Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures 2017

Recommendations Paper
August 2018

Recommendations following NIMDM 2017

Recommendations rolling over from NIMDM 2010

There were 36 recommendations that followed the NIMDM 2010. Each of these recommendations was considered as part of the updated deprivation measures, with the vast majority having been positively addressed. There are 10 recommendations that the Steering Group requested to keep for future updates, including the availability or quality of indicators, and issues that were out of scope for the NIMDM 2017.

1. Inclusion of community dentist data in dental extraction indicators

The children's dental indicator in the NIMDM 2017 Health Deprivation and Disability Domain included information on extractions taking place in Dental Practices and under anaesthetic in Hospitals. It was not possible to obtain data on dental extractions undertaken by the Community Dental Service as the required information is not currently available at a level below Health and Social Care Trust. *It is recommended that work is undertaken to explore the feasibility of capturing the necessary information at the necessary geographical level on dental extractions undertaken by the Community Dental Service including representations are made with the Department responsible to investigate future dental health indicators include information from Community Dentists as well as Dental Practices and Hospitals.*

2. Investigation into the inclusion of attainment data for young children

Following the NIMDM 2010 it was recommended that research would be undertaken into the viability of a small area Key Stage 1 indicator to measure attainment of pupils in the first years of Primary School. However, the provision of Key Stage 1 data has been impacted by industrial action resulting in a limited number of returns being made to CCEA since 2013/14 and levels of coverage were not considered sufficient to support the robust small area analyses required for NIMDM 2017. *It is recommended that research is carried out into the inclusion of a Key Stage 1 indicator in future updates.*

3. Future Key Stage 2/3 attainment indicators based on pupil results

Previously information on Key Stage 2/3 attainment was collected at the school level and applied to areas based on the school each pupil attended. Changes were introduced to secure such assessments at individual pupil level thus improving their utility. However, as the provision of Key Stage 2/3 data has been impacted by industrial action, it is not considered to be sufficiently robust for the small area analysis required for NIMDM 2017. *It is recommended that research is carried out into the inclusion of a Key Stage 2/3 indicator in future updates.*

4. Homelessness

The 2005 and 2010 Measures included an indicator on homelessness. However, concerns over the quality of the geographical coding of homeless data, as advised by the NI Housing Executive, led to the removal of this indicator from the Living Environment Domain.

Data on homeless presentations are reported by location of presentation (local office) rather than previous address for a number of reasons:
- It allows for adequate service planning in locations where the services are required;

- Many homeless clients will be of no fixed abode; and
- Many have been transient for a long time, or may have come from outside Northern Ireland.

It is recommended that future deprivation measures will re-assess the quality of the available information on homelessness. .

5. Development of Year Group Snapshots for school leavers

The Department of Education has recently begun developing a database to allow a snapshot to be provided. However, as it was not available in time for inclusion in the NIMDM 2017 update, it is recommended that the deprivation team continues to use three years of School Leavers Survey data. *It is recommended that research is carried out into the inclusion of a "year group snapshot" indicator in future updates.*

6. Alternative Methodological Approaches

The NIMDM 2001, 2005, 2010 and 2017 were based on the 'domain' methodology developed by a team led by Professor Mike Noble in the Social Disadvantage Research Centre, University of Oxford. A full methodological review (which would have taken considerably longer and cost considerably more) was ruled out of scope by SCG which commissioned NISRA to undertake this update. *It is recommended that a methodological review is undertaken for future updates.*

7. Urban-Rural Deprivation

Following the 2010 update it was recommended that further research should be undertaken into the identification of rural deprivation, giving consideration to the geographical unit of analysis and suitability of indicators employed. Urban-rural considerations were integral to 2017 update, the work of each of expert groups who have been facilitating the update and a dedicated urban-rural group was established to have oversight of the proposals brought forward by each of the six domain expert groups. In addition, steps were taken to ensure that the Steering Group included members representing rural communities. *It is recommended that urban-rural issues remain a consideration in future updates.*

