



# Gross Domestic Wellbeing (GDWe)<sup>TM</sup>

An alternative measure  
of social progress



Jennifer Wallace, Hannah Ormston, Ben Thurman,  
Mark Diffley, Mhairi McFarlane and Sanah Zubairi



## Acknowledgements

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# 1. Introduction

**‘[GDP] measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion... it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.’**

**ROBERT KENNEDY (1968)<sup>1</sup>.**

COVID-19 is bringing into sharp focus the importance of societal wellbeing. It has already illuminated the disparities that persist for many people living in the UK, and the interconnection of different factors that have an impact on how we live our lives together as a society. From the quality of our relationships to our health, to the places we call home and our income – the contribution of each to wellbeing cannot be understood in isolation. What’s more, the narrow parameters of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) do not – and cannot – tell an accurate story of whether life is improving, where the gaps are, or who is being left behind.

Gross Domestic Wellbeing (GDWe)<sup>™</sup> offers a more holistic and relevant alternative to measure social progress. Using the framework and data in the Office for National Statistics (hereafter ONS) Measures of National Well-being Dashboard<sup>2</sup>, we have developed, for the first time, a powerful single figure for GDWe in England and mapped this against GDP for the past five years.

**Our analysis found that GDWe in England is declining, and it was doing so before the COVID-19 pandemic began.** Whilst GDP over the last six years appears to have steadily increased, Gross Domestic Wellbeing has slowed and has begun to move in the opposite direction.

<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, R. 1968. *Speech at the University of Kansas*. Available at: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/the-kennedy-family/robert-f-kennedy/robert-f-kennedy-speeches/remarks-at-the-university-of-kansas-march-18-1968> [accessed November 2020].

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics, 2019. *Measures of National Well-being Dashboard*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuresofnationalwellbeingdashboard/2018-04-25> [accessed March 2020].

When these findings are placed against the current backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and the corresponding crises of social and economic inequality that have been exacerbated and exposed, we have even more reason to be concerned. The wellbeing of current and future generations is at risk.

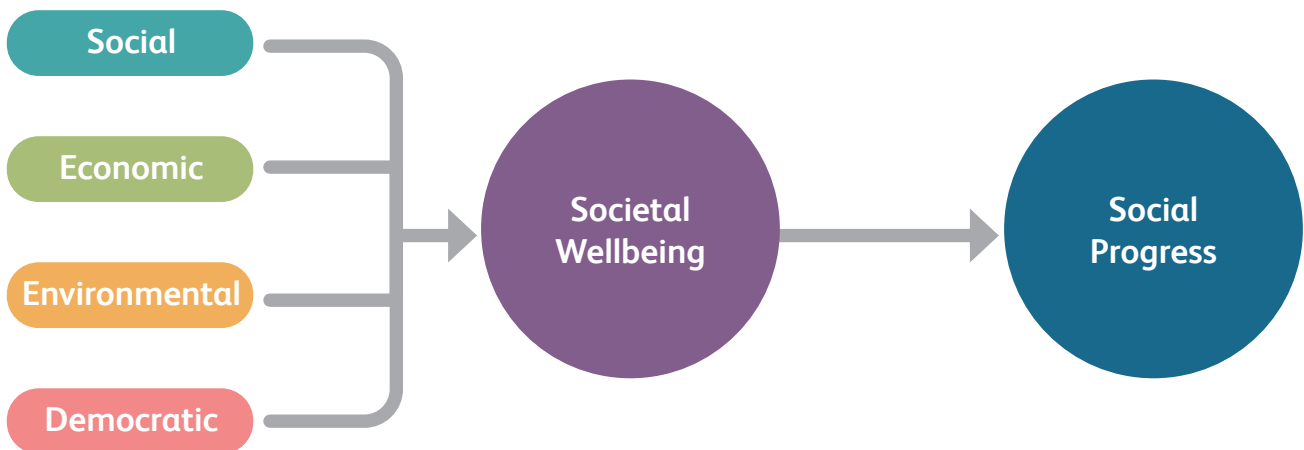
**We need to boost our recovery from the pandemic with a new way of thinking amongst all kinds of decision-makers. Thinking – and importantly the action it inspires – that places national wellbeing at the centre of the post-pandemic recovery plan and extends beyond that. GDWe offers the alternative measure to facilitate this shift in thinking.**

## 1.1. Carnegie UK Trust’s SEED approach to wellbeing

While variably called sustainable development, quality of life, happiness or going ‘beyond GDP’, at the Carnegie UK Trust, we understand societal wellbeing as comprising **S**ocial, **E**conomic, **E**nvironmental, and **D**emocratic (**SEED**) outcomes in how we measure social progress. To us, societal wellbeing means everyone having what they need to live well now and in the future. More than health and wealth, it includes having friends and loved ones, the ability to contribute meaningfully to society, and the ability to set our own direction and make choices about our own lives. The core message of all wellbeing approaches to government is the need to rebalance these outcomes, and to provide a mechanism for making trade-offs between different domains of wellbeing.

