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Spatial Economics Research Centre

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(A lot) more evidence on New Deal for Communities

The NDC evaluation process launched a plethora of [new publications last week](#). "[Neighbourhood projects make a difference](#)" was the spin CLG put on the findings. As with the [last NDC report](#), however, the details don't make for such happy reading. Quite simply, at the individual level, there is very little evidence that NDC is making much of a difference.

Starting with that headline: "After controlling for base characteristics, residents in NDC areas have on average seen statistically greater positive change in relation to their satisfaction with the area compared with comparator residents, (significant at a 0.05 level), when the starting position is not included the model. This is not, however, the case when a respondent's initial level of satisfaction is included."

On health: "This lack of marked positive change relative to other benchmarks is perhaps a little disappointing, given that the case study NDC partners have devoted considerable effort and resources to improving health outcomes amongst local residents, and these sorts of efforts have been replicated across the NDC Programme."

On education: "The research team found little statistically significant variation in outcomes for the whole cohort between NDC and comparator areas, even after controlling for the differences between these areas and NDC areas." Or put another way: "Educational performance has improved faster than the national average for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and in deprived areas generally, including non-NDC areas. What this means is that for the NDC Programme as a whole, there is no evidence that the presence of the NDC partnerships has made a decisive difference: other disadvantaged areas did broadly just as well." There has been improvement in key stage 3 Science - but when you look across such a huge range of indicators you are going to [find some significant differences even when there is no effect](#).

As I said before, what I take from this is the following: Based on the best evidence that we have available a reasonably well funded ABI has not, on average, improved individual outcomes in targeted areas. You can read the (7) reports yourself for the "wriggle room disclaimers".

Posted by [Prof Henry G. Overman](#) on [Wednesday, February 17, 2010](#)

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