2 What matters for wellbeing?

When you’ve had high wellbeing, what did it feel like?

What contributed to your positive wellbeing?
For individuals

• it’s about **feeling good** and **functioning well**

• it’s about **feeling confident, satisfied, safe and supported**

• whether our lives have **meaning** and **purpose**

• it’s **different** for different people
Personal characteristics
including personality traits and other individual differences which are both hereditary and environmental

Childhood experiences
including emotional health, family conditions & schooling affect us throughout our lives
Health

mental and physical health, disability and resilience to changes in health

Financial security

including how well we are managing with our money, as well as debt or uncertainty
Where we live

Local area deprivation, access to services, demographics, as well safety and opportunities

What we do

employment (especially good work), how we use our leisure time - including volunteering
Autonomy, participation and control
The ability to influence the things that matter to us

Community
How we feel about our neighbours and our place in our communities, and whether we feel that we belong and trust other people
How will your strategy, policy or framework seek to maximise wellbeing?

• **Health** – physical and mental, and resilience to change
• **Relationships** – especially close family support, but also friendships and social connections
• **Work and employment** – but also good quality jobs
• **Income and financial security** – especially low income and debt
• The **things we do** – including leisure, sport and volunteering
• **Communities** – our neighbours, trusting others and belonging
• **Autonomy, participation and control** – whether we feel we can influence the things that matter to us
Determinants of subjective wellbeing, based on quantitative analysis of effect sizes.

**Greater negative link with wellbeing**
- Loneliness
- Poor health

**Mixed evidence or no effect**
- Having a child

**Greater positive link with wellbeing**
- Someone to rely on
- Partner relationship

**Personal**
- Basic needs not met

**Wider environment & play**
- Air pollution
- Noise pollution

**Work**
- Unemployed
- Low quality work
- Longer commute

**Light green**
- Music
- Physical activity
- Green space
- Trust

**Dark green**
- Years of education
- High quality work
- Employed
Wellbeing changes over life

![Bar chart showing life satisfaction by age range, with data from ONS.](chart.png)
Pleasure and purpose

**Pleasure**
- good feelings
- positive experiences
- ‘savouring the moment’
- conscious awareness of experience

**Purpose**
- meaning
- contribution & role identity
- ‘the things I do are worthwhile’
Feelings of **pleasure** and **purpose** are important to wellbeing.

But the **balance** of those dimensions varies across our lives.

For **teenagers**, pleasure seems to be more important to wellbeing than purpose.

For people in **middle age**, the opposite is true – feeling that our lives have meaning, and the things we do are worthwhile is important.
What matters for our sense of purpose?

Meaning and purpose as a core aspect of wellbeing
Findings

What matters most...
Health
- How we feel about our health

What we do
- Being employed in a meaningful job
- Employment sector - health and social work
- Spending leisure time outdoors and leisure satisfaction
- Belonging to a religion
- Moderate to vigorous physical activity at least weekly
- Engagement in cultural activities and membership of organisations

On average in 2019/20, purpose was...
- 7.86 point score nationally
- Very low-low for 3.8% of adults
- Higher for women than men
- Highest for individuals in late 60s and early 70s
- Lowest for over 85s and low for 18 - 24yr-olds
Who has the lowest wellbeing?

People with the poorest personal wellbeing are most likely to have at least one of the following characteristics or circumstances:

- self-report very poor or poor health
- be economically inactive with long-term illness or disability
- be middle-aged
- be single, separated, widowed or divorced
- be renters
- have no or basic education

What matters in communities?

**People**
- Close relationships and friendships
- Strong networks of support to meet different needs
- Feelings of trust and belonging

**Place**
- Conditions that enable people to flourish – access to services, assets, facilities
- Opportunities to enable people to flourish – jobs, education, leisure
- Intangible cultural heritage, shared practices or history
- Sense of safety in the community

**Power**
- Voice and representation
- A sense of control or influence over things which are important
- Inclusive communities where nobody feels excluded
Key ingredient in our policy making: trust

- Trust in the people around us affects how we feel about ourselves and **our place in our community**
- **Trust in government and institutions** explains variations in wellbeing between countries
- It affects **how we behave** and **who we listen to**
- Living in a high-trust environment makes people **more resilient to adversity** (including effects of **discrimination**, **ill-health** or **unemployment**)
- It helps those with **low wellbeing** most
What matters in the workplace?

- **Health**
  - Overall health
  - Healthy activities and recovery
  - Resilience
  - Nourishment/water
  - Exercise
  - Breaks/within work
  - Recovery
  - Physical problems from workplace

- **Security**
  - Work conditions
  - Financial security
  - Safety
  - Bullying/harassment
  - Confidence in future
  - Ability to withstand shock

- **Environment**
  - Physical and systems
  - Fairness
  - Identity with values
  - Facilities
  - Working patterns
  - Tools
  - Commute

- **Relationships**
  - Line manager
  - Others at work
  - Support
  - Respect
  - Personal investment
  - Communication
  - Support
  - Stretching and enabling growth
  - Atmosphere
  - Fairness
  - Change management

- **Purpose**
  - Engagement
  - Job quality
  - Accomplishment
  - Motivation
  - Ability to influence decisions
  - Workload
  - Use of skills
  - Job 'fit'
  - Competence
  - Career development/progression

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3. Measuring wellbeing impact
Measure your wellbeing impact
Online tool for developing a wellbeing evaluation

https://measure.whatworkswellbeing.org/
A step-by-step guide

1. What is wellbeing?
2. Introduction to wellbeing evaluation
3. Planning your wellbeing evaluation
4. Wellbeing measures and data
5. Choosing wellbeing measures
6. Gathering qualitative data
7. Analysing and interpreting your results
8. Wellbeing Measures Bank
Wellbeing Measures Bank
Searchable database of measures and tools

- Tested and widely used measures
- Advice on choosing the right measure
- Information on implementation and benchmarking
- A growing bank of measures
Workplace wellbeing can drive public wellbeing

Ripple effect

Good Corporate Citizenship