**GDWe offers a tool with which to do that.**

Figure 1: Carnegie UK Trust's SEED approach to societal wellbeing.



## 1.2. Why does wellbeing measurement matter?

**‘What we measure affects what we do; and if our measurements are flawed, decisions may be distorted.’**

STIGLITZ-SEN-FITOUSSI (2009).

In 2009, the groundbreaking Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission<sup>3</sup> asserted the value of governments shifting their emphasis away from measuring economic production (GDP) to measuring citizens' wellbeing (GDWe). Some governments<sup>4</sup> across the world have since started to consider other methods of measurement and more rounded approaches that focus on balancing different areas of wellbeing; addressing inequality; or shifting thinking to consider longer-term challenges, such as the climate emergency. However, there are many - including the UK Government - that continue to look primarily to GDP to measure social progress. GDP remains the figure that is reported widely by the media, keeping it within the public consciousness.

3 Stiglitz, J. E. et al., 2009. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* [Online] Available at: <https://spire.sciencespo.fr/hdl:/2441/516uh8ogmqldh09h4687h53k/resources/wp2009-33.pdf> [accessed August 2020].

4 Scottish Government, 2020. *Wellbeing Economy Governments (WeGo)*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/groups/wellbeing-economy-governments-wego/> [accessed March 2020].

The OECD responded to the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission by creating the influential Better Life Index, which measures societal wellbeing across a range of indicators, including housing, civic engagement and life satisfaction<sup>5</sup>. The ONS Wellbeing Dashboard was similarly developed in 2011 as a response to the then Cameron Government's pledge to 'devise a new way of measuring wellbeing in Britain'<sup>6</sup>, yet it hasn't had a visible influence on policy decision-making.

However, with new election cycles come new priorities. And **there's a large amount of available evidence – critical to identifying and understanding the gaps in societal wellbeing – that is currently being overlooked.**

Instead of reporting multiple figures from several surveys, GDWe builds on the existing ONS framework to bridge the gap and bring all of the data together to **create a single figure of wellbeing**. This overall metric can be used to clearly show the difference between GDP and wellbeing performance – but also, crucially, GDWe can be tracked over time to tell whether wellbeing is going up or down. This simplicity may help to refocus priorities when thinking about social progress.

5 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2020. *OECD Better Life Index*. Available at: <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/> [accessed March 2020].

6 UK Government, 2010. *PM speech on wellbeing*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-wellbeing> [accessed October 2020].

It is worth noting here that we recognise there are several advantages and disadvantages of creating a score of this kind. Influencing decision-making by providing a communications tool that summarises a wide range of data into one single figure could have significant benefits for policymaking. However, the simplification of societal wellbeing into a single figure does have limitations, which should not be overlooked. GDWe requires the consistent measurement and collection of data, and, as it is largely quantitative in nature, could ignore some of the more qualitative stories that lie behind the statistics and figures. Issues of sensitivity to equalities issues also arise due to sampling sizes and methods of collection.

Yet, by offering an alternative measure of progress, we, for the first time, offer a single measure that highlights the disparity between priorities across the different domains of wellbeing, and provides a useful framework for those advocating for change in this area.

**We believe that GDWe can help to promote a more balanced and holistic understanding of complex societal issues.**

### 1.3. A short note on the impact of COVID-19 on Gross Domestic Wellbeing

Whilst it is too early to see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the GDWe score, a summary of the most recent data suggests the following key areas of concern:

- Bereavement, isolation and loss of income are triggering new mental health conditions or exacerbating existing ones<sup>7</sup>.

7 World Health Organisation (WHO), 2020. *COVID-19 is disrupting mental health services in most countries*, WHO Survey. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/05-10-2020-covid-19-disrupting-mental-health-services-in-most-countries-who-survey#:~:text=Bereavement%2C%20isolation%2C%20loss,outcomes%20and%20even%20death> [accessed October 2020].

