

**What Works  
Wellbeing**

# *How to run a Wellbeing Dialogue*



***Guide and Toolkit***

## Acknowledgements

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## Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
1. “In a nutshell” .....	4
2. Who is this toolkit for and what’s included? .....	5
3. Why bother? .....	6
4. When to use it.....	11
5. Who to involve? .....	16
6. What does it involve? .....	19
7. How to build wellbeing in? .....	24
8. Case Studies .....	30
9. FAQs .....	33
10. Resources .....	36
List of contacts (March 2016) .....	36
Project guidance and templates from Sciencewise .....	36
Other dialogue toolkits and guidance.....	37
Wellbeing Drivers.....	37
Wellbeing Action Frameworks and examples of use in previous dialogues.....	37
Wellbeing policy development exercises.....	37
11. Annexes A-C.....	See separate document

## 1. “In a nutshell”

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The benefits public engagement can bring to public policy and services are familiar to most of us. They include better quality decision making and increased legitimacy, with decisions being informed by the very people who will be affected by them. They also include better delivery by flagging up potential implementation issues early on. In a similar vein, national wellbeing measurement and research focuses on what the public say matters most to them and what we know affects quality of life. Looking at issues from a wellbeing perspective can help us develop more effective solutions by placing emphasis on how people and communities will be impacted by them. ‘Wellbeing dialogues’ bring the two together - a natural combination of public engagement and encouraging participants to view policy problems from the perspective of their own wellbeing and that of others. The dialogue can be focussed on any policy, service or issue: wellbeing is not the primary subject, but is instead an enabler for more effective discussions and subsequent outcomes.

This is a guide and toolkit for wellbeing dialogues. It has been largely informed by practice and experience. Wellbeing dialogues carried out in 2014 and 2015 tested the concept and found that looking at issues through a ‘wellbeing lens’ helped participants engage in a more meaningful way, leading to richer deliberations and a clearer, deeper focus on solutions. Engagement in this way can also help to reconnect people to the decision making process at a time when people can feel disengaged in decisions that affect them. The evidence is clear that participants really gain from this kind of process.

So, when should you consider a ‘wellbeing-dialogue’? It can add value at different stages of public policy and service development. It can be used early on to develop a shared understanding of the problem that needs to be addressed and to help shape objectives. If there are solutions already identified then dialogue can help to compare or refine them by exploring their likely impact on wellbeing. Dialogue can also contribute to downstream delivery by helping to shape communications and messaging to public stakeholders once decisions have been made, to support successful implementation.

What is involved in running one? The process itself is flexible, and can be as light touch or intensive as your objectives require. It could include a single round of deliberation or cycles of dialogue allowing more time for reflection. All dialogues will require some basic steps to be followed; planning - reaching a shared understanding of the dialogue objectives with stakeholders; designing the process and materials; organising and delivering the dialogue sessions, and analysing and reporting on the findings. A dialogue can be run with the help of a specialist contractor or in-house, depending on the resources available, but will require input from a variety of stakeholders including policy makers, front line workers and topic specialists and most importantly, those with a stake in the results. It is important to highlight that dialogues are distinct from other forms of qualitative research such as focus groups. They are particularly effective for policy issues in which public values and motivations need to be understood, often on challenging and controversial topics.

This toolkit aims to bring together the tools and guidance you might need to help you design and run the process. It helps to explain why?, when? and how? However there is also no substitute for talking to people experienced in this approach – so we also provide plenty of contact details for further help.

## 2. Who is this toolkit for and what's included?

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### Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is primarily aimed at policy makers and those making significant decisions that will affect people's lives and communities. It is relevant to a wide range of organisations and decision makers across the public, private and voluntary sectors and encourages a consideration of how public engagement and dialogue might enhance decision making. It is also for analysts to consider public dialogue as one of the tools in their analytical toolbox with which to support customers. This document outlines the case for wellbeing dialogues, when you might want to use one, and how to go about it.

### How to use it

This toolkit has been written on the assumption that the average reader knows little about wellbeing or public dialogue, so whilst it can be read end to end you might want to choose those sections which are most relevant to you, depending on how much you already know. So, how best to navigate it? For those who just want an overview we provide a separate, high-level summary, and this document then covers the detail. If you're not familiar with wellbeing and the benefits it can bring to decision making, this is covered in [Why Bother?](#), alongside an explanation of what a Wellbeing Dialogue is. The [When to use it?](#) section covers when wellbeing dialogue might be helpful and which types of decisions it is most appropriate for. We go into the finer details and project management processes required to run one in the [Who to involve?](#) and [What does it involve?](#) sections. Finally, [How to build wellbeing in?](#) covers what we would expect to be new material for most, including examples of practical exercises which can be used to help build wellbeing into public dialogue. If you're interested in [case](#) studies of previous wellbeing dialogues, there is a section on this. Finally there is an accompanying Annex to this guide which contains more example materials to help run a dialogue.

### 3. Why bother?

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“It is absolutely vital that every decision we take, every policy we pursue, every programme we start, is about giving everyone in our country the best chance of living a fulfilling and good life”. **Prime Minister David Cameron, May 2015**

“The central purpose of economic policies is to improve people’s lives. We need to rethink how to place people’s needs at the heart of policy-making.” **OECD, 2013**

#### Wellbeing - The policy context

Wellbeing is increasingly being recognised as a valuable measure of social progress – a complementary tool to traditional economic measures such as GDP. The need for a wider dashboard of measures to capture the quality of life of a nation has long been acknowledged and David Cameron committed to measuring national wellbeing in 2010, launching the Office for National Statistics (ONS) [Measuring National Wellbeing Programme](#). The ONS measurement framework consists of 41 Quality of Life measures based around 10 ‘domains’ (important areas of life), which have been largely identified by a national debate in which people around the UK expressed their opinions on what really matters to them in their lives. The domains are: the natural environment, personal wellbeing, our relationships, health, what we do, where we live, personal finance, the economy, education and skills, and governance. Importantly, the framework includes subjective as well as objective indicators: measures of people’s real, lived experiences as well as their objective circumstances.

#### What is wellbeing?

“Wellbeing, put simply, is about ‘how we are doing’ as individuals, communities and as a nation and how sustainable this is for the future.” – **ONS, 2014**



While much progress has been made on wellbeing measurement, attention is now turning towards how to make best use of the evidence in decision making. In reality many decisions are inherently about improving quality of life, and where this new and growing body of wellbeing data helps is to allow it to be considered more explicitly. The wellbeing dialogue process helps further still by creating the time and space needed to deliberate on the evidence and how it applies to the challenges and issues that need addressing.

## The ‘Wellbeing Lens’ – new perspectives



In addition to developing and considering wellbeing evidence it is possible to step back and adopt a ‘wellbeing perspective’ to a challenge or potential solution. Such an approach can provide a useful counterbalance to other perspectives. Table 1 illustrates this. For example, an emphasis is placed on building capabilities so people/ communities can solve their own problems rather than

seeking others to do so. Early intervention/ prevention options are explored to balance focus on ‘treatment’ of problems. The impact on important drivers of wellbeing such as relationships, trust and control can also be considered along with innovative approaches to ‘designing these in’ to the solution. There is a greater opportunity to reflect on integrated approaches because the ‘domains’ and drivers of wellbeing also highlight the potential links to other important contributors to quality of life – the environment, education, personal finances, the economy and work for example. Combined, these perspectives permit a more rounded assessment of issues, and options for addressing them.

**Table 1: What a ‘Wellbeing’ perspective brings to decision making**

What we usually think about:	What the ‘Wellbeing’ perspective also encourages us to think about:
Systems, processes, organisational benefits and finances	<b>People and communities</b> – so the human impact of policy is considered.
Objective circumstances	<b>Subjective experiences</b> – so how people experience the policy or service is considered
Silo priorities	<b>Joining-up/ Common Outcomes</b> – so that opportunities to collaborate and integrate are considered
‘Usual’ policy considerations	<b>“Innovation” factors</b> – e.g. trust, altruism, relationships, control – to consider new approaches to policy
Deficits	<b>Assets</b> – to build on existing, untapped resources available to people and communities
“Doing for” or “doing to” people	<b>Building capabilities of people/ communities</b> – to help people/ communities help themselves - solve their own problems and be self-sufficient
Treatment/ Illness	<b>Early intervention/ prevention/ wellness</b> – to avoid downstream costs and impact



What we usually think about:	What the 'Wellbeing' perspective also encourages us to think about:
Short & Medium term impact	<b>Long Term Impact/ Adaptation to change –</b> to ensure policies have long term benefit
This Generation	<b>Next Generation</b> to ensure policies are sustainable
'Average Impact' across population	<b>Distribution, Fairness and Equality of Impact –</b> to ensure groups of people/ communities are not disadvantaged by the policy

## Public dialogues – a unique form of citizen engagement

Engaging with the public, done well, can be a really important and valuable part of the policy making process and can be beneficial for both policy makers and those members of the public involved (see benefits box which follows). Public dialogue is one such way of doing this and is a robust and structured approach to getting citizens involved in important decisions. It differs significantly from other forms of engagement such as consultations, surveys or focus groups, and the most appropriate method will depend upon your objectives. There is more on the different options available to you and tools you can use to explore them [here](#). Facilitated by dialogue experts, public dialogue involves engaging directly with targeted members of the public to understand their deeper views, values and motivations around the complex problems which affect them. It includes cycles of deliberation and reflection and can enable the testing of ideas to reveal whether potential solutions are feasible or deliverable. It can also highlight messages which will or will not resonate with key members of the public and therefore will help or hinder future delivery.

There is unique value in hearing directly from the public, in their own words, what they think on an issue, what they value most and where their priorities lie. Dialogue is based on the principle that the public generally know best how a policy or service is likely to impact them.





**There are many benefits to public dialogue. These include:**

- **Better quality decisions** - generating better policy and service delivery options, including new ideas and perspectives, grounded in first-hand knowledge of public values and priorities;
- **Better delivery** - reducing risks by flagging up difficult issues and potential conflict in time to resolve them. This can make solutions more cost effective by preventing expensive mistakes early on;
- **Greater transparency and accountability for decisions**, including greater public understanding of a particular issue and better relationships between government and citizens;
- **Better legitimacy for policy and government** - increased buy-in as public dialogues can provide an opportunity to understand citizen and stakeholder support for a proposal. Policy decisions are also based on greater knowledge about the acceptability (or not) of specific policy options;
- **Empowering citizens** - a chance for participants to influence decisions on important issues that affect their lives.

## Wellbeing dialogues – a tool for innovation and ‘open policy’

Applying a ‘wellbeing lens’ to issues and engaging with citizens who have a real stake in the problems that we are trying to solve can support innovation by encouraging fresh perspectives on an issue – as outlined earlier. This is consistent with Open Policy Making and being open to new ideas, new ways of working and new insights, and drawing on wider expertise. Given that public engagement is also at the heart of the wellbeing agenda – wellbeing is fundamentally about focusing on what the public says matter most (see [national debate](#)) – then the two combined i.e. engaging with the public about a policy and its potential impact on wellbeing, has real potential. This is where the concept of ‘Wellbeing Dialogues’ comes from. Wellbeing dialogues encourage citizens to view problems from the perspective of the impact on their wellbeing, or other people’s. This can lead to higher quality, more thoughtful responses which in turn provide a stronger foundation for developing better solutions. This [video](#) from wellbeing dialogue pilots held in 2014 summarises the views of participants on the value of using a ‘wellbeing lens’ in this way, both to the decision making process and to them personally.

“Using wellbeing as a way in to discussing policies has proven very productive” – *Hopkins Van Mil, 2015 wellbeing dialogue*

“Participants were overwhelmingly positive about having had the opportunity to think about issues such as wellbeing, quality of life and leading a balanced life that they knew to be important but seldom normally considered.” *URSUS, 2015 wellbeing dialogue evaluation*

To be clear, wellbeing dialogues don't require a problem to be exclusively about wellbeing. Whatever your issue, if you're considering a public dialogue on it, it is worth thinking about the value of introducing wellbeing evidence and exercises into the public engagement process. You can find more on how to decide whether wellbeing dialogue is appropriate for your issue and what your other options are [later](#).

#### Some of the benefits of wellbeing dialogues:

- **Deeper engagement and participation** – public participants are able to engage with the issues and discussion on a more personal level.
- **Supports more credible and robust decision making** – informed by the direct knowledge and experience of those who will be affected by the decision.
- **Supports more rounded, people-focused solutions** – which better account for the potential impact on people's lives.
- **Supports integration and more 'joined up' solutions** – across the different elements that are important to quality of life, and between organisations working on them.
- **Gets beyond false assumptions and 'received wisdom'** – based on what the public really think and the values, motivations and views of those who will be directly affected.
- **Increased public awareness and understanding of wellbeing evidence** – which can encourage positive behaviour change.

## Feedback from policy makers on the benefits on dialogue

Policy makers across government have found public dialogue to be a very valuable part of the policy making process, helping them to manage risk, make better policy decisions, improve accountability and get beyond entrenched positions.

*"Helped enormously to **formulate the policy advice** we gave Government. Provided a serious backbone to that assessment."* - Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, public dialogue on mitochondrial donation

*"Dialogue is good for **complex topics** ... Gets **beyond headline responses** or ill-informed gut reactions"* - public dialogue on mitochondrial donation

*"Hearing members of the public deliberate was such a highlight at the events, it really got me thinking about **how people relate to the issues**. Policy leads often don't get the chance to speak enough to the end users of our policies"* - Policy maker, Department of Work and Pensions, Wellbeing Dialogue

*"Made **decision making easier** ... More secure because [our Board] felt they had a proper handle on what the public felt..."* - public dialogue on mitochondrial donation

*"engagement and consultation, if done properly, can actually **reduce the overall timescale** of the project"* - Democratic Audit UK

## 4. When to use it

Wellbeing dialogue has the potential to add value to decision making throughout the typical policy and programme cycle. The key point with dialogue is that it takes place at a time when a decision can still be influenced and when clear action can be taken on the findings.

Dialogue aims to open up discussions around issues, particularly challenging ones, and how they might be resolved. During pilots run in 2014 it was found that a wellbeing lens reinforces this aim, drawing attention to the ultimate objectives of policy as perceived by citizens, rather than policy makers. Using the wellbeing evidence provided to them, participants were able to challenge the underlying assumptions of a policy and in some cases the objectives, and on this basis to make suggestions for changes to priorities. The potential impact of dialogue is therefore at its greatest during the early stages of decision making, when objectives are being formulated, the broad design of a policy is being shaped or options are being considered. That said, a wellbeing perspective can also add value and contribute to later stages including options analysis and also implementation.

