



Article 12 in Scotland
Young Gypsy Travellers' Lives [YGTL]

Discrimination and On-Line Media
[Analysis focused on Scotland]

**On-Line Media Audit, Year 4: 1st April 2014 – 30th
September 2014**

July 2015

***Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
[1995]***

Article 6 [1]: *The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.*

National Union of Journalists: Code of Conduct

9] *Produce[s] no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.*

Independent Press Standards Organisation: Editors' Code of Practice

1] Accuracy:

i] *The press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures.*

12] Discrimination:

i] *The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.*

ii] *Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story.*

Young Gypsy Travellers' Lives volunteer:

The media targets us, there is never anything positive said about Travellers and they always stereotype us. It makes people judge us.

Summary

Article 12 in Scotland is committed to addressing the unethical reporting exhibited by many publications concerning Gypsy/Travellers, not only in Scotland, but also UK wide and further afield. Misleading and unbalanced articles are a key driving force in the discrimination experienced by Gypsy/Travellers living in Scotland, and indeed the UK as a whole, today. Our concerns regarding media coverage have been echoed by the young Gypsy/Travellers who lead *Article 12 in Scotland's Young Gypsy Travellers' Lives* project; prejudice on the grounds of their ethnic identity is part of their, their families' and their community's everyday reality. *Article 12 in Scotland* finds this unacceptable.

Not only is this type of journalism immoral and unethical, it also directly violates journalistic codes of conduct; fuelling negative myths and stereotypes, demonising the Gypsy/Traveller community and further segregating them from their settled peers.

This report details the findings of our Year 4 [final, 6 month] annual media audit. This annual media audit is focused on the **on-line media** in Scotland, and has been instrumental in providing members of *Article 12 in Scotland's Young Gypsy Travellers' Lives* project Management Group with new skills [a key objective of the project being the 'skilling-up' and empowerment of young Gypsy/Travellers in order to enable them to have their own voices heard by governments, professionals and wider society in general]. This report is intended to provide an up-date on the previous three audits produced by *Article 12 in Scotland*¹, and will form an important part of the research for our four year comparative report which will be published September 2015.

Article 12 in Scotland found:

- 81 articles over 6 months in 13 separate publications – meaning an average of around 3 articles per week. This number has decreased slightly since 2013-2014, however, due to the number of publications merging and being bought over by larger media corporations, *Article 12 in Scotland* feels that this number is still relatively high, especially given that many on-line searches now take the reader to a generic tabloid home-page. We feel this indicates that press interest in the Gypsy/Traveller community in Scotland is still high and showing no signs of decreasing. *Article 12 in Scotland* finds this worrying and feels this number of articles published continues to be disproportionate to the population size of Gypsy/Travellers living in Scotland.
- Once again, the single publication with the largest amount of articles was *The Courier* with 31% [an increase of 12% since last year]; *The Press and Journal* came in as the publication with the second highest number of audited articles - totalling 16%, and up 9% from 2013-14.

¹ To download *Article 12 in Scotland's* previous three Media Audits, please follow these links: Year 1: http://www.article12.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/A12_Media_Audit_Pilot_2012_Final.pdf; Year 2: http://www.article12.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/YGTL_MediaAudit_Year2_Final.pdf; Year 3: http://www.article12.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/YGTL-Media-Audit-Year-3_Final-.pdf.

- The publications with the joint-third highest amount of articles were the *Evening Express*, with 14%, up 1% from last year [and if you include the total of its sister publication *The Press and Journal* this number increases to 40%, nearly a half of all published articles, indicating a continued high proportion of reporting in the North East through these two publications alone], and the *Daily Mail Online [Scotland]*, again with 14% [this figure has remained constant since last year], indicating that there is still a national tabloid interest in the Gypsy/Traveller community and that articles are not simply confined to ‘local interest/information’.
- *The Scottish Sun* was found to have published 7% of audited articles [which gave it the fourth highest number of articles], a decrease of 5% since last year, however, being responsible for nearly a tenth of all articles published once again indicates the interest that tabloid papers have in the Gypsy/Traveller community.
- 78% of articles were focused on sites, up a further 12% from 62% last year [this includes unauthorised encampments, official sites, plans for new official sites and so on]; 49% discussed the Gypsy/Traveller community in general, up from 38% last year; 23% of articles contained negative stereotyping, a decrease of 1% since last year; and 14% focused on crime, an increase of 2% since last year.
- This year, only 1% of audited articles were classed as positive [down 6% from 7% last year]; negative reporting still accounted for well over half of audited articles at 60%, with a further 28% falling within the categories of discriminatory, and 5% classed as racist – only 32% of articles were deemed to be written in a neutral fashion. This means that an overwhelming majority of articles are still portraying the Gypsy/Traveller community in a negative and misleading light.
- We are pleased to note that the majority of publications audited did not appear to be using old archive/stock photos, however, we are concerned that this number has increased by 2% since last year: 20% is still completely unacceptable.
- 30%, over a quarter, of articles used the word ‘illegal’, with 17% mentioning ‘rubbish’, 12% focused on evictions, 4% focusing on ‘fear’ and 2% discussing ‘invasion’. These leading words are not helpful and are instrumental in fostering negative stereotypes and mistrust.
- A quarter of publications audited still do not capitalise ‘Gypsy’ and/or ‘Traveller’. This is disrespectful and does not give due regard to ethnic status. It is also worthy of note, that a large majority of publications are being assimilated into larger, tabloid, news-groups. A worrying trend with regards to prejudicial reporting and a lack of varied articles.
- *Article 12 in Scotland* finds the increasing popularity and reliance on social media, in particular social networking sites and the online comments sections of local and national newspapers, worrying. These sites have created an environment from which individuals and groups can make worrying statements and suggestions regarding Gypsy/Travellers [and indeed other ethnic minorities] via public platforms; these range from ridiculing on the grounds of a person’s ethnicity, to inciting racial hatred and, increasingly, establishing race hate groups. *Article 12 in Scotland* continues to believe that these on-line groups are instrumental in stirring-up ill-feeling, and

sometimes violence, towards the Gypsy/Traveller community; they provide a sinister and alarming platform from which people can spread lies and encourage hatred. They are dangerous, they are on the increase, and they continue to be one of the fundamental causes of the tension and dislike towards the Gypsy/Traveller community – not only in Scotland, but the rest of the UK, Europe and further-afield.

Article 12 in Scotland believe that journalists and their editors have a duty and responsibility to ensure that they are not only engaging in ethical reporting, but also effectively monitoring any affiliated on-line forums for racially motivated, pejorative comments made by their readers.

In spite of having recognised ethnic minority status from the *Scottish Government*, the Scottish Gypsy/Traveller community continues to be marginalised from mainstream society. This is, in part, fuelled by the media – both news and social - coverage of their culture, and is sadly unlikely to change until the media, in all forms, ceases publishing negative, misleading and unbalanced articles. Once again, the campaign continues.

