The State of Happiness

Can public policy shape people's wellbeing and resilience?

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About the Young Foundation

The Young Foundation combines creativity and entrepreneurship to tackle major social needs. We work on many different levels to achieve positive social change – including advocacy, research and policy influence as well as creating new organisations and running practical projects. The Young Foundation benefits from a long history of social research, innovation and practical action by the late Michael Young, once described as "the world's most successful social entrepreneur" who created more than 60 ventures which address social needs.

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The Local Wellbeing Project

The Local Wellbeing Project is a unique, three-year initiative to explore how local government can practically improve the happiness and wellbeing of its citizens. The project brings together the Young Foundation with three leading local authorities, Manchester City Council, Hertfordshire County Council and South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council; Professor Lord Richard Layard from the London School of Economics, and the Improvement and Development Agency for local government. The project is also backed by key central government departments.

Contents

Acknowledgements

1   Summary

Democratic governments have always been interested in actions that might increase the wellbeing of their citizens. But while in the past this was a broad and unfocused goal, today there is increasing evidence and understanding about what shapes wellbeing, from economics, psychology, philosophy and political science. There is also a growing body of knowledge and experience of how it can be measured.

Many initiatives around the world testify to the growing importance of wellbeing as an explicit goal of policy, including President Sarkozy's commission into measuring progress,[1] the growing reorientation of healthcare towards wellbeing in many countries, and moves by national governments including Canada, Australia and the UK to invest in different ways to measure wellbeing.[2,3] The recent recession might have been expected to diminish interest in wellbeing, which could have been seen as a luxury for times of plenty. Instead it has generated a sharper focus on what spending does to influence wellbeing, how to make people resilient and how to mitigate the factors that harm wellbeing.

However, serious work on policy options has lagged behind academic analysis of what causes happiness. There is still little solid experience of reshaping welfare, education and other fields of government action to promote wellbeing. The Local Wellbeing Project has been one attempt to fill the gap – a partnership between the Young Foundation, Professor Lord Richard Layard at London School of Economics (LSE), the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA), and three leading local authorities: Hertfordshire County Council, Manchester City Council, and South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council. It has shown that wellbeing can be made a practical policy goal, both nationally and locally, and that it provides a very different way of thinking about changing needs to traditional approaches.

The project has also provided a vehicle for looking at many of the different dimensions of wellbeing – including its overlaps with sustainability (and the tensions there are as well); the role of parenting and families; neighbourliness; and options for measurement. Annex 1 provides a comprehensive overview.

In this report we take a broader look at how a wellbeing focus can be integrated into public policy more systematically, and at what is known but also what is not known. We show that the language of wellbeing encompasses a range of different things, and that as the policy debate becomes more sophisticated it will differentiate between the different dimensions of wellbeing (happiness, fulfilment, life satisfaction) rather than seeing these as a single thing. We look at the challenges of measurement, and also suggest useful ways to measure wellbeing at a local level, emphasising that the greatest insights come from disaggregating data rather than aggregating it.

We also show where we think there is most potential for public policy to influence wellbeing – linking better understanding of wellbeing, and policies to promote it, with a more sophisticated view of future-readiness and the policies that are needed to promote resilience by reinforcing strengths and remedying vulnerabilities. This is becoming ever more important in the context of the recession and serious public spending constraints.

We also address the common arguments against taking wellbeing seriously. The first is that wellbeing is unknowable and unmeasurable. It is true that wellbeing

is difficult to measure. But work over the past few years by many of the world's leading statisticians has shown that wellbeing in all of its dimensions is not inherently harder to measure than economic prosperity, health or the environment (another report by the Young Foundation published in December 2009, 'Sinking and Swimming: Understanding Britain's unmet needs', shows in detail how the wellbeing of the population can be measured in many different dimensions).

A second set of arguments claims that public policy is inherently ill-suited to influencing wellbeing. Governments are poorly placed to understand wellbeing and their blunt powers and programmes are unlikely to influence it. There are certainly good reasons for believing that wellbeing should not be the *only* goal of policy. But there is strong crossnational evidence that wellbeing correlates fairly closely with particular forms of government, and, to a lesser extent, with the results of particular kinds of government policy. Given what we know, it would be very surprising if policy did not have a significant influence.

A third set of arguments claim that any overt attempts to influence wellbeing will fail, whether in individuals lives or in societies. As we show, there is some truth to this view: happiness is more often achieved as a side product of other goals rather than as an end in itself. But all of the policy measures set out here can be justified on grounds other than wellbeing. Any actions which were *only* justified as influencing wellbeing might indeed be suspect.

Finally, there are the arguments which point to the significant genetic influence on wellbeing and to the evidence that most people oscillate around a set point of happiness. Both sets of evidence at first glance suggest that public policy might have little impact. But crossnational evidence, again, suggests that, while there is a genetic influence on wellbeing and individuals tend to move around a set point, public policies can and do influence the overall distribution of wellbeing in a population, moving most people up (or down). In other words, average set points will tend to be higher in a nation (or a locality) with policies that support wellbeing.

What follows is a snapshot of a field in rapid development. The translation of analysis of wellbeing into policy is only beginning. But as we show in this report there are many dozens of practical projects underway, most below the radar of national government and the national media, that are trying to influence wellbeing.

These point to some priorities for policy, such as:

- lessons in schools to build up children's resilience
- health provision that gives as much weight to patient experience and wellbeing as to clinical outcomes (for example, through paying more attention to low level social supports)
- community policies that encourage neighbours to get to know each other

- parenting programmes that deliberately try to support parents' wellbeing as well as their childrens'
- planning, transport and school policies that encourage more exercise
- systematic support to isolated older people to help them create and maintain social networks
- transport and economic policies that encourage lower commuting times
- apprenticeships and other programmes for teenagers that strengthen psychological fitness.

These are just a few examples. Our hope is that the field will evolve and learn quickly both about what can, and what cannot, be achieved.

2   Introduction

Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life,
the whole aim and end of human existence
Aristotle

Democratic governments naturally try to promote a better life for their citizens. It is hard to imagine political parties being elected if they did not offer at least some prospect of improved wellbeing. And while government – central or local – cannot directly make us happier or more engaged, it does shape the economy, culture and society in which we live through policies and decisions on where to spend finite resources, and laws that regulate what can and cannot be done.

Government policies over the last few decades have primarily focused on promoting economic growth, ensuring a reasonable distribution of resources and opportunities, and protecting people from the major threats against which they cannot protect themselves.

But there has always been a parallel emphasis on wellbeing, from the 19th century utilitarians to 20th century liberalism and the socialism of figures such as Anthony Crosland.[4] Many believed that the emphasis on material growth would be temporary, and that once basic needs were met attention would turn to other things. In the 1930s Keynes wrote: 'assuming no important wars and no important increase in population, the *economic problem* may be solved, or be at least within sight of solution, within a hundred years. This means that the economic problem is not – if we look into the future – *the permanent problem of the human race*.'

Seventy years later the economic problem has not been solved, material scarcity continues to exist for a large proportion of the world's population. But in more prosperous countries it is no longer the central problem. Instead, other issues are equally important. These include crime and safety, health, learning and the environment. All now have an important dimension that is about wellbeing: how can healthcare make people happy as well as stopping sickness? How can education prepare people for a good and happy life?

This shift is a natural one for democracy. It has involved policy becoming more attuned to what the public cares about. In the past many policy fields were justified in instrumental terms. In the 19th century military prowess dominated, and issues as varied as education and public health had to be justified in terms of their impact on nations' relative military performance. In the 20th century economic prowess filled a similar position, and innumerable education policies, for example, had to be justified in terms of their impact on economic growth.

Today politicians and policy-makers can be more direct and more honest in describing wellbeing as a legitimate goal in itself. However, the policy tools for influencing wellbeing are at an early stage of development. Reliable measurements are fairly recent – which means that few policies have been tested for their impact on wellbeing.

This report describes the state of play in academic and practical knowledge about wellbeing, including the experience of the Local Wellbeing Project in the UK, one of the few programmes explicitly focused on influencing wellbeing across a range of policy fields. It also includes some UK and international examples that demonstrate the range of practical tests of wellbeing theory throughout the world. The report focuses on the key areas where the evidence is strongest, where there is most to learn from practical experience, and where public policy is likely have the greatest traction.

The **Local Wellbeing Project** – a partnership between the **Young Foundation**, **Professor Richard Layard** at the **LSE Centre for Economic Performance**, **IDeA**, and three leading local authorities: **Manchester City Council**, **South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council** and Hertfordshire County Council – began in 2006.

This ambitious programme aimed to find ways to accelerate local government's involvement in actions to increase wellbeing, through practical trials and adapting mainstream services.

*'Inspired by Lord Richard Layard and energised by the Young Foundation and colleagues in South Tyneside and Hertfordshire, we in **Manchester** have taken happiness very seriously. Being positive, having high aspirations, optimism that your aspirations can be achieved and the resilience to overcome the temporary setbacks are all attributes which we believe can make a big difference to the prospects of Manchester people, not least those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods. This is how we interpret wellbeing. It's taken some guts to try these ideas out through initiatives such as the Resiliency Programme for secondary school children, but we believe we are beginning to see the evidence that these approaches can make a difference to the bottom line of better tangible outcomes for local people.'*

– Geoff Little, Deputy Chief Executive, Manchester City Council

*'In **South Tyneside**, we are passionate about the role that culture and wellbeing plays for both individuals and communities. We have worked closely with local communities and national and international experts to identify what it is that gets in the way of wellbeing. We have developed an approach that we believe is right for the people of South Tyneside. We are grateful for the support of the Young Foundation and IDeA. We've also learned a huge amount by working with other experts, including Dr Martin Seligman of University of Pennsylvania and Lord Richard Layard, Founder-Director of the London School of Economics' Centre for Economic Performance. Our vision is to strengthen wellbeing and enhance our sense of place by inspiring and engaging people in a wide range of activity and by making the most of our world-class heritage, breathtaking natural assets, events and festivals. I would like to extend my personal thanks to those people who have made this happen - the local partners and practitioners who have made a real difference by delivering a range of services that have helped local people fulfil their potential and enjoy life to the full.'*

Councillor Tracey Dixon, Lead Member Culture and Wellbeing, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

*'**Hertfordshire County Council** has been really pleased to be involved in this ground breaking work. We believe that it has made a real difference to the lives of the children and young people that have participated in the*

initiative and plan to continue to develop the work further.'

Andrew Simmons, Deputy Director, Services for Young People, Hertfordshire County Council

Measures of wellbeing show that most members of the public are fairly content with their lives, and with their work. Crime has fallen in recent years, life expectancy has risen and measures of the quality of daily life have modestly improved in recent years, including neighbourliness and social capital. [5,6,7] However, levels of stress and anxiety have increased, as have some other measures of mental illness. Inequality has worsened, and there is growing concern about the wellbeing of children and young people who are experiencing new stresses and pressures to consume more and behave like 'mini adults' from a younger age.[8,9]

The work of researchers and academics on wellbeing – psychologists, health experts, social scientists, political philosophers and economists – is increasingly coming to the attention of policymakers and politicians across the political spectrum. The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit published a report on life satisfaction in 2002 surveying the state of the field.[10] More recently the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has set up its Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies with the participation of a glittering array of Nobel Prize winners.[11] French President Nicholas Sarkozy has recently proposed 10 'happiness' indicators for measuring French progress, including work-life balance, traffic congestion, mood, chores, recycling, gratification, insecurity, gender equality, tax and relationships.

'Quality of growth matters; not just quantity'

Gordon Brown, Prime Minister

'Wealth is about so much more than pounds or Euros or dollars can ever measure. It's time we admitted that there's more to life than money, and it's time we focused not just on GDP, but on GWB — general wellbeing… Wellbeing can't be measured by money or traded in markets. It can't be required by law or delivered by government. It's about the beauty of our surroundings, the quality of our culture, and above all the strength of our relationships. Improving our society's sense of wellbeing is, I believe, the central political challenge of our times.' [12]

David Cameron, Leader of Conservative Party

'Our current model of growth, based on material consumerism, needs to be replaced. The irresponsible lending that fuelled this growth is now causing misery to people across the country, saddled with debt they are struggling to repay. Forever buying more and more things does not improve our wellbeing and cannot be sustained with the Earth's finite resources. The economic crisis has forced a rethink of our financial systems'. [13]

Jo Swinson, Liberal Democrat MP, who chairs the All Party Parliamentary Group on Wellbeing Economics

This report sets out the key evidence about the ways that wellbeing can influence public policy. It looks at a number of fields, firstly through the lens of life experience, from early childhood, into education, to work, to parenting and then to older age; and secondly the factors that underpin quality of life for everyone whatever their life stage: health, the arts and culture, the environment and the community.

Many policy areas are now being rethought through the lens of wellbeing:

- changing school curriculums to promote emotional resilience, partly in response to evidence on the relatively poor wellbeing of children in Britain
- refocusing healthcare to emphasise patient experience and wellbeing as well as clinical interventions, particularly in relation to long-term conditions and the end of life
- shifting the balance of healthcare to better match the traditional emphasis on physical health with an emphasis on mental health and psychological fitness
- changing community development and planning policies to avoid measures that damage community connectedness, such as major roads that run through the middle of communities, and promoting initiatives that help build social networks
- emphasising policies to reduce fear of crime and promote safety as well as focusing on objective crime levels
- adjusting redistributional policies to reflect the impact of relative as well as absolute wealth and income on life satisfaction
- refocusing parenting programmes to emphasise parental wellbeing as well as children's wellbeing
- promoting activities with strong correlations with wellbeing, such as neighbourliness, volunteering, exercise and work in older age
- promoting the importance of participation in the arts and sports as much as spectating.

On all of these there is emerging evidence about what works: what directly increases wellbeing, and how improved wellbeing can help deliver other priority outcomes. But the policy practice to promote wellbeing still lags behind the academic analysis. We still lack solid evidence about what works.

However, this is a field where knowledge is likely to advance rapidly. Many governments are shifting in this direction, with much more systematic measurement of the impact of policies on wellbeing, as well as support from global bodies such as the OECD and World Economic Forum. At a local level, too many are experimenting with new policies – and testing what happens.

3 Understanding happiness and wellbeing

Create all the happiness you are able to create:
remove all the misery you are able to remove
Jeremy Bentham

This chapter summarises the key factors that shape happiness and wellbeing. The emphasis here is on subjective wellbeing – how individuals feel about the quality of their life.

The main factors associated with wellbeing include relationships with friends and family, good health and community. When asked what they value most, people tend to rate non-monetary aspects of their lives above their financial situation. Once basic needs have been met, increases in income are not mirrored by equivalent increases in wellbeing. There is also evidence that in Europe, wellbeing is associated with the relative equality of society.

Since Aristotle's time, many thinkers have considered that happiness or more broadly speaking, wellbeing, is an appropriate goal for society. The promotion of wellbeing was included in the 1776 American *Declaration of Independence*, listing the unalienable rights of all men as 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. Utilitarian philosophers in 18th and 19th century England identified pain and pleasure as the only intrinsic values in the world. Jeremy Bentham argued that actions that gave the maximum happiness to the maximum number were of greatest value. John Stuart Mill writing later also argued that actions should be judged against how effectively they promote happiness.

More recently a growing body of work has driven a more sophisticated understanding of wellbeing, drawing on economics, psychology and political philosophy. Whilst Aristotle conceived of happiness as the realization of an individual's capabilities, much of the happiness discourse today places a stronger emphasis on individuals' subjective assessment of their own happiness, the 'positive evaluation of their lives, including emotion, engagement, satisfaction and meaning' (also known as the 'hedonic' concept of happiness).[14]

Economist Richard Easterlin, exploring the reasons why satisfaction had stagnated in the USA, established in 1974 that happiness should be divorced from economic definitions of progress and that wellbeing does not necessarily rise with increased economic growth once certain basic needs have been met.[15] This has since become known as the 'Easterlin paradox'. A striking example of this is the experience of Korea, where GDP increased by 21 per cent between 2002 and 2007 but life satisfaction fell by 52 per cent to 48 per cent during the same period.[16]

Political scientists such as Bruno Frey have challenged conventional economic theory for placing too great an emphasis on 'extrinsic' rather than 'intrinsic' motivations for an individual's behaviour, intrinsic motivations being those that are rewarding because they fulfill psychological needs, extrinsic being those that motivate people to pursue aims that are believed to satisfy needs – for example financial gain.[17] Michael Argyle's work in the 1980s outlined additional factors that promote happiness, including relationships, music and eating.[18]

The positive psychology movement in the USA, particularly the work of Martin Seligman and Ed Diener, highlights what underlies happiness, including time spent with friends and family, meaningful employment and emotional resilience.[19] Also working in the USA, Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has written extensively on his theories of 'flow': how individuals' happiness is related to the way that particular activities are experienced and the relationship between wellbeing and 'flow', that is being completely absorbed in the task at hand.[20]

Economists have responded to this challenge by developing the discipline of 'happiness economics'. This branch of behavioural economics 'relies on more expansive notions of utility and welfare'[21] and builds on techniques traditionally

associated with psychology and sociology. The challenge, according to Richard Layard, is to reconcile economic theory with modern psychology 'whilst retaining the rigour of the cost-benefit framework which is the strength and glory of our subject'.[22]

Psychologically validated measures of subjective wellbeing provide a means by which to measure utility.[23] American psychologist Daniel Kahneman argues for two dimensions of happiness: self reported happiness, which can be measured by survey questions, and longitudinal surveys over time.[24] Psychological or mental wellbeing can also be tested against a battery of indicators, such as 'have you lost much sleep over worry lately'.[25] Research suggests close correlations between an individual's wellbeing and other plausible measures such as physiological symptoms, the results of brain scans, and the reported perceptions of friends.

Broad questions on satisfaction, in which typically respondents are asked to state 'how satisfied they are with life these days',[26] are relatively simple to administer. Evidence indicates that life satisfaction correlates with many objective variables; for example, good health is related to relatively high levels of satisfaction.[27] However, there are limitations to this approach, and many reasons for being cautious about reading too much into the headline data.

The relationship between what we all want and what makes us happy is complex and contradictory. Daniel Gilbert's work has helped understand the disconnect between aspirations, and what is known to make people happy, drawing heavily on the work of Daniel Kahneman.[28] Gilbert argues that people are bad predictors of their own happiness; although we spend a huge proportion of our time imaging our future, our capacity to predict what will make us happy when we get there is poor.

A particularly thorough recent study of wellbeing by American philosopher Daniel Haybron distinguishes between different 'dimensions of happiness, each representing a different mode of emotional response to one's life, and each tending to be favoured over the others in various ideas of living.'[29] One tradition emphasizes happiness as pleasure, and the balance of positive over negative. Another thinks of it in relation to overall satisfaction with life, while others look to interpret overall emotional states. There is also a very strong tradition of relating happiness to moral virtue and self-fulfillment.

The importance of this list is that the various philosophical approaches to happiness lead to different conclusions about what matters most. These distinctions are important when it comes to prioritising the aims of public policy, for example, in choosing how much weight to give to feelings of safety relative to opportunities for fun; whether to promote tranquility or vitality; how much to emphasise overall satisfaction in life, or whether to people should be 'stretched', in the belief that some some dissatisfaction now is necessary for greater fulfillment later, and whether to care at all about the moral dimension of wellbeing. A

particularly important set of issues arise around the question of choice: is the maximum freedom of choice more valuable than happiness? Or should we try to restrict choices - such as greater mobility, commuting times, or availability of infinite options for pensions and savings - that may, overall, reduce happiness in the long term?

What drives wellbeing?

Evidence of the impact of wellbeing on a range of outcomes is growing: a study on the longevity of nuns showed that on average, happy young nuns went on to live for more than a decade longer than their less happy colleagues.[30] Cheerful college students earned 30 per cent more than their more morose peers when the two groups were compared 19 years later.[31]

The evidence from surveys and research is consistent: when asked what matters most in their lives, individuals across nations and social class put more value on non-monetary assets than their financial situation.

Figure 1: Factors that influence happiness: results of a poll conducted for the BBC
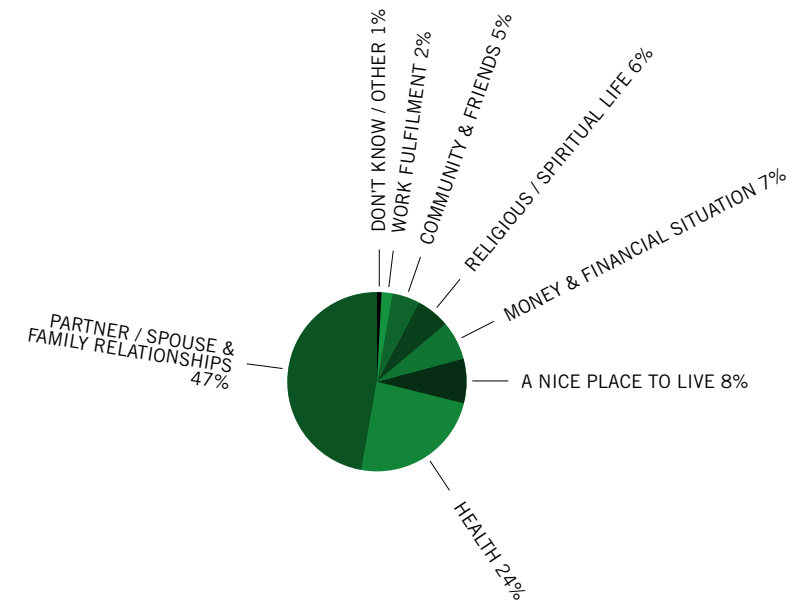
Source: Prosperity without growth, the Sustainable Development Commission[32]

Figure 2: Perceptions of 'what is important' across 27 EU countries[33]
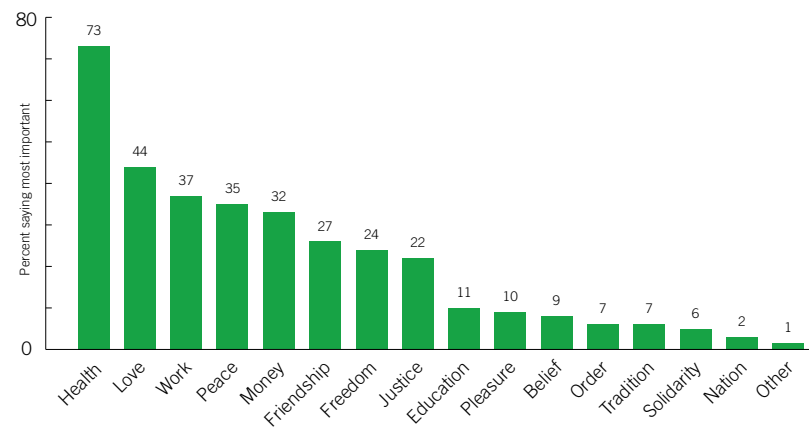
Source: Eurobarometer 2008

There have been extensive debates over the definitions of both wellbeing and happiness, and whether they are a single item or clusters of different items; for example, should pleasure, meaning and fulfilment be included? Some prefer to distinguish between pleasure, meaning and fulfilment, or between the positive aspects of happiness and the negative, since these appear to operate on different scales.[34]

Whatever definitions are used, there is consensus that wellbeing is influenced by a myriad of factors.[35] In all accounts they include personal dispositions and social supports, life experiences and income. Genetics also plays a part, and how genetic heritage interacts with the environment shapes how well people cope with difficult life circumstances.[36]

A report for the UK Government's Strategy Unit identified five factors that shape an individual's wellbeing:[37]

- **genetics**: research suggests between 40 to 50 per cent of any single individual's wellbeing is genetically determined.[38] However, this is not a simple linear equation but based on a complex combination of genes, and the interaction between genetic traits and environment
- **personality**: certain personality traits are associated with wellbeing, some of which are inherited. These include high self–esteem, extroversion, optimism, planning and organisational skills, low levels of neurotic attitudes and high intelligence
- **physical attributes**: though culturally specific, this includes physical attractiveness for women and height in men
- **gender**: women have marginally higher levels of satisfaction

- **age**: this too is culturally moderated with different countries demonstrating different levels of life satisfaction; however the relationship between age and life satisfaction is convex, with young people and older people experiencing relatively high levels of life satisfaction, when compared with their middle aged (aged 44 to 55) counterparts.

Other factors that influence individual wellbeing include civic participation, the existence of democratic institutions,[39] level of education, relative income and ethnicity and religious beliefs.[40] Many studies highlight the premium placed on inter-personal relationships with family, friends and others within the community.[41] These point to the crucial factors missing from the list above: by focusing solely on individual attributes they may miss the crucial factor, which is that how happy you are depends on the way that you live, which depends on the kind of society you live in.

In principle the strength of some of the individual and collective factors can be measured. Andrew Oswald has used a method of comparing different states with the additional income needed to achieve a comparable gain in happiness. He calculated the monetary value equivalent of being married, versus single, as £72,000 per year – a figure quoted eagerly by both the tabloids and long-married partners.[42]

Over a person's lifetime, wellbeing typically falls into a 'U-shaped' pattern.[43] It is not known whether the well-evidenced dip in wellbeing in middle age is caused by thwarted ambition, the stress of raising teenage children, caring for ageing parents, the realisation of mortality or other reasons.

Figure 3: Percentage of people fairly/very satisfied with selected aspects of life, by age
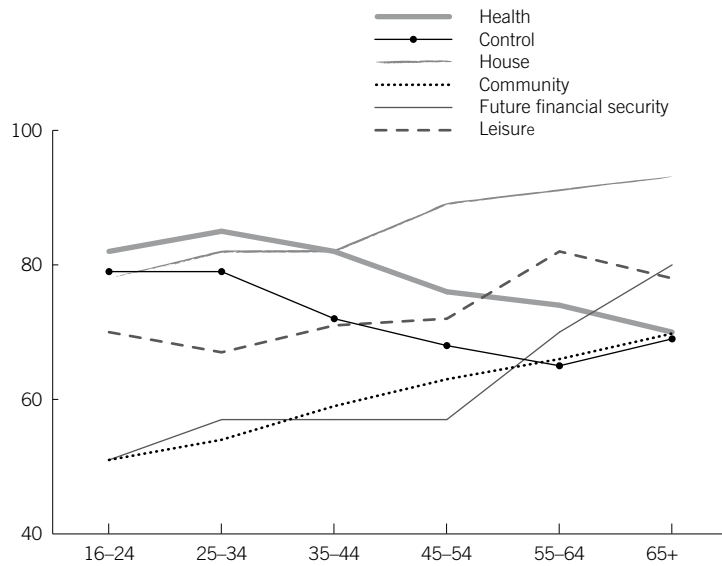
Money and happiness

The association between income and wellbeing is complex. Richard Easterlin[45] and others[46] have demonstrated that once a population's basic material needs are met, economic growth does not necessarily lead to a corresponding increase in life satisfaction. It is widely recognised that over the last 40 years, while economic growth has been significant, levels of happiness have not changed.

Figure 4: Economic growth in US and Britain
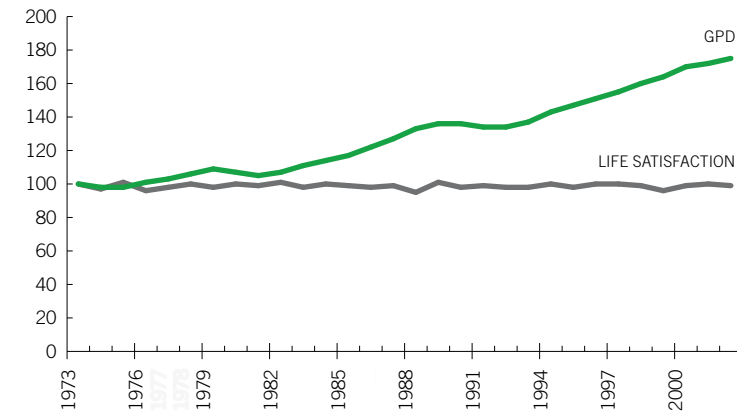
Once incomes rise above the level needed to pay for basic needs, wellbeing is influenced by relative income – how people see their situation compared to others – more than by absolute income. If your neighbours are richer than you this has negative impact on satisfaction, and people appear to compare themselves to the top fifth earners.[48] Another study highlighted the extent to which wellbeing is influenced by comparison with neighbouring countries or an individual's own past.[49]

Reflecting this, while countries with a higher GDP per capita generally reflect a higher level of life satisfaction, the association with increases in wealth and life satisfaction is much greater in poorer countries than richer economies.[50]

Figure 5: Life satisfaction across nations

The size of the circles correspond to population size

Source: Gallup data; graph modified from Angus Deaton, Harvard[51]

Figure 6: The relationship between income inequality and child wellbeing

Source: BMJ[55]
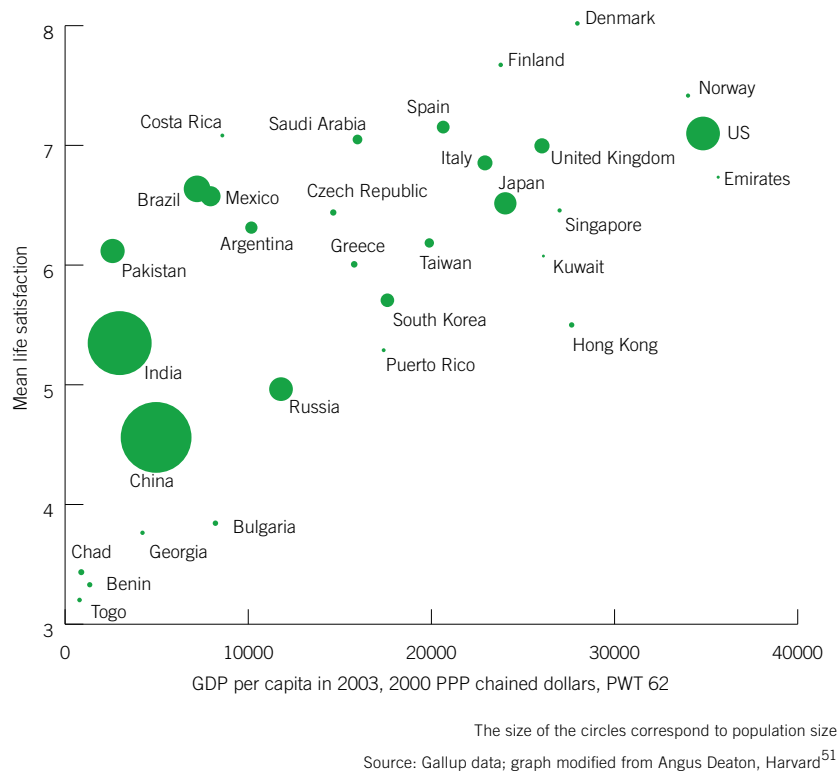
Part of the problem is that GDP measures are not very accurate even as measures of material prosperity. In a more globalised world, a foreign company's profits from a mine or forest are counted as value, even if the actions of this company harms the living conditions of the local community. When activities shift from the private to the public sector, or from the market to the household, this is counted as a decline of GDP even if the quality of services, and of life, improves. One example of the way that GDP fails to recognise individuals' experience is that while in the US GDP per capita was 15 to 20 per cent higher in 2008 than in 2000, in the same period median incomes fell.[52]

There is a clear relationship between levels of wellbeing and inequality when different countries are compared. Wellbeing tends to be lower in countries with higher inequality of income and wealth. The link between child wellbeing and income inequality is significantly stronger than the relationship between child wellbeing and absolute incomes.[53] These trends are stronger in Europe than in the USA.[54] One explanation is that there is stronger faith in the possibility of social mobility in the USA. In both regions perceptions are linked to beliefs: people who are politically conservative are less affected by inequality that those who identify as left wingers.

Richard Layard's work has contributed to our understanding of the disconnect between income and wellbeing. Layard describes the notion of 'rivalry', in which happiness increases when an individual's income increases relative to their peers', and, 'habituation' as they adjust to their most recent state. Both responses explain the effects of diminishing marginal gains to income.[56] Layard concludes that 'efforts to become richer are largely self-defeating in terms of overall happiness of society'.[57]

In the 1970s, Tibor Scitovsky argued that more is not necessarily better, categorising consumption as either 'joyless' or 'joyful', advocating that people should spend money on things that will give lasting satisfaction and 'pleasures', as time with friends or beautiful countryside, rather than wasting time and money on items that only give temporary pleasure 'comforts', such as expensive clothes or cars.

Economist Fred Hirsch's work on positional goods explored why, in spite of unprecedented affluence, there is a continuous quest for more and more material possessions.[58] He argued that once material needs have been satisfied, a greater proportion of consumption is motivated by its 'positional' effect – the status and value that accrue from having access to something that is both scarce and high status. This could be a luxury holiday, a visit to an exclusive restaurant, or a home in a gated community. The pursuit of positional goods is a zero sum game – once something becomes aspirational, more people will possess it and its scarcity value will decrease, leaving a space for new products to fill the gap. This relentless conspicuous consumption has a high cost in terms of negative externalities – particularly debt, longer working hours, environmental depletion, stress and anxiety.

A project on positional goods by the Young Foundation suggested that positional goods may have become more prominent in the economy since Hirsch was writing in the 1970s, with rising levels of luxury tourism, SUVs, and gated communities.[59] The thwarted aspirations of many people to achieve positional goods may help to explain high levels of debt.

4 Measuring Wellbeing

Happiness is like a butterfly which, when pursued, is always beyond our grasp, but, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you
Nathaniel Hawthorne

This chapter discusses the limitations of GDP and other mainstream metrics of economic progress as indicators of wellbeing, and explores the ways that different nations are attempting to find new ways to measure wellbeing alongside other measurements of society's progress.

Since 1945 GDP has been the widely used global measure of economic progress,[60] reflecting the overall health and robustness of a country's economy. But the extent to which GDP captures social progress is questionable – and it was not designed to do so. An over-reliance on income growth contributes to policies and interventions that encourage depletion of natural resources (which appears as an increase in GDP); longer working hours (which also leads to higher GDP) without counting the cost for family life; encouraging consumption of pharmaceuticals for low level depression rather than improving social relationships or exercise; and encouraging longer commutes to work, despite evidence that this undermines happiness.[61] Nonetheless, national accounts are often used as the sole barometer of national progress, in part due to a lack of consensus on alternative models of measurement.

Growth neither automatically solves social problems nor causes them. As economies grow it appears that societies tend to devote attention to the measures that are most easily quantifiable and that have had the clearest upward trajectory. These include improvements in relative poverty, in life expectancy and in educational achievement. The indicators that have been on a downward trajectory – including family stability, social cohesion, stress and environmental depletion – all raise controversial political issues and are difficult to quantify.

In the wake of recession and against the backdrop of global imperatives to manage CO_2 emissions, there is burgeoning interest in developing and testing new measures of success. International interest is strong. The OECD's work through its global project on 'Measuring Societal Progress' is one focus of interest.[62] And in September 2009, President Sarkozy's Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress published its findings. The commission, chaired by economist Joseph Stiglitz, concluded: 'what we measure affects what we do; and if our measurements are flawed, decisions may be distorted. Choices between promoting GDP and protecting the environment may be false choices, once environmental degradation is appropriately included in our measurement of economic performance. So too, we often draw inferences about what are good policies by looking at what policies have promoted economic growth; but if our metrics of performance are flawed, so too may be the inferences that we draw'.[63]

Policymakers assess the impact of their actions using indicators assessing areas ranging from infant mortality, to sulphur dioxide in the air, to the amount of land that is devoted to national parks. Some of these indicators, or measures, are based on solid statistical evidence, others on weak data or complicated methodologies. This approach reflects an objective model of wellbeing, and assumes that there is a list of characteristics that can be measured that underpin the wellbeing of a society.[64]

There is a need for a more rounded approach to how public policy approaches and measures wellbeing. One approach is to measure the wellbeing of individuals across a range of domains of their lives.

Figure 7: Gross National Happiness Indicators used in Bhutan[65]

- **economic wellness**: measured by economic metrics such as consumer debt, average income to consumer price index ratio and income distribution
- **environmental wellness**: measured by environmental metrics such as pollution, noise and traffic
- **physical wellness**: measured by physical health metrics such as obesity or severe illnesses
- **mental wellness**: measured by mental health metrics such as usage of antidepressants, and rise or decline of psychotherapy patients
- **workplace wellness**: measured by labour metrics such as jobless claims, job change, workplace complaints and lawsuits
- **social wellness**: measured by social metrics such as discrimination, safety, divorce rates, complaints of domestic conflict and family lawsuits, crime rates
- **political wellness**: measured by political metrics such as the quality of local democracy, individual freedom, and foreign conflicts.

In the last few years, there has been an explosion of interest in producing measures of wellbeing and life satisfaction. Initiatives to develop sets of progress indicators are being run around the world, in rich and poor countries, at local, national and regional level, and by many different types of organisations including governmental agencies, non-profit foundations, academic institutions, and community groups.