While we make reference to ‘policy cycles’, in reality policy development doesn’t necessarily follow a neat, linear process. That said there are a few stages that commonly need to be navigated which are given in the [HM Green Book](#) – and called the ROAMEF cycle. Four stages of the ROAMEF cycle can potentially be enhanced by wellbeing dialogue and Figure 1 illustrates this. The section which follows covers each of these stages in more detail –

- Rationale: Understanding the context
- Objectives and Appraisal: Defining success and appraising options
- Implementation and Monitoring: Making it happen
- Feedback: from the public

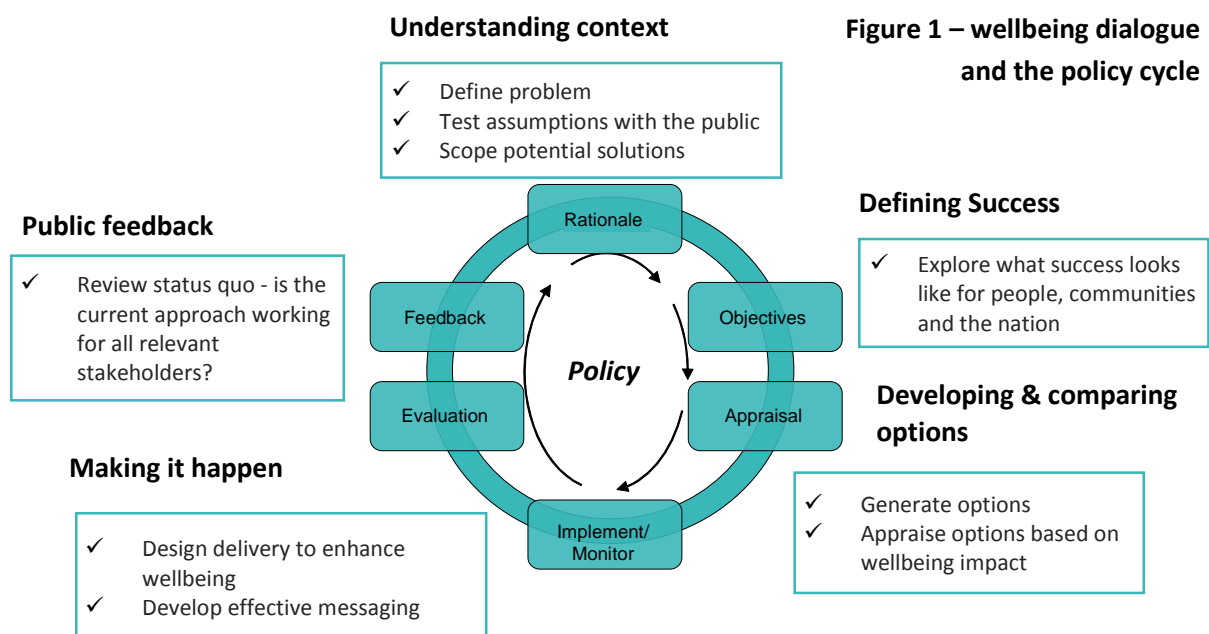


Figure 2 – role of dialogue at different stages of the policy cycle

## The potential role of dialogue at different stages of the policy cycle

<b>Rationale: Understanding the context</b>
<p><b>Dialogue at this stage can help you to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Frame and articulate the issues as the public see them, leading to a better shared definition of the problem to be solved.</b></li><li>• <b>Test policy assumptions and particularly understand the public’s values and priorities - are they aligned with your understanding?</b></li><li>• <b>Formulate or clarify objectives.</b></li><li>• <b>Scope out potential solutions, or test early solutions with the public.</b></li></ul> <p>Policy development should start from a clear definition of the problem or challenge that needs to be solved. This is an essential foundation for future steps and can clearly benefit from a dialogue on the shared understanding of the problem from the perspective of different stakeholders.</p> <p>In practice dialogue at this stage could involve <a href="#">introducing evidence</a> on what drives wellbeing, enabling all participants to relate to, and focus on, the real human impact of the problem and thereby get to the heart of it. This may indeed encourage participants to challenge the assumptions underlying the policy, and in some cases the objectives, and on this basis to make quite broad suggestions for changes. If the dialogue happens early enough then challenges to assumptions can be helpful to the overall policy development process.</p>
<b>Objectives and Appraisal: Defining success and appraising options</b>
<p><b>Dialogue at this stage can help you to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Think about what success looks like from the perspective of those who will be affected by the policy.</b></li><li>• <b>Open up the range of solutions for consideration and appraisal.</b></li><li>• <b>If options already exist, explore which is likely to have the most positive impact (or least negative impact) on wellbeing.</b></li><li>• <b>Fine tune options to increase the positive impact on people’s lives.</b></li></ul> <p>The scope for dialogue is significant at this stage. Here it might be possible to explicitly set wellbeing as a target, goal or outcome of the policy or programme being developed, to complement core objectives e.g. health, crime, education. For example the <a href="#">Public Health Outcomes</a> and <a href="#">Adult Social Care Outcomes</a> frameworks have explicitly set wellbeing as a desired outcome and are monitoring wellbeing indicators.</p> <p>At this stage the drivers or domains of wellbeing can clearly be used to form objective criteria by which participants can assess options – and on this basis rank options on their wellbeing impact, develop a broader set of options and/ or adapt existing options to increase impact. Involving the public, policy makers and front line workers also helps ensure discussion is grounded in practical reality and also the constraints of policy making.</p>

## Implementation and Monitoring: Making it happen

Dialogue at this stage can help you to:

- Consider how the delivery of the policy solution and policy design can enhance wellbeing.
- Consider messaging and how the policy or service can be most effectively communicated to those who will be affected by it.

Public policies and programmes can be delivered in very different ways, and the way they are designed and delivered can impact the wellbeing of the people they are delivered for. The delivery approach can be actively designed to enhance key drivers of wellbeing. Tools like [5-ways to wellbeing](#) could be used to help with this, by, for example, actively building in peer support (giving), enhancing social relationships (connect) or a learning element (learn). Being in control and having some autonomy over decisions which affect your life is also an important driver of wellbeing and policies or services can clearly be delivered in a way which promotes these.

Getting messaging around a programme wrong can create problems during delivery. Dialogues can help to formulate the right messaging from a public perspective by focussing on how people and communities will benefit. However it is important that dialogue is not used as a PR exercise to test an existing communication strategy. There should be something participants are able to change – dialogue is about actively involving them in the decision making process and it is important to clearly communicate what the scope for influence is from the outset.

## Feedback: from the public

Dialogue at this stage can help you to:

- Explore the status-quo: is there a gap between citizens' views of progress and policy makers'?
- Review whether the current approach is working for stakeholders in order to inform next steps and/or future direction of policy.

After a policy or programme has been implemented there is the opportunity to explore whether it is having the intended impact, whether there are unintended consequences and whether there are inequalities or distributional impacts. Importantly there is the opportunity to explore whether there is a gap between the public and the policy makers' views of progress. A dialogue can assess the impact on wellbeing and the quality of people's experiences – does this match the policy maker's perceptions of success? This will support feedback mechanisms by highlighting issues, challenges or problems to address.

## Does my policy lend itself to a wellbeing dialogue?

Is a wellbeing dialogue an appropriate tool for what you need? It might be helpful to ask yourself the questions below. You don't need to satisfy each point although the first (space for the public to

influence the direction of policy) is a pre-requisite for any dialogue – it is pointless asking for public input if there is no scope for them to make a difference.

#### Questions to consider

- ✓ Is there space for the public to genuinely influence the decision, policy or programme?
- ✓ Does your challenge or issue have a strong values dimension to it – perhaps fairness, equality, or trust? Do people have strongly held views?
- ✓ Does your issue or challenge involve individual choices driven by complex underlying motivations?
- ✓ Is the solution likely to significantly impact people's lives and/or their communities?
- ✓ Is there potential for misinterpretation of the rationale for action, or mis-appreciation of the problem?
- ✓ Does your challenge include a complex social and/or ethical issue which makes the potential choices difficult?



## What other options are there for public engagement?

Wellbeing dialogue will not always be the best method for engaging the public and choosing the right method will really depend upon what you want to achieve e.g. you might be interested in raising awareness of a particular policy or service, or working with the public to design a new service. There are other options available to you and there are some resources listed below which can help you explore them. Sometimes a range of tools might be appropriate.

#### [Engage 2020 Action Catalogue](#)

The Action Catalogue is an online decision support tool that is intended to enable researchers, policy-makers and others wanting to conduct inclusive research to find the method best suited for their specific project needs.

#### [Participation Compass](#)

Participation Compass is an interactive platform helping people in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors who need to involve a wider group of people in their work. The website (and app) provides you with information and advice on different methods of engagement, case studies and opportunities to share your experiences with others.

