

Focus Group – Child Specific Deprivation Measure

Monday 11th June 2018

Colby House

Introduction

Following the publication of the 2010 Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM 2010), a list of 36 recommendations¹ was produced that set out areas that should be considered as part of any future updates of the Spatial Deprivation Measures. One of the recommendations was:

“that the creation of a child specific multiple deprivation measure is considered alongside the creation of future deprivation measures”

The suggestion of such a measure was first brought up during the NIMDM 2005 consultation², however, it has always been outside the scope of a deprivation update.

The 36 recommendations in question were considered as part of the recently updated measures (NIMDM 2017), with progress towards addressing these being reported as part of the documentation detailing the proposals for the updated measures that was released prior to the public consultation³. Regarding the child-specific deprivation measure, it stated that the deprivation team will consider its feasibility once the data have been processed.

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures 2017 were published on 23rd November 2017. This was followed by a programme of public dissemination events during February and March 2018, computer-based training sessions in April and May 2018, as well as the release of deprivation measures for smaller geographical areas⁴ on 12th April 2018. It was at this stage that the deprivation team turned their attention to the recommendation regarding a child-specific multiple deprivation measure.

¹ Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010: Recommendations for Future Research into Spatial Deprivation, see <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2010-recommendations>

² Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005, see <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/NIMDM2005FullReport.pdf#page=12>

³ Proposals for the updated NI Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM 2017), see <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-consultation>

⁴ See <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/nimdm17-sa-level-results>

Focus Group

To address the recommendation the deprivation team organised a focus group to discuss the need for a child-specific deprivation measure. An invitation to attend this focus group (Annex A) was sent to contacts from the Family Support and Parenting Strategy, and Children's Champions within Government Departments. A meeting was arranged for Monday 11th June 2018, which was attended by 9 representatives from the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Health and Social Care Board, Action for Children, Action Mental Health, and Children in Northern Ireland.

At the start of the meeting, each representative introduced themselves and outline how they use deprivation statistics. The deprivation team delivered a short presentation to provide the context for this focus group meeting and to aid the discussion.



Focus Group -
Child specific depriv

Background

Brian Green, NISRA's head of Demographic Statistics, provided a background to the recent deprivation measures. The Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) ranks 890 Super Output Areas (SOAs), by bring together 7 domains of deprivation, each comprising of one or more indicators. These indicators had to comply with a number of [criteria](#) around the appropriateness and quality of the information.

The deprivation team was supported by 7 domain expert groups to identify suitable indicators. The project was overseen by an authoritative Steering Group, with a wide representation, that was responsible for all major decisions. The proposals for updated deprivation measures were subject to a public consultation, including 4 public information events around the country.

A final set of indicators and the methodology for combining them into the NIMDM 2017 were published in July 2017⁵. It also includes the Steering Group's response to proposed indicators, some of which did not meet the criteria.

⁵ NIMDM 2017 Consultation Results, see <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/nimdm17-consultation-results>

Available Information

Jos Ijpelaar presented the full range of information that has been released for the updated deprivation measures. For the first time, scores and rankings of all 38 indicators have been published, which allows users to drill down into specific issues, as well as the proportion of children aged under 16 living in income deprived households, and travel times to 20 key services, including (for example) schools, libraries and leisure centres.

There are 7 child-specific indicators in the Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain:

- Pupils with Special Educational Needs (Primary and Post-Primary);
- Absenteeism (Primary and Post-Primary);
- Leavers not entering Further Education, Employment or Training;
- 18- 21 year olds not enrolled in Higher or Further Education; and
- Leavers with less than 5 GCSEs at A* - C.

The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain includes 2 indicators relating to children (low birth weight and children's dental extractions); its remaining indicators are age/sex-standardized ratios covering all ages. Whilst it may be possible to focus solely on the younger ages, the number of cases will become too small to allow the ranking of 890 SOAs, many of which will have zero cases.

For indicators in the other domains, it is not possible to identify, for example, the proportion of children (a) whose parents are employment deprived, (b) who share a household with someone who is health deprived, (c) who live in poor quality housing, or (d) who are victims of a traffic accident or crime.