- the United Nations created the Human Development Index to track and compare the wellbeing of nations, using GDP, health and educational achievement indicators[66]
- the new economics foundation (nef) is part of a team that successful bid to include a module of wellbeing questions in the 2006 European Social Survey[67]
- the Australian Unity Index is a gauge of how satisfied Australians are with their lives and general life in Australia[68]
- in November 2008, Bhutan adopted the much talked about Gross National Happiness Index. The Index has been developed to promote the principles of Gross National Happiness, establish benchmarks and track the policies and performance of the Kingdom of Bhutan[69]
- Japan has used a model of 'people's life indicators'.[70]

In the UK there is also a greater level of interest in measuring the experience of residents at a local level. The Comprehensive Area Assessment focuses on 'what matters here, to whom', capturing the views and experiences of residents.[71] This is part of the overall shift within local government to a focus on 'place shaping', working with key strategic partners like health. It also reflects the imperative to 'promote the general wellbeing of a community and its citizens', as set out in the Local Government Act 2000.

The national indicator dataset includes indicators that capture the views and experiences of citizens. These go some way in understanding the 'combined effect of policies on the way people experience their lives'.[72] However, there is no single agreed metric used within central or local government. This hinders efforts to assess levels of wellbeing at a national level and prevents real comparisons between regions and between and within local authority areas.

The Local Wellbeing Project: work on measurement

Measuring wellbeing is a key underpinning strand to the Local Wellbeing Project. In the highly performance managed UK public sector, this was key to cementing the work of the project in the wider context in which local authorities operate.
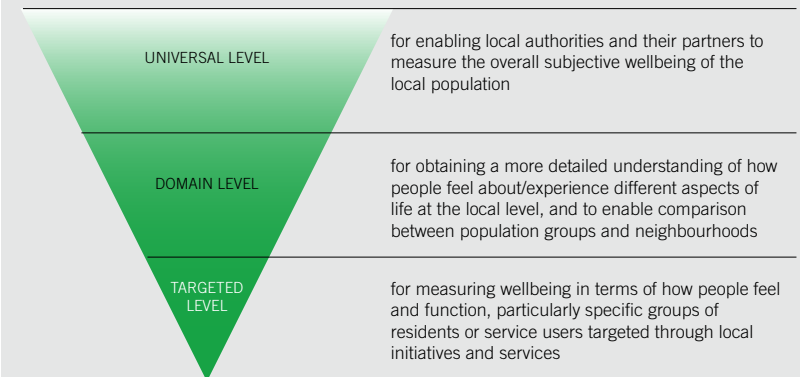
In August 2007, the report *Local Wellbeing: Can we measure it?* explored how wellbeing can effectively be measured at a local level within the current framework set for local government by central government and the Audit Commission. The aim was to support local authorities to understand local need, effectively measure outcomes, track progress and inform decisions on resource allocation.

It took as its starting point the international experience of other municipalities. This included the example of the eThekwini municipality in Durban in South Africa, where measuring wellbeing was central to measuring progress in post Apartheid South Africa. Between 1998 and 2005, the municipality conducted a quality of life survey with residents of the municipality to understand what people think about the quality of their lives.

Local Wellbeing: Can we measure it? sets out a practical framework to support local authorities to measure wellbeing and maximise the use of existing datasets. This was based on a three-tiered approach for measuring wellbeing.

- **universal level**: overall and cross cutting measure of people's life captured by a single-item measure
- **domain level**: measure outcomes with different thematic objectives (e-health, education, community safety) and across different domains of life (personal, social and place)
- **targeted level**: focuses on the underlying or protective factors that impact on people's wellbeing. This could include indicators associated with resilience, self-esteem and competency, either focused on particular groups or geographic areas.

Figure 8: A tiered approach to measuring wellbeing

UNIVERSAL LEVEL — for enabling local authorities and their partners to measure the overall subjective wellbeing of the local population

DOMAIN LEVEL — for obtaining a more detailed understanding of how people feel about/experience different aspects of life at the local level, and to enable comparison between population groups and neighbourhoods

TARGETED LEVEL — for measuring wellbeing in terms of how people feel and function, particularly specific groups of residents or service users targeted through local initiatives and services

Universal measure of wellbeing is usually captured in a single-item measure, which in practice has been to ask people to rate how satisfied they are with their life. This measure could be used to measure progress against the overarching aims of a Sustainable Community Strategy or Local Area Agreement. Findings could potentially be disaggregated to measure levels of satisfaction between different population groups.

Domain level data focuses on how satisfied individuals are with different aspects of their lives. *Wellbeing: Can we measure it?* defines domain level wellbeing using the personal – social – place structure illustrated below. The three dimensions capture how people feel about their own lives; how they feel about people around them and how they feel about the area they live in.

Measures of wellbeing at the **targeted level** are particularly relevant to vulnerable individuals and the indicators often incorporate psycho-social indicators.

Figure 9: A domain approach to wellbeing

The report identifies existing national indicators that can be used to measure wellbeing and highlights some of the gaps. A critical factor informing this strand was to make this framework align with data required for the England's Comprehensive Area Assessment, guidance on drawing up Local Area Agreements and other performance management tools. Local Authorities can enhance their understanding of wellbeing in their area with simple additional questions that could be added to their regular surveys.

Building on the findings from the first phase, the next phase of the project will develop a resilience framework aligned to the measurement framework. This will incorporate a new stress on measuring resilience and adaptability within local communities, characteristics that will be key in surviving the challenging economic climate. A model of 'resilience', both at the community and individual levels, will potentially help decisions in policy making and local resource prioritisation and enable authorities to develop a better adaptive capacity to adverse events.

At the local level across the globe,public agencies are experimenting with different ways of measuring wellbeing. Examples range from the Quality of Life in Jacksonville indicators led by Jacksonville Community Council in Florida; to the Victoria Community Indicators Project in Australia; to a joint City Council and University initiative in Porto, Portugal; to the City of Leduc Genuine Wellbeing Report in Canada; to NHS Dumfries and Galloway's work with the new economics foundation.[73]

To underpin their work on wellbeing, Manchester CC and South Tyneside MBC both measured subjective wellbeing by adding questions to their 2008–09 Place Survey. In both areas, life satisfaction appears to be linked to satisfaction with the area in which respondents live: with belonging in South Tyneside and with feeling safe in Manchester.

In **South Tyneside**, residents were asked how satisfied they were with their life as a whole. Satisfaction was higher amongst women, and over 55s. It was also greater amongst those who were satisfied with their local area and the Council and who felt they belonged to their neighbourhood.

Figure 10: South Tyneside, life satisfaction

Q All things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?

7% Fairly dissatisfied
2% Very dissatisfied
15% Neither/nor
18% Very satisfied
74% **Satisfied**
59% Fairly satisfied
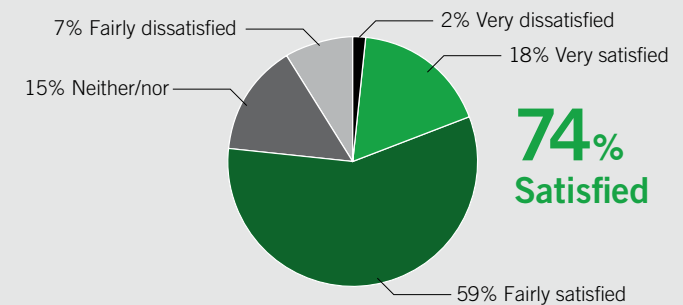
Source: Ipsos MORI

In **Manchester**, surveys over time have established that the percentage of residents who state they are satisfied with their lives has had little significant change. The percentage of residents who state that they are happy has fluctuated over the years, however the overall trend may be upwards.

There are a numbers of factors that impact upon happiness and life satisfaction. The biggest net effect relates to feeling safe during the day and satisfaction with the local area as a place to live. There was also a (less strong) relationship with levels of deprivation in the local area; and satisfaction with the way that Manchester City Council runs things.

Levels of deprivation in an area also impact upon the happiness and satisfaction with life scores of respondents.

Figure 11: Manchester: deprivation and life satisfaction

IMD 2007 Average SOA scores by Ward
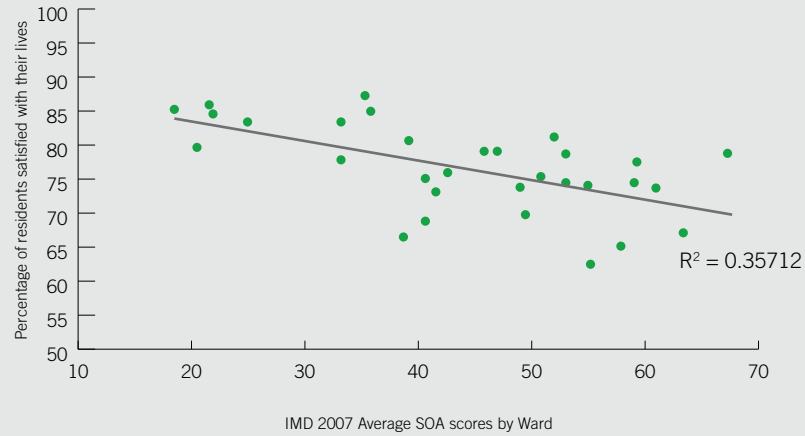
Source: Index of Multiple Derivation 2007 and 2008/09 Place Survey

Figure 12: Manchester: deprivation and happiness

IMD 2007 Average SOA scores by Ward

Source: Index of Multiple Derivation 2007 and 2008/09 Place Survey

The correlation between deprivation and happiness is stronger than the correlation between deprivation and satisfaction with life. The relationship is closest for wards with lower levels of deprivation: wards with lower levels of deprivation are more closely clustered around the line. In areas of higher deprivation there is a greater spread of happiness and satisfaction with life scores.

Canada

The Institute of Wellbeing, a non-governmental organisation chaired by the Honourable Roy Romanow, has developed a Canadian Wellbeing index. The Institute of Wellbeing's vision is:

> *'To enable all Canadians to share in the highest wellbeing status by identifying, developing and publicizing statistical measures that offer clear, valid and regular reporting on progress toward wellbeing goals and outcomes Canadians seek as a nation'.*[74]

The Canadian Wellbeing index uses objective measures to document changes over time. The index also employs more subjective measures of civic participation and community vitality.

The index is formed of three broad domains:

Living Standards – focuses on levels of income and income distribution, including monitoring levels of employment and economic security.

Healthy Population – captures self-reported health and prevalence of specific conditions, including diabetes and depression. It also documents levels of satisfaction with health services and access to doctors.

Community Vitality – measures wellbeing at a community level. This includes crime and fear of crime, trust, sense of belonging to a community and levels of participation in group activities.

The Institute aims to develop a composite measure of wellbeing, to provide an accessible snapshot of quality of life in Canada.

Policy implications

While data on life satisfaction are useful, and certainly should be collected, for policy makers, nearly all of their value comes from disaggregation: seeing which groups are faring better than others or who is faring worse than might be expected, how this changes over time and what conditions stimulate wellbeing. Aggregate numbers comparing places, or times, tell us very little.

The most useful data – from the point of view of the development of public policy and resource allocations – is that which comparison of small geographic areas or the experience of different groups. Metrics that help build understanding of individual's wellbeing across different domains of people's lives, and how the different domains interact are also important.

Any measurement framework needs to be able to function at several levels. It should look at people's situation in terms of their individual attributes (their happiness, strengths, weaknesses); their immediate supports (family, friends, services); and the broader structural conditions they live in (for example, whether they live in an area with a buoyant economy and high quality services). All three domains are critical in shaping wellbeing. Over-individualistic perspectives risk being distorting by missing out the latter two levels.

Data on different aspects of people's lives is routinely collected and it is recognised that certain conditions, such as access to leisure and recreation, having a strong network of friends and good health, contribute to wellbeing. However, a framework which understands how these factors interact and stimulates wellbeing provides a more accurate story on wellbeing in local communities. Aggregate numbers comparing places, or times, tell us very little.

Data also needs to connect assessments of peoples' current states – how happy, or for that matter how rich they are – with assessments of their readiness for the future. In other words we need to look at their balance of assets and weaknesses as well as their current happiness, since this will be critical to their future happiness. Extracting those indicators which identify assets that buffer individuals and communities will lead to greater understanding of why some communities adapt positively to adversity and why some communities do not. Understanding the relationship between wellbeing and resilience and where this relationship unravels. These are particularly useful to inform the development of interventions that boost resilience.

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

5 What is the relevance of wellbeing to key areas of public policy?

Real happiness is cheap enough, yet how dearly we pay for its counterfeit.
Hosea Ballou

This chapter explores what is known about wellbeing in two separate sections: firstly looking at the key stages in an individual's life – family and childhood, education work, old age – and secondly, looking at the key areas that are relevant throughout life – health, community, arts and culture and the environment. It paints a complex picture of the ways in which wellbeing plays out in these different areas, and draws out some of the implications for public policy.

- In health, a greater wellbeing focus would shift the emphasis to positive health and meeting the needs of people with lower level mental health issues, a group who often make considerable demands on primary health care services.
- In children's services, a wellbeing focus would tend towards a bigger emphasis on promoting self expression and identity, and services that underpin self esteem and resilience in adulthood
- In community empowerment, a wellbeing focus would imply spending more on creating social networks and people's sense of belonging and less on formalised consultation processes.
- In arts and culture, wellbeing could be boosted by spending more on participation, and less on enabling people to spectate big events.

This chapter looks at the policy areas where the evidence is strongest about the relationship between wellbeing and different outcomes, and where most is known about what practical interventions can increase wellbeing. It draws heavily on the experience of the Local Wellbeing Project, which focused on the areas where local government and its key strategic partners' were thought to have the greatest chance of having a meaningful impact. The report does not aim to set out a comprehensive review of every field of public policy, instead focusing on the areas where the potential for public policy is greatest.

The starting point is a life stage analysis – moving from childhood to old age. Underpinning this are core issues that affect everyone's wellbeing, including health, arts and culture; community, crime, and the environment.

Figure 13: the priority fields

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

5.1 Lifestages and wellbeing

5.1.1 Family and childhood

Families have experienced rapid changes and new pressures over the last 30 years. Many families are better off, but many are struggling financially, or have fractured. For most of us, the pace of life has increased, and for some it seems it is at the expense of family and community relationships. Stress at work can affect family wellbeing.[75] There has been a rise in family break-up.[76] A third of UK 16-year-olds now live apart from their biological fathers, and in the US the equivalent figure is half.[77]

Reach Out!

When faced with the suicide of his cousin in 1992, Jack Heath felt compelled to take direct action to tackle Australia's high youth suicide rate. Backed by various donors, including Microsoft and the Australian Government, Jack and his business partners created Reach Out!, an internet based charity providing advice for young people experiencing depression and emotional difficulties.

The use of the internet, now accepted as commonplace, was cutting edge at the time. It allowed the creation of anonymous forums for young people to post comments and stories and through this to relieve stress and unburden themselves in a safe way.

Reach Out! chose not to offer counselling over the web. Instead it promotes the website as a self-help community. This keeps running costs low and allows budget to be spent on the promotion of the site to young people and their parents. Since the launch of Reach Out!, youth suicide rates in Australia have declined by 46 per cent. Building on this, the Reach Out! team have introduced the site into the USA where it is currently being developed. Each site will reflect the culture and nuances of language of the area that it will serve.

Life begins in the family, and a loving family is essential to a good start in life for any child. Good parenting is at the heart of children's wellbeing and development. For parents, the story is complex. Parenting can lead to joy and despair, sometimes at the same time. One study established that overall, being a parent had neither a negative or positive affect on the parents' wellbeing. However where household circumstances are difficult, having a child is an additional challenge to wellbeing.[78]

Parents' wellbeing is critical to their ability to raise their children. When mothers' and fathers' own wellbeing is under threat then their capacity to

parent successfully diminishes. Their enjoyment of the experience of raising children is hampered. If the connection between parent and child is good enough then practical and psychological benefits should accrue to both individuals and the wider community. For families across social classes, increasing adult wellbeing can have positive repercussions on the whole family, giving all the members a better chance of constructing a different kind of future.

Families Australia works with public sector and community based organisations to support the wellbeing of families. Building on the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, Families Australia identifies four aspects of family wellbeing:

- physical safety and physical and mental health
- supportive intra-family relationships, including possession of effective conflict resolution skills, opportunities to learn values, traditions, languages, ideas important to their family, and receipt of support and encouragement for achievement and attainment from within the family
- social connections outside the family, including in the local community
- economic security and independence.[79]

Toronto's Macaulay Child Development Centre, alongside local barbers, is working with fathers, step-fathers, grandfathers and uncles to discuss parenting of young people in their lives.

Barbershops were identified as key meeting places for men from the Caribbean community. The aim was to use this resource to create a forum to discuss parenting issues, aimed at Toronto's black community.

Following the success of a pilot session, the Centre worked with other local proprietors and community leaders to design additional sessions, and the barbers were tasked with formulating topics for the sessions. The Centre has applied for funds to develop what is now called **More Than a Haircut** to support parenting interventions amongst Toronto's community of Caribbean men.[80]

Over the last decade the UK Government has tried to build a system of support for parents and carers that spans the spectrum of help from a friendly chat with a volunteer or health visitor about a temporary problem, to the provision of intensive sustained parenting programmes.

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

Wellbeing and parenting: Every parent matters[81]

The UK government has endorsed three parenting programmes: **The Triple P Positive Parenting Programme**; **Webster Stratton**; and **Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities**. All programmes encourage parents to develop problem solving skills and help children and young people master self-regulation.

The **Triple P – Positive Parenting Program** was founded by Matthew R Sanders, at The University of Queensland. The programme focuses on strengthening parents' knowledge, skills and confidence. The programme is targeted at parents with children aged nought to 16, both at universal populations as well as targeting children at high risk of emotional behavioural problems.

Similarly, the **Webster-Stratton** programme encourages parents to discuss principles and strategies around the importance of clear and consistent rules, standards and boundaries; the value of communicating with care and authority; the use of rewards and reinforcement behaviour; and an examination of a parent's own emotions and concerns. The Programme was developed in the US by Dr Carolyn Webster-Stratton.

The third programme, **Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities** (SFSC), invites parents to focus on their own childhood and experiences and encourage them to get involved in community activities. The SFSC course helps parents to 'utilise a process of discipline, enhancing their ability to respond as opposed to react to disrespectful behaviour.' The programme was designed in the US by Dr Marilyn Steele and was first adapted in the UK by the Race Equality Foundation in 1999.