#### [Open Policy Making Toolkit](#)

The Open Policy Making Toolkit is a practical guide to tools and techniques that can help you make and deliver better, more user led policy. The toolkit is based on the principles of Open Policy Making.

#### [Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis](#)

Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) provides a practical and structured approach to comparing and appraising options. MCDA can be used to address a wide range of problems and at different stages of the policy process, and can involve stakeholders – including members of the public – in the process of comparing policy options.



## 5. Who to involve?

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### Who can help you deliver a wellbeing dialogue?

There are public engagement professionals who specialise in the dialogue approach, for example those at [Sciencewise](#)<sup>2</sup>, who are able to provide advice and support on whether dialogue is right for your needs, provide help in developing a business case for resources and help develop a brief to commission a dialogue contractor if required. Sciencewise support dialogues in science and technology and co-fund many projects, providing up to 50% of the costs and allocating you with a dialogue engagement specialist to support you. They are also often able to offer support if you're not bidding for funding, and bring much value and experience to the project.

If there's not the expertise available within your organisation to deliver a dialogue, then you can appoint a dialogue contractor (see Annex A for a list) to design and carry out the dialogue for you. Dialogue contractors are *process* experts so we suggest you make sure wellbeing and policy topic specialists are involved too. They can work closely together with the contractor to design the process around your policy questions and to integrate the wellbeing element in. This toolkit includes guidance to help you do this [here](#).

The What Works Centre for Wellbeing can also provide wellbeing expertise, for example on which areas of your policy it might be helpful to explore and how best to frame the questions from a wellbeing perspective. Relevant contacts can be found [here](#).

### What type of stakeholders do you need to get involved and when?

There will be a variety of different stakeholders to involve in a dialogue and you will want to identify them early on. They are likely to have very different understandings of the same issue and it is one of the benefits of the process that a mix of views and perspectives are represented. Stakeholders can contribute to the process in a number of different ways such as being involved in a governance group, commenting on the planned dialogue process and looking at materials being sent to public participants. They can also attend the dialogue events to be drawn on for 'expert' information when needed.

#### Typical stakeholders to involve in a dialogue:

- **Decision makers/ Policy makers/ Service managers** – It is crucial to involve stakeholders who have the ability to take the dialogue findings and act upon them, and who can make changes on the back of what the public have said. Much of the value of dialogue stems from decision

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<sup>2</sup> Sciencewise is a BIS funded programme which helps policy makers commission and use public dialogue involving science and technology.

makers hearing directly from the public participants, and best practice suggests that dialogue should not proceed unless there is a commitment from decision makers to get actively involved in attending the events.

- **Front line experts** – It is worth thinking about involving those currently delivering a similar or related policy or service. They will be able to provide advice on the realities of delivery and how potential options might, or might not, work on the ground.
- **Enabling organisations/ sectors** – There will often be organisations (potentially from other sectors – public, private and charitable) who can make important contributions to the dialogue design and the interpretation of results.
- **Topic specialists** – including academics or think tanks - essentially people who are well versed in the policy area and familiar with the research around it. This will also include people with wellbeing research expertise.

## Participant recruitment

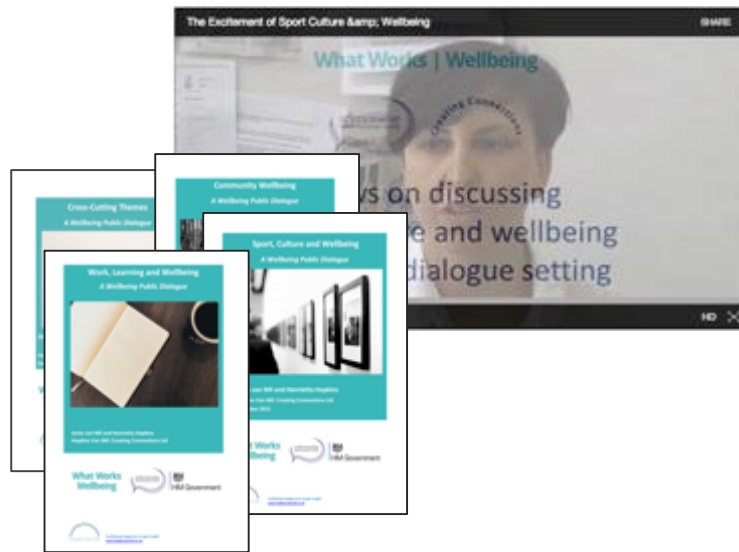
You will need to recruit members of the public to take part in your dialogue and the selection criteria you use will be determined by what you are trying to achieve. The aim is not to recruit a large sample of people – this is not quantitative research for which sample size matters. For most dialogues it is typical to recruit 15-20 people per session, possibly in a few different locations if this is important. It is also important to ensure you get the right type and/or mix of people, thinking about things like age, gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity, occupation, geographical location as appropriate, and other aspects more specific to the area you are investigating. For example it might be important whether or not participants are active in their community, or are users of a particular service. So a ‘purposive sampling’ approach is most suitable rather than probabilistic sampling which is commonly used in surveys.



Once the background characteristics of participants have been decided it might be possible for you to recruit participants yourself or through a trusted third party such as a local authority or a charity. It is more usual, however, to use professional contractors to identify and recruit participants for you according to the specification you provide. This would normally be handled by your dialogue contractor – but if you are planning on running the process in-house and don’t feel comfortable with this aspect, then the Market Research Society (MRS) has a number of fieldwork partners listed on their [website](#) who can help with recruitment for you. It is usual, and also good practice, to offer incentives to participants – typically small payments for taking part. There are ways of being creative about this, for example, the incentive might, in part, be a visit to a nice location (a town hall or public building) in which the dialogue events take place, so this is not an expensive part of the process, especially given dialogues are typically run with small groups of people.

## Communicating the results

Dialogue is a *qualitative* process – in other words the interest lies in what people say: their ideas, their reactions, their reflections on the issues they are discussing. Some will want, and expect, *quantitative* conclusions and will be interested in, for example, the relative numbers of people supporting or opposing a decision. This is not possible through dialogue. It is worth considering this in the final report to ensure readers understand the robustness of the dialogue process and the clear distinction between qualitative and quantitative research, so that the results are not mis-represented. If quantitative findings are required then dialogue is not the right technique to use.



One of the best ways to convey results is to carry out ‘vox pop’ interviews with participants during the process which can be embedded in final reports. These can be particularly vivid in communicating values and motivations related to an issue, especially when personalised through a wellbeing lens.

## 6. What does it involve?

Every dialogue project will differ in some respect but they all have some common steps and stages. These steps are outlined in the process diagram below which is based on best practice and lessons learned from previous public dialogues. While it might appear a lot of work, remember it will need to be tailored to your own needs - some processes may require less work - but these are the steps which should always be considered. Furthermore there is specialist advice and support on hand to help with some of the more technical stages, such as writing a business case for resources to conduct a dialogue. The most specialised and resource intensive phases are the design, delivery and reporting ones, for which it is usual to bring in some external expertise.



## More detail on each stage

This section expands on the process diagram of what is involved in a wellbeing dialogue and provides a little more information on each stage, pointing to resources and further information where available.

### Explore

- **Read as much of this guide as you need to then talk to a specialist**

There is plenty of expertise available to support you in understanding wellbeing dialogues. Talk to a dialogue specialist at, or recommended by Sciencewise, or to the What Works Centre for Wellbeing for wellbeing advice (see [contacts](#)).

- **Decide whether a dialogue is suitable for your needs**

Will your project benefit from a wellbeing dialogue and is it the most appropriate tool for engagement? Check whether your policy ticks one or more of the [guideline criteria](#) and/or explore the different [options for engagement](#).

