

Southwark Gypsy and Travellers Site Allocations Policy and Procedure

	Name/Location	Job title, extension	Date
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Owner	Resident Services DMT		

Pitches Allocations policy

Legislation

Equality in housing

1. Gypsies and Travellers are a recognised ethnic-minority group, protected under Section 9 of the Equality Act 2010.

Sites and pitches

2. We (Southwark Council) provide a range of different-sized pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on four official sites in Southwark: Ilderton Road, Brideale Close, Burnhill Close and Spring Tide Close.
3. Each pitch consists of a hard standing for a single caravan, and an individual utility block containing a bathroom, toilet and kitchen. We (Southwark Council) are only responsible for maintenance and repairs to the site and within the Council's utility block.

Charges and costs

4. We let pitches under a pitch agreement. You will pay a weekly charge for the pitch. Part of this charge pays for the general running costs of the site. We review the charges for individual pitches annually.

Paying charges

5. You can pay for your pitch by cash, swipe card (at PayPoint outlets and post offices), direct debit, standing order or cheque, or over the internet or by phone. We will tell you how and when you can pay when you sign the agreement. If you qualify, you can apply for Housing Benefit to help pay towards the cost of the pitch.

Managing sites and pitches

- The Travellers Service will be responsible for managing the site and the waiting list and for helping with your application and offering pitches (in his/her absence, another officer will be nominated to undertake their duties).
- A Housing Manager, along with the Travellers Service, will be responsible for offering pitches.

Who can apply for a pitch?

To be allocated a pitch you must be on the waiting list

To be accepted on the waiting list, you must:

- Be aged 18 or over
 - Complete the Application Form and provide supporting evidence as required
6. Applicants who apply as partners are treated as making a joint application and each partner should provide the details required
 7. Every person who submits a complete application will have their application considered. This does not mean that everyone who applies will be placed on the waiting list

How to apply

8. You must fill in an application form. The application form must include the names and details of everyone in your household who will live on the pitch.
9. You can get a form:
 - by writing to your Travellers Officer, Southwark Council, PO BOX 64529, London, SE1P 5LX
 - by emailing marie.griffin@southwark.gov.uk or paul.jeffery@southwark.gov.uk
10. You can post your application to us at:
 - Travellers Service, Southwark Council, Southwark Council, PO BOX 64529, London, SE1P 5LXor you can take it to of the one-stop shops below.
 - **Peckham** (Ground Floor, 122 Peckham Hill Street, London, SE15 5JR)
 - **Walworth** (376, Walworth Road, London, SE17 2NG)
8. The Travellers Service will provide you with all the information you need about applying. They will stamp your application form with the date of when we received it and will give you a copy or send one to you if you applied by post. If you would like, the Travellers Officer will help you to complete the application form (see Appendix 1).
12. You must make sure that the information you provide on your application form is accurate and up to date, and you must tell us if there are any changes to the details on your form after it has been completed.

Evidence to support your application

13. You will need to give us proof of identity and address for everyone who will be living on the pitch. When you apply, you must show us one item from 'A' below and one from 'B'.
 - A) Passport or full birth certificate
 - B) Phone bill, driving license, bank statement or other document showing your full name and address
14. We have listed all other evidence we need on the application form.

Assessing your application

15. We will let you know we have received your application within 10 working days and we will assess it within four weeks, though this may take longer if we need to carry out more detailed checks.
16. The Travellers Service will contact you to let you know if your application to join the waiting list has been successful and they will tell you whether a pitch is available. If you did not provide proof of identify or address when you filled in the application form, the Travellers Service will take copies of these documents before telling you whether your application has been accepted.
17. The council reserves the right not to accept an application for the waiting list, suspend an application or remove an applicant from the waiting list on the grounds of:

- Criminal or anti-social behaviour
- Using threatening language or behaviour to any council officer
- An applicant has moved onto a council pitch without permission from the council
- Proved false information in their application or knowingly withheld relevant information

The waiting list

18. There is a waiting list for site pitches. If we accept your application we will put you on the waiting list. While you are on the waiting list, you must tell us if there are any changes to the details on your application form.
19. The Travellers Service will update the waiting list whenever a pitch comes free. The list will include people who are applying from outside the site, people who already have a pitch agreement but want to move to another pitch and people living with others on the site but who want their own pitch.
20. The waiting list and the details you give us will not be made public, however, we can give you an idea of how long the list is if you ask us.
21. The position on the waiting list of all applicants will be determined by the banding they have been placed in and the number of points they are awarded, using the information provided on the application form (see below for an explanation of the points system and banding criteria). If at this stage two or more applicants have the same number of points within the same band, we will offer the pitch to the applicant who has spent the longest time on the waiting list.