The UK spends more on children than most OECD countries, at just over £90,000 per child from birth up to 18, compared to an OECD average of just under £80,000.[82] However, a 2009 Child Action Poverty Group ranked the UK 24 out of 29 European countries when it measured the wellbeing of children and young people.[83] A 2007 UNICEF report ranked the UK bottom of the league table of nations on children's subjective wellbeing.[84] The proportion of youth not in school, training or in jobs in the UK remains high, at more than one in ten 15 to 19 year olds, the fourth highest rate in the OECD. And this is rising as UK 18 to 25 year olds bear the brunt of the recession, a pattern not repeated in comparable European economies.[85] Education results are poor relative to spending levels. Underage drinking and teenage pregnancy rates are high.[86]

The picture however is not completely bleak: in other areas, the UK performs well. Children in the United Kingdom are materially fairly well off. Average family income is higher and child poverty is lower than OECD averages. Children in the United Kingdom also enjoy a high quality of school life and children's satisfaction with school is good. Rates of bullying are relatively low.[87]

It has been suggested that this wellbeing deficit could be a result of high levels of individualism in the UK.[88] Two pieces of recent research by The Children's Society and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation argue that the UK has become focused on 'excessive individualism' alongside a reduction in a sense of belonging and connection to our local neighbourhoods and communities.[89]

Consumerism, aggression, and unhealthy living all have their allure, across all age groups, particularly if children do not have satisfying interests or pursuits and a sense of agency. It has been demonstrated that specific school policies targeted at particular forms of damaging behaviour have little sustained effect.[90] What does make a difference is providing an environment (likely to be at schools) based on the principles of consideration for others, self-understanding and the cultivation of constructive interests.

The Local Wellbeing Project: work on parenting

Parenting is a key priority for the local authority partners. Early discussions concluded that the most useful role for the project would be to explore the relationship between existing parenting support and wellbeing. The aim was to help the authorities understand how their services could develop in the future to deliver a stronger impact on wellbeing, alongside their core outcomes.

Research suggests that the wellbeing of mothers and fathers contributes to and enhances the wellbeing of the child. Programmes that focus on improving parents wellbeing and that strengthen the relationship between parent and child will consequently contribute to the overall wellbeing of the family.

The report *Parents and wellbeing: knitting families together* examined how local government in Manchester, Hertfordshire and South Tyneside have interpreted government directives at the local level, and how prominent within parenting support is the goal of enhancing not just the wellbeing of children, but also of parents and carers.[91]

Although government (local or central) cannot legislate to make parents of children happy, it can mitigate some of the negative effects of modern-day living, for example, by offering support that improves rather than undermines the autonomy and confidence of a parent.

The report analysed the different levels of intervention, for parents that need a lower intensity response as well those that have acute needs, and identifies the implications for policy and practice.

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

Figure 14: Different ways of categorising parenting provision

A typology of service provision

Level 1 is a 'light touch'. It addresses universal need and offers information and advice for parents and carers on specific issues and on more general aspects of parenting. Services here are not targeted; they are available for all.

Level 2 is for parents with additional needs who are referred by other professionals or who self refer. Services here are targeted but still at relatively large populations. Parents have to overcome few hurdles to access services. Attendance is voluntary.

Level 3 addresses more complex needs that may be addressed through specialist services, often provided by professionals. This includes more intensive one to one support, and parenting interventions that may be compulsory.

Level 4 is for acute needs that may involve statutory intervention, the threat of custodial sentences, intensive and often sustained intervention. The principle that there should be 'no wrong door' is important in the approach; also a focus on the whole family and acting holistically, building on family strengths and providing tailored support.

Type of needs being addressed

Flourishing needs
Enables parents to 'top up' on their skills and knowledge on an informal 'light touch' basis.

▲

Coping needs
Enables parents and carers to do more than 'just get by', on a short-term basis where parents can dip in and out of support as needed.

▼

Basic needs
Enables parents and carers to become resilient and begin coping with difficult life circumstances. Using a holistic intervention to foster various life skills that impact on parenting.

Response needed from policy and practice

Universal services: including information on parenting; Children's Information Service and other sources of advice; advice on key choices and transitions (for mothers, how to return to work; childcare; starting school; primary to secondary transition), encouragement of support groups; flexible family friendly working practices for mothers and fathers

Targeted specialist preventative services: This may include visits by specialist parenting support outreach workers, voluntary attendance on an evidence-based parenting programme, or intensive individual and family support. This can include different interventions for mothers and fathers.

More complex targeted services: This could include referral to an educational psychologist or a child psychiatrist for ongoing support; parenting support services tailored to meet individual needs; some parenting interventions which are attached to parenting orders that require attendance on a course.

Targeted, intensive, expensive services: this includes services that are carefully targeted to families and individuals within the family. This can include Family Intervention Projects, or evidence based parenting interventions delivered as part of wider packages addressing different needs of the people involved.

While wellbeing is not a widely used measure of parenting interventions, many of the outcomes recorded by parents, carers and grandparents resonate with key indicators of wellbeing:

Improved social networks and social relationships: Parenting support enables participants to begin to build a partnership with others, creating new series of social networks.

Trust in oneself – and others: Parents report that the opportunity to hear the views and experiences of fellow parents allows a perspective that 'normalises' parenting problems. It permits them to restore or develop a faith in their own judgement.

Improving the relationship of the couple: Problems in parents' relationships can have negative effects on the development and wellbeing of children and adolescents.[92]

Links with the community and a sense of belonging: The decline of the extended family and increases in isolation of the modern family may mean that some families and children have a weak sense belonging. When parenting support is linked to opportunities in education, employment and engagement in the local community this can help build social networks and support.

A capacity for enjoyment: A successful parenting workshop, a timely piece of advice can remind a parent that children are a source of fun, love and huge emotional rewards, and that awareness also enhances wellbeing.

Breaking the cycle: Some parents were themselves reared harshly as children and can (unintentionally) replicate this experience with their own children. Parenting support that encourages parents to understand their own childhoods better can support self-efficacy and open new doors.

Manchester, Hertfordshire and South Tyneside have offered parenting support for a number of years. All three offer help across a range of services in the local community including in libraries, Sure Start projects, children's centres and extended schools. Services for parents are often described as those that are 'light touch' support, through to 'acute interventions'.[93,94]

In **Hertfordshire**, each of the ten districts in Hertfordshire County Council has an appointed parenting and information officer and a parenting forum for practitioners providing support to parents. The local authority works with a range of third sector organisations including Homestart, Parentline Plus and ADDvance. Parentline Plus trains teaching assistants to deliver parenting

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

courses in schools, using volunteers. Hertfordshire Practical Parenting supports parents of teenagers and is targeted at parents with teenagers that are at risk of youth offending, exclusion from schools and families at risk of eviction.

> 'Family resilience and wellbeing are key to positive outcomes for individuals and to healthy local communities. They have an impact on child outcomes, child poverty, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, mental health &c. In Hertfordshire we are in the process of developing new multi-agency "Think Family" teams in local neighbourhoods. The Local Wellbeing Project has been an important influence, as we have conceptualised and formulated this strategy, shaping future inter-agency approaches and support for vulnerable families.'
> David Silverman, Strategy Manager (Parenting Support, Hertfordshire County council

> 'The multi-agency Action Learning event held in March 2009 in collaboration with the Young Foundation Local Wellbeing Project and DCSF was a pivotal moment in engaging all local agencies in this journey [towards whole family wellbeing']'.
> Hertfordshire practitioner

Manchester have trained a number of staff across a range of agencies to deliver the Webster-Stratton Incredible Years Programme, the Pathfinder Parenting Your Teenager in Manchester and Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities parenting courses. Parenting your Teen in Manchester adopts Webster-Stratton to run an eight-week course to help parents strengthen relationships between them and their teen.

Following a year long consultation with the community, **South Tyneside** produced their Families First (Parenting) Strategy. The strategy is underpinned by three principles: prevention, partnership and participation. The South Tyneside Early Excellence Children's Centre provides parenting courses, a nursery, day care provision, and a crèche for parents taking training and outreach. The strategy emphasises adult wellbeing as central to their approach to parental wellbeing.

The report recommends that the wellbeing of parents, as well as children, should become explicit objectives within parenting programmes and strategies. Services should be designed to boost parents' and children's wellbeing, and parents and children fully involved in the planning process.

The last recommendation proposes a government backed parenting support innovation fund to provide financial and practical support for a more diverse approach to parenting support. This would cultivate parenting interventions that foster emotional resilience and wellbeing of parents, children and the family as a whole.

Policy implications

Family life cannot be characterised by any single model: whilst many families today thrive, others do less well faced with the pressures of consumerism, relationship breakdown and the dilution of extended family networks. International comparative studies have exposed the low wellbeing of children in the UK compared to their peers in comparable countries.

Children's wellbeing is built into the government's Every Child Matters agenda, however policy makers are constantly having to trade off putting resources into the 'harder' targets – child protection, education for children with special needs, early years provision, child mental health services – versus supporting services and facilities that encourage children to thrive, such as arts, music and sports. This can become an argument between targeting resources at those in greatest need and universal provision. Within this, wellbeing as an outcome can become obscured.

Good parenting is critical for raising children who can thrive as adults. And the wellbeing of parents – mothers and fathers - is at the heart of good parenting.

Although in the UK there has been an enormous increase in funding for family support, policy has often failed to fully acknowledge the need to improve the wellbeing of parents. When families are under pressure, everyone's wellbeing suffers. Boosting parents' wellbeing alongside increasing their parenting skills can strengthen parenting support services, and increase the likelihood that interventions will succeed over the long term. Commissioners and service providers need to consider how they can work together to take a rounded approach to parenting and family issues.

5.1.2 Education

Schools, colleges and universities have long been aware of their role in contributing to student development, wellbeing and resilience – and in preparing young people for life and not just exams. But in recent years these aims have often been obscured by a narrow focus on 'academic achievement', 'efficiency gains' and 'performance targets'.[95]

There is a remarkably broad consensus on what the aims of education should be if the present and future wellbeing of pupils was placed at the centre. But these aims rarely translate into educational policy, teacher training, the national curriculum, or even how we measure intelligence and success. Looking at educational policy through a wellbeing lens refocuses our attention on the broader aims of education: not only mastering the disciplines but also honing the social and emotional competencies that will enable pupils to flourish within school and in life.

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

There is growing recognition that teaching to test, and training teachers to teach to test, does not sufficiently prepare young people for 21st century life and work.[96] Numeracy and literacy are a priority for all schools. But the emphasis on core academic skills can squeeze out a wider range of human competencies – thinking creatively, collaboration, empathy and emotional resilience – at the very time when these skills are needed the most. Sir Jim Rose, the Cambridge Primary Review and others have argued that the arts – subjects that allow students time to think, to be creative, to solve problems – are most at risk from the 'standards agenda' and that schools should preserve curriculum time for these.[97]

A new body of research confirms the importance of nurturing the wider spectrum of human competencies to pupils' present and future wellbeing.[98] Student wellbeing matters to educational attainment. Dedicating time, energy and resources to improving the wellbeing and resilience of young people does not need to detract from other types of learning. There is increasing evidence that this approach can have a positive impact on both achievement and classroom behaviour.[99]

Wellbeing and resilience matter to employment and to the economy. In the past decade employers have consistently said that young people entering the workforce are lacking in 'soft skills', including the ability to work as a team, accept criticism, commitment, or management, leadership and oral communication skills.[100] The 2006 Leitch Review states that such skills are increasingly *the* lever for prosperity and fairness and they should be a top priority for the UK's education system.[101]

It has been suggested that there are hints of a 'quiet but very positive evolution in learning'.[102] The myriad of wellbeing-led approaches within schools, colleges and third sector organisations suggests that practice is possibly outstripping policy.

Many schools are adopting whole-school approaches to wellbeing and resilience. An increasing number are signing up to cross-curriculum programmes, such as the Government's Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL).[103] Others focus on broadening the curriculum to ensure that the full range of 'human intelligences' is allowed to flourish. Wellington College has developed a wellbeing curriculum for all students, and requires all of its students to participate in art, music and dance until the age of sixteen so that they are able to develop and enjoy different kinds of self-expression.

Other schools have opted for, or complement whole-school approaches with, dedicated class time for personal development. One example is the UK Resilience Programme, designed to improve skills such as social awareness, problem solving, assertiveness, negotiation and relaxation.

The Local Wellbeing Project – wellbeing and resilience in schools

The UK Resilience Programme

The UK is fares poorly in terms of child wellbeing and resilience and this area emerged as a priority at the outset of the project. The interest of the local authority partners was in child wellbeing but also in how this could be used as a tool to improve achievement and classroom behaviour.

The Penn Resiliency Programme (PRP), developed and tested rigorously by the University of Pennsylvania, was chosen to be secondary schools in the three partner areas. Year seven pupils – aged 11 to 12 – were targeted in recognition of the challenges faced in the transition from primary to secondary education, and because at this age children have the cognitive ability to deal with complex concepts whilst not yet having entered the turmoil of the teenage years.

The UK implementation of PRP, the UK Resilience Programme (UKRP), is the largest trial of this approach in any country to date. Partner authorities funded the work from a number of different sources including Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and children's mental health budgets. The evaluation of the pilot is funded by DCSF and is being carried out by the London School of Economics.

UKRP aims to improve the emotional resilience of 11 to 13 year olds by enhancing a number of important life skills to enable them to deal constructively with daily problems and challenges. The curriculum focuses on cognitive skills, social problem-solving skills, assertiveness, negotiation and relaxation through various methods, including applying new skills to the real world. The curriculum is taught by trained UKRP teachers over eighteen hours to groups no larger than fifteen.

22 schools are participating in the programme and 323 teachers have been trained to deliver the programme so far. Two thousand students participated in the academic year 2007-08 and the impact of the programme is being monitored over three years.

The first year findings are promising. The initial quantitative work found a significant positive impact on pupils' depression and anxiety symptom scores for those schools where the treatment and control groups were well matched. This effect was larger for girls than for boys, for pupils who had lower baseline scores for depression and anxiety, and for those who had not met target levels for Key stage 2 in their exams. The longer term impact

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

on pupil wellbeing, as well as other factors such as educational attainment, attendance and classroom behaviour, will be monitored over the duration of the programme. The final evaluation report is expected at the end of 2010.

Anecdotal evidence from the partner local authorities is positive and they remain committed to rolling out the programmes authority wide. The teachers and pupils involved in the programme – as well as head teachers from the pilot schools- have been able to articulate the positive impact of UKRP in the classrooms and beyond.

> *'I'm nearly 60 and I've had, in my life, one or two life changing moments. The resilience training was one of those for me'.*
> Teacher

> *'Longdean School has introduced a number of measures including the UK Resilience Programme, and the impact can be seen in no permanent exclusions this year, a 50 per cent reduction in fixed term exclusions and attendance going up from 88 to 93 per cent'.*
> Richard Bryant, Head of Longdean, Hertfordshire

Mind Matters promotes social and emotional wellbeing in secondary school communities in Australia. **Kidsmatter** adopts the same approach in primary schools.

The initiative uses a whole school approach to embed and promote preventative mental health intervention and equip young people with the skills to respond effectively to challenges. There is a resource kit for schools and professional development for staff that implement the intervention.

By 2005, 87 per cent of schools in Australia had adopted the Mind Matters approach. An evaluation found that schools and their staff had adopted policies and structures to support the mental health of staff and students. It found improvement in students' confidence to undertake help-seeking behaviour. Teachers stated that they felt better able to support their students.[105]

Contributing to pupil wellbeing became a statutory requirement for UK schools in 2007.[106] DCSF and Ofsted are working to develop both qualitative and quantitative school-level indicators to enable more effective self-evaluation and to support the inspection process. This increasing focus on the relationship between schools and other areas of pupils' lives complements government policy to promote 'extended schools'. Two thirds of UK schools now offer a menu of activities after school hours to pupils, their families and to the local community.[107]

Many outside school-hours activities are designed to promote pupil wellbeing, and also have potential to increase the wellbeing of parents by involving them in their child's learning and enabling them to learn new skills.

The growing recognition of the importance of nurturing a wide range of life skills is also encouraging schools to call into question the sharp division between practical and vocational, and academic learning. This is reflected in government initiatives such as Diplomas and the new high priority put on Apprenticeships, and in practical initiatives such as the Studio School Trust, set up by the Young Foundation.[108]

The Local Wellbeing project – work with older teenagers Apprenticeship pathfinder project

Young people make key transitions in their lives between the ages of 16 and 19 that are critical in determining life chances and wellbeing in adulthood. Evidence suggests that life is becoming increasingly difficult for this age group. UK government statistics estimate that one in eight teenagers are depressed, and around ten per cent of 16 to 18-year-olds are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training.[109]

This strand of the Local Wellbeing Project aims to explore the link between soft skills, employment prospects and wellbeing, and whether increasing access to higher quality and higher status vocational routes into employment can increase wellbeing and aspirations.

Following discussions with project partners, central government, the Learning and Skills Council and the new National Apprenticeships Service, the work has crystallized into the **Apprenticeships Pathfinder Project**.

An initial report, '*Thinking about Apprenticeships*',[110] aimed to shed more light on parent, pupil and employer perceptions and expectations of apprenticeships. Two key issues were highlighted that have informed the pathfinder's work: the lack of available information about apprenticeships, how they work and their benefits; and the need to strengthen relationships between stakeholder groups that are key to the success of apprenticeships – employers, young people, colleges, training providers and schools.

The Pathfinder aims to provide evidence about the processes and relationships that will be required by local authorities, the National Apprenticeship Service and others, including Connexions, schools and employers, to achieve the government's aspirations for Apprenticeships. These are: that apprenticeships become a mainstream learning route for

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

young people between 14 and 19 years old; that young people meeting the specified entry standards will be entitled to an apprenticeship place by 2013; and that one in five young people are engaged in apprenticeships within the next decade.

The three partner local authorities will aim to increase the supply of employer places, stimulate demand from young people, and 'open doors to apprenticeships' for young people who are disadvantaged or disengaged. The Pathfinder will seek to capture the impact of these aspirations on the wellbeing of young people and communities.

Learning does not end when compulsory education does. 'Keep learning' is one of the five ways to wellbeing identified by the new economics foundation (nef).[111] A body of research echoes this and highlights the links between formal and informal learning and wellbeing at all stages of life.[112] A growing number of programmes aim to remove barriers to participation in informal adult learning and encourage creative ways of engaging learners of all ages.[113]

Policy implications

All education systems aim to not only equip children and young people with the skills they need as adults – particularly literacy and numeracy – but also to prepare young people for the full demands of life.

The critique of the focus on targets, tests and prescribed curriculum of recent years is that it has squeezed out space for schools to concentrate on these wider issues, and that some school children are not learning the softer skills, including teamwork, communication skills, or the personal skills, such as emotional resilience, that they and potential employers need.

In response, the government has introduced initiatives that focus on wellbeing, such as the Social and Educational Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme, and encouraging the development of extended school. From 2007 schools have had a statutory responsibility to contribute to their pupils' wellbeing.