NB: The *Scottish Government's* official terminology 'Gypsy/Traveller' has been employed throughout this report. However, it is important to note that this term is not accepted by all families. Indeed, many Scottish Gypsy/Travellers prefer to self-define as 'Traveller'.

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Introduction

Article 12 in Scotland is a non-governmental organisation that works, through the medium of peer education, to promote young people's rights as set out in international human rights charters. Through our *Young Gypsy Travellers' Lives* project, *Article 12 in Scotland* aims to significantly improve relations between the Gypsy/Traveller and settled communities, particularly, but not exclusively, between young people; thus building bridges, bonds and links between people and communities of different cultures, and enabling young Gypsy/Travellers to contribute as equal citizens to decision making processes and live their lives free from prejudice.

The *Young Gypsy Travellers' Lives* project - which is led by a group of young Scottish Gypsy/Travellers, and staffed by members from both the Gypsy/Traveller and the settled community - is committed to addressing the discrimination and prejudice faced by Gypsy/Travellers living in Scotland today.

The negative, disrespectful, and, at times, racist way in which certain representatives of the British media portray the Gypsy/Traveller community has long been one of *Article 12 in Scotland's* key concerns: not only for the safety and well-being of the Gypsy/Traveller community, but also as a barrier to positive change and bridge building with members of the settled community. Our concerns have been echoed by members of *Article 12 in Scotland's Young Gypsy Travellers' Lives [YGTL]* project Management Group, who have identified negative media coverage as one of the main driving forces in the discrimination faced by their community.

Unbalanced reporting can and indeed does create prejudice; perpetuating dangerous and offensive myths and stereotypes and helping to foster racial hatred – further fuelling the division, fear and mistrust between the Gypsy/Traveller and settled communities. The *Equality and Human Rights Commission* rightly state that the negative portrayal of the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller community '*serves to validate the idea that somehow Gypsy Travellers are fair game - that it is not racist to stereotype or discriminate against a Gypsy Traveller.*'²

Consequently, *Article 12 in Scotland* committed to an extensive on-line Scottish media audit; commencing in September 2011 [as part of a 6 month pilot and training for the *YGTL* Management Group], this audit was on-going until the end of September 2014, and has allowed us to track trends and changes in reporting. A comparative report will be published in September 2015.

² *Equality and Human Rights Commission* [2010 edition], *Gypsy Travellers in Scotland: A Resource for the Media*. On-line at:

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/Scotland/gypsy_travellers_in_scotland_-_a_resource_for_the_media_pdf.pdf

Rationale

Article 12 in Scotland believes that Scottish Gypsy/Travellers are an extremely vulnerable group in the hands of the media. Entering key words such as ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Traveller’ into the search facility of many on-line publications will usually reveal myriad negative articles and racist commentaries; ranging from ridiculing and ‘poking fun’, to inciting racial hatred and talk of evoking the ‘final solution’: ‘*Send them to Hazelhead* [a crematorium located in Aberdeen] *where the final solution is obvious*’.³ As evidenced by the above comment, tensions in Aberdeen City and Shire have reached crisis point, a lack of authorised sites and the blocking-off of traditional stopping places have heightened animosity between the transient and settled communities; a theme which is replicated throughout Scotland.

Article 12 in Scotland has been monitoring certain publications in the North East of Scotland since 2009 [it is noteworthy to mention here that many articles have now been removed and the on-line reader comments/full articles section is disabled for those who do not have a paying subscription]. A seemingly innocent article in the *Press and Journal*, a daily publication in Scotland [read by 138,000 readers every day⁴], entitled *There are all sorts of ways to give people a bad name* is just one example of the media campaign against Gypsy/Roma/Travellers here in Scotland. This article draws you in with a commentary concerning a respectful silence at a Scottish football game, but half-way through turns into an anti-Roma rant; the commentary includes:

*‘You can’t walk 10 yards without tripping over some old girl in a shawl or having your ears assailed by some swarthy bloke playing the Romanian national anthem on his accordion. [...] Within minutes, they had hobbled and wheeled themselves off in every direction in search of kind-hearted Dubliners. [...] The worry is that, with the dire collapse of the Irish economy, these gangs will set their sights on Scotland. Thanks to the diversity training that the Scottish constabulary have been undergoing of late, in which they have been taught to treat these travellers with the utmost respect, the beggars could clean up over here with impunity. [...] If anyone dares to criticise them, they will probably find themselves up on a charge of inciting racial hatred. [...] Perhaps I should start packing a bag for an extended stay at Her Majesty’s pleasure [sic].’*⁵

Article 12 in Scotland believes that this type of misleading journalism is unethical and dangerous. *Article 12 in Scotland* does not accept that representatives of the Scottish media would report on any other ethnic minority in the same way in which many publications currently report on, and demonise, Gypsy/Travellers. We believe that the media plays a fundamental role in keeping anti-Gypsy/Traveller sentiment alive; it is for this reason that we have committed not only to such a lengthy audit, but also to eradicating this unacceptable form of ethnic discrimination.

³ Reader’s comment, *Press and Journal* on-line [July 2010]: article and comment since removed.

⁴ *Press & Journal*: Media Pack, July 2011 Version.

⁵ *Press and Journal*, 7th January 2011, no author: *There are all sorts of ways to give people a bad name*. On-line at <http://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/Article.aspx/2079711?UserKey>

Methodology

This report outlines the findings of our Year 4 [6 month] on-line Scottish media audit of local, national, daily and weekly Scottish publications. We have focused solely on **on-line media** as, despite being one of the most important and influential means of [instant] information sharing around today - particularly with a readers' comment facility available for most larger on-line publications, this is an area that [in terms of impact on the Gypsy/Traveller community] has not been analysed in the past.

Article 12 in Scotland's fundamental goal for the *YGTL* project is to empower and 'skill-up' young Gypsy/Travellers in order that they may speak for themselves – and their community – to bring about real and lasting positive change and to enjoy the fundamental human rights that members of the settled community take as given. The key to this goal is participation; with this in mind, all members of the *YGTL* project team were invited to take part in the auditing process, allowing them to become involved in the regular checking and analysing of relevant articles published in their local press. The publications audited have been chosen to reflect not only every jurisdiction in Scotland, but also to cover various types and sizes of publications: daily and weekly, local and national. Internet searches are also undertaken and, out of interest, 'Google Alerts' for keywords have been set up [which generate thousands of on-line hits globally every week for racist terms such as 'pikey', 'gypo', 'tink' and so on].

In order to ensure a sense of continuity, *Article 12 in Scotland* created an 'audit form'. This form was broken up into various sections and gave a sense of structure to the audit. Nonetheless, due to the fast-paced nature of the internet, the pre-requisite for expensive on-line subscriptions, differing news stories between on-line and print editions, a lack of an interactive on-line presence for certain publications and the inability to read the full story on-line [various publications do this in order to try and up print media sales], *Article 12 in Scotland* does not claim to have captured every article within our specific remit.

Findings

[A visual representation of our findings may be viewed in the appendix to this report.]