Annual Review

22. In April each year we will write to you to ask if you want to stay on the waiting list.

Appeals about the waiting list

23. If we refuse your application to join the waiting list, you can appeal against this decision. You can discuss your application with the Travellers Service. If you are still not satisfied you should appeal in writing, within 10 working days of the decision to refuse your application to the Programmes and Investigations Manager, Resident Services, , Housing and Modernisation, Southwark Council, PO Box 64529, London SE1 5LX. You will receive a written reply within 15 working days.

Offering pitches

24. A Housing Manager, along with the Travellers Service, will use the conditions listed below (see the table below) to decide who to offer pitches to from the applicants on the waiting list.

Our conditions for offering pitches

25. We will put applicants on the waiting list in order of the banding they have been placed in and the number of points each application has been awarded (see below for an explanation). If two or more households have the same number of points within a

banding, we will offer the pitch to the applicant who has spent the longest time on the waiting list.

26. If possible, we will offer you a choice of pitch.
27. When we decide who to offer pitches to, we will work to avoid any conflict on sites. If we think there is a risk of conflict with residents already living on the site, we will take this up with you and carry out a fair risk assessment. We will consider all applications fully and fairly.
28. We consider carefully who we offer pitches to and we do not automatically have to offer pitches to the household with the highest priority.
29. If you give us any false information when you apply for a pitch, we may cancel your application and we have the right to withdraw any offer we may have made you

Proposed banding and points system for offering pitches

Date of application	Your situation	Points	Banding
You must be able to give us proof of everything listed below.			
Banding	If you have lived on a Southwark Travellers site for six months out of the last 12 months or three of the last five years.		Band 1
	If you have a close relative who has lived on a Southwark Council Travellers' site for six months out of the last 12 months or three of the last five years.		Band 2
	If you have never lived in Southwark and have no close relatives who have lived on a Southwark Travellers site for six months out of the last 12 months or three of the last five years.		Band 3
	Homeless applicants whom Southwark Council has no statutory duty to house under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.		Band 4
Points	Medical evidence indicates that a static dwelling would help someone in your household manage a serious or life-threatening medical condition.	20	
	If you are experiencing domestic or racial violence.	15	
	Your current accommodation is overcrowded or insanitary	10	
	Medical evidence indicates that you need a static dwelling due to a moderate health condition of someone in your household.	10	
	You or a member of your household works in Southwark	5	
	You or a member of your household undertakes voluntary work in Southwark	5	
	If a member of your household is aged 68 or over.	5	
Score			

Telling you about our decision

30. We will tell you our decision in writing within 10 working days of making it. We can also tell you our decision in person if you ask us to.

Complaints about decisions

31. If you have a complaint about our decision to offer a pitch, you should follow our complaints procedure.

If you owe us money

32. We will not offer you a pitch, or allow you to exchange your pitch with anyone, if you owe us money for pitch charges, rent or other debts. This includes any money you owe from any pitch you have had before. We may allow you to exchange your pitch with someone else in exceptional circumstances, for example where you:
 - have to move because of significant repair work
 - are a victim of a hate crime; or
 - are at risk of domestic violence.

Exchanging pitches

33. You and the person you want to exchange with will have to fill in an application form and discuss your request with the Travellers Service.
34. The following conditions apply to exchanges.
 - You must pay any money you owe us before the exchange takes place.
 - You (and the other person you want to exchange with) must not have broken your agreement, or be under investigation for breaking it.
35. The Travellers Service will make a decision on the exchange within 42 days of you asking for an exchange. This decision must be approved by a Housing Manager.
36. When offering any pitch, the Travellers Service will take into account the general good management of the site when looking at a request to exchange pitches.