

19/6/15

# Gipsy caravans increase by third to nearly 20,000 over past decade

By Peter Dominiczak

THE number of gipsy caravans in England has increased by nearly a third in the past decade to more than 20,000 amid fears that planning loopholes are being exploited.

Official statistics show that the total number of traveller caravans in England has

increased by 28 per cent since 2006.

The figures, collated by the Department for Communities and Local Government, show that the number of traveller caravans in England in January was 20,123 – 604 more than at the beginning of 2014.

The Conservatives are planning to unveil tough measures to deal with illegal gypsy encampments, including setting up special magistrates' courts that can order evictions at weekends and at night.

Before the election, the Tories announced new rules to say that travellers will have to prove they have a "nomadic

lifestyle to qualify for help in the planning system.

Experts said this would in practice mean showing that they had been on the move for two months every year.

It is thought that this will help councils to stop them setting up illegal camps.

The new figures show that nearly 10 per cent of gipsy caravans are on "unauthorised developments".

Caravans on authorised private sites have formed a growing proportion of the total number of caravans over the past 10 years, the figures show, rising from 37 per cent in January 2006 to 53 per cent.

ISSN 0307-1235



Σ 0 15

19/6