NB: Due to rounding up/down, and the overlapping of certain categories, some percentages may not add up to 100.

Article 12 in Scotland found:

Volume:

- 81 articles over 6 months in 13 separate publications – meaning an average of around 3 articles per week. This is a slight decrease on our average findings from the previous year: 195 articles over 12 months in 21 publications [averaging around 4 articles per week]. This decrease is a positive move in the right direction, however, *Article 12 in Scotland* feels that, once again, this number is disproportionate to the population size of Gypsy/Travellers living in Scotland, and highlights the significant ‘interest’ the media has in reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community. We also feel it is worth noting that many smaller, regional papers are becoming assimilated into larger, tabloid, news groups – meaning even less variation in the reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community.
- The publication with the largest amount of articles was, once again, *The Courier* with 31% of audited articles, accounting for over a third of all articles published and up 12% from last year. *The Courier* is a widely read regional paper, covering Angus, Tayside and Fife – all areas with on-going issues concerning Gypsy/Traveller sites and a lack of authorised pitches.
- The second highest amount of articles concerning the Gypsy/Traveller community were found in *The Press and Journal*, which was found to have published 16% of all articles audited [up from 7% last year]. If you combine this figure with *The Evening Express*, *The Press and Journal*’s sister publication, which came in joint-third with 14% of articles published [up from 13% last year], this figure accounts to nearly a third of all articles. Considering that these two publications are both regional papers, with an extremely high readership in the North East of Scotland, *Article 12 in Scotland* finds this statistic worrying. It is worthy of note, that a further 26 articles in *The Evening Express* were found by *Article 12 in Scotland*, but were removed before auditing could be done. These articles have not been included in this audit.
- In joint-third place comes the *Daily Mail Online [Scotland]*, with 14% of articles audited. This indicates that there continues to be a national tabloid – and often sensationalist - interest in the community, and not simply just articles confined to ‘local interest/information’.
- Once again, *The Scottish Sun* came in as the publication with the fourth highest number of audited articles with 7% [down from 12% from the previous year]. This indicates, once again, that there is still a national tabloid interest in the Gypsy/Traveller community.

Themes:

NB: Many articles had two or more themes.

- 78% of articles were focused on sites [unauthorised encampments, official sites, plans for new official sites and so on].
- 49% discussed the Gypsy/Traveller community.
- 23% of articles contained negative stereotyping.
- 14% focused on crime.

Although reporting on sites decreased from 72% in 2011-2012 to 59% in 2012-2013, we have seen a sharp increase from 62% in 2013-2014, up to 78% in our Year 4 findings. This indicates that the issue of sites is still one of the fundamental driving forces in the media coverage of the Gypsy/Traveller community, with over three quarters of all articles reporting on this issue. Until the issue of sites is resolved, unauthorised encampments will continue to be the norm, the media will persist in reporting on them and tensions will continue to rise. This combined with the fact that articles reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community account for over a third of all articles, indicates a continuing trend within the media regarding their interest in the community as a whole.

Reporting on crime [implied or otherwise] had previously decreased, from 25% in 2011-2012, to 14% in 2012-2013, down to 12% in 2013-2014, however our Year 4 audit found an increase of 2%, up to 14% this year. *Article 12 in Scotland* feels that this volume is completely unwarranted: the *Association of Chief Police Officers* states that they have no disproportionate problems of criminal activities within the Gypsy/Traveller community.⁶ Yet, around a sixth of articles focused on ‘crime’ within or as a result of the Gypsy/Traveller community. This, combined with the figure of just under a quarter of all articles containing negative stereotyping of Gypsy/Travellers, gives a clear indication that the Gypsy/Traveller community is still being subjected to press demonisation and ridicule.

Tone:

NB: Many articles contained two tones e.g. negative/discriminatory.

- 1% of articles were classed as positive.
- 60% were overwhelmingly negative.
- 32% were audited as neutral.
- 28% were classed as discriminatory.
- 5% were identified as downright racist.

In 2012-2013, *Article 12 in Scotland* noted that various publications reported on the *Scottish Government’s Equal Opportunities Committee’s Enquiry ‘Where Gypsy/Travellers Live’*, this not only increased the volume of relevant articles but also decreased the amount of negative

⁶ *Equality and Human Rights Commission* [2009] *Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities: A review*, p164, on-line at: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/12inequalities_experienced_by_gypsy_and_traveller_communities_a_review.pdf

articles from 58% in Year 1 to 38% in Year 2, and increased the amount of ‘neutral’ reporting [rising from 27% in Year 1 to 54% in Year 2]. In our 2013-2014 audit, with the dust from the Enquiry firmly settled, we noted some significant changes in the tone of audited articles: the amount of positive articles decreased from 10% to 7%, with negative articles **increasing** significantly from 38% to 52%; articles classed as neutral decreased from 54% to 36% and we have seen discriminatory articles increase from 7% to 10%, with articles classed as racist more than doubling from 1% to 4% this year. During our final year of auditing, we have seen these figures rise again: articles classed as negative have increased by 8%, from 52% in 2013-14, to 60% in Year 4; discriminatory articles have nearly tripled, from 10% in Year 3, to 28% in Year 4; and articles deemed racist have risen from 4% to 5%. This is in addition to positive articles decreasing from 7% in Year 3, to only 1% in Year 4 and articles classed as being neutral falling from 36% to 32% [although it should be noted that *Guardian* articles have not been audited this year]. These figures are evidence that that media reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community is still hugely inflammatory.

Article 12 in Scotland had hoped that the positive changes recorded in Year 2 would continue [and increase] during the remainder of our audit, but, unfortunately, this has not been the case. In Year 2, nearly 50% of articles portrayed the Gypsy/Traveller community in a negative light; during Year 3, this figure rose to nearly 70%; our final figures show that negative, discriminatory and racist articles have once again risen drastically in volume. *Article 12 in Scotland* finds this not only disproportionate to the community as a whole, but also completely unacceptable and indicative of the very long way we still have to go in order to ensure fair and balanced reporting for this marginalised community.

Article 12 in Scotland finds these figures extremely worrying and reiterates, once again, that we feel this would not likely be the case with any other recognised ethnic minority. It is also important to note that of the articles classed as neutral, many were only available on-line in an edited form [with the comment section unavailable] – the full article could easily take on a different tone,.

Use of Archive/Stock Photos:

- Yes: 20%
- No: 54%
- Unsure: 25%

Although we are pleased to note that the majority of publications audited did not appear to be using old archive/stock photos, we feel that the increase from 18% in Year 3, to 20% in Year 4 is completely unacceptable. The premeditated use of old, misleading and unconnected photos is unethical and goes against the *Independent Press Standards Organisation’s* Editors’ Code of Practice⁷. The practice of using old photos to deliberately misrepresent a situation reinforces myths and stereotypes [e.g. concerning mess] and adds to the negative view of Gypsy/Travellers held by members of the settled community.