Government initiatives appear to be running behind practice. Many individual schools and colleges, and local education authorities are pushing wellbeing and emotional resilience to the forefront of their work. This is taking place in primary and secondary schools, in schools that focus on academic achievement and within vocational education. The activities of pioneering institutions need to be evaluated and lessons spread rapidly to others.

5.1.3   Work

The majority of people will work from the age of 18 through to retirement, spending around 2,000 hours a year at work.[114] The experience of work – or lack of work – can be a key challenge to quality of life. Equally work can be an aspect of life that fuels wellbeing and boosts quality of life.

Dame Carol Black's Review of the Health of the Working Age Population[115] identified business as a key potential partner in promoting adult health and wellbeing across Britain. According to this review, the annual economic costs of sickness absence and worklessness associated with working age ill-health are over £100 billion. This is greater than the current annual budget for the NHS and equivalent to the entire GDP of Portugal.[116] The current total cost to employers of employee mental health problems is estimated at nearly £26 billion a year, according to the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health – equivalent to £1,035 for every employee in the UK workforce.[117]

The evidence tells a complex story: on one hand it has been argued that too many are stuck in a cycle of 'work-and-spend' that has resulted in a treadmill of endless work, to support lifestyles that are based on the consumption of more and more, at the expense of free time.[118] On the other hand, work satisfaction has increased. In the UK there has been an increase in the percentage of employees satisfied with the sense of achievement they gain from work (up from 64 per cent in 1998 to 70 per cent in 2004).[119]

It is also known that work has an inherently beneficial impact on an individual's state of health. A recent review for the Department of Work and Pensions[120] concluded that work was, overall, good for both physical and mental health and wellbeing. The beneficial effects of work were shown to outweigh the potential harmful effects of long term worklessness or prolonged sickness absence. Work has a wider function in people's lives, providing us not only income but also with extra meaning. The American Good Work project aims to increase the incidence of 'good work' – work that is excellent in quality, socially responsible, and meaningful to its practitioners. The project argues that there are three critical elements of good work: that it is technically excellent; personally meaningful or engaging; and carried out in an ethical way.[121] 'Good work' is characterised by three intertwined strands of 'E' - a triple helix.[122]

Figure 15: The Triple Helix of Good Work: Excellence, Ethics, and Engagement

Excellence
Ethics
Engagement

Source: Good Work Project

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

There is a correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The Good Work Project found that job satisfaction is associated with opportunity for personal control and skill use; externally generated goals; variety; job security and income; physical security; supportive supervision; opportunity for interpersonal contact and social status.[123] Professions that are repetitive and with limited opportunity for personal control are characterised by lower levels of job satisfaction. These findings have been mirrored in the UK by the Work Foundation[124] and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.[125]

Figure 16: Job satisfaction by UK occupational groupings (top and bottom)[126]

| Highest job satisfaction	Lowest job satisfaction
Corporate managers & senior officials	Assemblers & routine operatives
Hairdressers & related occupations	Metal forming, welding & related trades
Health & social service managers	Elementary admin occupations
Personal services occupations	Customer service occupations
Managers in distribution, storage & retail	Textiles & garments trades
Production managers	Admin occupations (government & related)
Managers & proprietors (other service)	Process operatives
Sports & fitness occupations	Draughtspersons & building inspectors
Functional managers	Skilled trades
Artistic & literary occupations	Plant & machinery operatives

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi argues that work is at its most fulfilling when people are in a state of 'flow', a deep focus that occurs when people engage in tasks with intense concentration and commitment.[127] Flow requires that the task is challenging and requires skill. There are clear goals and immediate feedback. People concentrate and have deep, effortless involvement. There is a sense of control; sense of self vanishes and time stops.[128]

When people become unemployed their happiness falls, less because of the loss of income than because of the loss of work itself.[129] The detrimental impact of unemployment is felt as strongly after one or two years of unemployment as at the beginning.[130] It seems that people do not get used to unemployment, though it hurts less if other people are out of work too.[131] And even when they are back at work, people still feel its effects as a psychological scar.[132] Andrew Oswald estimates that you would have to give someone £23,000 per month (or £250,000 per year) to compensate for the loss of happiness from being unemployed – far more than even the most generous benefit system.[133]

The other area of strong evidence is on the relationship between travel time to work and wellbeing. Recent research shows that commuting in crowded

conditions and long commutes are both associated with lower levels of frustration tolerance and job stability as well as with poor health and work absences.[134] Commuting is not good for workers' wellbeing, but may be part of a wider trade-off enabling families to exercise choice to live outside urban centres.

Figure 17: The relationship between life satisfaction and commuting time
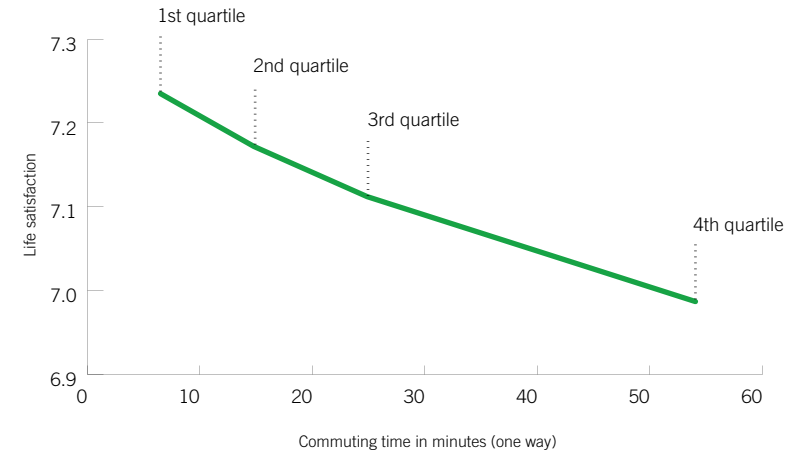
From the work of Bruno Frey[135]

The relationship between the changes in how we work now and our wellbeing is a mixed picture. The trajectory of a decrease overall in working hours is continuing in most Western economies: in December 2008 in the UK, the majority of full-time workers averaged 37 hours.[137] However, some professional and managerial occupations report intensive pressures on time and an increase in the length of their working day. In the UK, the people who work the longest hours are men between 30 and 49, with children, and in the private sector, although on average full-time managers do not work longer hours than their EU counterparts.

One survey found that the main reason for working long hours was workload. But half of the respondents said that working longer hours is 'totally [their] own choice – doesn't mind working long hours' – up from two out of five respondents saying the same thing in 1998.[138] Many people like work, including long hours, and not everyone wants to spend their marginal time with friends.[139] For the other half, it can be difficult to articulate the wish to cut working hours. A survey of associates in US law firms showed that they would like to work shorter hours for less pay.[140]

There have been major changes in working patterns in Britain, with a dramatic increase in flexible and part-time working.[141] This has a positive impact on individuals' work-life balance. The proportion of workplaces where some staff –

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

but not senior managers – work from home has risen from 16 per cent in 1998 to 28 per cent in 2004.[142] This is a particular help to people with children and caring responsibilities. Legislative change has been important in enabling this shift.[143] The proportion of firms where staff work term time hours and have flexitime and job sharing policies has also risen.[144] Flexibility has been aided by technological advances, with remote working and easy access to email making it possible for more to work from home. For others, however, new technologies can become a burden, making them feel on call 24 hours a day.

The concept of employee wellbeing has grown in popularity over the recent years and becomes ever more relevant in the current global economic recession. In one survey of employers, half said that individual staff workloads have increased as a result of the credit crunch. A similar number say that their employee stress levels have risen.[145] Research from late 2008[146] found that almost two thirds of Britons felt more stressed, run down and prone to illness than they did three years previously – and more then one in ten said the majority of stress they experienced was coming from work.

Even when in work, people fear unemployment, and when unemployment goes up, it has a major impact on the happiness of everybody including those in work.[147] The recession has raised unemployment and usually unemployment rates lag after economic recovery.[148] It is estimated that more than one in six young people are out of work.[149]

Business Action on Health

Business in the Community launched an emotional resilience toolkit in May 2009 as part of their Business Action on Health campaign.[150] Building on the Government's Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project[151], the project recommended five simple actions that employers of all sizes and sectors can take to promote wellbeing at work: foster a sense of community; get people moving; nurture sensitivity to the environment; promote learning and development, and encourage generosity at work.

GlaxoSmithKline: Wellbeing in the workplace

The company needed to ensure employees remained physically energised, mentally focused, emotionally connected and spiritually aligned to its company mission.

A company-wide personal and team resilience programme was created, focusing on Expertise, Execution, Behaviours and Self-awareness. This

included on-site health and fitness centres, flexible working arrangements and family support services.

Healthcare benefits focused on prevention and access to innovative and proven treatments, focusing on musculoskeletal and ergonomic improvement, smoking cessation, walking, weight management, blood pressure , health promotion and sleep roadshows. All employees were offered a Health Risk Appraisal.

The benefits were:

- the number of working days lost fell 29 per cent
- global work-related mental ill-health levels dropped 60 per cent
- staff satisfaction increased 21 per cent and performance and productivity increased between seven and 13 per cent
- 53 per cent reported significant improvement in physical, emotional, mental and spiritual performance
- employees experiencing strain at work fell 3 per cent
- the number of days lost fell by 44 per cent and musculoskeletal case levels fell by a third.[152]

East Sussex: Wellbeing in the workplace

In 2004 the employee absence rate within East Sussex Council was over nine days per person each year. This cost the council approximately £7.5 million a year. Since then, the council has been overhauling its approach to sickness and occupational health in the workplace, to reduce costs and increase productivity and also to increase staff wellbeing.

The council had the dual aim of changing employee attitudes towards sick leave and promoting employee wellbeing. The new approach was designed to underscore the duties that both employee and employer have to one another.

East Sussex put together a comprehensive wellbeing package:

- those who are off sick for longer than four weeks, or more than twice in six months, are automatically referred to an occupational health physician
- free clinics to help people give up smoking; reflexology, massage and pilates classes at a reduced rate; and tailored personal training programmes are all offered
- staff can access five free sessions with a local counsellor to help solve work and personal problems
- staff with musculo-skeletal problems are offered physiotherapy.

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

Results so far have been promising. In 2007, absence rates had dropped to eight days per person per year. Staff morale had improved. Surveys showed that 73 per cent of staff enjoyed working for the council, up six per cent from the previous year.

East Sussex is currently assisting 16 other organisations to deliver some of these initiatives, including Brighton and Hove City Council and the local fire service.

The aim of the majority of pay policies is to align pay and output through various forms of performance-related pay. However financial reward is not as effective a motivator as is often assumed. Edward Deci gave puzzles to two groups of students. One group was paid for each correct solution, the other not. After time was up, both groups were allowed to go on working. The unpaid group continued to work for longer than the paid group – because of their intrinsic interest in the exercise.[153]

Richard Layard argues that in the light of this, British governments over the last 20 years have made serious errors in their approach to the reform of public services. They have stressed ever more the need to reward individual performance, rather than focusing on overall levels of pay and stressing the importance of the job and the promotion of professional norms and professional competence.[154]

The impact of additional income on wellbeing, once basic needs are met, are relatively small, and diminish as people rise up the income scale. So while taxation crudely involves redistributing an equivalent sum of money from the higher paid to the lower paid, the equivalent in 'wellbeing currency' would be a transfer of a small amount of wellbeing from the higher paid, equating to a larger donation of wellbeing to those at the other end of the income scale. Layard argues that a society will have a higher level of average wellbeing the more equally income is distributed. His argument follows that there is a need to reduce the need for us to work longer hours in the pursuit of higher income at the sacrifice of our private lives. Tax should act as a disincentive for longer working hours and as a key element in promoting a sensible work-life balance.[155]

Policy implications

Work can be a source of fulfilment and frustration. There have been stark changes in how many people work – including the increase in the number of people in 'white collar' jobs, increased automation and use of new technologies. These have increased stress for some as the pace of work accelerates. But for others, technology and more flexible attitudes to work have been liberating.

Working hours continue to fall overall, although for some occupations, notably professionals and managers, hours have increased. However, many people enjoy working long and hard, and overall satisfaction with work in the UK has risen. Recession-related stress linked to the experience of, or threat of, unemployment has also become an important factor in our working lives.

Wellbeing is not strongly associated with high pay in itself, although it is linked to earning more than people around you, an effect that decays over time.

The link between pay and wellbeing challenges policy on pay and reward in the private and public sector. It has been argued that if increases in income do not increase wellbeing, then state intervention to limit pay increases will not necessarily lead to the level of public resentment that is commonly feared, although here as in many areas of life, people are notoriously bad at predicting what will actually make them happy.

All employers – public, private and third sector – can take effective action to improve wellbeing and there are many examples of good practice. There are strong examples of where emotional resilience has been taught to employees and various interventions targeting wellbeing, and mental and physical health, combined with policies that enable flexibility and work-life balance.

Increasing tax likewise can be seen as a transfer of wellbeing. Shifting disposable income from the well off to the less well off, should equate to a small loss of wellbeing from the wealthy and a big gain in wellbeing by those on lower income.

5.1.4 Ageing

The UK population is living longer and is in better health than ever.[156] And yet, whilst some 'younger old' people from the baby boomer generation are enjoying good pensions, the benefits of decades of overall house price inflation, long haul holidays and a high quality of life, many of us fear getting old. We associate ageing with physical and mental frailty, and social and financial exclusion.

A forthcoming report from the Young Foundation brings together recent analyses of old age. It shows that rising longevity is being associated with greater loneliness, weakening social supports and, in some cases, lower life satisfaction. Older people are more likely to live with low levels of life satisfaction and wellbeing if they are poor, isolated, in ill health, living alone, living in unfit housing or rundown neighbourhoods and worse still if they are a carer or living in a care home.[157]

However it is easy to characterise ageing as simply an experience of deterioration and increasing misery. One study in Leeds and Huddersfield concluded that ageing is not just about decline, nor even about maintaining an even keel. It is also about seeing and seizing opportunities and actively managing transition and

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

loss.[158,159] Strong themes that emerged from this work included the value attached to inter-dependence: being part of a community where people care about and look out for each other; a determination 'not to be a burden'. Threats to life quality include not only bereavement and ill health, but also 'daily hassles' and their cumulative impact.

Although the relationship between physical and emotional ill health increases with age, services have paid far more attention to the implications of physical limitations than to emotional components.[160] Age Concern and the Mental Health Foundation launched the UK Inquiry into Mental Health and Wellbeing in Later Life in late 2003.[161] This found that 12 to 15 per cent of people over 65 living in the community are thought to have depression, with up to a quarter suffering symptoms severe enough to warrant intervention. [162] Depression affects 60 per cent of older people in care homes. As people age, 'major' depression becomes less common but 'minor' depression is more prevalent. Depression tends to be more chronic in later life, with longer episodes and shorter remission periods.[163]

As people age they are more likely to encounter major stressors such as relocation, bereavement, and onset of illness. A person's ability to deal with these will have much to do with their emotional resilience, and their adaptability and potential for continued development.

However, wellbeing does not have to diminish in older age. In the 'U-shaped curve' of happiness, wellbeing reaches its nadir in the mid-to-late forties and then climbs.[164] A physically fit seventy-year-old is on average as happy as someone of twenty[165], and ageing is a positive experience for the majority of people.[166] And for those who do experience decline in memory and cognitive functioning, training for in reasoning, memory and speed can lead to significant improvements in all three areas.[167] Mental decline does not have to be inevitable.

Mental, physical and emotional welfare are all linked with each other. Training in cognitive reasoning does not just increase that faculty, but it also increases older individual's feeling of comfort and confidence in their ability to cope with day-to-day difficulties.[168] Better cognitive functioning is also associated with increased psychological wellbeing.[169]

Local Wellbeing Project – improving the emotional resilience of older people

Full of Life: Wellbeing in Later Years

The UK is ageing fast. A priority for local government and health services is to increase the number of effective – and cost-effective – ways of improving the wellbeing of the growing number of older people. There are few services for older people who do not meet statutory thresholds of need. Early discussions

with local authority partners identified the need to develop a mainstream service to enhance emotional resilience and the ability of older people to deal constructively with change and daily challenges. Ageing is likely to bring new challenges for most people, including retirement, bereavement, moving home or the onset of various diseases and disabilities.

The **Full of Life Project** was developed with the aim of strengthening the social networks and emotional resilience of older people. It is based on 'Living life to the Full', a programme developed and tested rigorously with different age ranges by Dr Chris Williams from the University of Glasgow. The programme builds on strong evidence that demonstrates that guided self-help based on CBT is an effective way of enabling people to take back control over their lives.

This service is innovative not only in using and adapting CBT for people aged sixty-five and over, but also in recruiting and training volunteers to deliver the course who are both from the same age range and from the local community. The aim is to boost the wellbeing and emotional resilience of older people, and the wellbeing and emotional resilience of the volunteers.

Small scale pilots have been completed in South Tyneside and Manchester to test the suitability of the materials for this particular age range and the training for volunteers. Feedback from the volunteers and participants was positive and the preliminary findings from the evaluation of the programme are encouraging.

A much larger pilot stage in South Tyneside is evaluating the impact of the materials and the contact with volunteers on the wellbeing of older people. The service is being tested both as individual telephone support and in group sessions. The aim is to deliver to around 80 people by Spring 2010 and then grow.

> *'I have read the books a lot and use them regularly myself. They are great and easy to follow. They have made me a lot more self-aware.'*
> Volunteer

> *'The service really fills a gap in the system, plugs a loophole. For people who may not want to go for therapy, or who cannot leave their homes, the books and telephone support is ideal.'*
> Older person

> *'The books helped a lot to boost my morale - the conversations with [the volunteer] and having the books to hand anytime made me feel like I wasn't alone. The man who wrote the books really knows exactly how I feel! They are easy to read, and nice and condensed.'*
> Older person

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

A number of factors have driven changes in government policy on ageing to better support wellbeing, independence and engagement with the wider community. These include the demands from older people themselves, and government and services providers' wishes to find ways for services to better meet needs and to be more efficient. 'Personalisation' of social care has resonated strongly with both social care service planners and service users; the 'reenablement' agenda aims to maintain independence, although this to date has had a stronger emphasis on physical than emotional needs.

Public services still mainly focus on the most vulnerable older people in times of crisis (estimated to be 15 per cent of the population) rather than enabling the other 85 percent to remain independent for as long as possible. Recent plans shift this balance but there still is a lack an overall vision at a national, regional or local level to cater and plan for an ageing society.