- The Labour Force Survey shows that the employment rate has been decreasing since the start of the pandemic, while the **unemployment rate is now rising sharply**<sup>8</sup>.
- Personal well-being: In the year ending March 2020, average ratings of life satisfaction, happiness and anxiety, *in the UK*, all deteriorated for the first time since 2011<sup>9</sup>. We anticipate a decline in the personal well-being domain as a reflection of this.
- There have been new variables analysed, such as chronic loneliness vs lockdown loneliness. Data published by the ONS in November 2020 indicates the negative impact of COVID-10 on personal well-being and our relationships. 47% of adults in England reported that their wellbeing was being affected (for example, through boredom, loneliness, anxiety and stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>10</sup>).
- There has been a large reduction in the amount of time travelling (walking or driving) – which could affect access to nature and health<sup>11</sup>.
- Trust in national government fell by 11 percentage points in the year to autumn 2019<sup>12</sup> – this would be reflected in the next update of GDWe.

8 ONS, 2020. *Labour market overview, UK: November 2020* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/latest> [accessed November 2020].

9 ONS, 2020. *Personal Well-being in the UK: April 2019 to March 2020*. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/april2019tomarch2020> [accessed October 2020].

10 ONS, 2020. *Coronavirus and the social impact on Great Britain: 20 November 2020*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/20november2020> [accessed November 2020].

11 As above.

12 British Social Attitudes Survey, 2020. *British Social Attitudes Survey 37* <https://bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-37/consequences-of-brexite.aspx> [accessed November 2020].

- Public debt and inflation is highly likely to be affected by the pandemic, impacting the Economy domain<sup>13</sup>.
- Leisure satisfaction, physical activity, and arts engagement are all likely to be affected due to lockdown restrictions, although there is no hard evidence of this yet. In addition, daily screen time is up – which is linked to poor mental health. However, there was no data on this available at the time of writing.

## 1.4. Review of Commissions and Inquiries

Alongside the GDWe score for each domain within the ONS dashboard, a thematic review of over 873 recommendations from 48 commissions and inquiries since 2010 – from Marmot to Grimsey, Dilnot to Taylor – highlights many areas of mutual focus, challenge, and concern. The recommendations show that though the data currently being collected by the ONS offers a useful starting point and a framework for measuring wellbeing, there are significant gaps. As we learn through increased public engagement what matters to people now, the UK Government should be prepared to change how they measure social progress to reflect these changes. This could help to identify the structural issues for specific people and places that were evident before COVID-19 crisis began.

13 ONS, 2020. *Public Sector Finances, UK: May 2020*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/may2020> [accessed June 2020].

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen renewed calls to replace the UK Government's existing, GDP-based growth model with a more balanced approach<sup>14</sup>. **National GDP has no predictive power over our personal well-being and there are multiple examples of the pursuit of GDP being in direct conflict with local and global environmental concerns.** For example, GDP counts the extraction of oil from the North Sea but does not factor in the impact this will have on future generations; it counts the pharmaceutical industry, but not the health of society<sup>15</sup>.

**We need to boost our recovery from the pandemic with a new way of thinking. We do not have the luxury of time or resources to allow a recovery to take place in a way that further exacerbates the environmental challenge, and we cannot consign large swathes of the population to poor quality jobs knowing that they result in poorer health and marginalised communities.**

**We are calling on the UK Government to redouble its efforts; to put wellbeing at the heart of its decision making processes, firstly by measuring what matters to people and secondly by taking that evidence forward in the design and implementation of environmental, economic and social policy.**

14 See for example the campaigns led by Reset, coalitions to #BuildBackBetter, as well as the Carnegie UK Trust's own contribution to these debates (Wallace, White & Davidson, 2020).

15 UK Government, 2019. Extractive Industries in the UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extractive-industries-transparency-initiative-payments-report-2018/extractive-industries-in-the-uk> [accessed November 2020].

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Creating the GDWe Score

Data collected and published by the ONS for the Measures of National Well-being Dashboard was used to construct the GDWe score. GDWe is structured around the 10 ‘areas of life’ or ‘domains’ they outline. These are:

-  **Personal well-being**
-  **Our relationships**
-  **Health**
-  **What we do**
-  **Where we live**
-  **Personal finance**
-  **Economy**
-  **Education and skills**
-  **Governance**
-  **Environment**

The geographic scope of the analysis is England, as this is where the data was more consistently available. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have separate wellbeing dashboards and are therefore not included in this analysis. The data within the dashboard includes both objective and subjective data, collected from a range of sources including the Understanding Society<sup>16</sup> survey, the Annual Population Survey<sup>17</sup>, and the Labour Force Survey<sup>18</sup>.