- **If you are already proceeding with a dialogue consider adding a wellbeing dimension**

If you are already proceeding with a dialogue then adding a wellbeing dimension to the public engagement events could very much enhance the quality of engagement and the value of your outputs. The benefits of adding a wellbeing dimension have already been outlined in earlier sections of this guide. In practice it means building some exercises into the events and this [section](#) explains how to go about it. Case studies of wellbeing dialogues are available [here](#).

### Plan

- **Determine some clear objectives for the dialogue**

Identify what you want to achieve through public dialogue – what is your objective? What specifically do you want to have – information, advice, opinion, ideas – at the end of the process that you did not have at the beginning? What influence will this have? What decision process will the results support?

- **Talk to stakeholders and determine whether there is broader support**

Engage stakeholders and ensure there is appetite for a dialogue amongst them. Most important to engage at an early stage are those you would envisage being on your ‘Oversight Group’ and who will oversee the project from start to finish. The group will include a mixture of internal customers for the results of the process (the decision makers - those people who will be able to take the findings away and act upon them) and external or independent experts. Previous dialogues have found that the involvement of this group early on is critical to success, and you will probably want to reach a shared understanding at this point about what the primary objectives for the dialogue are – are there any trade-offs in priorities? It might be helpful to agree upon the following questions:

- What is the relevant policy context?
- What is the primary research question? Are there other issues which it would be interesting to explore as well?
- What current or future decisions or processes may be influenced by the public’s views on this topic?
- What can the public add? (That is, what can they tell you that you don’t already know from

other research?)

- What can a 'wellbeing lens' add? (That is, what is the relevance of wellbeing to the topic?)

- **Develop a business case for resources (a Sciencewise specialist can help)**

Once you have a clear objective and stakeholder support, work out whether you have the necessary resources in terms of time, money and expertise in-house to deliver it. You might need some external expertise to deliver the technical stages of the dialogue – sampling design and recruitment, event facilitation and results synthesis. In such a case you will likely need to develop a business case for resources. Sciencewise provides a helpful template for constructing a business case for resources [here](#); this is particularly relevant if you are bidding for Sciencewise funding to support the dialogue – but it can also help you construct an internal case.

## Manage

- **Appoint a project manager or lead**

When you have approval, appoint an in-house project manager. This does not need to be a full time job or require a formal recruitment process – this will of course be up to you and depend upon the complexity of the project – but it might be that there's an existing member of staff who can take oversight of the project for its duration. He or she may require assistance and input from others, including contractors if necessary. This is typically a good research project for an analyst (social researcher) to manage.

- **Establish a project board to help to steer the project and key decisions**

Formally establish the 'Oversight Group' or governance structure, which might also include a smaller project sub-team. This is helpful both for independent oversight of objectives and methodology, development of contract briefs and management of dialogue contractors, if applicable. The group can also ensure the accuracy, rigour and balance of the information and other materials to be supplied to participants. Furthermore, it is a good way to involve those who need to 'buy-in' to the results to take action on them. The Oversight Group, project manager and contractor will meet periodically to monitor progress, results and to adapt the dialogue process as necessary.

- **Commission external dialogue contractor with help from specialist (if required)**

If you choose to use an external dialogue contractor, a dialogue specialist at Sciencewise can advise you on what you will need to consider when writing the specification and Invitation to Tender - Sciencewise provide an [example](#). You will also need to speak to your procurement department and build sufficient time into your project timetable to allow for the procurement process. For more information on the costs of using a contractor and the basic pros and cons compared to running the dialogue in-house, go to [FAQs](#).

## Design

- **Agree and finalise objectives and formulate clear policy questions**

Having a well-defined research question is key to focusing the dialogue and its design. A shared understanding of the primary objectives of the dialogue will have been agreed with key project partners early on, and now is the time to revisit them with whoever will be delivering the dialogue, to ensure they are actually deliverable through the process. If you are using a dialogue contractor they will be able to help you translate your objectives into carefully framed questions

to suit the dialogue process.

- **Agree purposive sample characteristics of participants**

You will need to agree the participant recruitment specification to ensure the selection criteria allows you to reach the right range of people for your objectives. There is more information on participant recruitment and some of the selection criteria you might want to think about [here](#). At this stage the objective is not to develop a statistically representative sample, but rather a purposive sample of the types of people whose values and motivations you wish to ascertain.

- **Design overall process - number of sessions and content, logistics etc.**

The dialogue process and methodology is usually designed by the project manager and/or dialogue contractor, with input and approval from the Oversight Group or similar, depending on your governance set-up. There will also need to be discussion around how to introduce the wellbeing dimension. More guidance on how to do this – including example exercises - and guidance on how to produce a ‘process plan’ can be found [here](#). This toolkit also includes links to more detailed information on facilitation skills and how to run a workshop – see [Resources](#).

## Deliver

- **Logistics - recruit participants, book venues, invite participants and stakeholders**

If you have recruited a dialogue contractor they will take care of the logistics for you, although your help might be required to make sure the right ‘experts’ and stakeholders are committed to attending the dialogue sessions. Participants will need to be recruited against the agreed criteria and invited to events.

At this stage you will also need to plan a venue, somewhere participants will feel at ease participating. Some stakeholders may need special assistance in order to participate on an equal footing. For example, consider what languages written materials should be translated into, ensure physical access to meeting places for people with disabilities, time meetings to enable parents with small children to attend, and hold meetings in different venues to reach certain cultural groups (e.g. religious centres).

- **Design and develop event materials and briefings**

This might include background reading and information for participants ahead of the sessions, presentations and discussion material to provide participants with the information they need on the day, and any other materials you require - for example to run wellbeing exercises. The technical appendices for the [2014](#) and [2015](#) dialogues are good examples of the kinds of materials and briefings that have been used for wellbeing dialogues in the past.

- **Run and transcribe events**

Depending on the route you’ve chosen, the dialogue process will be delivered by an external contractor and/or internal staff. Recording the sessions and making use of flip charts and post it notes to record discussion will help with transcription later. Remember to handle recording sensitively. Participants should be reminded that it is anonymous, both in the briefing they’re provided with beforehand and during the session, and given the opportunity to object.



## Report

- **Analyse and synthesise evidence - write reports**

When the dialogue meetings are complete the findings will need to be analysed and draft results produced. This is usually done by the project staff and/or the dialogue contractor. Careful thought needs to be given to the presentation of the report, keeping the intended audience in mind, and the type of reporting products agreed with project partners early on.

- **Share drafts and incorporate feedback**

The draft report will need to be put to the Oversight Group for comment, and feedback incorporated. The final report should then be approved by the Oversight Group as well as project staff and/or contractor (depending on who's producing the report), to ensure rigorous analysis and effective presentation.

- **Publish reports**

The final report will then be published according to what the Oversight Group agreed and importantly, shared with participants so they can see the outcome of their contributions. It is also usual to publish the dialogue materials and process plans alongside the report of the findings.

## Decision

- **Internal review of findings and decision on how to best make use of the findings**

Following the completion of the dialogue it is crucial that the findings are reviewed and consensus reached about the action that is going to be taken as a result. The whole point of dialogue is to improve the quality of decision making, so it's really important that the findings go on to have influence.

Previous dialogues have found this stage to be one of the most impactful and creative parts of the process, particularly if it is an internal meeting with key stakeholders to review the evidence. Creating a safe environment where the implications of the findings can be discussed freely by policy makers is essential to the success of this stage. If implemented well then the public's views and perspectives can help to challenge the status quo, stimulate creativity, generate new ideas and support decision making.

- **Feedback on 'what happened next' to participants.**

Ideally, you would follow up with participants to provide an update on what's happened as a result of the dialogue and the impact it had – typically 6 months after the events.

- **Post project review and evaluation of project (if joint project with Sciencewise)**

As with most projects, it is helpful following a dialogue to conduct a final project review meeting to reflect upon what worked well and what didn't – and if the project is jointly resourced by Sciencewise this is a requirement. Sciencewise provide a helpful framework for assessing the quality of your dialogue process which can be found [here](#).

