

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Social Need in Nottinghamshire 2004 has been prepared in order to assess the distribution of social need across the geographic county of Nottinghamshire. It should therefore be useful for both policy makers and service deliverers in that it provides pointers to where efforts may need to be directed, both by local authorities and others, to address these needs.

The Study should be seen as complementary to the Government's Indices of Deprivation, providing a more local perspective.

Previous Editions of Social Need in Nottinghamshire

This is the fourth study into social need in Nottinghamshire. The first three editions were drawn together and published wholly by the County Council, as between the early 1970s and 1990s the County Council had a remit to cover the whole of the geographic county including the City of Nottingham. The first edition, *The County Deprived Area Study*, was published in 1975 and the second, *Disadvantage in Nottinghamshire*, was published in 1983. The last edition, *Social Need in Nottinghamshire*, was published in two volumes, one general and one for rural areas of Nottinghamshire, in 1994. Each previous edition was published between two to three years following the release of the details of the Census of Population, which provides much of the data used in this study, and which takes place every ten years. This study has been produced through the joint efforts of teams in both Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils. Where data has been provided by external agencies other than by National Statistics and the Census of Population, this has been noted in the acknowledgements and in Chapter 4.

The Social Exclusion Unit, Policy Action Team 18 and Better Information

In the late 1990s, successive Government announcements placed more emphasis on the need for those organisations working at local level to be able to access authoritative and up to date statistics against which policies could be developed and progress measured. This was given greater impetus in 2000 by the Social Exclusion Unit publishing the *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, which had a particular focus on dealing with the needs of areas suffering from multiple and deep seated deprivation. This in turn led to the establishment of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and its allocation to the most deprived 88 areas in England as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The Social Exclusion Unit also established a series of Policy Action Teams to investigate those areas which could be seen as contributing to deprivation, including health, employment and so on. One of the Policy Action Teams to be established was PAT 18 on *Better Information*; the terms of reference for PAT 18 included the need to investigate the scope for a coherent cross-government strategy to obtain more up to date information, more consistency in the collection of such information and how good practice could be identified. The resulting report suggested that successful neighbourhood renewal required good local area

information and that data collected by government departments at that time was imperfect due to lack of currency and could not be shared due to various barriers.

The recommendations to Government from PAT 18 included:

- the development of Neighbourhood Statistics – a collection of data sets providing information on social and economic statistics at ward level;
- the development of geographical information referencing to support more flexible analysis and production of information;
- a cross-government information policy and strategy to support the development of Neighbourhood Statistics.

These recommendations were largely accepted by Government and the Neighbourhood Statistics service was established and now forms part of the rich landscape of information sources available to researchers and policy makers around the country. Although Neighbourhood Statistics currently uses wards as its geographical building block, it is intended that they will shortly be replaced by 'super output areas', which are aggregations of 2001 Census output areas at a hierarchy of levels. Data will be reported for whichever level is appropriate in terms of data-collection and confidentiality. The lowest levels, which have an average population of about 1,500, have been defined using a statistical process grouping together contiguous census output areas which are most similar on a number of indicators. These fit within current ward boundaries, but unlike the social need zones they are not intended to reflect locally identifiable communities.

Indices of Deprivation

The Government's intention to become more responsive in terms of currency and more accurate in terms of measurement of social need has been marked by the publication of successive editions of the Indices of Deprivation over the last decade. The Government commissioned the University of Oxford to review the much criticised *1998 Index of Local Deprivation* in December of the same year and in the *Indices of Deprivation 2000*, produced a recalculated set of indicators, using newly available data which was largely based on 1998 baselines. This has remained in place since that date. The 2000 Indices comprised 33 indicators and gave details for each of the 8,414 wards in England. The importance of the Indices was underlined by the Government using them as the basis for allocating Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) monies. The levels of deprivation across Nottinghamshire as determined by the indices can be ascertained by the fact that Nottingham, Ashfield and Mansfield received substantial funds through the NRF to address problems in their areas.

In late 2002, the Government, through the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, began the process of refining the indices by commissioning the University of Oxford to produce options for the updating of the 2000 Indices. Two reports were produced outlining how this might be done, what new indicators – for example any on crime and disorder - might become components of any new set and whether any new geographical areas other than wards might form better building blocks than wards

for the calculation of deprivation at local level. The second consultation report on updating the 2000 Indices was issued in August 2003 and the Government has decided, in the light of responses received, that the 2000 Indices should be updated and that 'super output areas' will be the main geographical building blocks for which full details will be available. Publication of the new indices is planned for Spring 2004.

Relationship of the Study to the Indices of Deprivation

Social Need in Nottinghamshire 2004 is distinct, and remains important, because:

- it puts social need into a Nottinghamshire context, which should be of particular relevance to the City and County Councils' partners having a remit for the whole geographic county (e.g. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, Nottinghamshire Police, Connexions, Learning and Skills Council etc);
- the zones used have been, so far as possible, defined to reflect locally identifiable communities, rather than the automatically generated 'super output areas' used by the Indices of Deprivation;
- it is the latest in a series of studies providing a unique opportunity to look at changes in patterns of social need in Nottinghamshire over the last 30 years;
- several indicators (e.g. Social Services data) are available to the Councils which are not available for the Indices of Deprivation;
- in addition to an overall measure of social need, detailed data about the indicators used is contained in the report. This aids more in depth interpretation of different aspects of social need;
- information has been included showing the relationship between different aspects of social need, through 'correlation coefficients'.

Concepts of Social Need

Social need is an imprecise term, made more difficult to define by the use of many alternative terms referring to deprivation, poverty, social exclusion, inclusion and so on. It is different from poverty, which can be briefly defined as the lack of sufficient money to allow a basic standard of living. A recent report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003*, examines low income, health and well-being, education, training and so on, in trying to ascertain the results of Government policy aimed at addressing these issues. Social need can include poverty but also involves a range of related but different aspects. In this Study, social need relates to housing, education, skills, health, employment, income and family difficulties and the overall measure of social need has been calculated from a range of indicators. Very often, individuals, households or groups of people who experience difficulties regarding any of the above will also be affected by several others and will therefore suffer from multiple

disadvantage. This, together with a lack of access to opportunities, can be defined as social need.

The Study does not attempt to identify the root causes of need. Neither does the Study identify individual households which are in need, but it does identify those areas where large numbers of people suffer from various aspects of social need.

Definition of Areas

Throughout this document the Study area covers 'Nottinghamshire' which comprises of the combined administrative areas of Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. Where the term 'City' is used, it refers to the Nottingham City Council administrative area and similarly where the term 'County' is used, it refers to the Nottinghamshire County Council administrative area.

Useful Web Sites

Many of the organisations mentioned above have useful web sites which discuss elements of social need or contain useful data. The following is a list of the most useful of these sites:

- www.jrf.org.uk
- www.neighbourhood.gov.uk
- www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk
- www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk
- www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001
- www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood
- www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk