

YEARS AHEAD:
The North East
Forum on Ageing

Comfortable Life?

Self assess your individual needs

Background

Although income is an important factor in determining living standards, other non-financial factors can impact on living standards. A person can be described as being materially deprived if they lack a social item (for example, seeing friends and family regularly).

Several years ago, to help measure levels of material deprivation, the Government introduced an indicator which, based on responses, could determine collective levels of deprivation across the Country. This information is extremely useful to officials who develop policy and to local decision makers.

This material deprivation indicator is an additional way of measuring living standards for pensioners. This indicator is comprised of questions based on access to specific goods, services and experiences. It measures how many pensioners are in material deprivation and the reasons for lacking access to the goods, services or experiences.

This toolkit has been developed by Years Ahead, the North East's regional forum on ageing, along with the Department for Work and Pensions. It is not about gathering more data for statistical purposes, but instead by using those same questions we can collectively identify gaps in services, levels of individual need. Perhaps most importantly the process will also help us to identify good practice that can be shared with the wider community.

Introduction to self assessment

This self assessment asks a number of questions that will provide some insight into individual and collective aspects of material deprivation. For the process to be effective the individual needs to be completely honest and not worry what others may or may not think. Being deprived of goods or services is something that can happen to all of us at any times in our lives. Being retired should not mean we accept less and lower our standards.

With repeated use, completion of this self assessment will assist an individual and community to:

- Identify aspects of material deprivation
- Promote learning and share good practice
- Identify and plan ways to develop solutions
- Identify sustainable working arrangements and approaches

The process

The Tool has been designed to capture both individual and community needs. The toolkit can either be done as part of a workshop involving a group of people or individually.

To complete the toolkit go through **Part 1 – Assessing need** marking the answers to each question. If you answer no to any of the questions there is a column to indicate whether this is out of choice or for some other reason. If you answered yes then there is another column to write down any service you use or good practice in your local area which other people could benefit from but may not know about.

Next go to **Part 2 - Potential Solutions!** This has already been filled out with examples of services and ideas that others have suggested. Look through your answers in part 1 and where you have answered no to any of the questions you can check if

there are any solutions which would work for you. This is also a good place to write down any other good practice or services in your local area, these will all be added to the list so that there are as many solutions as possible listed.

The final activity is **Part 3 – Individual/Community Action Plan**. The aim of this toolkit is to make sure everyone has the opportunities they deserve after retirement and to share good ideas with others so that we all have a good quality of life. Part 3 is your opportunity to make an action plan to improve your own circumstances or that of your community if the toolkit is being completed in a group. Look through part 1 to see where you may be missing out and then check in the corresponding section of part 2 to see if there are ideas which will help you and write these down on the action plan.

Conclusion

This self assessment will not on its own lift an individual or a community out of material deprivation. But it should help you to think about some of the basic essentials that are missing from your life and offer potential ways in which this can be addressed.

A good way to use the toolkit would be for members of a group to work through it together so that good practice in your local area can be discussed and added to the toolkit. Working as a community through the process will also enable you to identify the priority areas of collective need, stimulate discussion **and identify potential solutions**.

Part 1 – Assessing need

Question	Please circle yes or no	If no, was this out of choice or for other reasons?	If yes, are there any services you access or good practice that may help others that have answered no to this question?
1) Do you eat a healthy balanced, varied diet every day?	YES NO		
2) Do you go out socially, either alone or with other people, at least once a week or as often as you would like?	YES NO		
3) Do you see your friends or family at least once a week or as often as you would like?	YES NO		
4) Do you take a holiday away from home for a week or more at least once a year?	YES NO		

Question	Please circle yes or no	If no, was this out of choice or for other reasons?	If yes, are there any services you access or good practice that may help others that have answered no to this question?
5) Would you be able to replace your cooker, microwave or fridge, if it broke down?	YES NO		
6) Are you able to keep your home in a good state of structural and decorative order without depleting financial resources to an unsatisfactory level?	YES NO		
7) Are your heating, electrics, plumbing and drains kept in good working order?	YES NO		
8) Do you have a damp-free home?	YES NO		

Question	Please circle yes or no	If no, was this out of choice or for other reasons?	If yes, are there any services you access or good practice that may help others that have answered no to this question?
9) Does paying your heating and lighting bills cause you to worry?	YES NO		
9a) Is your home kept adequately warm that is 21°C (70°F) in the main living room and 18°C (64°F) in all other rooms?	YES NO		
10) Without cutting back on essentials, are you able to pay regular bills like electricity, gas or Council Tax?	YES NO		
11) Do you have a telephone to use, whenever you need it?	YES NO		
12) Are your transport needs met?	YES NO		

Question	Please circle yes or no	If no, was this out of choice or for other reasons?	If yes, are there any services you access or good practice that may help others that have answered no to this question?
13) Do you have your hair done or cut regularly?	YES NO		
14) Do you have a warm waterproof coat that is in good condition?	YES NO		
15) Would you be able to pay an unexpected expense of £400?	YES NO		
16) Have you taken part in any lifelong learning activities in the last 12 months? e.g. a computer course, an art club, dance lessons, etc.	YES NO		
	YES NO		

Question	Please circle yes or no	If no, was this out of choice or for other reasons?	If yes, are there any services you access or good practice that may help others that have answered no to this question?
17) Would you be able to access the internet if you needed to? (either yourself, at a library or through a friend or relative)			
18) Do you have home contents insurance?	YES NO		
19) Are your social care needs being met? (either through direct personal payment or other resources)	YES NO		
20) Are your health care needs being met?	YES NO		


Part 2 - Potential Solutions!

Question	Potential Solution
1) Do you eat a healthy balanced, varied diet every day?	
2) Do you go out socially, either alone or with other people, at least once a week or as often as you would like?	
3) Do you see your friends or family at least once a week or as often as you would like?	
4) Do you take a holiday away from home for a week or more at least once a year?	
5) Would you be able to replace	

Question	Potential Solution
your cooker, microwave or fridge, if it broke down?	
6) Are you able to keep your home in a good state of structural and decorative order without depleting financial resources to an unsatisfactory level?	
7) Are your heating, electrics, plumbing and drains kept in good working order?	
8) Do you have a damp-free home?	
9) Does paying your heating and lighting bills cause you to worry?	
9a) Is your home kept	

Question	Potential Solution
<p>adequately warm that is 21°c (70°F) in the main living room and 18°c (64°F) in all other rooms?</p> <p>?</p>	
<p>10) Without cutting back on essentials, are you able to pay regular bills like electricity, gas or Council Tax?</p>	
<p>11) Do you have a telephone to use, whenever you need it?</p>	
<p>12) Are your transport needs met?</p>	
<p>13) Do you have your hair done or cut regularly?</p>	➤
<p>14) Do you have a warm</p>	➤

Question	Potential Solution
waterproof coat that is in good condition?	
15) Would you be able to pay an unexpected expense of £400?	
16) Have you taken part in any lifelong learning activities in the last 12 months? e.g. a computer course, an art club, dance lessons, etc.	
17) Would you be able to access the internet if you needed to? (either yourself, at a library or through a friend or relative)	➤
18) Do you have home contents insurance?	

Question	Potential Solution
19) Are your social care needs being met? (either through direct personal payment or other resources)	

Part 3 – Individual/Community Action Plan

Your top priority	What steps you will now take.	Progress by when?
1)		
2)		
3)		

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