing conditions are also associated with depression and anxiety, particularly amongst women and children.<sup>9,10</sup> Research has found that lack of control over one's home also has an independent role in depression.<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• <b>Inability to store and refrigerate foods</b> leads to risks of contamination and food poisoning, and in particular food poverty, especially amongst Travellers.<sup>12</sup> This leads to poor diet and specific impacts on children include difficulties of concentration and lack of vital nutrients.<sup>13</sup></li> <li>• <b>Fire hazards</b> associated with use of candles and alternative sources of light in the absence of electricity, storing fuel and safety issues associated with generators.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Describing the site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the site have mains electricity supply?</li> <li>• If yes, is the supply dependable (24 hrs)? Describe.</li> <li>• If no, how is electricity provided? Is it dependable (24 hrs)? Describe.</li> <li>• Any safety issues arising from the provision of self-generated electricity?</li> <li>• How and where fuel is stored/hazards arising? Condition of generators? Hazards associated with alternative sources of lighting/heating?</li> <li>• How are homes heated? Any emissions from heating systems? What means of ventilation?</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions for residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If electricity is not dependable, how do the families cope when it is not available?</li> <li>• How much does self-generated electricity cost households compared to mainstream?</li> <li>• Are safety issues or hazards dealt with by households? Describe.</li> <li>• Describe procedures for preparation of food, heating home, access to hot water for families. What are the impacts (e.g. cost, fuel poverty, food poverty)? Describe.</li> <li>• How does this impact on households' and individuals' daily life and well-being?</li> <li>• Describe any impacts that affect particular groups (young, old, men, women, people with disabilities etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Service units should be provided with an internal electricity supply for cooking facilities and washing facilities (laundry and personal). Mainstream electricity should be provided on all sites. Consideration should be given to the provision of high powered generators to residents where there is a delay in mainstream electricity provision.</p>

only describe what the potential health impacts are, as you cannot be definite about the cause and effect relationships. The mitigation measures listed give examples of how potential threats to health can be undermined.

5 The inability to heat one's home to an adequate (safe and comfortable) temperature owing to low income and poor (energy inefficient) housing.

7 Henwood, M. (1997) Fuel Poverty, Energy Efficiency and Health. A report to the EAGA Charitable Trust.

8 Williams, R., Walsh, D., White, J., Jackson, M. and Mumford, J. (1992) Effect on Carbon Monoxide Levels in Mobile Homes Using Unvented Kerosene Heaters for Residential Heating. Indoor

and Built Environment, Vol. 1, No. 5, 272-278.

9 British Medical Association (2003) Housing and health: building for the future. BMA Board of Science and Education.

10 Martin C., Platt S. and Hunt S. (1987) Housing conditions and ill health. BMJ 294:1125-1127.

11 Shenassa, E., Daskalakis, C., Liebhauer, A., Braubach, M. and Brown, M.

(2007) Dampness and Mould in the Home and Depression: An examination of mould-related illness and perceived control of one's home as possible depression pathways. American Journal

of Public Health, Vol. 97, No. 10, pp1893-1899.

12 Friel, S. and Conlon, C. (2004) Food Poverty and policy. Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency, Crosscare and the Society of St. Vincent

de Paul. 13 Ibid.

HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEATURE	SAMPLE HIA QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>Evidence highlights the following relationships between sanitation, water supply and health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the WHO, sanitation is a cornerstone of public health: poor provision of sanitation and hand washing/personal hygiene facilities can contaminate food, lead to spread of infections, and impact on well-being, especially for women and girls.</li> <li>• Amongst the problems associated with low quality toilets are bowel problems, bladder problems, urinary tract infections, bedwetting, and constipation.</li> <li>• Infections and disease can arise from contaminated water supply: for example, cryptosporidiosis can be caused by contamination arising from rat droppings.</li> <li>• There are some difficulties in establishing causality between sanitary conditions, water supply and health effects. However, when this occurs the 'precautionary principle' is recommended. This means actions and measures to potentially improve health should not be delayed as a result of scientific uncertainty (i.e. 'it is better to be safe than sorry'). This has been endorsed by the UN at the 1992 Rio Conference (UNCED 1992).<sup>14</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Describing the site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the water supply on site – is there internal plumbing for caravans on site for any or all households?</li> <li>• Do any households rely on external taps for water? If yes, then <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o How many families or individuals use each tap?</li> <li>o Describe the taps and the condition they are in.</li> <li>o Are there any hygiene or contamination issues here?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What sanitary conditions are there on site? Are there plumbed toilets on site?</li> <li>• Are these provided in service bays?</li> <li>• If sanitary equipment consists of external portable toilets, how are these serviced or maintained? Do they have wash hand basins? How far away from home units are they located?</li> <li>• How many households or individuals share a portable toilet?</li> <li>• What washing facilities are there on site (hot water supply, showers, etc.)?</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions for residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households should describe the water and sanitation equipment and whether/how it affects their health, well-being and daily life.</li> <li>• Are there any economic or cost implications associated with personal hygiene and accessing water?</li> <li>• Describe any impacts that affect particular groups (young, old, men, women, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Adequately plumbed service units should be provided with sufficient access to hot and cold water, and with toilet and showering facilities.</p> <p>Until a service unit is provided, portable showers and high grade portable toilets with wash hand basins should be provided in consultation with residents regarding their location, features, frequency of servicing, etc.</p> <p>This should be monitored in a site management plan. An analysis of the water supply should be conducted to alleviate fears of possible contamination.</p>

<sup>14</sup> UNCED (1992). Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Annex I Principle 15. Available at

<http://www.un.org/documents/1992/ga/conf151/aconf15126-1annex1.htm>

HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEATURE	SAMPLE HIA QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor waste water drainage can lead to spread of infections.</li> <li>• Inadequate site surfacing can impede drainage (water logging) and can likewise lead to spread of infections.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Site description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the site surface – is there a hard surface? What kind of drainage is there on site? Is there a slope on the site to allow liquid drain away from mobile homes? Describe site surface and drainage during different weather conditions?</li> <li>• Does water collect in key areas (pedestrian area, under the mobile homes, near toilet facilities)?</li> <li>• Describe the conditions of drains. Is drainage adequate or are there any circumstances where drains are blocked? If so, state these circumstances and how long drainage is likely to take? If drains get blocked, what are they blocked with? Are there procedures for maintaining site and dealing with blocked drains (is there a site management plan)?</li> <li>• Describe the site surface and drainage in specific areas, such as areas where children cycle, run and play.</li> <li>• Photographs are useful to illustrate the site surface and drainage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions for residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the site surface and drainage on site and whether/how it affects health, well-being and daily life. It is possible that the effects are noticed at particular times of the day/year and in particular weather conditions so this should be considered.</li> <li>• Are there any economic implications for households arising from the above?</li> <li>• Describe any impacts that affect particular groups (young, old, men, women, and children regarding playing, running, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Hard site surface with sloping levels, consistent with guidelines, should be in place in all sites and bays.</p> <p>Site management plan (developed in consultation with residents) would ensure drainage is inspected and addressed if insufficient.</p> <p>Provision of adequate play surface for children to mitigate chance of injury. Should be developed in consultation with residents.</p>

HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEATURE	SAMPLE HIA QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As overcrowding is usually associated with other factors such as poverty and poor nutrition, it is often hard to isolate direct impacts arising solely from overcrowding.</li> <li>Overcrowding<sup>15</sup> is associated with mental health issues (especially for women) and impacts on children's and adults' health with regard to respiratory diseases, TB, meningitis and poor self-rated health in adults.<sup>16</sup></li> <li>Poor housing is associated with economic, social, physical and mental well-being. The health effects are also long-term: those who have experienced poor housing in the past are more likely to become ill, regardless of their current housing status.<sup>17</sup></li> <li>Dampness and mould in homes can contribute to and/or exacerbate respiratory illness and increase the risk of children developing wheezing and chest problems. Moulds and fungi can produce allergens which can lead to asthma, respiratory and skin problems.</li> <li>Evidence suggests that defective housing particularly affects children's health with aches and pains, nerves, diarrhoea, headaches and significantly more respiratory problems among children in damp housing compared to children in non-damp housing<sup>18</sup>. Asthma sufferers are also three times more likely to be found in a damp home than in non-damp homes.<sup>19</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Site description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the site overcrowded? How many family units was it originally designed for, and how many people live currently on site?</li> <li>How many caravans does each family have/ need – is there adequate space for the required number of caravans?</li> <li>How many people live in one caravan? Where do daily activities take place (dining, studying, food preparation, sleeping, communal activity) in a family unit?</li> <li>What is the average family size? How many bedrooms are there in the unit and what is the age profile of families?</li> <li>If there are additional caravans on the site, outside of the bay areas, where are these parked and does this impact on services (water supply, toilets, refuse collection, etc.) and safety (location of caravans near footpaths, internal road of site, visibility, etc.)?</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions for residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Households should describe overcrowding at home and on site and whether/how it affects their health, well-being and daily life.</li> <li>Describe any impacts that affect particular groups (young, old, men, women, people with disabilities, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Bays in new developments should enable sufficient space for two mobile homes or caravans.</p> <p>Improved housing conditions may be facilitated by the application of rent supplements for caravans (to enable residents to rent caravans privately).</p> <p>Alternatively high quality mobile accommodation (for example, chalets) should be provided to families.</p>

15 Section 63 of the Housing Act, 1966 stipulates that a house shall be deemed to be "overcrowded" when the number of persons ordinarily sleeping in the house and the number of rooms therein are such that either: (a) any two of those persons, being persons of ten years of age or more of opposite sexes and not being persons living together as husband and wife, must sleep in the same room, or (b) the free air space in any room used as a sleeping apartment for any person is less than four hundred cubic feet (the height of the room, if it exceeds eight feet, being taken to be eight feet, for the calculation of free air space), and "overcrowding" shall be construed accordingly.

16 Gabe J., Williams P. (1987) Women, housing, and mental health. *International Journal of Health Services*; 17(4):667-79.

17 Marsh A., Gordon D., Pantazic C. and Heslop P. (1999) Home sweet home? The impact of poor housing in health. *The Policy Press* 1999.

18 Martin C., Platt S. and Hunt S. (1987) Housing conditions and ill health. *BMJ* 294: 1125-1127.

19 Department of Health (1999) *Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation*. Government White Paper, Cm 4386, London: The Stationery Office.

HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEATURE	SAMPLE HIA QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire safety measures can prevent fires arising, and can ensure that the effects of fire are mitigated by emergency responses.</li> <li>• Lack of fire safety can lead to increased risk and accidents, leading to fatality or serious injury.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Site description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What safety provisions are evident on site (refer to the Traveller accommodation guidelines for examples of safety procedures)?</li> <li>• Are there any compounding issues that could affect this (e.g. proximity of caravans to each other, presence of fuel such as diesel for generators on site), barriers at entrance to site?</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions for residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there fire safety equipment and is it maintained on a regular basis?</li> <li>• Have there been any fire accidents on site? Describe.</li> <li>• Any other issues which could affect fire safety (practices of residents around fire safety, presence of barriers, etc.)?</li> <li>• Can emergency services access site?</li> <li>• Describe any impacts that affect particular groups (young, old, men, women, people with disabilities, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Provision of safety equipment and procedures through site management plan.</p> <p>Provision of mains electricity would undermine the need for combustible fuel on the site, and risk of fire through use of candles.</p> <p>Use of code system for access by emergency vehicles rather than key (uncertainty around access to the site in case of emergency).</p>

HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEATURE	SAMPLE HIA QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>The availability of and access to defined community space helps to promote the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to health and information services; educational activities; recreation and leisure opportunities.<sup>20</sup></li> <li>• Community and civic engagement.<sup>21</sup></li> <li>• Social capital.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Site description questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there any community, play or communal facility on site?</li> <li>• What is the quality of existing facilities? Can families access them easily?</li> <li>• Is there any visiting service on site (play-bus, public health, etc.)?</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions for residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do residents rate the provision of facilities and how do they impact on their quality of life?</li> <li>• Describe any impacts that affect particular groups (young, old, men, women, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Consultation should take place between site residents and local authorities around play and recreation space to be developed.</p> <p>Communal and community space should be mandatory, e.g. portable cabin space.</p> <p>This should also provide for the needs of young people and adolescents (e.g. youth work activities).</p>

<sup>20</sup> The importance of recreation space for children is recognised at national level: one of the National Children's Strategy 2000-2010 objectives is to ensure that children benefit from a built and natural

environment which supports their physical and emotional well-being.

<sup>21</sup> See section 5 for a description of social capital and how it is associated with health and well-being.

HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEATURE	SAMPLE HIA QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>Health associations identified include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural environments are associated with positive effects such as less anger and reduced blood pressure.<sup>22</sup> As environments deteriorate, so does the physical and mental health of people who live in them.<sup>23</sup></li> <li>Studies have reported general housing location to be a health influencing factor.<sup>24</sup> There are indirect effects of location on health, caused by lack of access to jobs, education, services, etc.<sup>25</sup></li> <li>There are no definitive data on the impacts of living close to waste/composting facilities. However, poorly designed/managed waste facilities (especially landfill and composting) can have a nuisance impact due to odours, dust, bio-aerosols (composting), noise and traffic. Other impacts can include ground or surface water pollution, and impacts on landscape.<sup>26</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Site description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How far from nearest city, town, other services (health, education, etc.)?</li> <li>What is located adjacent to the site and how is land zoned?<sup>27</sup></li> <li>What is the nature of the natural environment – is there any landscaping on the site or at the site boundaries?</li> <li>Are there any residential areas adjoining the site?</li> <li>If there are any former landfills or waste management facilities adjacent to the facility, how far away is the boundary wall of the facilities from the halting site? Are there any identifiable issues arising from the presence of the facilities (e.g. identifiable odour). Describe.</li> <li>What opportunities exist for undertaking economic activity on site?</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions for residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the families' views around the general site location and around what adjoins the site? Positive and negative aspects should be ascertained.</li> <li>Does the location of the site have any impact on access to services, access to employment, economic activities, education, etc?</li> <li>Describe any impacts that affect particular groups (young, old, men, women, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Should endeavour to locate sites close to services??</p> <p>No site should be located within at least 200m of any waste management/former landfill site.<sup>28</sup></p> <p>If a site is close to such a facility, there should be landscaping between it and the facility to improve the visual environment, and to act as a buffer zone.</p> <p>Regular consultation between Traveller organisations and management of waste facilities should occur regarding facilities management, including odour testing<sup>29</sup> and monitoring of air and bio-aerosol emissions, etc. Referral to the Environmental Protection Agency should be considered if problems (e.g. odour) persist.</p> <p>Provisions should be made on site for economic activity if residents wish, or an alternative site considered.</p> <p>CRE (the Composting Association of Ireland) recommend a guideline buffer zone of 200m<sup>30</sup> from a composting facility, and monitoring of bio-aerosol emissions is recommended for particulate matter.</p>

22 Passchier et al. (1999) Public Health Impact of Large Airports. RIVM.  
23 Jackson, R. and Kochitzky, C. Creating a healthy environment: the impact of the built environment on public health. Centre for

disease control and prevention. Available online <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/articles/Creating%20A%20Healthy%20Environment.pdf>  
24 Blackman, T., Evason, E., Melaugh, M. and Woods, R.

