



Home Office

Rt Hon Mike Penning MP
Minister of State for Policing,
Fire, Criminal Justice and
Victims

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Lord Dubs
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

CTS Reference: M1001/16

09 FEB 2016

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter of 20 January relating to the British-Irish Parliamentary report on *Travellers, Gypsies and Roma: access to public services and community relations*. I am replying to the matters raised that fall within the remit of the Home Office.

With regard to the Advisory Committee's recommendation for the Government to consider whether the current licensing arrangements for scrap metal dealers are fit for purpose, I can confirm that I consider they are.

The Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 brought in a wholesale reform of the scrap metal industry, not only to tighten the net around rogue dealers, but also to protect law abiding dealers, allowing them to be able to go about their business without the threat posed by unlicensed collectors.

Under the licensing system introduced by the Act, mobile collectors are required to have a licence for every council area in which they wish to collect scrap metal. This is a deliberate requirement to ensure that local authorities, who are responsible for administering and ensuring compliance with the licensing system, have a record of all scrap metal dealers who hold a licence and are operating within their area.

The licensing fee charged by the local authority ensures that it has sufficient funds to be able both to administer the licensing system and also to undertake compliance activity. This would not be the case if we were to have a national or multi-authority licensing system.

As you are aware, the Act states that the Home Secretary will review the legislation and publish a report to Parliament within five years of the Act's commencement, which means the report must be published by 30 September 2018.

The impact of the Act on small and medium-sized businesses, including Travellers, Gypsies and Roma, will form a part of that overall assessment. However, we will undertake an assessment by October this year as to whether sufficient evidence is available to conduct a proper review, and if so, to conduct the review at this point.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Kind regards

MP

Rt Hon Mike Penning MP