Research from Canada shows that among the over 65s the activity that brings greatest satisfaction is paid work – significantly more enjoyed than going to the cinema, dining out. This is a reminder that being valued is one of the most important sources of wellbeing.

Policy implications

The experience of ageing for many is positive. Wellbeing tends to rise in older age from its nadir in the middle years. The experience of old age is one of transition, and change. Social and financial exclusion, misery and loneliness, are not inevitable consequences of ageing.

Although prosperity helps, it is not the only factor that affects wellbeing. But low wellbeing is associated with living in rundown areas and in care homes. It is also well recognised that depression becomes more common as people age.

Independence, not necessarily the absence of help and support, but the capacity to make choices, and strong social relationships emerge as important in maintaining wellbeing. This has important implications for the type of housing and support that older people are offered by the state.

A wellbeing lens on government policy on ageing would lead to more exploration of models such as co-housing where people live collectively; an attention to both housing and wider neighbourhood facilities and design; building social networks across and between generations; and a broader focus on ageing across public policy.

Recent policy has prioritised maintaining independence through aids and adaptations and the provision of care and support in people's homes, alongside personalising services. The focus on physical enablement and personalisation needs to be mirrored by a focus on emotional reenablement. Emotional resilience

can be boosted and 'taught' at all ages – the experience of the Local Wellbeing Project demonstrates one model of how this can be approached.

5.2   Society and wellbeing

5.2.1 Health

Across many countries, mortality rates have improved at an unprecedented rate. This has changed the focus of healthcare systems from simply extending life towards improving life over the course of a longer lifespan[170] and reducing chronic and degenerative conditions. A World Health Organisation (WHO) report sets out the aim of 'placing emphasis on physical, mental and social welfare as the future task of its policy rather than a mere increase in life expectancy'.[171]

However even with advancements in health care, many countries fare poorly in terms of obesity, smoking, alcohol and drug consumption, poor mental health – all of which damage individuals' and societies' wellbeing. Andrew Oswald estimates that the cost or monetary compensation of a reduction in health from excellent to good would be £10,000, and from excellent to fair, the cost would be £32,000.

Approximately one in four people say that they are not in good health.[172] ONS statistics suggest that the number of men self-reporting an illness increased from 40 per cent in 1993 to 44 per cent in 2007, but had reduced to 42 per cent in 2007.[173] Similarly, the proportion of women reporting a long standing illness increased from 40 per cent to 44 per cent during the same time period.[174]

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

Figure 18: Percentage of population reporting good health
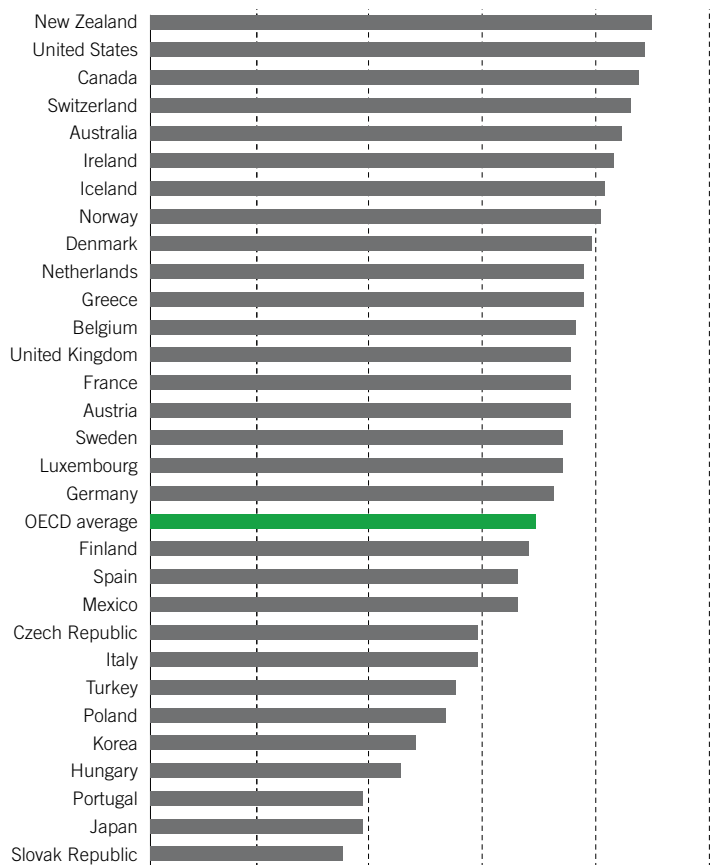
Source: OECD[175]

The WHO estimates that half of all people with ill health have a mental health illness, including depression or anxiety. Mental health has worsened in developed countries in recent years[176] and in the UK prescriptions for anti-depressants trebled between 1991 and 2003.[177] In 2007, the UK fell below the average mean index for mental health in 2007 and was ranked eight out of 21 when compared to other OECD member states.[178] The proportion of people in England who meet one or more criteria for a mental disorder has increased from 15 per cent in 1993 to 18 per cent in 2007. Women aged between 45 and 64 have experienced the largest increase. Only a quarter of people receive treatment for common mental or emotional conditions.[179]

'Positive mental health' describes a condition in which individuals fulfil their potential and enjoy their lives. Researchers argue that not only has mental illness, and associated ill physical health, increased but also that only a relatively small

percentage of society can be described as flourishing.[180] 'We know very little about how to improve the lives of people whose days are free of overt mental dysfunction but are bereft of pleasure, engagement and meaning'.[181]

The links between wellbeing and physical health are strong. Nations that have higher levels of wellbeing are more likely to have longer life expectancy, even when controlling for national income and infant mortality.[182] Older women considered to have higher levels of 'eudaimonic' wellbeing (wellbeing associated with self-development, personal growth and purposeful engagement) demonstrate a number of positive health traits, namely low waist to hip ratio and lower cholesterol.[183] An inverse relationship has been found between levels of happiness and hypertension at the national level.[184]

Figure 19: Happiness and hypertension
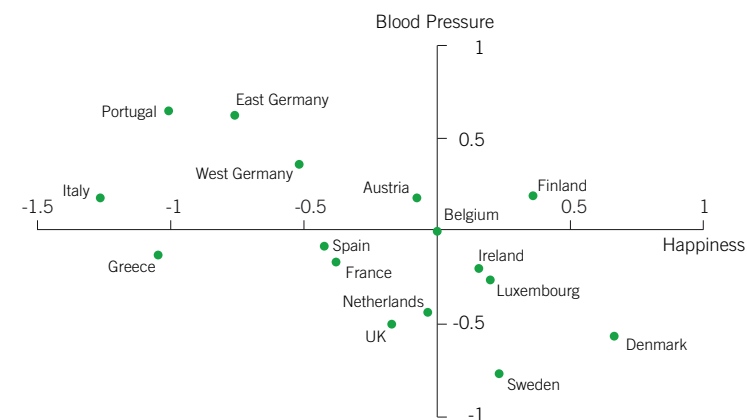
Burgeoning evidence linking mental wellbeing to poor physical and mental health has contributed to a general call to understand the 'biopsychosocial interplay'[186] of health, broadening the focus beyond curing illness to developing interventions that foster happiness in individuals. Diener states, 'subjective wellbeing, people's evaluation of their lives, is an indispensable component of psychological health, although it is not a sufficient condition of it.'[187]

Sunderland City Council: Bunny Hill Customer Service Centre

'Many of the illnesses that GPs and hospitals see every day in Sunderland are ones that could potentially have been avoided, or their seriousness reduced. The Wellness Service ensures that people at risk are identified earlier and referred to the appropriate health, diet and physical activity advice that will make a difference to their long-term wellbeing'.

Executive Director for Public Health, South of Tyne and Wear

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

Health outcomes in Sunderland are significantly below the national average – and in recent years this has been associated with lifestyle choices. The focus of the Healthy City priority in the Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025 is to ensure that the city provides excellent health and social care services and also supports its inhabitants to make healthy choices.

Sunderland City Council has been working with its partners to create a comprehensive wellbeing programme. The aim has been to shift the emphasis from treatment of illness to the promotion of wellness. A crucial part of the delivery has been through Wellness Centres that provide accessible sporting and leisure facilities to increase the number taking part in physical activity. Sunderland now has six of these that are linked to other wellness services in the city, from doctors' surgeries to outreach services at schools and community centres.

Bunny Hill Customer Service Centre demonstrates how Sunderland's Centres are playing a key role in placing wellbeing at the heart of community life. Bunny Hill links its Wellness Centre to a range of services:

- general inquiries about council services
- an NHS Primary Care Centre
- a library and community learning suite, including an ICT room
- a Books on Prescription service
- a community officer who works in the library with substance misuse clients and young people
- the Buttercup Nursery, which provides full day-care and crèche places
- a community café and an outreach centre for community development.

There are currently 7,597 Wellness Centre members in Sunderland. 16 per cent are under the age of 19. Between April 2007 and March 2008 the number of attendances at the Wellness Centres exceeded the target two-fold. In 2008 Sunderland City Council was awarded Beacon status for Reducing Health Inequalities.

The UK Government's Foresight report concludes 'Promoting mental capacity and mental wellbeing for everyone will be vital in meeting diverse challenges facing our changing society.'[188] The report[189] surfaces challenges in designing health services, particularly whether policy should focus on improving the mental wellbeing of the many or address the chronic mental disorders of the few.

Government policy – exemplified in the 'New Horizons' approach – will go some way to address some of the issues raised above. This policy initiative shifts the focus away from cure to preventative mental health interventions and is deemed to be a 'new approach to public mental health and wellbeing.'[190]

Changing Minds

The South London and Maudsley NHS trust have devised a new way to tackle issue ignorance and stigma around mental ill-health. The scheme recruits and trains local people who have experienced mental ill health to deliver mental health awareness training to others in the local community.

Recruits take part in a nine month part-time 'training to train' course, designed and shaped by people who have used mental health services themselves. Having completed the course, qualified trainers can use their skills and personal experience to train others to be mental health awareness trainers.

The positive effects are to educate the community about mental ill-health and the stigma and discrimination that often accompanies it; to promote understanding of mental health and wellbeing in the community; and to empower participants, improving skills, confidence and self-esteem, skills that can be transferred into the job market. The course has been successfully run five times between 2004 and 2007.

Policy implications

The improvement in mortality rates has shifted the focus of healthcare systems in developed countries from prolonging life to improving quality of life over a longer lifetime. 'Quality' favours intervening to improve wellness rather than illness, prevention rather than cure, and a focus on improving wellbeing alongside tackling mental health deficits.

A health policy that focuses on wellbeing would prioritise stopping people getting ill rather than focusing primarily on crisis and decline. This overall principle can be applied to physical and mental health services. It is well recognised that there is a relationship between mental and physical ill health, but there is less recognition of the relationship between levels of wellbeing and physical health.

Levels of mental ill health are rising, however alongside those formally diagnosed as 'mentally ill' are a large number of people who are anxious, lonely, or suffering from mild depression. Health services spend relatively little on this large number of people. Addressing their needs through talking therapies, promoting exercise and social contact would not only benefit these individuals but should generate cost savings over the long term, preventing their decline into more severe forms of illness.

Government policy addresses these issues to an extent, however the challenge of re-aligning health policy towards wellness, prevention and wellbeing are enormous. A key issue is aligning the work of agencies who provide community

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

based services (often local authorities) and those that provide acute care. Public health has a strong role in recognising the implications of poor wellbeing for a wide range of other outcomes.

5.2.2 Sports and the arts

The impacts and significance of the arts and culture – as part of a continuum and ecosystem of creativity and innovation – are now widely understood to reach far beyond intrinsic values and touch on matters […] such as social cohesion, economic innovation, regeneration, the creative and knowledge economy, inward investment strategies, tourism and quality of life.

Intelligence on Culture & Cultural Capital Ltd. & Partners[191]

Increasing participation in sports and the arts has become a government priority, running alongside continued support for arts and sports organisations and professions.[192] A growing body of research draws out consistent messages and themes that demonstrate the importance of participation in art, sport and cultural activities to emotional and physical health, social capital, cohesion, and neighbourhood regeneration.[193]

These may be some of the most affordable methods of increasing individual and community wellbeing. The benefits come more from participation than observing arts and sports – although watching your team winning may increase wellbeing in the short-term, the experience of losing will have the opposite effect, and the analogy may be extended to great and sub-standard shows or events.

The link between sports and physical health is self-evident, and the link between physical wellbeing and mental wellbeing is well established.[194] We are only starting to scratch the surface, however, of the impact of sporting, artistic and cultural activities to learning and self-esteem, for example, or identity and creativity.

Participation in these activities enables individuals to gain new skills but also to hone important life skills. Team sports improve team working and communication; an art project can stimulate creative thinking; volunteering for a community-based cultural project increases an individuals' ability to empathise with others. Cultural, artistic and sporting activities provide opportunities to discover new types of self-expression and to develop a wider range of human capacities and 'intelligences'.[195] Passions can develop. All can increase feelings of self-worth, confidence and motivation.[196]

The arts, sport and culture not only encourage informal, lifelong and intergenerational learning but also improve formal learning experiences.[197] For young people in particular, increased participation has shown to increase academic attainment as well as reducing truancy and improving classroom behaviour. National and international evidence suggests that increased

participation reduces youth offending and drug use through 'diversion' from criminal behaviour, improving social and emotional skills and improving prospects for the future.[198]

When artistic, cultural and sporting activities take place in a community setting there is huge potential to build local social networks. Social capital not only improves local relationships for individuals but also benefits the local area more widely. Recent studies show that increased participation in cultural, artistic and sporting activities helps tackle some of the issues that concern local communities, including delinquency,[199] graffiti and grime.[200] This increases residents' satisfaction with the neighbourhood and increases use of public spaces, both of which can in themselves lead to further improvements in individual and community wellbeing.

Policy implications

Increasing participation in sports and culture is a government priority. This may be one of the most effective ways of increasing individual and community wellbeing.

Evidence is emerging about the impact of participation in sports and cultural and belonging, identity, creativity and wellbeing. Participation in sports can encourage team work, and all exercise is associated with increased wellbeing. There is also a link with educational achievement and behaviour improvements for children and young people. Cultural activities, including community arts, like community based sports, develop local social networks and a sense of belonging.

The bulk of government funding for sports and arts is spent on supporting performances, training performers and sports men and women, and funding sporting events. Maximising the wellbeing impact of arts, cultural and sports spending implies a shift from spectating and the production of sports and arts, to participation, particularly if this has a community focus.

5.2.3 Community

The well connected are more likely to be hired, housed, healthy and happy.
Michael Woolcock[201]

Ever since Aristotle, the importance of family, friends, and other forms of social contact have been recognised as key to personal wellbeing. Both surveys and experimental data on wellbeing show the importance of the social context in which we live, with a growing body of research supporting the suggestion that community and neighbourhood empowerment has the potential to improve the wellbeing of individuals and communities.[202]

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

Strong neighbourhood networks can have a significant impact on quality of life. Data from the British Household Panel Survey highlights a strong link between personal wellbeing and talking to neighbours.[203] Neighbourhood networks open up access to reliable informal childcare, neighbours who can look after your house when you are on holiday, can reduce isolation and grow a sense of belonging. There is also evidence that the existence of social networks is linked to lower levels of crime, and improved educational achievement and health.[204]

Social capital is defined as: '…networks, norms, and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives.'[205] Robert Putnam has written extensively about the atomisation of society and argues that while social connectedness has been declining, depression and suicide have been increasing. His research indicates that joining and participating in one group halves a person's odds of dying the following year.[206]

Putnam distinguishes between two forms of social capital - bridging and bonding. 'Bridging' describes the ties between people who define themselves as coming from different groups or backgrounds, for example between players in interfaith football teams. Bridging social capital is key to improving social cohesion, levels of trust and feelings of belonging, all of which contribute to individual and community wellbeing.[207] 'Bonding' social capital refers to the relationships between people who share social backgrounds or community identities. This increases feelings of pride and empowerment within groups.[208]

Community empowerment is often understood as a 'zero sum' exchange, in which power is redistributed from one group to another – for example from elected councillors to local community groups. But it is also perceived to give benefits to communities – of geography or interest – by strengthening its ties and maximising its capabilities, resources and ability to influence the actions of those in power.

It can be difficult to evidence the more positive impacts of community engagement and empowerment. The biggest dataset globally on the impact of involvement is probably the UK's national evaluation of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme.[209] However, in spite of the policy intentions of those who designed the programmes, the data shows that community involvement in NDC areas had negligible impact on how people felt about the area they lived in, their quality of life, their feeling of being part of the community, and their trust in the local authority. But in spite of this, significant amounts of public money have been spent on this activity, in the often political belief in the intuitive link between giving people a voice in the decisions made by the state, and improving quality of life for everyone.

A growing body of evidence suggests that people who feel that they can influence their immediate environment have higher levels of wellbeing. Direct democracy, for example, in which every citizen is able to participate in decision making e.g. through referendums, has been shown to improve wellbeing of citizens.[210] Bruno

Frey studied Swiss cantons with different types of direct democracy and increased levels of happiness amongst Swiss citizens that have greater level of local democracy.[211] (The critics argue that these cantons that allowed referendums were also those that were the sunniest).

Figure 20: Wellbeing and everyday democracy
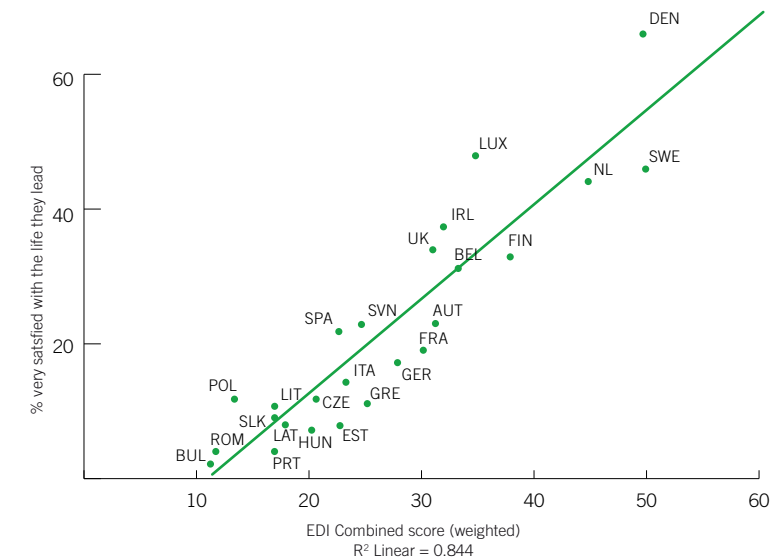
Source: Demos

This trend is played out in other international comparisons, with those countries that have greater level of 'everyday democracy' reporting higher levels of life satisfaction.[212] Everyday democracy encapsulates not only democratic practice in formal structures but also structures in the private sphere such as families, schools and local communities.