## 7. How to build wellbeing in?

The previous section focused on what is involved in a public dialogue and provided pointers to resources on how to conduct one. This section focuses on what is unique about wellbeing dialogues and how you can build wellbeing into the process.

“The dialogue already provides further evidence that there is a lot to be gained from putting wellbeing at the heart of policymaking.” – **URSUS, 2015 wellbeing dialogue evaluation**

There are various tools and techniques which you can use to explore the wellbeing dimensions of your policy with participants, and here we describe some of those used in the 2014 and 2015 wellbeing dialogues designed and delivered by Hopkins Van Mil. These are examples and your dialogue sessions should of course be designed with your objectives and policy question in mind – so you will need to tailor the exercises to suit your needs. The exercises that follow are designed to get participants to think deeply about an issue as it relates to people’s lives and experiences, and the impact on communities.

In building wellbeing evidence into your dialogue it is also worth noting that expertise and advice on how to go about doing this is available, particularly from the What Works Centre for Wellbeing. So this section provides a flavour of what can be done but in practice, it is worth getting some advice.

### Present wellbeing evidence to participants

Presenting participants with some of the evidence around wellbeing as it relates to the policy area in question helps them become familiar with the concept. There are two types of wellbeing evidence you might want participants to consider, depending on the topic area to be discussed. The first is general, population-level evidence which indicates what kinds of things are important to wellbeing, for example social relationships or job security. There are a number of relevant documents which you can draw from as necessary, although this selection is by no means exhaustive:

<a href="#">Wellbeing evidence for policy: A review</a>	This document by the New Economics Foundation introduces the evidence. The review divides the literature into different policy areas and summarises the relationships between the relevant factors and wellbeing. The policy areas include; the economy, social relationships and community, health, the local environment, education and care.
<a href="#">Third European Quality of Life Survey – Quality of life in Europe: Subjective wellbeing</a>	This report from the European Commission highlights the most interesting and policy relevant findings from the European Quality of Life Survey (2011-12). It reports on inequalities in wellbeing across Europe, identifies the determinants of high and low wellbeing and explores some of the protective factors.

<a href="#">Wellbeing at work, A review of the Literature</a>	This report by NEF summarises the evidence on the factors that influence employee wellbeing at work.
<a href="#">Wellbeing and Policy, Commissioned by the Legatum Institute</a>	This report explores how wellbeing analysis can be usefully applied to policy. It looks at how to define and measure wellbeing and the factors that affect it.
<a href="#">Do we really know what makes us happy?</a>	A review of the economic literature on the factors associated with subjective wellbeing.
<a href="#">What Works Centre for Wellbeing website</a>	Compiles some of the key documents and research on wellbeing.

Secondly, if a specific intervention is being considered, it is worth looking at evaluations of that intervention, or similar interventions, to assess whether wellbeing data was measured – and then present this to participants. Given that wellbeing data is not always available, it may be useful in some cases to present mental or physical health measures, which are more often available. Wellbeing is of course a much broader measure of quality of life, but health is an important dimension and can provide some useful context for discussion. It should be made very clear to participants in materials and presentations if health and mental health impacts of interventions, not wellbeing, are being presented.

During the [2014](#) and [2015](#) dialogues, presentations introducing the concept of wellbeing and the evidence around how it related to each policy area were used, in addition to evidence around different interventions and their effect on wellbeing. The technical appendices to the reports include the presentations and are very useful examples.

## Follow good practice guidelines for running an effective dialogue process



It is very important for participants to be sent some ground rules in advance of a dialogue workshop, setting out expectations of each participant and the group as a whole. The ‘do no harm’ principle is important to keep at the front of everyone’s mind. For example in the 2014 wellbeing dialogue on loneliness, participants were provided with contact details for a range of organisations (such as the Samaritans) who could provide support if people needed it.

As a minimum, it is recommended that the design of the session(s) include a well-researched process plan. Figure 3 below provides some guidelines on what this might include.

**Figure 3: Guide to a dialogue process plan**

**A dialogue process plan could include:**

- **A warm-up exercise.** For a round 1 wellbeing dialogue this might include: *What is the best thing that has happened to you this week?* This models the process for the dialogue, allows participants to get to know each other and their facilitator and provides a moment to begin to think about the dialogue content. For a round 2 follow-up event, a warm-up helps to get people back into the subject matter by asking about what they have thought about as a result of attending the first workshop and/ or if they've heard anything (in the news for example) in the intervening days/weeks which has reminded them of the previous discussions.
- **Presentations and case studies** to provide contextual information. It helps if they are simple, visual and in plain English. No more than 3 points to a slide is a good rule of thumb. Remember that public participants may have little or no previous knowledge of the issue and wellbeing issues may need to be handled sensitively.
- A number of **well-thought through exercises** to enable participants to reflect individually and collectively on the subject matter,
  - Using post-it notes for individual thoughts
  - Using flip charts to record group thinking.
- **Open questions** to provoke thought. Example questions for a wellbeing dialogue include:
  - To what extent was the quality of your life affected by this experience?
  - How would you describe the current barriers to living your life well?
  - What are the most memorable experiences (positive/ negative/ neutral) you have had in your life?
  - What effect have these experiences had on your wellbeing? On the wellbeing of your family and friends?
  - If you were describing this event to your best friend (your doctor/ your children/ your partner etc...), what would you say?
  - What did you learn from these experiences?
  - To what extent does it matter whether or not you had freedom to choose your own course of action?
  - How have you/ your community/ your family bounced back from difficult times?
- **Specialists on hand** to answer specific contextual questions throughout.
- **A meaningful conclusion to end the session**, with participants reflecting back on what they have discussed and specialists responding with their thoughts.

For examples of process plans, those used for the [2014](#) and [2015](#) wellbeing dialogues are included in the technical appendices. They also include examples of all the various materials and resources used.

## Specific exercises to introduce wellbeing into the dialogue

## Orientation

This is about getting participants familiar and comfortable with the concept of wellbeing. The way you frame wellbeing may be different depending on the policy area you're considering, and it is worth thinking carefully about how you introduce the concept to participants. Some may not have heard the term before and they will need to process what it means to them.

It can be helpful to use proxy terms such as:

- Living life well
- Quality of life
- Being the best you can be.



To help participants think through the concept there are various frameworks which can be used or adapted for use. All the examples given below are taken from previous dialogues, and are the result of a design process based on a thorough research of the wellbeing evidence and literature. It is important to recognise that each dialogue is unique. Your dialogue might build upon different literature and research, depending upon the specific area you are investigating and the questions you want answered - and these frameworks cannot necessarily be imposed. However they are good examples of how wellbeing frameworks have been adapted and utilised in dialogue. The examples include:

## NEF's 5 Ways to Wellbeing:

During the 2014 Loneliness dialogue participants were asked to describe a place which had been designed to maximise the [5 ways to wellbeing](#), helping them to formulate their thinking. See Annex C1 for the process.



**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:** Basic/Safety/Belonging/Self-esteem/Fulfilment

During the 2015 work, learning and wellbeing dialogue participants were asked to think about their different needs at work and in learning, and categorise them from basic needs through to self-actualisation. This encouraged them to think about what ‘thriving’ looked like and led onto a conversation about whose responsibility it was to ensure these needs were met – resulting in some tangible findings for policy makers. See Annex C2 for the process.

## Self-determination theory

This framework was used in the 2015 sports, culture and wellbeing dialogue and was presented to participants early on to help frame discussion in wider theories about wellbeing, and aid their understanding of the concept. Participants were asked in what ways physical and cultural activities

could help people live their lives well and their responses were then grouped accordingly under the different headings - autonomy, relatedness or competence - helping participants understand the relationships between sport/culture and wellbeing. See Annex C3 for the process.



