

ARTICLE 12 IN SCOTLAND

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

A recurring theme in the comprehensive and on-going research of Article 12 in Scotland and others (see for example, The UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, MECOPP and Amnesty International) on accommodation needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community is the absence of a standardised Site Tenancy Agreement (STA).

Currently, the content and context of STAs varies from Local Authority to Local Authority: a practice that leads to confusion, conflict and dispute and a belief that Gypsy/Travellers do not enjoy the same accommodation rights as members of the sedentary community.

Cognisant of this, the Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee 1st Report, 2013 (Session 4) Where Gypsy/Travellers Live made the following recommendations:

It is essential that Gypsy/Travellers, as site tenants, have the same rights and responsibilities as people living in fixed housing. We welcome the Minister's agreement on this, and expect that the Scottish Government will, as a priority, work with Gypsy/Travellers, local authorities, ACHA and Amnesty International on the development and implementation of a standard Gypsy/Traveller site tenancy agreement, containing as a minimum rights and responsibilities for all parties comparable to the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (p.21).

Article 12 in Scotland views the Housing (Scotland) Bill as an opportunity to address the lack of a standardised STA and equality of accommodation rights. This can, in our opinion, best be achieved by the inclusion of an explicit reference to STAs in the proposals for Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreements section of the Housing (Scotland) Bill.

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27 February 2014