

RET Update – Unauthorised Encampments & changes to legislation on “Trespass without Consent”.

Below are some numbers to show the number of unauthorised encampments and the use of S61 over comparable time periods.

1st December 2020 to 30th April 2021

80 UE of which 7 were moved on using S61

1st December 2021 – 30th April 2022

9 UE of which 1 was moved on using S61

We are working through the legislation changes and await final drafts of NPCC (National Police Chiefs Council) guidance. Force policy is being amended and Inspector Terry Jacobs has formed a working group to share findings and set expectations moving forward. The changes in legislation will have a huge impact on the everyday policing of unauthorised encampments. From policy to the forms, we need to complete (that we have to re write), everything needs to be considered to provide a proportionate policing response that encompasses legislation, policy and NPCC guidance. Mr Jacobs intends to keep the working group up to date with findings and set clear direction once this work is done. This is a huge task and work is well underway to ensure we are ready to go once the legislation goes live on 24th June.

The unauthorised encampments that we are having and have had over recent history have been good in nature as well as being far smaller in number as the data above shows.

We are told by members of the travelling community that Essex is considered a ‘no go’ for those that travel with the intention of being involved in crime and disorder. Crime and ASB are not a regular feature of the unauthorised encampments across the county.

Whilst we do not aim in any way to reduce the number of unauthorised encampments, we do have high expectations of behaviour and will use the powers given to us when these expectations are not met.