(1989) Housing and Health: a case study of two areas of West Belfast. Journal of Social Policy, 18(1):1-26.  
25 Ellaway, A., Macintyre, S. and Kearns, A. (2001) Perceptions of Place and Health in Socially Contrasting Neighbourhoods.

Urban Studies, Vol. 38, No. 12, 2299-2316.  
26 EPA (2005) Pilot Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Replacement Midlands Waste Management Plan 2005-2010.  
27 For example, if it is zoned

industrial and all adjacent facilities are non-residential (e.g. industrial) this may have an impact on the visual environment.  
28 As recommended by the Composting Association of Ireland (Cré), 2004. In

some European states, the recommended buffer zone is set at a minimum of 500m.  
29 Odour monitoring includes olfactometric measurements, analysis of hydrogen sulphide, ammonia, mercaptans and amines and odour modelling.

Burke, D. (2006) Green Waste Composting: Technology, design and environmental management. Presented at Cré themed seminar 'Green Waste Composting', 14 March 2006.

30 Prasad, M. Van der Werf, P., and Brinkmann, A. (2004) Bioaerosols and Composting: A Literature Evaluation. Composting Association of Ireland (cré).

## SITE LOCATION

## GENERAL LOCATION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEATURE	SAMPLE HIA QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>Proximity to waste management sites can lead to increased presence of rats. The health issues associated with the presence of rats include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rats contribute to the contamination of their environment through hair, droppings and urine. This leads to the potential spread of infection and diseases such as leptospirosis (Weils disease), TB, salmonella, E.Coli and parasites (ticks, mites, fleas, tapeworm).</li> <li>• Gnawing through wires by rats can cause damage to electrical equipment, which could potentially lead to electrocution and fire.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Site description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there rats on site? What measures have been taken to eliminate rats if they are on site? Are these sufficient? Is there any evidence about what causes rat infestation?</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions for residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is a presence of rats, how does this presence impact on residents' health and well-being, and daily life? Does it affect some household or community members more than others?</li> <li>• Describe any impacts that affect particular groups (young, old, men, women, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>Site management plans should be developed to monitor and address conditions that give rise to rats. A site management plan should be developed in consultation with families and should be reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Residents on site should ensure that waste and food is properly disposed of to minimise infestation.</p> <p>Consultation and communication should take place between the local or housing authority, vermin control company and residents in relation to rat poison placed on sites.</p>

HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEATURE	SAMPLE HIA QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>The following associations have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport can enable access to goods and services and plays a vital role in the health and well-being of communities.<sup>31</sup></li> <li>• Reliance on cars as a means of transport can lead to community severance and can also promote a sedentary lifestyle, resulting in increased obesity, risk of heart disease, diabetes and blood pressure.<sup>32</sup></li> <li>• Transport can contribute to noise pollution leading to sleep disturbance and annoyance, resulting in increased stress.</li> <li>• Transport contributes to air pollution – leading to increased respiratory diseases and cardiovascular diseases. Traffic pollution has been identified as one of four major triggers for asthma.<sup>33</sup> There is also increasing evidence that air pollution impacts on the cardiovascular as well as the respiratory system.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, those who live close to busy roads may be at increased risk of exposure to potentially carcinogenic pollutants from diesel.<sup>35,36</sup></li> <li>• Traffic leads to an increased risk of injuries and deaths from accidents; children from lower socio-economic groups tend to be more susceptible to serious road accidents.<sup>37</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Site description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe public transport provision frequency, cost, suitability.</li> <li>• What is the nature of the road outside the site (main road, dual carriageway, etc.)?</li> <li>• What is the speed limit outside the site?</li> <li>• Are there road markings to indicate the presence of the site?</li> <li>• How heavy is the traffic (you might do a traffic count)? Any particular types of vehicles (e.g. HGVs)?</li> <li>• What about noise on the site – does it arise and does it affect families?</li> <li>• What about air quality – any surveys undertaken in the past?</li> <li>• What about site boundary – any trees between site and road?</li> <li>• Is there a footpath outside?</li> <li>• Is there a cycle lane?</li> <li>• Is there a pedestrian crossing?</li> <li>• Is overtaking permissible on the road outside the site?</li> <li>• Is there a hard shoulder?</li> <li>• What is the nature of the boundary between the site and the road?</li> <li>• Visibility issues at the entrance and exit – anything blocking visibility or access?</li> <li>• Describe the internal road network.</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions for residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the presence of the road impact upon residents' ability to access goods and services?</li> <li>• Any safety issues for residents?</li> <li>• Describe any impacts that affect particular groups (young, old, men, women, etc.) or those living in particular parts of the site?</li> <li>• Any accidents (fatal and non-fatal) amongst the residents/visitors?</li> </ul>	<p>Public transport provision.</p> <p>Landscaping by site boundary.</p> <p>Road markings and signage (internal and external).</p> <p>Safe speed limit on main road.</p> <p>Footpath and pedestrian provisions should be put in place.</p> <p>Internal site play and recreation space and equipment for children should be provided.</p> <p>Internal road network and exercise space and facilities (e.g. community space) should be provided</p>