### Integrated Capabilities Framework

The Integrated Capabilities Framework (Hodgett and Clark, 2011) is designed for investigating individual and community wellbeing in multicultural settings and is built on insights from three different perspectives for studying wellbeing – the capability approach, the livelihoods approach, and the chronic poverty approach. It focuses on the full range of capabilities different people have reason to value, rather than resources, recognises that wellbeing is multidimensional and that the dynamics of wellbeing change over time. The framework informed much of the 2015 community wellbeing dialogue. An introduction can be found [here](#). For more information see [contacts](#).

### Ideation

The wellbeing dialogues run in 2014 found that whilst dialogues were a potentially useful stimulus for new ideas and perspectives amongst policy-makers and frontline workers, participants themselves did not produce particularly innovative solutions to problems. Presenting participants with some proposed policy options or at least ideas would be the suggested approach to address this, allowing them to develop a broader set of options and/or adaptations of existing ones. Some exercises which have been used to explore ideas in previous dialogues are listed below.

### Visualising the ideal



This exercise involves asking people to visualise, through drawing on a piece of card, an ideal situation (ideal community/ ideal workplace/ ideal wellbeing message for them). This can then be used as a springboard for discussion around what needs to be in place for the ideal to become a reality, or what the barriers are to people reaching it. During the 2014 dialogue on loneliness, participants were asked to describe an ideal community which had been designed to maximise the

5 ways to wellbeing. This elicited ideas about interventions and actions which could have an impact on loneliness and boost wellbeing. Annex C1 includes details of the process.

### Thinking Hats

The Thinking Hats exercise can be very useful in trying to get people to think about every angle of an issue. It encourages participants to wear someone else's 'hat' and take a negative, positive or gap filling perspective on the evidence so that it can be reviewed from all standpoints. This can be used to consider ideas from all different angles – for example from the point of view of how it would impact wellbeing positively (wearing one hat) or negatively (wearing another hat) – what would be the trade offs? See Annex C4 for an example.

### *Wellbeing across the life course*

This is about getting participants to think about their life experiences and how they experience changes at different life stages.

#### **Timeline**

The timeline exercise asks participants to think about positive and negative lived experiences across their life course, with the facilitator using prompts to encourage an exploration of the wellbeing issues. This exercise can be used to test how participants' lived experience fits with the dialogue research question/objective. See Annex C5 for an example.



### *Wellbeing Drivers*

A checklist of wellbeing drivers and domains (factors which are important to quality of life) can be used to compare options and make a simple assessment of whether they will be wellbeing positive, negative or neutral. This checklist also enables consideration of whether some of these important aspects of wellbeing can be actively 'designed in' to the policy to enhance the overall impact. The list of drivers is included at Annex B.



## 8. Case Studies

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### Wellbeing dialogues in 2014

Three wellbeing dialogues were run in 2014 covering loneliness, community rights and increasing the incomes of low earners. The aim was to involve members of the public in looking at how wellbeing could be used to develop better policy. During each of the dialogues, members of the public were presented with a challenge and asked to consider high wellbeing solutions. A short case study on the process follows. You can also read the more detailed [case study](#) from Sciencewise or the [full report](#) on the findings.

#### *The dialogue process:*

The project was led by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and Hopkins Van Mil (HVM), and supported by Sciencewise and Cabinet Office. It consisted of a series of workshops with 137 specially recruited members of the public, and workshops with 30 front-line workers to consider the feasibility of ideas emerging from the events. Policy makers attended the workshops. The results were published in a report.

For each of the three policy areas, two rounds of workshops - each with about 25 participants - were held in two different locations; a total of around 50 participants per policy theme, with each group meeting twice. The two rounds were held two-three weeks apart. The locations for each policy area were as follows: loneliness workshops were held in Bedford and Leicester; increasing incomes workshops in Birmingham and Pontypool; and community rights in London and Birkenhead.

After the first round of public workshops, the results were collated and reflections sought both from the relevant policy-makers and from external topic specialists, to consider which areas would be most interesting to follow-up in Round 2.

After Round 1, there were also three workshops with frontline workers – relevant stakeholders such as Jobcentre Plus staff, local businesses and community organisers. These participants were presented with the ideas from Round 1, and asked to consider their feasibility and the possible impacts on their work.

In Round 2, the same participants were re-convened. They were presented with the outcomes of Round 1 and then they interrogated and challenged their own ideas further.

The final results of the dialogue were reported by the dialogue contractors, HVM. NEF then produced an overarching report which summarised the dialogue findings and included conclusions and

recommendations on when and how the public should be engaged in the use of wellbeing in policy-making. NEF's report concluded that:

*"Introducing a wellbeing lens helped participants engage with policy issues in a meaningful way. We recommend its use in public dialogue at an early stage of the policy cycle, when challenging objectives and assumptions is most useful. We also recommend its use with other engagement techniques at later stages of the cycle."*

The dialogue results were publicised extensively by NEF, Sciencewise and HVM, and shared across government departments.

## Wellbeing dialogues in 2015

Building on the public dialogue into wellbeing in 2014, the What Works Centre for Wellbeing ran another, delivered by Hopkins Van Mil and supported by Sciencewise and Public Health England. This time the aim of the dialogue was to help the Centre shape their work programmes into three areas of our lives:

- work and adult learning,
- the wider community, and
- participation in cultural and sports activities.

Discussions focussed around what the public thought the priorities for the Centre should be in each of these areas, and aimed to inspire new ideas for supporting and improving wellbeing. The full reports and a summary of the findings by the What Works Centre for Wellbeing can be found [here](#).

### *The dialogue process:*

The dialogue process was delivered by Hopkins Van Mil (HVM) and steered by an Oversight Group with representation from the What Works Centre for Wellbeing, Cabinet Office and Sciencewise and more than 16 other organisations, including government departments, arms' length bodies, academics and NGOs. Three sub-groups also brought together about half a dozen specialists for each of the three main themes of the dialogue: community wellbeing; sport and culture; and work and learning. The oversight group and sub-groups were closely involved in the framing of the dialogue to ensure that it was policy relevant, balanced and accessible.

The dialogue involved a total of 12 workshops and 96 members of the public. For each of the three themes, two rounds of workshops – each with 18-20 participants – were held in two different locations, with each group meeting twice. Each set of dialogues involved two full Saturdays a month apart. The locations for each theme were as follows: community wellbeing workshops in Bristol and Belfast, sport and culture in London and South Tyneside, and work and learning in Cardiff and Falkirk. Public

participants were carefully selected to be representative of each location and a range of levels of involvement with their communities, sport and culture, and work and learning.

For each round of workshops day 1 focused on introducing participants to the wellbeing theme and the factors which contribute to or prevent wellbeing. Day 2 focused on a more in-depth exploration of wellbeing in the context of participants' lives; whether and how individual and government (or other) actions could affect wellbeing; potential direct and indirect use of the What Works Centre for Wellbeing; and the format, style, channels and messengers that they and others might be most receptive to. More than 20 specialists from national and local government, academic teams and local projects attended the events and presented policies and case study projects which showed how communities and individuals can improve their wellbeing.

A range of methods was used in each workshop. These included facilitated small table discussions, plenary input through presentations and question and answer sessions, individuals recording their thoughts on post-it notes collated and explored by the facilitators, and carousel sessions. Participants also represented their own experiences by drawing pictures, for example of events that had affected them or of how strong communities might look.

The dialogue findings were reported by the contractors, HVM, who produced 4 separate reports – one on each theme and a separate report on the cross cutting findings. The findings were then incorporated into the work plans for the What Works Centre for Wellbeing, ensuring the public's views and priorities are reflected in their work going forward.

## 9. FAQs

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This section presents a few commonly asked questions together with answers.

### How many dialogues are needed and how many people per dialogue?

The number of dialogues and number of participants needed really depends on what you are trying to achieve. Dialogue is always a designed process – each one is different and tailored to its own purposes. The number of participants involved also depends on who you want to talk to. If you want a wide range of participants then you clearly need more people than if you just want to talk to a very small, specialist group. It is important to highlight that dialogue results are not quantitative and a robust representative sample is not required, rather 20 people per event is more indicative.

