Minister for Equalities & International Development
Simita Kumar MSP

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Katie Hagmann MSP
Convener
Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

Email: EHRCJ.committee@parliament.scot

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Dear Katie,

Thank you for your letter dated 8 October 2026 regarding progress following the publication of the independent archival research into historical policies affecting Gypsy/Traveller communities and the formal apology issued by the First Minister in June 2025.

I recognise the strength of feeling that continues to exist among affected individuals, their families and wider Gypsy/Traveller communities, and the need to drive positive change and tackle inequality for these communities across Scotland. The Scottish Government is clear that historical policies have had a profound impact and their consequences continue to be felt across generations.

The Scottish Government continues to engage widely and carefully with different parts of the community to ensure that a range of perspectives are heard and considered. However, I would particularly highlight that a range of work is underway to deliver continued improvements for Gypsy/Traveller communities across Scotland, including work to address the legacy of historical policies.

Following publication of the archival research report, the Scottish Government took forward a programme of engagement with affected individuals, community representatives, and stakeholders to understand views on the report's findings and how they should inform future action. Alongside this, we progressed a number of short-term measures such as support for cultural and heritage activity aimed at preserving and raising awareness of Gypsy/Traveller history and experiences.

Responding to longstanding requests from community members and recommendations emerging from the archival research, the Scottish Government also facilitated engagement between residents at Bobbin Mill and Historic Environment Scotland (HES) to explore options for recognising and preserving the site's historical significance. This work considered a range of potential approaches to commemoration and heritage recognition, supporting community-led discussion about how the history and legacy of the site might best be

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acknowledged. Residents subsequently indicated a preference to explore alternative approaches to recognition, but the engagement helped inform consideration of future options and we remain open to future engagement.

Alongside activity relating to commemoration and heritage recognition, the Scottish Government also took forward work aligned with the report's recommendations on cultural awareness and accommodation. In March 2026, £10,000 was granted to Perth and Kinross Council to support activity with local community members aimed at increasing understanding of the history and legacy of the "Tinker Experiments", including an exhibition delivered during Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month. The Scottish Government understands that Perth and Kinross Council has also implemented some immediate improvements at Bobbin Mill and is engaging with residents on potential longer-term options. The council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) includes Bobbin Mill.

The Scottish Government has also actively engaged with recommendations arising from the Scottish Human Rights Commission's (SHRC) *No Man's Land* report and its important contribution to understanding the experiences of Gypsy/Traveller communities affected by historic policies. In February, Senior Scottish Government officials attended an SHRC-convened event in Pitlochry bringing together affected community members, local authorities and other stakeholders to discuss the report's findings and recommendations, including proposals relating to accommodation, community empowerment, and wider next steps. In March, my predecessor Ms Stewart provided a formal written response to the Commission's report, setting out the Scottish Government's position and reaffirming our commitment to ongoing engagement with affected individuals. The Scottish Government continues to consider its recommendations alongside feedback gathered through wider activity as part of our ongoing consideration of future work.

Since my appointment as Minister for Equalities and International Development, I have continued this engagement, meeting with individuals affected by historical policies in early October. These discussions have reinforced the importance of ensuring that any future response is informed by the experiences and perspectives of those affected.

The Scottish Government recognises that the effects of historical policies can continue to be felt across generations and that their legacy remains significant for many individuals and families today. We are equally clear, however, that lessons must be learned from the failures identified in the archival research. Our focus is on ensuring that policy and service delivery are shaped by respect for the rights and lived experience of Gypsy/Traveller communities and that our policies are informed by their priorities.

Our engagement has also highlighted that the impacts of historical policies have not been experienced uniformly across Gypsy/Traveller communities. While some individuals were directly affected by those policies, others continue to experience their consequences through intergenerational trauma, inherited disadvantage, and ongoing barriers. As a result, there is not a consensus across Gypsy/Traveller communities on what an appropriate response should look like. The issue of redress has been emphasised by some; others have highlighted the importance of recognition, truth-telling, cultural preservation, and, critically, continued action to improve outcomes for Gypsy/Traveller communities today.

The Scottish Government is therefore taking forward work on a number of fronts. Through our Anti-Racism Delivery Plan 2026-2030 (ARDP), we have identified work with

Gypsy/Traveller communities as a strategic priority and continue to support action to improve outcomes in areas including health, accommodation, education and tackling discrimination. This builds on the successful delivery of improvements for communities achieved through activity like our successive Gypsy/Traveller Action Plans in 2019 and 2024, in which we made significant investment to tackle identified challenges. This included over £650,000 in support of the Community Health Worker programme since 2020 to support Gypsy/Traveller communities overcome barriers to accessing health and other public services; nearly £15 million through the Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund between 2021-26 to deliver improved accommodation for Gypsy/Traveller communities in six Local Authority areas; and nearly £1.5 million provided to Gypsy/Traveller stakeholders through the Equality and Human Rights Fund between 2021-2026.

Work is ongoing to continue progress through the commitments set out in the ARDP, for example making funding for publicly provided Gypsy/Traveller accommodation available through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) and a review of site standards for publicly provided sites in partnership with COSLA which includes the implementation of new requirements on damp and mould. We are also working with community organisations through the Benefit Take-Up Strategy to address barriers to accessing social security support.

At the same time, we continue to consider the findings of the archival research and the views expressed through community engagement to inform advice on potential future responses. This includes consideration of a range of options relating to recognition of past harms, preservation of testimony and community memory, promotion of Gypsy/Traveller culture and heritage, and improving public understanding of Gypsy/Traveller history and experiences.

I recognise the significance of questions relating to redress for some of those affected, and this remains part of our wider consideration of the report's findings. Consideration of potential redress arrangements raises a number of complex issues, including questions relating to scope, eligibility and evidential requirements, particularly given the broad range of historical policies and practices examined through the archival research. The Scottish Government remains focused on ensuring meaningful progress continues to address inequalities and improving outcomes for Gypsy/Traveller communities across Scotland while future redress arrangements are still being considered.

I hope this provides reassurance that the Scottish Government continues to take this matter seriously and remains committed to ensuring that the findings of the archival research, and other evidence, inform both our ongoing engagement with affected communities and our wider work to improve outcomes for Gypsy/Traveller people across Scotland.

While we cannot change the harms caused by historical policies and practices, we can ensure that the lessons arising from them continue to inform our actions today. That is why we remain focused on working in partnership with Gypsy/Traveller communities, addressing inequalities, improving outcomes, and ensuring that our actions are informed by and respectful of their experiences.

Yours sincerely,

SIMITA KUMAR

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