Need for Child-Specific Deprivation Measure

From the introductions, it was clear that common uses of deprivation statistics include resource allocation, monitoring and research. The main question for discussion was:

“Are the available deprivation statistics sufficient for all uses?”

Indicator data have been published as part of the NIMDM 2017; earlier measures released only domain rankings, which may have a role in prompting the recommendation to consider the need for a child-specific deprivation measure.

The NIMDM looks at relative spatial deprivation, which can only be done using the more prevalent types of deprivation. Data on less prevalent types of deprivation should still be collected and reported at a national or LGD level. It is at those levels that these types of deprivation should be monitored and targeted, not at the SOA level.

Attendees recognised that it would not be straightforward to combine indicators into a child-specific multiple deprivation measure. For example, employment deprivation accounts for 25% in the MDM, however, the indicator does not tell us the number of children who have employment deprived parents. If this domain was to be removed, that 25% weight has to be redistributed to other domains.

Brian Green alerted attendees to the existence of the [Administrative Data Research Centre](#), which could be used to identify children affected by one or more types of deprivation experienced by their parents or other household members, through the linkage of administrative data. This type of information is generally not available in stand-alone datasets.

When asked about the existence of child-specific deprivation measures in other jurisdictions, Jos IJpelaar responded that the only example was found in Wales⁶. A statistical article describes the deprivation indicators that focus on children, however, it does not combine those indicators into a single index of child deprivation. Attendees agreed that a similar document for Northern Ireland would be very useful.

In summary, the general consensus was that the range of available data regarding deprived children had been expanded through the updated deprivation measures and that this needed to be actively deployed in conjunction with other available information when considering children related issues. Consideration should however be given, through the PfG data collection agenda, to capturing other relevant data that might potentially be developed into additional indicators that meet the agreed criteria and add value. While acknowledging the additional work that would be associated with the creation of a child specific multiple deprivation measure and the imperative to follow due process in terms of agreeing, for example, the indicators to include and weights to assign to the relevant domains, the group felt that this desired direction of travel should be considered further. It was agreed that this will become a recommendation for the next deprivation measures.

Next Steps

The deprivation team agreed to write-up a short note reflecting the discussion that took place during the focus group, to be circulated to the attendees and the Statistics Co-ordination Group (SCG), who funded the recent update. Attendees were also asked to write in to NISRA to outline why there is a need for a child-specific deprivation measure.

The deprivation team also agreed to create a summary paper of the available deprivation indicators relating to children.

NISRA

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⁶ Area Analysis of Child Deprivation 2014, see <https://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/151201-wimd-2014-area-analysis-child-deprivation-2014-en.pdf>

Annex A – Focus Group Invitation

To whom it may concern

As you may be aware, updated Deprivation Measures for Northern Ireland were published in November 2017 (NIMDM 2017). They include 38 indicators of deprivation spread across 7 individual deprivation domains, which were ratified by the Deprivation Steering Group following a public consultation. The 38 indicators in question are combined into an overall Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) which should be used in conjunction with the other domains. Further details can be found at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>

The purpose of this email is to invite you to participate in a focus group discussion aimed at addressing one of the 36 recommendations that resulted from the previous deprivation measures that were published back in 2010, namely, the recommendation to “consider creating a child specific Multiple Deprivation Measure.”.

As outlined in the attached Terms of Reference, the aim of the focus group will be to consider whether there is a user need for a child-specific deprivation measure and, in the event of reaching that conclusion, what form it should take (i.e. which of the 38 indicators might be included).

We would like representation from a wide range of stakeholders, particularly those who could potentially make use of a child-specific deprivation measure. Accordingly, this email has gone out to government departments, other non-government public bodies and voluntary organisations with a particular focus on children. If you agree that it would be suitable to get involved in this focus group, can I ask you to select all suitable dates in the next few weeks through the link below - a reply by 1st June would be extremely helpful. We will select the date with the largest possible attendance from the widest possible range of organisations and backgrounds, and will issue an invite to attend the focus group thereafter.

<https://doodle.com/poll/.....>

Your assistance with this would be very much appreciated.

NISRA Deprivation Team