⁷ [Clause 1 Accuracy: i] *The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures:* <https://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/cop.html>

Key Negative/Leading Words:

NB: Many articles had two or more ‘leading words’.

- Illegal: 30%, increasing from 25% in Year 3
- Rubbish: 17%, decreasing from 19% in Year 3
- Eviction: 12%, increasing from 8% in Year 3
- Fear: 4%, increasing from 3% in Year 3
- Invasion: 2%, decreasing from 5% in Year 3
- ‘Other’, examples include: cost, violence, crime, immigrant, *encampment spreading*, illicit, *a catalogue of Traveller-related crime has gone unpunished*, [Gypsy/Travellers] *turn tourists off*, shocking, *wave of Travellers*, community outrage, *fears the area may be left damaged by the new encampment*, traveller problem, area targeted [as a camp], concerning, not acceptable, problems, unacceptable, flashpoints, criminality, anger, appalled, criminal, absolute disgrace, urinating, shocked, tensions, threatened, unsettling, *roaming around at dusk*, alarming, intimidated, attacking, harm, scared, blight, fly-tipping, human health hazard, disgusting, concerns of the public, *help in the council’s ‘dealings’ with the Traveller community*, defy the law, congregate, scruffy vans, boot them out, taxpayer. Some articles were also guilty of racial profiling and the use of emotive words such as relief.
- *Article 12 in Scotland* also noted a significant amount of ‘mafia’ and ‘war’ style terminology, such as: battle, no-go-zone, mob-rule, law of the jungle, running battles etc.

The use of leading words is irresponsible and can be likened to subliminal messaging; repeated use of words such as ‘illegal’, ‘invasion’ and ‘fear’ can lead to all sorts of negative doubts, misunderstandings, frustrations and myths about the Gypsy/Traveller community and culture; which in turn keep division and hatred alive.

Capitalisation of ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Traveller’ in audited articles:

In addition to the media audit that is the subject of this report, *Article 12 in Scotland* has annually audited 87 Scottish newspapers [covering a cross-section of Scotland] in order to monitor use of capitalisation:

- Yes: 16%
- No: 25%
- N/A [e.g. the paper has now gone into administration/been assimilated into another publication/family of publications/no articles since last audit]: 59%

In April 2011 only 2% of the publications in question capitalised ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Traveller’, in April 2012 this had increased to 4%, and again to 28% by April 2013; during Year 3, 2013-2014, this had decreased to 7%, however during our final year figures had increased to 16%.

Nonetheless, the 25% of publications still not capitalising ‘Gypsy’ and/or ‘Traveller’ is far too high, disrespectful and does not give due regard to ethnic status.

Across the duration of this audit, *Article 12 in Scotland* has noted a high volume of regional papers becoming part of larger news groups or ceasing to exist altogether.

Social media

A worrying area of continued significance is the world of social media; the readers' comments section of on-line news sites, and social networking sites such as *Facebook* are becoming ever more popular communities where there seems to be a sense of misplaced anonymity with regards to what people post [the *Facebook* presence of many local papers are guilty of hosting inflammatory 'debates' concerning the Travelling community]. Indeed, anti-Gypsy/Roma/Traveller groups are prolific on social networking/question and answer sites; unfortunately as soon as one of such pages is reported and removed, another takes its place. It is worth noting that despite their content violating site terms and conditions, the removal process can take weeks - or in some cases the pages are not removed at all. These types of pages are prolific across the UK as a whole, and are indicative of the amount of work that still needs to be done in order to address the racial tension directed towards the Gypsy/Traveller community living in the UK today.

These types of comments are not restricted to *Facebook* groups; the readers' comments of many on-line publications are a hive a racial bigotry too:

Evening Telegraph, Travellers set up camp at Dundee Technology Park [Facebook]: Steve Hardy: “lock up your garages and sheds the pikies are in town haha”;

Evening Telegraph, Travellers set up camp at Dundee Technology Park [Facebook]: Iain F MacMillan: “These people are law breakers but have rights but I'd rather not see the laws being broken especially when they feed carts and dogs Too their own dogs or Children [SIC]”;

Daily Mail [Online], 8th June 2014, Travellers lead their horses through river during traditional washing routine dating back to 1685 at Appleby Fair, notinmyname, Rainham: “Yet another tradition that ought to be consigned to history”;

Inverness Courier, 25th May 2014, Two new traveller sites for Inverness, Aleckidd, “they are parasites living off dubious gains”;

Inverness Courier, 25th May 2014, Two new traveller sites for Inverness, allymac1314, “These people clearly do not wish to integrate with domesticated society, so if space must be found for them it should be well away from residential areas”.

The above comments demonstrate just how engrained the negative attitude towards the Gypsy/Traveller community actually is. The fact that people think it is acceptable to make such comments, in a public forum, about a recognised ethnic minority highlights how much still needs to be done in order to put a stop to this 'socially acceptable' form of racial discrimination.

Article 12 in Scotland believe that social media – social networking sites, blogs, on-line news presences and other on-line communities and groups – have a duty to thoroughly monitor all racially aggravated content within their sites. On-line social spaces provide a worrying platform for promoting racial intolerance towards Gypsy/Travellers; ranging from ridiculing and stereotypes, to inciting racial hatred and violence.

A right to fair reporting

Journalists, editors [and indeed anyone else who is involved with any form of media] have a duty and responsibility – under UK Equality Law – to make sure that they report in an ethical fashion [the *Scottish Government* now recognises Scottish Gypsy/Travellers as an ethnic minority, which brings them under the protection of the *Equality Act 2010*].

Regulatory bodies:

- *Independent Press Standards Organisation [IPSO]* [formally the *Press Complaints Commission*]
Editors' Code of Practice: <https://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/cop.html>
- *Office of Communications [Ofcom]*
Ofcom is a statutory body, and therefore has the backing of the law [guidelines can be found at]: <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/>
- The *National Union of Journalists* also have a 'Code of Conduct', which may be read here: http://www.nuj.org.uk/files/NUJ_Code_of_Conduct.pdf

The *Equality and Human Rights Commission* also have a guide available for the media entitled *Gypsy Travellers in Scotland: A Resource for The Media* [updated in June 2013] which all journalists should make themselves familiar with before reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community:

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/Scotland/Scottish_News/g_t_resource_final_v1.pdf

Journalists and editors have a responsibility to ensure fair and ethical reporting for all. Tensions between the Gypsy/Traveller community and the settled community will never cease if the media continue to vilify and misrepresent Gypsy/Travellers. It is also imperative that **all** on-line publications step-up to the plate and implement a robust monitoring system in order to eliminate racist, insulting and dangerous reader comments.

