



## Housing – A Critical Perspective.

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### **Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:**

**1. Paper / Proposal Title:** Conflict sites: negotiating a space and place for Gypsies and Travellers

**2. Format:** Written paper

**3. Author(s) Name:** Jo Richardson

**4. University or Company Affiliation:** De Montfort University

### **5. Abstract (300 words):**

A host of demands are placed upon people and physical spaces to perform in a particular way; but how can conflicting demands be negotiated to allow our spaces to accommodate different people, ideas and issues? Like other indigenous, traditionally nomadic, communities across the world, Gypsies and Travellers face poorer health, education and employment outcomes and are perceived as 'others' in media, public and political discourse. Conflict arises when Gypsies and Travellers stop on the roadside, or other public spaces, and create unauthorised encampments. Within the realm of the 'politics of home' the debate on provision and management of sites is often conflict-ridden. The result is a shortage of sites for Gypsies and Travellers to live on, poorer health, educational and employment outcomes. Also observable in the very many areas with insufficient site accommodation is an increase of unauthorised encampments an in parallel a decline in social cohesion.

There is often disagreement, objection and conflict during planning consultation for the delivery of permitted sites, and low-level conflict can also be seen on existing sites between residents and managers. However, there are examples where the complexity of the challenge is acknowledged by a range of organisations and people in one area, and where a more agile approach to problem solving is achieved to move from conflict to inclusion in accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. This paper will focus on emerging findings from a research project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) which seeks to understand the different levels of conflict within Gypsy site delivery and management in order to suggest how the challenges, complexities and in some cases improved outcomes can be negotiated.

### **7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Jo Richardson

Professor, De Montfort University, School of Architecture Housing and Social Research

Jo Richardson is Professor of Housing and Social Research based in the department of Politics and Public Policy at De Montfort University, Leicester. Her current research projects include a study funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation looking at conflict resolution in site management and delivery for Gypsies and Travellers; plus three pieces of work evaluating projects for councils and housing organisations across the country. She has published a number of books and papers on the topic of Travellers, including: *Gypsies and Travellers: Empowerment and Inclusion in British Society* for Policy Press in 2012. She has talked about her research internationally, upon invitation by the OSCE in Warsaw in 2010, in March 2015, invited the British Embassy in Romania to take part in a human rights debate in Bucharest on representation of Roma in the media and more recently in May 2016 she gave a visiting professor guest lecture at the Program on Negotiation at Harvard University. Jo has discussed her research over the last 15 years in various print and broadcast media outlets, most notably on national BBC TV breakfast news. She has also worked with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers, particularly with Baroness Whitaker and the late Lord Avebury who hosted her ESRC seminar in the House of Lords in 2013.