Some dialogues might involve two rounds, with the dialogue group meeting more than once. In these cases, lessons learned from previous dialogues indicate it's important to allow sufficient time between the rounds to reflect upon the findings from Round 1 and feed them into the design for Round 2. The [2014 wellbeing dialogues](#) are an example of a two round process.

### What resources are required to run a dialogue?

Time, money and expertise. How much a dialogue costs depends on the scale and complexity of the process; the extent of the materials required for background information; and how many participants are required, how many times they meet and for how long. There is plenty of available expertise on both dialogues and wellbeing to help you estimate the resources you will need. You can find the contacts [here](#).

### How much of your time will it involve?

It depends on whether you have a specialist contractor on board, but the time required to do it properly can be under-estimated. Indeed, if you are recruiting a specialist contractor the length of the procurement process itself will need factoring in. You will also need to allow sufficient time for planning, and securing buy-in from stakeholders.

### How much will it cost and making the financial case?

A dialogue process requires an investment of time and expertise to ensure the results are both relevant and robust. If you intend to use a specialist contractor Sciencewise provide some [guidance on likely costs](#), which can range from £15,000-£250,00 depending on the depth and breadth of engagement required. There are also some helpful [case studies](#) of different dialogue projects, what they've involved and the cost. If you choose to use a contractor you will still need to consider the in-house costs, which could include 20-50% of a project manager's time for the duration of the project and coordinating Oversight Group and other project team meetings. Activities such as reviewing dialogue materials and process plans, and attending the dialogue sessions themselves/working with the contractor to make

sure the right people are there will also take some time. Having said that these can all be relatively light touch and scaled to meet the demands of the project.

Some guidance on making the financial case for public engagement can be found [here](#).

### Can it be done without a specialist contractor – what are the pros and cons?

Yes – providing there are sufficient resources of time and expertise in-house. Some of the basic pros and cons of using a contractor are as follows:

Pros of using a contractor	Cons of using a contractor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specialist dialogue expertise and experience applied to your project</li><li>• Frees up your time to focus on the application and use of the results</li><li>• Have an objective, independent organisation leading the dialogue which is detached from the policy under consideration.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost</li><li>• Time and resource commitment up front to set up contract</li></ul>

### How do I engage a contractor?

Engaging a contractor involves drawing up an [Invitation To Tender](#) setting out exactly what you want to achieve, allowing contractors to bid for the project by setting out what they propose in terms of methodology and participation. A list of dialogue specialists you might like to consider can be found at Annex A.

### Will a contractor understand how to embed wellbeing in? If not, how to help them?

Contractors are process experts and their job is to design a process of dialogue that will deliver answers to the questions you ask. They will use whatever experts you suggest to help them deliver against the project brief. In the Invitation to Tender you can provide them with details on how to build wellbeing into the dialogue from [here](#) and connect them to wellbeing experts from [here](#).

### What skills are required to manage a dialogue in-house?

If you're running a dialogue in-house it would be helpful to have the following skills represented amongst the team:

First, **design skills**: getting clarity on the purposes of the dialogue and what needs to be achieved – often a more difficult task than it sounds – and designing a dialogue process along with the right

methodologies to deliver the objectives. A particularly technical aspect of the process design is participant sampling and recruitment.

Secondly, **communication and facilitation skills**: experience working with groups of public participants – often with many differences of age, outlook and opinion among them – to generate answers to the questions posed.

Thirdly, **support skills**: providing the managerial, administrative and logistical support necessary to deliver the dialogue – including organising the events, venues and participant invitations.

Fourthly, **analytical and reporting skills**: making sense of what participants say and reporting it objectively, in a way that is both rigorous and engaging.

Finally, and specifically to dialogues on wellbeing, it would be useful for there to be some experience within the delivery team of **wellbeing science**, or support from an expert.

### How long does it take before getting results?

Most dialogue processes using an Oversight Group and external contractors take at least six months from inception to delivery and evaluation. Smaller processes using in-house expertise could take less time providing the necessary resources are available. The quality of the conversation and taking the time to really explore the issue is all part of the value of the dialogue process.

### What will the results look like and how can they be used?

The form the results take is a design issue and should be decided at the outset – not least because form and function are inter-dependent. If you want the results to inform young people, for example, then it might be better to produce a 15-minute video than write a 200-page report.

## 10. Resources

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This section includes some resources you might find useful for further information. Much of the detail is included in the Annex.

### List of contacts (May 2016)

Wellbeing/dialogue expertise	What Works Centre for Wellbeing	Dawn Snape, Head of Evidence and Analysis - Tel 07773030896, <a href="mailto:Dawn.Snape@whatworkswellbeing.org">Dawn.Snape@whatworkswellbeing.org</a> ,
	Sciencewise	<a href="mailto:Sciencewise@bis.gsi.gov.uk">Sciencewise@bis.gsi.gov.uk</a>
	New Economics Foundation	Tel 0207 820 6300, <a href="mailto:info@neweconomics.org">info@neweconomics.org</a>
	Dr. Susan Hodgett, Ulster University	Capabilities approach to wellbeing <a href="mailto:sl.hodgett@ulster.ac.uk">sl.hodgett@ulster.ac.uk</a>
Recruiters	The Market Research Society (MRS) has a number of fieldwork partners listed on their <a href="#">website</a> .	
Consultants	See Annex A for a list of dialogue consultants.	
Evaluators	Sciencewise provide <a href="#">guidance</a> on contractors that could be invited to tender for a dialogue evaluation. Evaluators meet a set of criteria set out by Sciencewise but it should be noted that this does not imply recommendation by Sciencewise, and the list is not exhaustive.	

### Project guidance and templates from Sciencewise

Sciencewise is the UK's national centre for public dialogue in policy involving science and technology issues, and the programme provides co-funding and specialist advice to help Government Departments and Agencies develop and commission public dialogue. The Sciencewise [website](#) includes some helpful guidance and tools, including an example business case template, example invitation to tender and guidelines for running meetings and workshops.



## Other dialogue toolkits and guidance

Dialogue toolkits	<a href="#">Dialogue by Design handbook</a> - This guide includes lots of material on public engagement methods more generally, particularly the design factors; why you're doing it, who should be involved and how to do it.
	<a href="#">Oliver Escobar, Public Dialogue and Deliberation</a> - This is more than a toolkit and specifically about dialogic communication.
Guidance on how to run workshops, general principles and facilitation skills	<a href="#">Sciencewise guiding principles</a> - Outlines Sciencewise's guiding principles for public dialogue on science and technology related issues. They provide the basis for Sciencewise funded projects and useful best practice guidelines which can be applied to any public dialogue.
	<a href="#">Sciencewise guidelines for running meetings and workshops</a> – 10 key points.
	<a href="#">Public Engagement Training: the handbook</a> - On how to run public engagement events and facilitation skills.
	<a href="#">A guide for training public dialogue facilitators</a> - Provides instructions on how to train dialogue facilitators and is a very useful guide to facilitation skills.

## Wellbeing Drivers

Simple wellbeing checklist for options comparison. See Annex B.

## Wellbeing Action Frameworks and examples of use in previous dialogues

See Annex C. The section on '[How to build wellbeing in?](#)' provides context.

- Five Ways to Wellbeing and Children's Six Ways to Wellbeing; C1
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs; Annex C2
- Self-determination theory; Annex C3
- Thinking Hats exercise; Annex C4
- Timeline exercise; Annex C5

## Wellbeing policy development exercises

Simple exercises to explore the wellbeing dimension of a policy or service - can be found [here](#) and include:

- Stakeholder wellbeing analysis
- Wellbeing time analysis
- Wellbeing perspectives analysis
- Five ways to wellbeing analysis
- Wellbeing actions checklist

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