And yet despite the evidence,[213] wellbeing is rarely articulated as an explicit outcome of neighbourhood working and community empowerment. Social capital, with its clear relationship to individuals' and communities' wellbeing, is frequently regarded as an add-on rather than the main staple of community based activity, with more attention being paid to increasing service integration and involvement in decision making by public bodies.

It has been suggested[214] that the best way for local governments to enhance wellbeing is to implement policies at the local level that foster strong relationships – building regulations can encourage orientation of homes so that people meet their neighbours, and mandatory communal green spaces can aid community cohesion and social interaction.

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

Neighbourhood Parliaments in India

In the state of Kerala the concept of a neighbourhood Parliament is becoming ever more popular. Groups of around 30 families gather as a 'parliament' (no larger or individual voices become overlooked) to discuss local issues and propose actions to be taken. These parliaments are linked by a central network called the Neighbourhood Community Network (NCN).

The core assumption of the parliaments is that people themselves are the best agents to ensure their own wellbeing: processes and programming for wellbeing will deliver the best results when people themselves have the scope to participate in, monitor and control such processes and programmes.

The parliaments give a special focus to the poor, women and other disadvantaged groups to enable more effective participation. NCN supports individual parliaments, arranging for consultations with local, state and sometimes national government officials. NCN also promotes youth parliaments and children's parliaments.

The benefits, above and beyond the direct political implications, include social inclusion and the provision of an arena in which young children can enter the world of politics.

The Local Wellbeing project – work on neighbourhoods and community

The Local Wellbeing Project looked at how practical initiatives within the three areas that aimed to improve community empowerment also contributed to resident wellbeing, and to develop an understanding of what could be done to strengthen this link.

For decades, government policy has promoted active community empowerment. Community empowerment is well recognised as a way of building social capital, reducing feelings of powerlessness in local communities, improving the quality of local democracy and boosting services' response to very local needs. However, the link with resident wellbeing is less understood.

The report, *Neighbourliness + empowerment = wellbeing*, drew on discussions with academics and experts, and with practitioners with the three areas. The report identified hypotheses from the evidence, in the UK and internationally, and tested them against case studies from the three local authority sites. The report found that community empowerment contributes to wellbeing in three ways: by enhancing opportunities for residents to influence

decisions affecting their neighbourhoods; by facilitating contact between neighbours and residents; and by helping residents to gain confidence to exercise control over local circumstances.

Opportunities for residents to influence decisions affecting their neighbourhoods: The democratic services team in South Tyneside adopted new skills to support fresh initiatives as part of a wider commitment to bolstering local democratic processes. The initiatives proved successful in a number of ways, including increasing the number of young people registered to vote, which stood at 86 per cent at the time of writing the report.

Facilitating regular contact between neighbours: Manchester City Council holds a Manchester in Bloom competition to encourage local residents to transform and maintain their local environment. The local council met with 200 residents and other local services, in a local car park, to discuss the competition. Other local service agencies capitalised on the goodwill of the residents to support their own local initiatives. For instance, the Safer Neighbourhood team asked for mobile telephone numbers and from this created a text message based network of local people. Since the competition, residents have maintained contact with each other, with tea and coffee mornings held regularly in the local car park, often attracting up to 50 residents on Sundays. There are reports that neighbours have since developed new relationships.

Helping residents gain confidence to exercise control over local circumstance: Mancunian agreements bring people together to tackle local problems. Based on a shared understanding, commitment and actions, the agreements involve a number of local people and agencies. Manchester City Council with The Friends of Blackley Forest, sought to address the perception that the local nature reserve was unsafe and encourage greater use. The established initiatives increased the number of people visiting the Forest. Residents and council officers were able to successfully collaborate and develop trust to successfully address a local problem.

The report concludes with practical recommendations to improve existing empowerment initiatives and enhance wellbeing. These include: training democratic services staff in outreach work; encouraging staff to become mentors or 'ambassadors' to residents trying to navigate complex local institutions; encouraging local schools, colleges or adult education institutions to deliver courses on how local democracy works; organising informal networking events or fun days for active local residents and key decision makers to mingle; providing materials and workshops for residents so they can maintain areas within their neighbourhood.

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

Collective efficacy, the extent to which residents respond to local problems – for example, whether they intervene if they see an adult hitting a child in the street – can regulate local codes of conduct, discouraging antisocial behaviour, and improve wellbeing within local communities.[215] Robert Sampson's work in Chicago found that communities with high collective efficacy were also those with lower levels of violence.[216] Research conducted in Colville, a west London community, and St. Marys, in Oldham, found a positive link between collective efficacy and wellbeing.[217]

Evidence from the Home Office Citizenship Survey highlighted a correlation between residents' view of their community and the belief that residents were willing to take action against anti-social behaviour.[218] Residents from National Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders are more satisfied with their communities and are more likely to feel that their concerns on crime and their environment are being resolved than those living in comparable areas.[219]

During the last decade there has been a steady fall in total crime, and across most types of crimes.[220] However perceived levels of crime stand in stark contrast with the actual level of crime. The proportion of people reporting that national rates of crime have worsened has increased in recent years. There is a decline in proportion of people that think that there is more crime locally, which is in line with actual trends. Nonetheless, when asked, 17 per cent of people were worried about being a victim of violent crime, whilst the actual risk stood at three per cent. In an international survey conducted by the UN Habitat in 2007, respondents from 35 countries were asked if they feel unsafe walking home at night, England and Wales were 17th, higher than the United States, China and Canada.

Figure 21: Trends in crime in England and Wales, 1981 to 2008–09

Source: British Crime Survey[222]

Fig 22: Perceptions of changing crime levels in England and Wales, 1996 to 2008-09
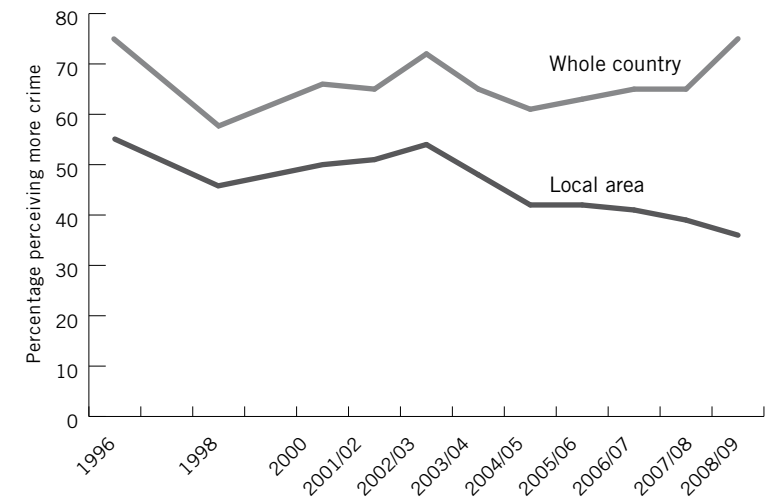
Source: British Crime Survey[223]

The impact of experiencing crime can significantly affect an individual's sense of wellbeing. Victims of crime tend to be less satisfied with life, are less positive, perceive the world as malevolent, have a reduced sense of self worth, and are more fearful of the risk and impact of crime, than people that have not been a victim of crime.[224] Shapland and Hall found a number of effects that arise from the experience of crime:

• initial shock and guilt at having become the victim of crime
• physical injury, including permanent incapacity in a small number of cases
• psychological effects, including fear, anger and depression, which, for some, may turn into longer-term depressive effects including sleeplessness and anxiety and, occasionally, into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
• behavioural effects, involving changes to the victim's lifestyle, normally to avoid the situation or context in which the offence occurred
• a loss of autonomy and increased vulnerability
• a loss of trust, and faith in society, particularly in the local community or in relation to the social group or place where the offence occurred.[225]

The effect of fear of crime and anti-social behaviour on wellbeing is similar to the effects of being an actual victim of crime. An independent enquiry into inequalities in health made clear links between wellbeing and crime, finding that 'fear of crime can also be a cause of mental distress and social exclusion'.[226]

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

Research shows that residents that feel safe score higher on mental and social wellbeing scores.[227]

The effects of crime and the fear associated with it can be felt not only by individual victims, but also by their families, friends and colleagues. People who perceive themselves to be at risk of crime may take steps to reduce the perceived risks, such as not talking to strangers, change their view about their community or reduce number of times they venture outside. The liveability survey conducted by Ipsos Mori in 2001 and 2005, found that a low crime rate was the largest single factor which determined where people would like to live.[228]

When people are reluctant to go out, this can result in a psychological and physical withdrawal from the community, which can trigger perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour.[229] Shrinking social networks within a community contribute to higher levels of crime, which, in turn, can cause further deterioration in social capital.

Crime reduction and lowering perceived levels of crime and anti-social behaviour both require interventions that address the general wellbeing of individuals and their communities. Martin Davis, the Head of Partnership and Engagement for the Metropolitan Police Authority advises a broader approach to community safety is required, one that 'targets exclusion, social inequalities, as well as appropriate planning measures… Indeed community security requires a holistic and coordinated approach.'[230]

Communities are better able to moderate the level of risk where there are higher levels of collective efficacy and social capital.[231] Interventions that foster ties within communities can contribute to reduced levels of fear of crime amongst residents. Those communities with strong networks and ties have a greater level of mutual trust and engagement in community organisations, which also contributes to other aspects of people's wellbeing. The presence of neighbourhood trust and cohesion can also influence resident's willingness to intervene when a criminal act is taking place.

This thinking also informs planning guidelines. Part of the national Planning Policy Statement focuses on the links between the planning system and crime prevention and finds that 'places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community' can contribute to crime prevention.[232]

Policy implications

Although community empowerment is often seen as a 'zero sum game' – one group (community activists) gaining power at the expense of another (institutions) – a growing body of work points to the impact of community empowerment on wellbeing.

Empowering residents to have a say in decisions that affect their local areas is a cross party priority. This is motivated typically by a wish to strengthen local democracy, to improve services, and to tackle deprivation. Increasing wellbeing is rarely seen to be an explicit outcome of community engagement.

There is good evidence of the link between local social networks and wellbeing, and of a link between wellbeing and collective efficacy and belonging. Community development and engagement policies that prioritised wellbeing would put a greater stress on generating social networks – for example through local activities or using new technologies – and on building a sense of belonging and local identity.

Strong social networks and social capital are both key to reducing actual and perceived crime levels. The damage done to individuals from experiencing and fearing crime and anti-social behaviour is comparable. It is important to prioritise tackling perceptions of crime and disorder alongside measures to reduce actual crime levels.

These lessons apply to different communities across urban and rural areas in different parts of the UK. The same lessons also have relevance to spatial planning and to building new housing developments that meet residents' needs and aspirations, now and in the future.
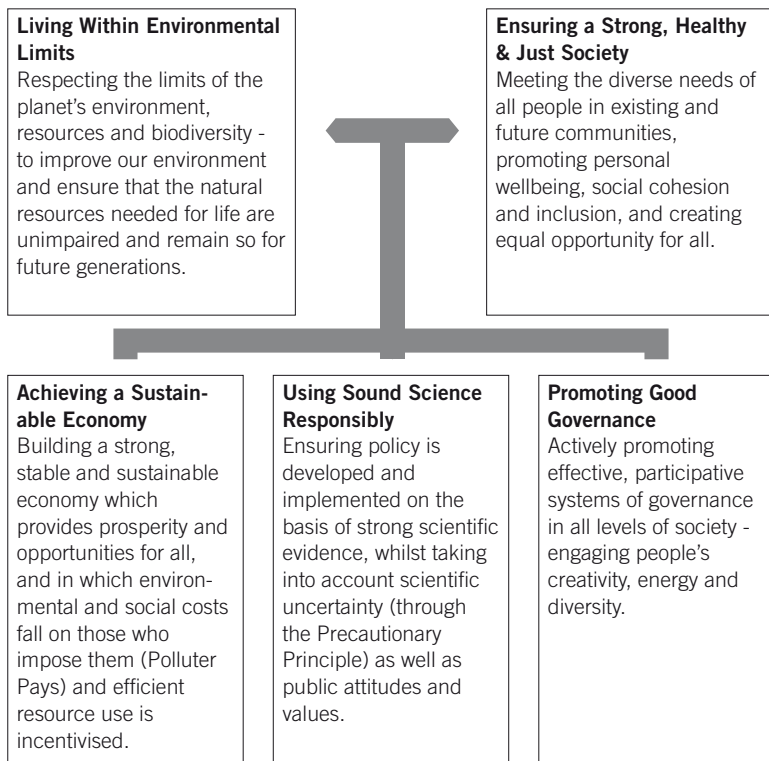
THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

5.2.4   The environment

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.
Mahatma Gandhi

Wellbeing and environmental sustainability are often linked in debates about how to measure societal progress.[233] Both ideas are brought together in the UN definition of sustainable development: 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The UK's sustainable development indicator set includes an indicator of subjective wellbeing, alongside a raft of other indicators focusing on environmental depletion and related areas.

Figure 23: The UK Sustainable Development Strategy

Living Within Environmental Limits
Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity - to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

Ensuring a Strong, Healthy & Just Society
Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all.

Achieving a Sustainable Economy
Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (Polluter Pays) and efficient resource use is incentivised.

Using Sound Science Responsibly
Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the Precautionary Principle) as well as public attitudes and values.

Promoting Good Governance
Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society - engaging people's creativity, energy and diversity.

Source: Defra[234]

There is growing recognition amongst national and local policymakers that they have an important role in promoting environmental sustainability – and that promoting wellbeing and individual behaviour change are key within this.[235] Encouraging people to make decisions and adopt lifestyles that have a positive impact on both their own wellbeing and that of the planet will be fundamental to the success of sustainable development on a global scale.

The relationship between the wellbeing and environmental sustainability agendas is not always an easy one. Although often mutually reinforcing (for example cycling to work decreases pollution and is good for mental and physical wellbeing) they are sometimes seen to clash. A common assumption is that green lifestyles involve sacrifice and or extra expense – cutting down on long haul flights, using public transport rather than driving, or buying organic or locally-sourced food. Former US Vice President Dick Cheney said 'conservation may be a sign of personal virtue but it is not a sufficient basis for a sound, comprehensive energy policy.'[236]

The evidence suggests that there can be a link between environmental knowledge, attitudes and behaviours and personal wellbeing. Research from Imperial College London found that people who live a more eco-friendly lifestyle (based on an assessment of their lifestyle and attitudes) tend to score significantly higher in subjective wellbeing assessments.[237] There are a raft of UK and international initiatives that demonstrate the positive impact of green initiatives on physical, mental, economic and community wellbeing.

Consciously Rebuilding

The devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina left New Orleans with many pressing needs. The Consciously Rebuilding organisation was developed in response to this situation with the aim of creating links between local communities, industries and the local government involved in the rebuilding process. Through a co-operative approach to rebuilding the residents can work with the other involved parties to develop a city that fulfils all their needs.

The organisation places a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability – both of the rebuilding process and the actions of the residents after rebuilding is complete. One of its programmes provides training to local residents in environmental issues such as environmentally conscious design. Other programmes are more practical, such as tree-planting and organised clean-ups, both of which foster an atmosphere of co-operation within the community.

Increased engagement with nature and the outdoors is associated with higher levels of concentration, lower levels of aggression, lower levels of stress, and higher levels of wellbeing,[238] and linked with a variety of health outcomes,

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

including faster recovery times among hospital patients, decreased mortality among senior citizens, and fewer sick calls for prisoners.[239, 240] 'Green exercise' is an expanding movement across the UK that advocates a range of physical activities in the outdoors that aim to improve mental health.[241]

Group based activities that focus around exposure to nature also develop social networks and build social capital.[242] Tree planting, for example, brings neighbours together, reducing social isolation and creating a stronger sense of place and belonging.[243] The Community Guardians scheme in Manchester enables residents to 'adopt' their local area and work with the city council to maintain its public spaces.[244] Enabling residents to improve the quality of their area increases resident satisfaction with their immediate environment as well as the use of public spaces, both of which have a further positive effect on wellbeing.[245] Recent research has shown that the presence of vegetation can reduce crime in inner-city areas.[246]

Smarter Travel Sutton

Smarter Travel Sutton (STS) is London's first sustainable travel behaviour change programme. The programme seeks to reduce congestion and the environmental impact of cars by boosting levels of walking and cycling – both of which simultaneously improve physical and mental wellbeing – as well as encouraging public transport use.

The programme is funded by Transport for London (TfL) and is run in partnership with local stakeholders (including charities, non-governmental organisations, the Metropolitan Police, Primary Care Trust, and businesses).

The main target areas are school and workplace travel plans. Promotional activities included social marketing campaigns and events in schools and the community, including environment fairs, 'Give your car the day off', and 'File the Miles', which encourages families and young people to replace car miles with walking or cycling and to record the total mileage achieved. Another key element of programme activity is Personal Travel Planning. Travel Planners visit people in their homes and give tailored travel advice.

The impact so far is promising, although the medium and longer term impacts and the sustainability of behaviour change are being monitored.

- bus use in Sutton rose by 13 per cent between 2006 and 2009, compared to a 9 per cent growth in the control area where the initiative was not run
- cycling levels in Sutton rose 50 per cent between April to October 2008 and the same period in 2007 (compared to a 12 percent increase in the control area over the same period)

- there has been a 19 per cent reduction in the number of pupils making car or car-share trips to school.

Many of these schemes encourage individuals to lead more eco-friendly lifestyles without requiring them to sign up to the sustainability agenda. The more policymakers and local agencies can do to maximise – and advertise – the wellbeing impact of their services and behaviour change strategies, the more successful they are likely to be.

The Local Wellbeing Project: Going green to beat the blues

The wellbeing of present and future generations is one of the pillars of sustainable development. 'Good' societal progress has come to be seen as progress that enables local populations to live well but also to live within the limits of a 'finite planet'.[247] As a programme designed to explore how local government action can support initiatives to increase wellbeing, it was important for the Local Wellbeing Project to explore how the wellbeing and environmental agendas could be aligned – and even how practical initiatives that aim to increase wellbeing could also be used to accelerate pro-environmental behaviour.

Our exploration of local action in Manchester, South Tyneside and Hertfordshire found many examples of ways in which the two agendas are linked. These tended to focus on activities around mental and physical health – such as 'green gyms' – or activities focused on particular geographical areas that set out to improve the public realm or engage people in collective actions around the environment. Two examples are highlighted in more detail below.