Article 12 in Scotland does not claim that all Scottish – and indeed UK-wide - publications, deliberately mislead the public and strive to criminalise the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller population, but we do know that some do. This deliberate misrepresentation [via leading words and the use of archive/stock photos] of an already marginalised community is not only unethical – it also serves to put a whole community in danger:

“...it is this language that is used to achieve the marginalisation of, and discrimination towards, Gypsies ... Gypsies are presented generally as a problem and more specifically as in need of controlling, dirty and, through the use of the war and invasion analogies, as a very different group who are in direct conflict with the [British] in group ... such talk can be used to deligitimise and dehumanise the people it is aimed at...”⁸

⁸ “A stinking filthy race of people inbred with criminality”: A discourse analysis of prejudicial talk about Gypsies in discussion forums, p27, Lottie Row and Simon Goodman, *Romani Studies Journal*, June 2014

Conclusions and recommendations

Article 12 in Scotland concludes that, once again, the on-line media, both here in Scotland and UK wide, is guilty of publishing a disproportionate amount of articles about the Gypsy/Traveller community [in particular with regards to local sites]; three articles per week, of which an overwhelming majority are of a negative tone, concerning a community which is reported to make up less than 0.5% of the Scottish population⁹, smacks of victimisation. The sheer volume of these articles serves only to perpetuate negative myths and stereotypes - via means of tone, leading words and headlines, disregard for ethnic status by not capitalising 'Gypsy' and/or 'Traveller' and the use of archived photos - fostering a negative attitude towards Gypsy/Travellers. We believe this is not in the public's interest and is serving solely to demonise an already marginalised community.

The increase in negative reporting that we have seen again during this section of our audit is not only disheartening, but also extremely worrying. The media has a duty to report ethically and in an unbiased fashion, on **all** articles published. *Article 12 in Scotland* does not feel that this is the case where reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community is concerned. The media has a very powerful voice; *Article 12 in Scotland* believes that, with willing, the media could be instrumental in changing, rather than fuelling, negative attitudes towards the Gypsy/Traveller community. The media should use its power to effect positive changes in the public's mind-set, thus eradicating what many describe as the last 'socially acceptable' form of racism in Scotland.

Recommendations:

- **The lack of adequate sites, both transit and permanent, continues to be a huge issue; local authorities have a duty to push through the immediate creation of more, decent, appropriately located authorised sites.** This would in turn reduce the amount of unauthorised encampments, a key driver in tensions, and lead to less negative media coverage.
- An increase in more neutral and ethical reporting. *Article 12 in Scotland* reiterates that we would like to see Scottish publications taking a lead in this.
- All publications to familiarise themselves with the *Equal Opportunities Committee's Enquiry Where Gypsy/Travellers Live* and the *Equality and Human Rights Commission's* updated guide: *Gypsy Travellers in Scotland: A Resource for the Media*. *Article 12 in Scotland* would also like to see more self-regulation with regards to biased reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community.
- **The implementation of a more robust monitoring system for on-line reader comments/social media sites, and penalties for those who do not comply with regulations concerning ethnicity.** This area is of utmost concern to *Article 12 in*

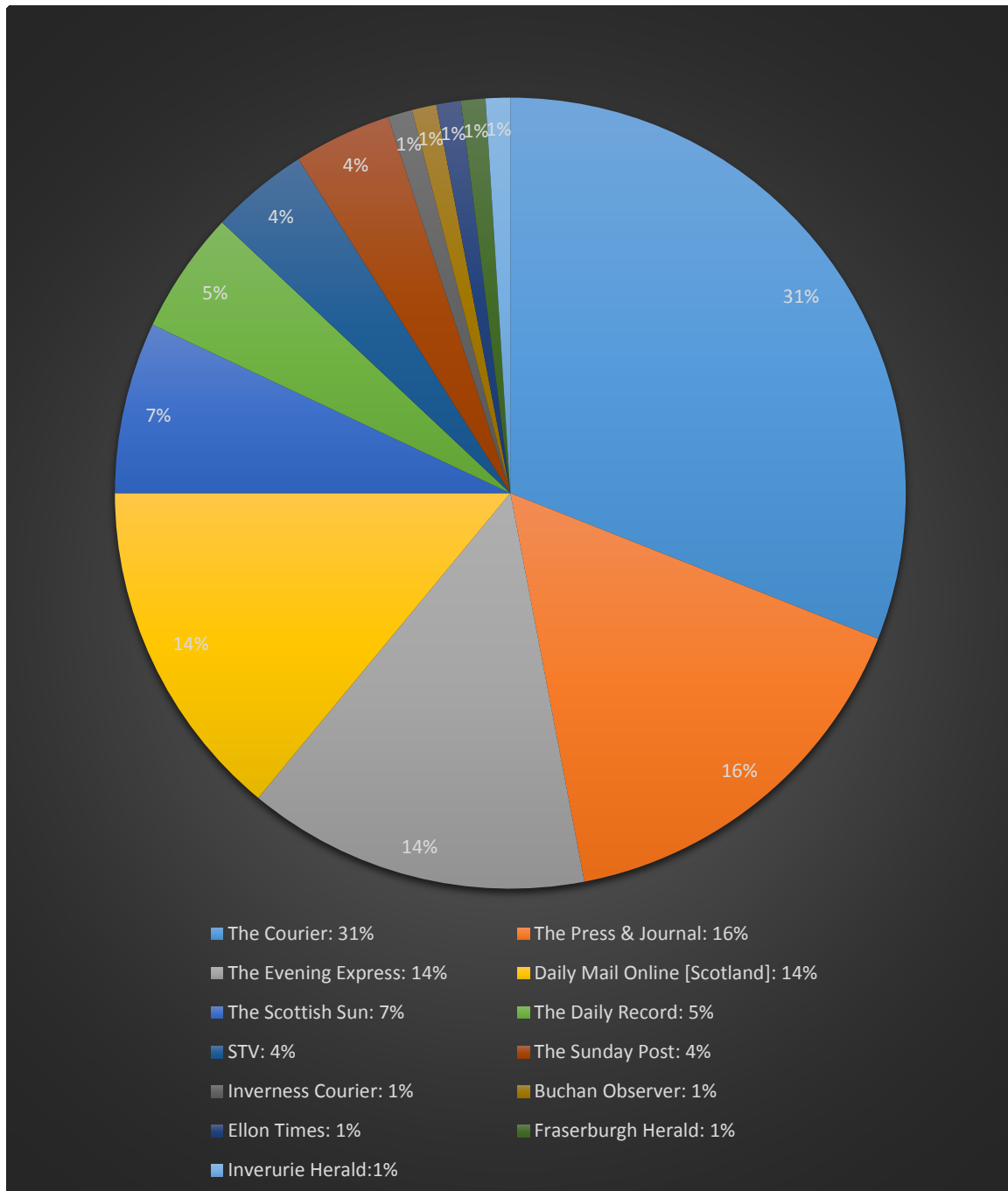
⁹ *Equality and Human Rights Commission, Gypsy Travellers in Scotland: A Resource for The Media:* http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/Scotland/Scottish_News/g_t_resource_final_v1.pdf

Scotland. There is currently a high level of tension towards the Gypsy/Traveller community to be found on these sites, and with little-to-no official monitoring, they quickly become a vitriolic breeding ground, whipping up racial hatred and vigilante style talk, which could lead to actual violence towards the community.

