

## NDC Evaluation 2006-9

### Newsletter 2

NDC Partnerships, GOs and others should now be aware that the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) has commissioned Phase 2 of a national evaluation of the NDC Programme. The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University has been asked to head up a consortium of organisations to carry forward the 2006-2009 national evaluation. All of those involved from the evaluation side are really excited about this. The NDC Programme provides the best opportunity there has ever been to understand why and how neighbourhood level change occurs. The Programme has enormous potential to inform the wider debate about neighbourhood renewal policy and practice.

For those who are relatively new to the Programme it is worth pointing out the depth of evidence which emerged from the first 2001-2005 Phase of the evaluation. Key results from the phase have been brought together in as Research Report 17 on the NRU's web site: <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/>

Many other findings from the first 2001-2005 Phase are also available on the national evaluation team's own web site: <http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/Home.asp>

Evidence emerging from the first phase of the evaluation has been presented at a number of **regionally based dissemination events**. Four have been held to date; others are planned for later in 2006. Partnerships should have been informed about 'their' regional presentation. If anyone is unsure about what is happening in their own region, they should contact Paul Lawless in the first instance, whose details are at the end of this newsletter.

### Phase 2 of the Evaluation

The exact range of tasks and outputs for Phase 2 of the evaluation is being finalised. But the **main planks** of the evaluation seem clear.

#### (i) The 2006 MORI Survey

MORI/NOP will be undertaking a household **survey** in all 39 NDC areas. The 2006 survey is designed to measure change in NDC areas since 2004 and comprises a number of elements including:

- as many **follow-up interviews** as possible with those NDC residents who took part in the previous survey to track changes in their attitudes and circumstances;
- interviews with **new respondents at original addresses** where the previous respondent has moved;
- additional interviews with residents from a **newly drawn random sample** of addresses.

This year the household survey has been slightly reduced in size, and will consist of 400, 25-minute interviews in each area (previously 500, 30-minute interviews). In general, these changes will have little impact on Partnerships' ability to use the data at a local level. However, recognising that the survey does provide important local performance monitoring information, each Partnership is being offered an opportunity to purchase an additional five minutes of interviewing time to cover any specific

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questions they may require. Fieldwork is due to begin mid-May and run through to October, with initial results available at the end of November.

As in previous years a number of outputs will be provided for Partnerships, including a **marked-up questionnaire** and **key findings document**, showing comparisons with 2002 and 2004, as well as NDCs and national benchmarks. More detailed **computer tables** analysing results by a number of key sub-groups will be provided as well as data in **SPSS format**. All survey data and documentation will also be available on the **NDC extranet site**, allowing users to run a wider range of analyses.

#### **(ii) NDC specific administrative data**

The Social Disadvantage Research Centre (SDRC) at the University of Oxford will continue to **collate and analyse administrative data** in order to construct indicators of outcome change for aspects of worklessness, crime, education, health, and housing and physical environment. Indicators will be produced for each NDC areas, parent local authorities, government office regions and England as a whole.

During Phase One of the evaluation, the dissemination of administrative data to NDC Partnerships was constrained by the need for annual Partnership-level reports. However, in Phase 2 'indicator bundles' will be circulated to all 39 Partnerships every three months, each bundle containing the most up-to-date information available at that time. Partnerships will be able to contact the SDRC if particular issues arise. The four bundles will be delivered to Partnerships in May, July, and October 2006 and in January 2007.

#### **(iii) NDC Case Studies**

One of the key objectives of Phase 2 of the evaluation is to understand what is happening at the neighbourhood level: why is change occurring and how can key lessons be disseminated across the neighbourhood renewal community? In order to achieve this end, the evaluation will be doing detailed work in **six case study NDC areas**. There are a number of reasons for picking a small number of case studies. Perhaps the most important is to help us all understand the best way to approach renewal in the round. However, resources will only allow for work in a small number of NDC areas. We fully appreciate that some Partnerships which would like to have been case studies are going to be disappointed. But we need to select NDCs in different regions and from different types of neighbourhood. In addition we must have an appropriate mix in relation to key socio-economic variables, such as ethnicity and tenure. And of course the Partnerships which are initially 'selected' have to agree to become involved! As soon as key stakeholders have given their final approval we will of course inform everyone about the final selection.

**A SUGGESTION THAT THIS IS NOT DONE: WHY? I CAN SEE NO REASON WHY NOT AND IT WILL COME OUT ANYWAY**

#### **(iv) Policy Studies**

The evaluation team is also very keen to pick up policy and practice issues across all 39 NDCs. For that reason we will be carrying out about four **policy studies** each year. These are designed to pick up experience across the Programme and to disseminate good practice more widely. The first of these studies is likely to focus on the 'mixed communities' debate.

**(v) National evaluation team/ NDC contacts and collective learning and dissemination**

The national evaluation team is very keen to ensure effective links with Partnerships, GOs and other key stakeholders. Engagement between the national evaluation and local Partnerships should prove rewarding in a number of ways: collective learning; ensuring the national team is aware of local evaluation activities and outputs; Partnership training needs; linking regional networks into the national evaluation; informing the national evaluation's dissemination programme; and so on. We are also going to refresh the **National Evaluation Reference Group** consisting of NDC staff with a particular interest in evaluation. Chief Executives have already forwarded some names for the Group. We will circulate these in the next Newsletter. It should be stressed here that there are not the same Partnership level resources in Phase 2 as was true for the 2001-2005 Phase 1 of the evaluation. The national evaluation will not, for instance, be producing annual NDC level reports. But nevertheless, subject to resources, the evaluation team is committed to maximising engagement with NDCs. To help in that process each Partnership will continue to have a named contact with the evaluation team. All of these contacts worked on Phase 1. However as the evaluation consortium is somewhat smaller, we cannot guarantee that all NDCs will have the same named contact as occurred in Phase 1. But we will do our best to ensure continuity wherever we can. Evaluation contacts will be in touch with all Partnerships shortly.

**(vi) Partnership level data collection**

NDCs will be aware that during Phase 1 the collection of all kinds of Partnership level data was undertaken locally by the evaluation team's 39 contacts. This task can be done more cost-effectively through one central team located in CRESR. We will liaise closely with the NRU to ensure that demands placed on Partnerships from both the evaluation and PMF are minimised. Nevertheless it is vital that the evaluation team annually updates information in relation to a wide range of Partnership level 'factual' information on, say, Boards, staffing, management processes, engagement with agencies, legal status and so on. We are often asked for this information. It is also really important that we have the evidence to allow us to explore relationships between changing outcomes and a range of process variables. The evaluation team will be in touch with Partnerships about the most-effective way of collecting this evidence in the next couple of months.

***We welcome comments and ideas about any aspect of the national evaluation. At this stage we are also especially interested in getting feedback on this Newsletter,***

***If you have any comments on any aspect of the national evaluation in the first instance please contact Paul Lawless: 0114 225 3529 or p.l.lawless@shu.ac.uk.***

**TBA: (i) distributed via SI or CRESR? (ii) hard copies to NDCs? and GOs?**