The message from the research is that there is huge potential to accelerate green behaviour through maximising – and promoting – the positive impact of eco-friendly lifestyles on individual and community wellbeing. The two agendas can therefore become mutually reinforcing – and without requiring every individual to sign up to the sustainability cause.

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

Figure 24: The overlap between activities that promote wellbeing and sustainable behaviour
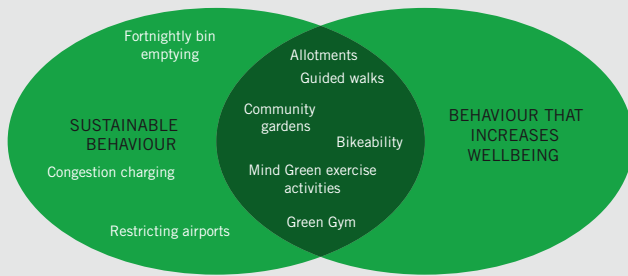
Two examples of where the two agendas can become mutually reinforcing are given below.

Be Proud. Love Manchester

'Proud of Manchester' takes elements of the council's annual 100 Days campaign which brings people together to improve their communities and the ongoing 'Respect Action Neighbourhoods' which involve different agencies that work as one team to coordinate activities which local people have identified as a priority.

Each season follows a different theme, from the Spring 'Looking After Our Communities', which aims to encourage communities to care for their local area, to the Winter 'Celebrating Our Communities', which focuses on community achievements – thanking the community heroes who brighten up their local area.

The focus of Be Proud is on action – it is about residents and public services taking joint responsibility of the local area and working together to make a visible difference to the city. For residents, seeing the effect of their participation has helped them feel a genuine sense of empowerment. For public services, the campaign has demonstrated the impact that involving local residents can have on a community's wellbeing.

South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council: Green Gym

South Tyneside's Green Gym initiative is run in partnership with the charity Groundwork. Based around an environmental theme, it works on the concept that engagement with nature and the outdoors can lead to both an appreciation of the importance of environmental sustainability and have a positive effect on personal wellbeing. Green Gym sessions offer a range of activities including allotment development, nature reserve conservation and restoration of community gardens and public open spaces. The Green Gym project aims to:

- improve individuals' psychological health and wellbeing
- reduce isolation
- increase voluntary and community group activity
- increase physical activity
- help reduce the unemployment rate and engage people in decision making.

Sessions involve vulnerable members of the community in South Tyneside's deprived wards. They are community-led and the project liaises closely with other local organisations, including local community centres, community-based mental health teams, South Tyneside Primary Care Trust, BTCV JobCentre Plus and the Shaw Trust.

Policy implications

Wellbeing has long been recognised as a key element of sustainable development. The UK government's strategy now includes subjective wellbeing as part of a raft of indicators of progress.

There is some evidence that people who have 'green' lifestyles experience higher wellbeing than the population average. Some environmentally friendly activities – including green gyms, community greening projects, and building new sustainable developments – all can have a wellbeing benefit to the population.

One of the key challenges of reducing CO_2 is to change people's behaviour. Pro-environmental behaviour is often caricatured by denial – of long-haul holidays or luxury foods and clothes, for example. Wellbeing however can be a tool for challenging this association. If pro-environmental behaviours increase wellbeing, for example by encouraging cycling or by creating social networks, then it is possible that they will be more broadly adopted.

The UK government has housed cross-Whitehall responsibility for wellbeing in Defra, because of the sustainable development link. Other departments, including Communities and Local Government, Department of Health, Department for Children, Families and Schools all have a greater direct responsibility for the services that can build wellbeing. Mainstreaming wellbeing within the overall approach to public policy is likely to be more successful if responsibility within Government is located at the centre.

THE STATE OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING TO KEY AREAS OF PUBLIC POLICY?

6 Conclusions: implications for public policy

But what is happiness except the simple harmony between a man and the life he leads?
Albert Camus

There is as yet no straightforward menu of policies to improve wellbeing. Advances in behavioural economics and psychology have improved understanding of this territory. But specific policy knowledge is limited. There are many promising ideas and approaches but little certainty that a particular set of actions will deliver particular results.

Wellbeing is a desirable outcome of public policy – few people would argue with the contention that the actions of government should make people feel good about their lives, and that government should be in the business of reducing stress, anxiety, loneliness and misery. But governments cannot 'make people happy': what they can do is to create the conditions in which they are more likely to be happy. Wellbeing has been adopted in UK public policy with a mixture of enthusiasm and trepidation. Although a single Whitehall department – Defra – has been given a clear lead and cross-Whitehall initiatives have been established, different government departments vary in the relative priority they put on wellbeing, the extent to which they believe it can be a measureable, and therefore real, outcome of public policy.

In the early 1990s when the current wave of interest in public policy and wellbeing started to gain momentum it was plausible to both say that happiness could not be measured and that it had little obvious relation to public policy. Neither position is tenable now. Happiness, wellbeing and fulfilment (all different things) are hard to measure but not inherently harder than GDP or educational levels. In a range of policy areas, many of which are highlighted in this report, there is plenty of evidence of correlation between policies and outcomes, and some evidence on causation.

The Local Wellbeing Project has demonstrated how an emphasis on wellbeing in schools can be used as part of wider strategies to improve attainment and behaviour; how building social networks can increase wellbeing at the local level to underpin community engagement; how wellbeing can be used tactically to encourage pro-environmental behaviour; how a wellbeing focus can improve the impact of parenting programmes; and how wellbeing can help older people live independently in the community for longer.

Thinking about wellbeing can shift the focus of policy. For example, wellbeing is often lowest in middle age, yet this is a time when people are least likely to use public services, being neither young adults nor children in education, neither parents with children, nor older people. Regeneration policies have often dispersed long established communities, breaking down 'bonding' social capital and harming wellbeing even as the physical fabric has improved.

Our own work has encouraged us to want better measurements and understanding of the many dimensions of wellbeing. But it has also pushed us to want to develop a better understanding of the relationships between people's current wellbeing and their future prospects. For policy-makers it's vital to know not just how people are faring now, but also how prepared they are for the future. These questions of resilience and adaptability are particularly important during a period of recession and recovery and will be an important focus of the next phase of our work.

Annex 1: The Local Wellbeing Project

The Local Wellbeing Project brought together the Young Foundation's understanding of how to drive change and innovation with specialist academic input from Professor Lord Richard Layard at the London School of Economics' Centre for Economic Performance, the IDeA, specialists in local government improvement and innovation and three local authorities driving local government's agenda in this issue: Manchester City Council, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

The project established four aims:

- to explore how local government intervention in key areas can increase wellbeing and resilience
- to establish the value to local government of prioritising happiness and wellbeing in service delivery and strategic planning
- to develop replicable practice to maximise happiness in the delivery of services under the five themes set out below
- to establish robust and cost effective ways of measuring happiness at local level.

Most of the factors that affect wellbeing are local. They become manifest in relationships within the family, with people in the neighbourhood, at schools and at work, and how people feel about their immediate environment. This means that the interventions that could increase wellbeing are delivered at the same very local level and are under the direct or strategic control of local government and other local agencies. Examples include the role of community engagement and family support on the quality of relationships with neighbours and within the family; the role of local government and health services to provide good community mental health services; and schools' potential to help young people's wellbeing in the broadest sense.

The Local Wellbeing Project started with the hypothesis that the benefits for local government of prioritising wellbeing are *direct*, benefiting people in the area, and also *indirect*. If people are happier it is likely that they will thrive in other dimensions of their lives, that they will be in a better position to benefit from services they need such as parenting support or employment training, and that they will contribute to the social capital of the community.

The local government partners joined the partnership for different reasons, each a product of their particular situation and local political priorities.

- for **South Tyneside**, interest grew during the process of developing their first Local Area Agreement with partners. A historic legacy of post industrial decline
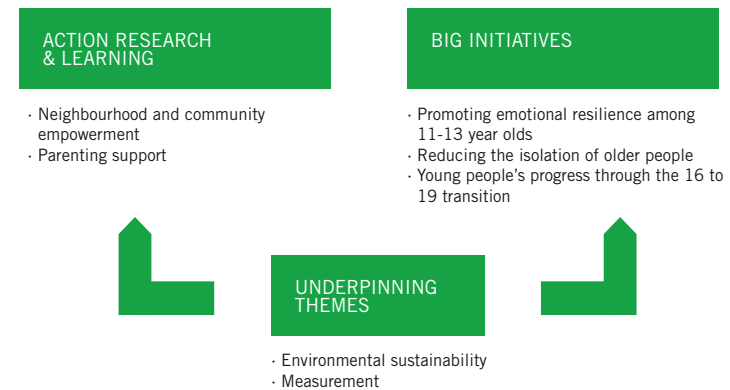
and deprivation had left many of their communities with low aspirations and facing unique barriers to wellbeing. The implications of promoting wellbeing were recognised across the local strategic partnership as a shared priority
- for **Manchester**, the motivation was to explore whether increasing wellbeing could help improve the prospects of some their most deprived communities, improve behaviour at the local level and stop the trend for residents to move away from the city as soon as they became successful. Many Manchester residents are not yet in a position where economic success will not improve happiness, but nor is economic success enough to attract and retain successful people. The focus was, therefore, on wellbeing as a contributor to regeneration in its widest sense
- for **Hertfordshire**, the focus was on Children's services and how the young people who were excluded from the overall prosperity of the county could be equipped to thrive and take up opportunity

The Local Wellbeing Project focused on five strands – 11 to 13 year olds; apprenticeships; parenting; neighbourhoods and older people – and two underpinning themes – measurement and environmental sustainability. These strands developed out of discussions with the local government partners to pinpoint where they felt that they had greatest traction on wellbeing, and which chimed with political and strategic priorities in their areas.

The 2000 Local Government Act gave authorities broad powers to promote economic, social and environmental wellbeing. However the activities the project focused on were not those that required action over and above the normal range of mainstream council activity.

Project structure

ACTION RESEARCH & LEARNING
· Neighbourhood and community empowerment
· Parenting support

BIG INITIATIVES
· Promoting emotional resilience among 11-13 year olds
· Reducing the isolation of older people
· Young people's progress through the 16 to 19 transition

UNDERPINNING THEMES
· Environmental sustainability
· Measurement

The Local Wellbeing Project's work has demonstrated that wellbeing can enthusiastically and usefully be adopted as a strategic aim at the local level and that:

- a wellbeing focus is appropriate for local government and its local partners
- that this agenda has resonance for politicians and officers operating in different demographic, social and political contexts
- that the aspect of the wellbeing agenda that galvanises energies and interests most effectively is emotional resilience
- that improving wellbeing can be achieved through adapting mainstream services, that it is not necessary to set up new expensive initiatives to have an impact
- that wellbeing can boost the delivery of other priority outputs, including educational achievement; community engagement and parenting support.

The local government partners: Manchester City Council

Manchester has experienced significant growth in the last few decades. From groundbreaking urban regeneration programmes, to successful sporting events, Manchester has been transformed into a regional powerhouse of sustainable economic growth offering opportunity and a better quality of life for all. Manchester's vision has focused on making the city a world-class location for people to live, invest, visit and work, Manchester is now established as a regional capital city. However, some of Manchester's challenges remain. There are too many people not working; school results are improving but are behind the national average. Too many people suffer from ill health, men and women to die earlier than in other parts of the UK.

Manchester's Community Strategy aims that the population 'contribute to, and benefit from, Manchester's success – with everyone achieving their full potential and having a great sense of participation and wellbeing.'

The emphasis is 'on reducing deprivation by helping people: have higher aspirations; be more optimistic that their high aspirations can be achieved; and be more resilient to the realities of their daily lives.'

The themes of aspiration and wellbeing are priorities for the Local Strategic Partnership, wellbeing projects are led directly the Manchester Local Strategic Partnership Board.

Manchester measures the wellbeing and happiness of its residents through the Place Survey, and responses have shown that residents are now more satisfied and happier with their lives.

Alongside its work through the Local Wellbeing Project Manchester has also focused on wellbeing through building social capital within its deprived neighbourhoods, and on the role of adult social care. The aim of the Manchester Board is to integrate a wellbeing focus into partners' everyday activities and business.

The local government partners: South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

South Tyneside is a rapidly improving local authority, and was rated 'four star and improving strongly' in its latest CPA inspection.

The Spirit of South Tyneside, the Local Area Agreement, focuses on tackling the key challenges and removing barriers to achieve the vision of a better future for all of South Tyneside people. Culture and Wellbeing are two of the most important priorities and are cross cutting themes within the Local Area Agreement, impacting on all other key outcomes. South Tyneside interprets wellbeing as the outcome or actual impact of activities and interventions they provide as a local authority – in effect, the end result.

Through the Local Wellbeing Project, South Tyneside have aimed to understand what gets in the way of wellbeing and how the local authority and its partners can increase the sense of belonging and self-esteem needed to help people 'self actualise' – or in other words to be the best that they can be.

Alongside the national projects that are part of the Local Wellbeing Project, the Council and its partners have carried out a further three local projects, a sense of place, reducing financial exclusion and reducing depression and anxiety.

Since the start of their local project, close partnership working, particularly with the Third Sector, has seen South Tyneside recognised as one of the best areas in the country for its work in promoting financial inclusion and tackling over-indebtedness.

The local government partners: Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire is the second most densely populated county in England. It is home to a diverse population of over 1 million people living in both large urban communities and sparsely populated rural areas, some experiencing affluence and others extreme disadvantage. The population includes over a quarter of a million children and young people.

Hertfordshire's involvement in the Local Wellbeing Project was through Children's Services, with some involvement of central departments in other strands.

Hertfordshire Children's Trust Partnership's vision is for all children and young people in Hertfordshire to enjoy a happy, healthy and safe childhood that prepares them well for adult life and enables them to reach their full potential. Children and young people should be valued members of society, whose achievements and contributions are welcomed and celebrated.

The priority within Hertfordshire's Children and Young People's Plan is to improve dramatically outcomes for vulnerable groups, narrowing the gap, and to motivate and inspire all children and young people to participate fully in society and enjoy the benefits of living in the county. The aim is that services are focused around children and families rather than professional boundaries, with support provided early to prevent problems escalating.

For the county, the key benefits of involvement in the Local Wellbeing Project have been the work in schools through the UK Resilience Programme, and the contribution to its parenting strategy, linking the wellbeing of parents and carers with the wellbeing of children.

Annex 2: Contributors to the Project

Partner authority chief executives:

Caroline Tapster, Hertfordshire CC; Sir Howard Bernstein, Manchester CC; Keith Harcus, South Tyneside MBC, and his predecessor Irene Lucas (now at CLG).

Advisory board

Andrew Cozens CBE, Strategic Adviser for Children, Adults and Health Services, IDeA; Adrian Barker, Strategy Manager, Strategy and Development Unit, IDeA; Vicki Goddard, Improvement Strategist - Strategy and Development Unit, IDeA; Richard Layard, founder and co-director, Centre for Economic Performance, LSE; Amy Challen, Coordinator and Lead Researcher of Resilience Programme, Centre for Economic Performance, LSE; Caroline Tapster, Chief Executive, Hertfordshire CC; Geoff Little, Deputy Chief Executive, Manchester CC; Cllr Jim Battle, Manchester CC; Keith Harcus, Chief Executive, South Tyneside MBC; Tony Duggan, Head of Culture, Health and Wellbeing, South Tyneside MBC; Cllr Jim Foreman, South Tyneside MBC; Steven Hall, Sustainable Development Indicators / Public Attitudes

Environment Statistics and Indicators Division, Defra; Jill Rutter, Director, Strategy and Sustainable Development, Defra; Claire Crawley, Head of Policy Management Unit, Social Care Directorate, DH; Will Cavendish, formerly Director,

Health and Wellbeing, DH; Richard Bartholomew, Chief Research Officer, Head of Analysis and Research Division, DCSF; Julia Gault, Head of Families Unit, DCSF; Donna Molloy, Deputy Head, Families at Risk, DCSF; Dan Howard, Senior Research Officer, Local Government Research Unit, CLG ; Rosie Milner, formerly Community Empowerment Strategy, Team Leader, CLG; Jane Todorovic, Deputy Director, Local Government, CLG; Marcial Boo, Director of Policy Knowledge, Audit Commission; Laura Dosanjh, Strategy Advisor, Audit Commission; Tom Wraith, Area Information Manager, Analysis & Reporting, Audit Commission; Naomi Eisenstadt, formerly Head of Social Exclusion Taskforce; Matt Briggs, Deputy Customer Group Director for Older People, DWP; Hugh Pullinger, Divisional Head, Older People and Ageing Society Division, DWP; Karen Olney, Senior Business Development Manager, NAS

UK Resilience Programme:

Lucy Bailey, Resilience Programme Manager, Hertfordshire CC; Elizabeth Biggs, Team Leader, Hertfordshire CC; Lindsay Edwards, Head of Young People's Substance Misuse & Crime Reduction Services, Hertfordshire CC; Jill Tordoff, Diversity and Inclusion Team and Jane Johnson, Interim Strategic Lead for Behaviour and Attendance, Manchester CC; Alison Parker, TaMHS Project Manager for South Tyneside, South Tyneside MBC; Christine Smith, Head of Transition and Wellbeing; Helen Watson, Executive Director, Children and Young People, South Tyneside MBC; Amy Challen, Coordinator and Lead Researcher of Resilience Programme, Centre for Economic Performance, LSE.

Improving emotional resilience in older people:

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Apprenticeship pathfinder project:

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Manager, Services Directorate, IDeA; Rod Kenyon, Director, Apprenticeship Ambassadors' Network; Simon Nathan, Senior Policy Adviser Skills and further education CBI (replaced Fiona Murray); Neill Schofield; Expert Advisor; Robin Todd, PMDU (Previously DIUS/DCSF Joint Apprenticeships Unit; Bill Wilson; Policy Advisor CIPD/Revenue and Customs

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Environmental sustainability

Bethan Clemence, Hertfordshire Climate Change Partnership Manager, Hertfordshire CC; Paul Walker, Hayley Johnson and Leanne Knowles, South Tyneside MBC; Beverley Taylor, City Green Programme Director, Manchester CC, and Steve Higgins, Programme Manager, Corporate Performance, Manchester CC

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Governments cannot 'make people happy'. But they can create the conditions in which wellbeing is more likely to increase. This report sets out the state of the field, showing how local and national governments are trying to understand and influence the happiness of their citizens. It combines lessons from the Local Wellbeing Project – one of the few programmes explicitly focused on influencing wellbeing across a range of policy fields- with examples from across the UK and internationally.

A growing body of knowledge about wellbeing is now being turned into policies and programmes. Although the field remains underdeveloped, this report points to a future where public agencies will take it for granted that they should consider the potential impact of their actions on happiness and wellbeing.

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