Contact is made with Gypsy/Travellers by Police Officers in a number of ways. Each Force area instructs that staff to make early contact with Gypsy/Travellers and then maintain liaison between them, businesses and communities in the area which any encampment is established. Local Authority Liaison Officers assist in maintaining the level of contact at any encampment with all the partners and local services. Forces also have designated Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officers.

Gypsy/Travellers community representatives have been invited to attend Force Liaison Group meetings and work is ongoing to encourage engagement and further representation.

**Policies or Practice Guidelines relating to Gypsy Travellers**

Each Force has in place a Force Standard Operating Procedures based on Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) guidelines. These guidelines are maintained nationally by the ACPOS Gypsy/Traveller Reference Group which has representation from all forces and policing agencies in Scotland together with a wide range of voluntary and funded agencies that have interests around the Gypsy Traveller Communities.

This guidance is constantly reviewed and was re-published in October 2011 after significant consultation with all agencies including Gypsy Travellers.

**Any specific training or awareness-raising undertaken in relation to Gypsy Travellers**

Force areas are in the process of delivering Equalities briefings to staff, including an input on building relationships with Gypsy/Travellers.

All forces have training packages in relation to Gypsy Travellers in varying formats. ACPOS Gypsy Traveller Reference Group organise yearly events at the Scottish Police College as part of the college's Continuous Development Programme. A training event was held as recently as March 2012 in this regard with plans to repeat in 2013.

Representative of the ACPOS Gypsy Traveller Reference Group have an input at the Scottish Police College's Ethics, Equality and Diversity Course within the Leadership and Management Division directed at mind to senior managers of the service.

In the Lothian and Borders area, Police Officers have attended a number of workshops hosted by MECOPP and STEPS as delegates and delivering police perspective to the Gypsy/Traveller community as required.

**What difficulties Gypsy/Travellers have accessing your services/support and what you have done to address any such difficulties**

It is felt that there is a historical mistrust of authority, which is why officers are encouraged to maintain contact with encampments in the hope that it will progressively bring increased trust and confidence within communities.
There has been mention of encampments facing problems accessing meaningful education and problems with children integrating into mainstream schools. Work is continuing with local authority partners to try and improve this situation.

Health care has also been raised as an issue. Work is ongoing to explore the possibilities of creating a pathfinder leaflet, which can be distributed to encampments by liaison officers. Many Local Authority Areas have local health nurses that work with the Gypsy Traveller Community and there is joint training with the police in areas such as Fife.

Chief Inspector Gordon Mitchell
ACPOS Lead for Gypsy Travellers Portfolio
Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland
9 July 2012