8. Time trend indicator data

The NIMDM is a relative measure of spatial deprivation. It is therefore not possible to ascertain whether deprivation in an area has increased, decreased or remained the same from the change in rank. Data for key indicators could however shed light on absolute changes in area based deprivation. *It is recommended that plans are set out to publish updated figures for key indicators on a more frequent basis.*

9. Child-specific deprivation measure

The NIMDM 2010 recommendations included that the creation of a child-specific multiple deprivation measure should be considered alongside the creation of future deprivation measures. To this end, the deprivation team held a focus group with key stakeholders to assess this need. Whilst there was no urgent need, there was a keen interest for such measure to be

used for resource allocation, monitoring and research. *It is recommended that NISRA should not lose sight of the need for a child-specific deprivation measure.*

10. Review of Domain Weights

The weights used when combining the individual domains of deprivation into the overall multiple deprivation measure were identical in the 2001, 2005, 2010 and 2017 Measures: Income and Employment (25 per cent each), Health and Education (15 per cent each), Proximity to Services (10 per cent), and Living Environment and Crime & Disorder (5 per cent each). Despite consulting on whether these domain weights still reflect current priorities, the Steering Group concluded that, on balance, the NIMDM 2017 consultation responses had not provided a robust rationale for changing the domain weights from those that had been deployed in the 2010 measures. The Steering Group was instead in favour of educating users in how to work with domains for particular policy needs. *It is recommended that the domain weights are reviewed in future updates.*

New recommendations

A further set of recommendations for future deprivation measures has been compiled by the Steering Group. These originate from interactions over the course of this project, from meetings of the Steering Group and Domain Expert Groups, public consultation information sessions, written responses to the consultation, and dissemination events.

11. Disposable Income and Cost of living

The income deprivation indicator is based on household income corrected for the household size and composition. It does not take account of individual or regional differences in the cost of living, such as housing costs, as this information was not available at a low enough geographical level to support the NIMDM 2017. *It is recommended that Disposable Income and Cost of Living is considered in the Income Deprivation Domain.*

12. Indicator on employment quality

The draft Programme for Government states that *"Access to a better job is important in combating poverty and is a vital component in building successful communities."* Similarly, the Employment domain expert group suggested that Zero Hours Contracts are investigated as a type of 'Underemployment'. In NIMDM 2017, there is a single indicator in the Employment Deprivation Domain – proportion of the working age population excluded from work. Whilst the deprivation team recognises how the quality of employment and/or working conditions can affect employment deprivation, it isnot equated to being excluded from work. Despite its methodological challenges, *it is recommended to investigate if and how information on employment quality can be incorporated into the employment domain.*

13. Fewer indicators in the Health and Disability Domain

There are a large number of indicators, some of which have very small weights. There are 9 indicators on the NIMDM 2017 Health Deprivation and Disability domain, including the combined mental health indicator based on 5 different data sources. This is greater than the number of indicators in the most recent Indices of Multiple Deprivation for England (4), Wales (4) and Scotland (7). The current data intense approach puts a burden on the data suppliers and the deprivation team as data processors. Furthermore, it is not possible to investigate the

relationship between health deprivation and, say, cancer incidence, as this is already an indicator that contributes to health deprivation. *It is recommended that the indicators within the Health and Disability Domain are reviewed and their number reduced.*

14. Benefits full mental/physical split

In the NIMDM 2017 Health and Disability Domain, recipients of DLA have been split across two indicators, based on whether their main health condition was of a mental or physical nature. At the time, this information was not available for other health related benefits, such as Incapacity Benefit. *It is recommended that recipients of the other health benefits are split in a similar way.*

15. Public Transport Frequency

The NIMDM 2017 introduced an indicator on Public Transport travel times to a number of key services. Whilst this was regarded as an important improvement, it did not cover the return journey or indeed travelling at a different time of day. This was done for the Deprivation Measures in Wales (http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2014/141218-wimd-2014-technical-en.pdf#page=56) and Scotland (http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00504822.pdf#page=57), albeit for a smaller set of services (8 and 3 respectively compared to 16 services in Northern Ireland). *It is recommended to include return journeys and travel times at a different time of day, whilst rationalising the main services.*