

# **Perceptions of 'Place' and Patterns of Residential Mobility: the New Deal for Communities Programme in England**

**Ian Cole (i)**

Sheffield Hallam University  
CRESR  
City Campus  
England  
Sheffield  
S1 1WB  
England  
UK

Tel: +44 (0)114 225 4529  
Email: I.D.Cole@shu.ac.uk

Co-Author: Ian Wilson

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper seeks to make a contribution to policy debates and research evidence about the relationships between perceptions of place, patterns of mobility and neighbourhood instability in deprived areas. It is based on the large-scale national evaluation of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme. Launched in 1998, NDC is an ambitious area-based initiative designed to 'narrow the gap' between 39 deprived localities and the rest of England in relation to six key outcome areas: housing and the physical environment, liveability, crime, work and finance, education and training, and health. Each NDC receives approximately £50 million of additional resources during the course of the ten year programme.

A degree of household mobility is an essential and healthy aspect of any housing market and different rates of mobility are to be expected in different markets. However, high rates of mobility can result in poor social cohesion, undermine resident commitment to the neighbourhood and cause many to leave before they can reap any benefits ensuing from programmes such as NDC.

As in other area-based initiatives, a central aim of NDC is that regeneration should make the beneficiary neighbourhood more attractive to both existing and potential residents. Consequently, it is assumed, fewer existing residents will leave the area, while those who do leave will be replaced more rapidly. Therefore, population turnover will be lower; leaving more stable and cohesive communities. It is estimated that between 2001 and 2006, around £1 billion has been spent on place-based initiatives in the NDC programme as a whole. But what impact has this had on perceptions of place and mobility?

The relationship between place-based expenditure and mobility is often uncertain, complex and perverse. An improvement in household circumstances, or a relative increase in property values, may result in 'lifting the lid' in activating a long-standing desire to move. Furthermore, those who leave may be replaced by less affluent households, affecting outcome measures of change and impact over time. Alternatively any improvement in the image of neighbourhood undergoing regeneration may attract in higher income groups than before - an assumption common to many 'mixed communities' programmes.

It is often difficult to track these kinds of effects due to the lack of robust longitudinal data. However, this paper draws on the household survey findings from Ipsos MORI in 2002, 2004

and 2006 undertaken as part of the NDC evaluation. It examines whether respondent perceptions about place-based factors are significant predictors of moving intentions and behaviours. The paper then explores whether changes in respondent perceptions of place are associated with changes in moving intentions. The discussion centres on the potential for attaining neighbourhood stability through developing place-based interventions in regeneration programmes.

**Key Words:** neighbourhood, regeneration, mobility