- Publications to stop posting inflammatory ‘debates’ on their *Facebook* pages – these threads are instrumental in fuelling hatred and can lead to dangerous discussions.
- The implementation of stricter guidelines regarding the reporting of Gypsy/Travellers. *Article 12 in Scotland* strongly advocates freedom of speech and the right to personal choices/opinions; however, this cannot extend to racial profiling. Gypsy/Travellers should be treated with the respect due to any other ethnic minority.

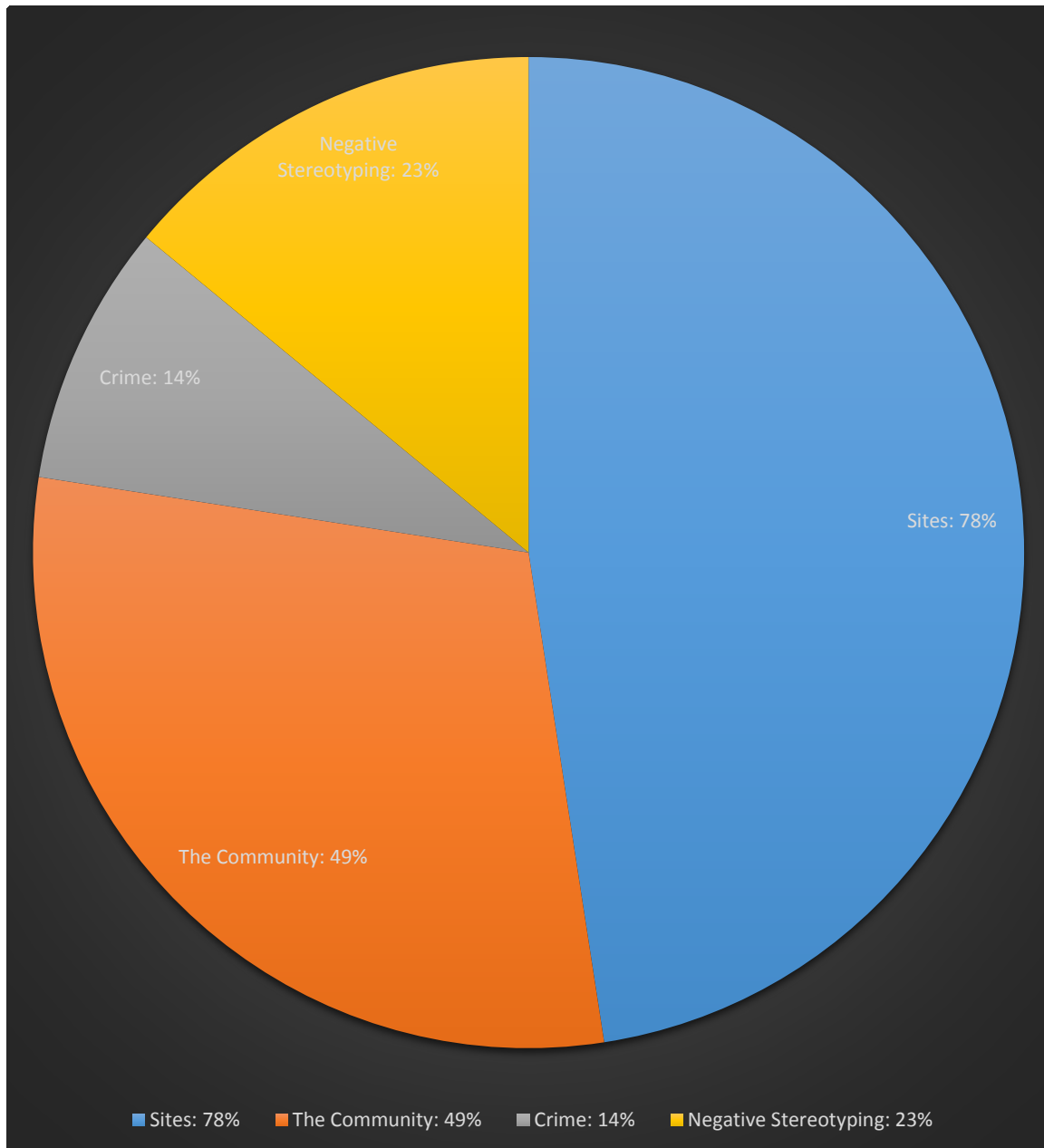
Appendix: Visuals

1] Publications audited by *Article 12 in Scotland*:



NB: Due to rounding up/down some percentages may not add up to 100.

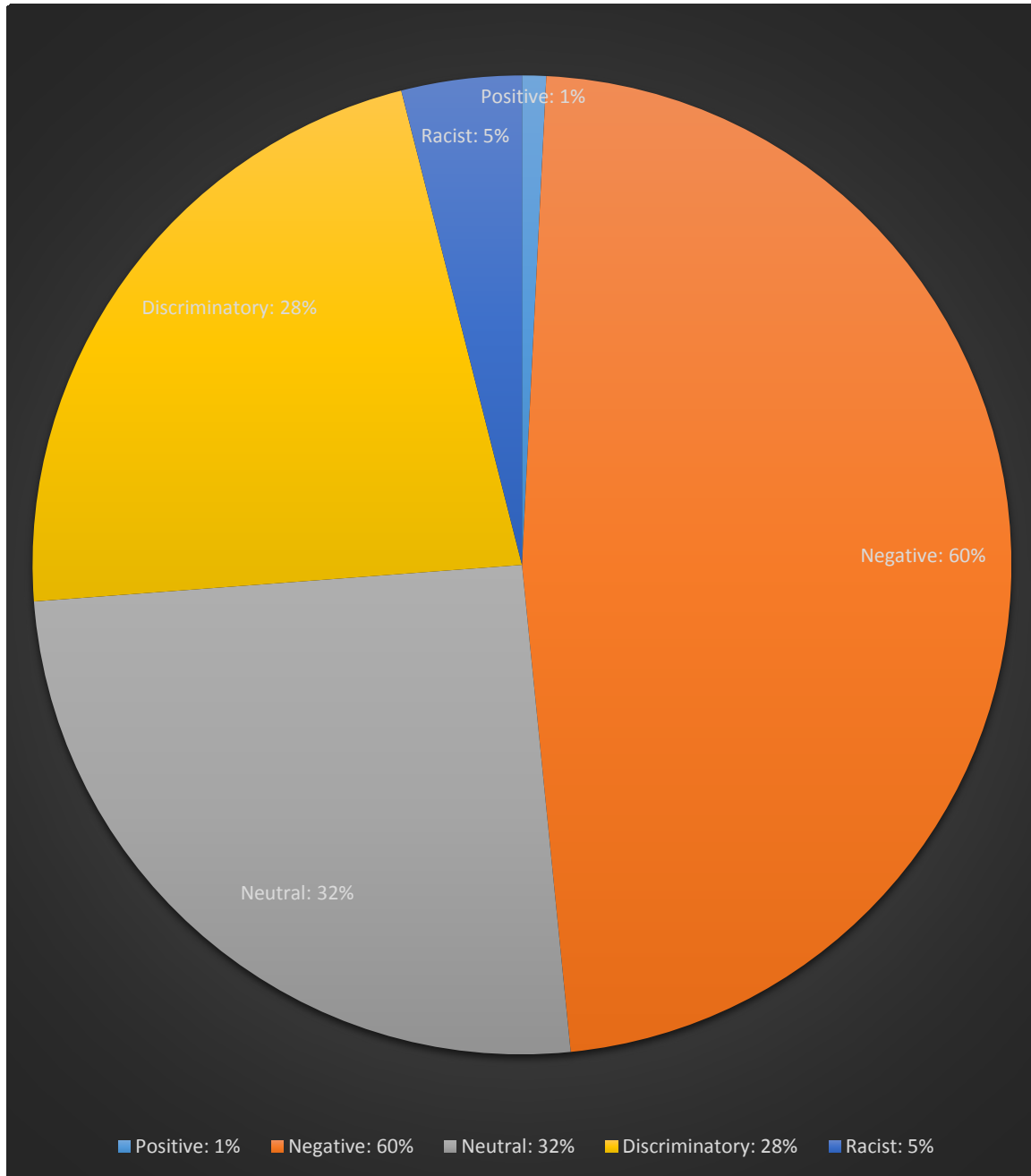
2] The main common themes found by *Article 12 in Scotland* during the auditing process:



NB: Due to rounding up/down, and the overlapping of certain categories, some percentages may not add up to 100.

Many articles contained more than one of the common themes above.

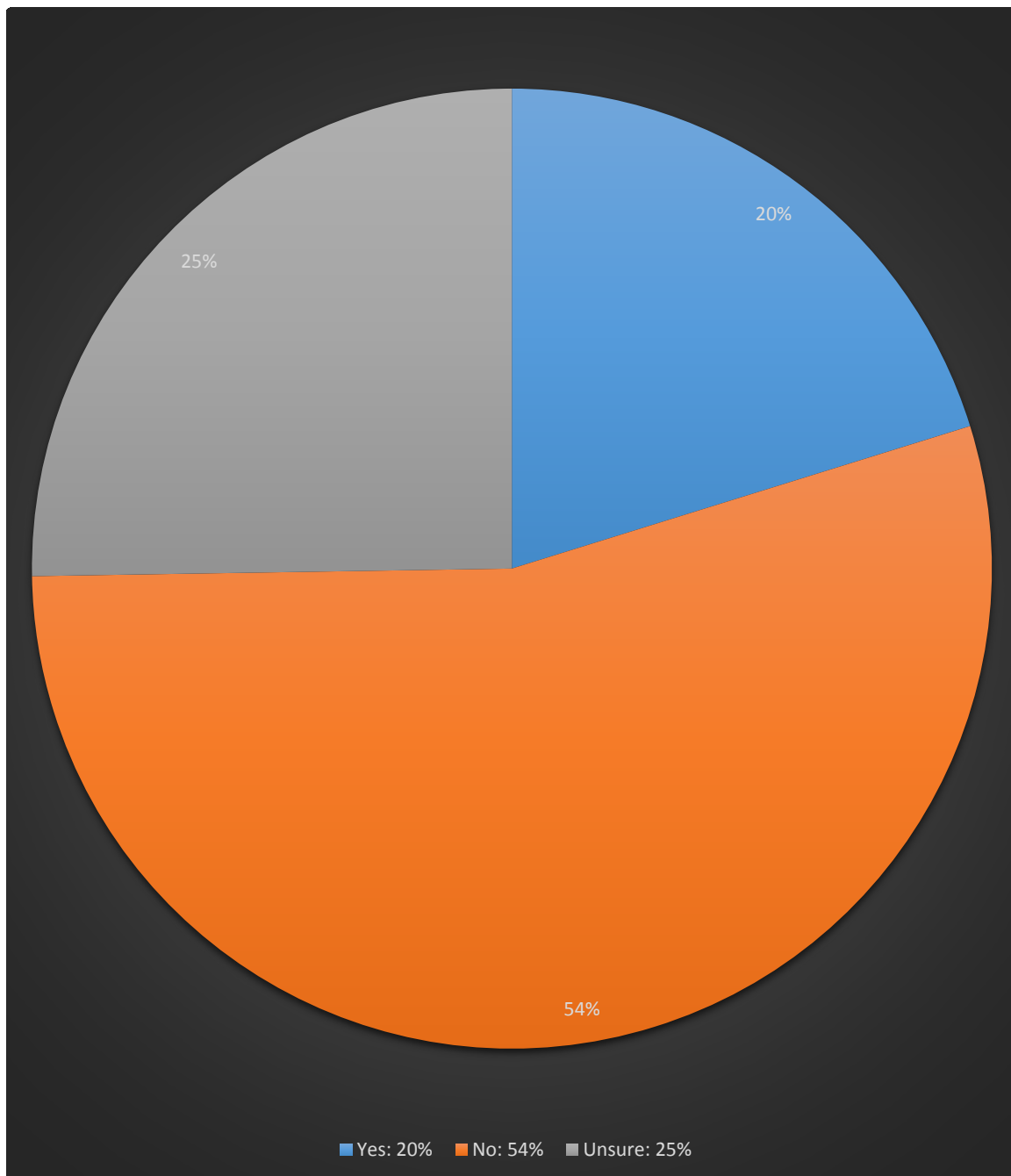
3] Tone of articles audited:



NB: Due to rounding up/down, and the overlapping of certain categories, some percentages may not add up to 100.

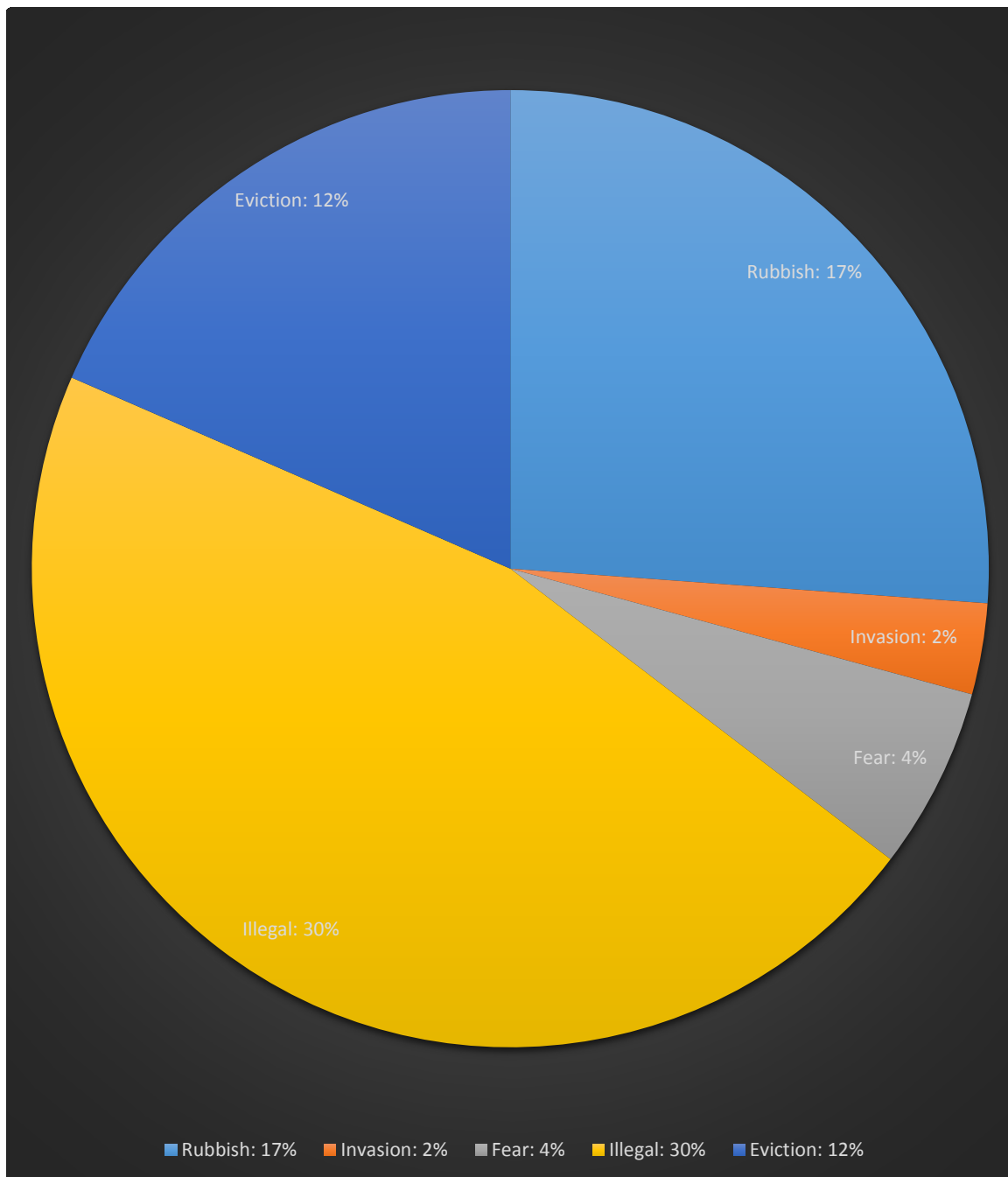
Many articles contained more than one of the common tones above.

4] Use of stock – or archived – photos:



NB: Due to rounding up/down some percentages may not add up to 100.

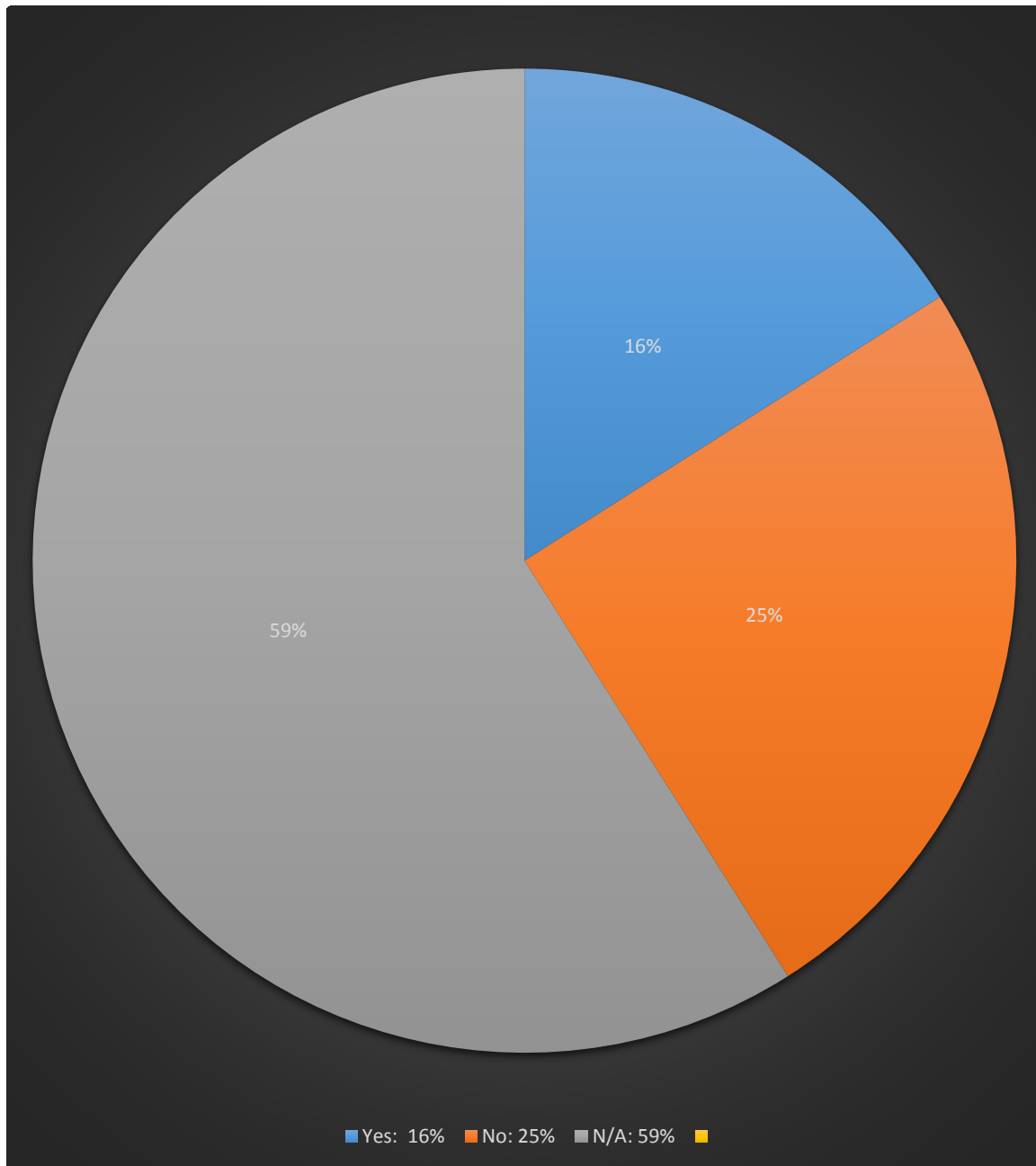
5] Negative/leading key words:



NB: Due to rounding up/down, and the overlapping of certain categories, some percentages may not add up to 100.

Many articles contained more than one of the identified key negative/leading words.

6] Capitalisation of Gypsy/Traveller, taken from a cross-section of Scottish publications:



NB: Due to rounding up/down, and the overlapping of certain categories, some percentages may not add up to 100.