31 World Health Organization (2000) Transport, Environment, and Health. WHO Regional Publications, European Series, No.89.  
32 Ibid.

33 National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Asthma: Breathtaking epidemic. In: <http://www.publichealth.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=500709>

34 World Health Organization Europe (2004) Health Aspects of Air Pollution. Copenhagen: WHO.  
35 World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (2000) Transport, Environment

and Health. Copenhagen; WHO.  
36 The literature states that the effects of air pollution are compounded in heavy traffic, when low average speed journeys, such as those

taken on congested routes, are less efficient in their use of fuel and result in greater congestion.  
37 Health Development Agency (2005).

HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FEATURE	SAMPLE HIA QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of social capital and social support are positively associated with good self-rated health, good health chances, lower levels of anxiety and depression, greater sense of safety and freedom from crime, improved recovery from mental illness, and better recovery prognoses.<sup>38,39</sup></li> <li>• Low levels of social capital are viewed as eroding citizen's sense of justice and inclusion, leading to anxiety and compromised rising life expectancies, also mental illness.<sup>40</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Questions for residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the nature of relationships and interaction on site?</li> <li>• What supports do residents feel are available from other site residents?</li> <li>• Any tensions on site? What gives rise to this? How are these tensions managed?</li> <li>• Describe any impacts that affect particular groups (young, old, men, women, etc.) arising from positive or negative social capital.</li> </ul>	<p>Efforts should be made to maintain family groupings in existing/new sites.</p> <p>Regular and ongoing consultation and communication with families as new sites are being developed around allocation issues in order to alleviate or prevent tensions between families.</p> <p>Tenant participation in policies and procedures should be in place.</p>

38 Health Development Agency (2004) Investigating the links between social capital and health using the British Household Panel Survey. London: HDA.

39 Pearce, N. and Davey-Smith, G. (2003) Is social capital the key to inequalities in health? *American Journal of Public Health*, 93 (1): 122-129.

40 Ibid.

## CONCLUSIONS

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The above table provides a sample of the issues that can affect Traveller families living in low grade accommodation. Its intention is to provide some useful information for those interested in assessing conditions on Traveller sites, as well as those with an interest in how the built environment can impact on health and well-being. While we hope that it can therefore be used in a variety of settings, we would recommend that those using it consult with the rest of the materials developed as part of this Health Impact Assessment as well as those materials developed by the Institute of Public Health.

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**Galway Traveller Movement**

1 The Plaza,  
Headford Rd,  
Galway

**Tel:** 091 765 390

**Fax:** 091 765 395

**E Mail:** [info@gtmtrav.ie](mailto:info@gtmtrav.ie)

**Web:** [www.gtmtrav.ie](http://www.gtmtrav.ie)