16 Understanding Society, 2020. *The UK Household Longitudinal Survey*. Available at: <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/> [accessed March 2020].

17 Office for National Statistics, 2020. *Annual Population Survey*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/methodologies/annualpopulationsurveyapsqmi> [accessed March 2020].

18 Office for National Statistics, 2020. *Labour Force Survey*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforhouseholdsandindividuals/householdandindividualsurveys/labourforcesurvey> [accessed March 2020].

There are 41 indicators in the ONS dashboard. To create a single number, a series of calculations were required<sup>19</sup>. Firstly, the data was normalised so that it could be compared and displayed in a way that indicated its relative position and change over time. These were then combined to create one score for each domain. Following this, the domain scores were combined to give an overall GDWe score. As with GDP, this score represents whether Gross Domestic Wellbeing (the sum total of all the measured wellbeing in a society) is increasing or decreasing over time, indicated by a percentage when mapped against GDP, and as a score out of 10 otherwise.

### 2.2. Limitations of the ONS measures

Our analysis revealed several limitations with the current ONS measures, highlighting significant gaps and inconsistencies in the data currently being collected. 22% of the data within the past 9 periods required to provide a comprehensive GDWe score was missing across the range of indicators. Disappointingly, ‘Depression and anxiety’ – an indicator critical to understanding both health and personal well-being outcomes – had to be removed from the analysis due to the scale of missing data. Given what we already know about the impact of COVID-19 on this aspect of wellbeing<sup>20</sup> we believe that the ONS should work quickly to ensure timely data is being collected in this area. In addition to missing data, the frequent changes in survey questions or method of data collection created several inconsistencies.

It should be noted that the score is measured against a 2013/14 baseline and is therefore only

19 Note our GDWe analysis was based on 40 indicators, see methodology for further information.

20 The Health Foundation., 2020. *Emerging Evidence on COVID-19’s impact on mental health and health inequalities*. Available at: <https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/blogs/emerging-evidence-on-covid-19s-impact-on-mental-health-and-health> [Accessed October 2020].



relative to 2013/14. For example, when looking at ‘the economy’ domain in comparison to the others, it would seem that it is performing well; it is higher than the overall GDWe level. However, the score has not returned to the level where it was before the 2008 Financial Crash (nor is it likely to, after the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy).

A more detailed breakdown, which includes discussion about the technical aspects of producing the GDWe score is provided in Appendix 2.

### 2.3. Review of Reviews

Aware of the importance of exploring the story behind the stats; the potential differences across subgroups of the population not sampled in the main data sources; and the limitations of basing our understanding of GDWe solely on the quantitative data; we complemented the statistical analysis with a qualitative thematic review of the main commissions and inquiries undertaken in and relevant to England, since 2010.








We wanted to understand the predominant focus of prominent thinkers on wellbeing, and to see which themes and issues of importance for social progress reoccurred frequently within the recommendations. In addition, the quantitative GDWe analysis suggested several gaps not just in the data being collected under the current categories, but in the themes of wellbeing themselves. For example, the ‘Governance’ domain includes data on ‘voter turnout’ and ‘trust in government’, but not information on citizen engagement or participation, or if individuals feel they can influence key decisions that impact their lives. We were aware of the enormous amount of additional evidence available through these commissions and inquiries, and thought that they might shed light on where the gaps remain. There was also a wider question about the volume of commissions and inquiries that take place each year, their level of influence, and how they might bring about change.

Due to the number of commissions and inquiries over the last 10 years, and the importance of maintaining a balanced understanding of the key issues, to be included in the study, the commission or inquiry must have been ‘independent’ of government in that it had an independent chair. We intentionally excluded parliamentary inquiries. The review must also have specified a focus on one or more of the 10 ONS wellbeing areas. 2010 was chosen as an appropriate cut off point because of the change in Government in May during this year.

There were four anomalies in our 10 year focus, such as the report *Is Britain Fairer?* by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Unlike other commissions in this review, the EHRC is a statutory and standing commission. Nevertheless, we have included their review due to the paucity of commissions which relate to equalities issues in general, and race equality in particular. For similar reasons, the *Independent Inquiry into Access to Healthcare for People with Learning Disabilities* – undertaken in 2008 and outwith the 10 year period – was included. Although it had a UK wide focus, we chose to include the *UK 2070 Commission* because of its ambition to ‘level up’ the UK, which largely relates to the North of England. Finally, we included the *Independent Inquiry into Britain’s Democracy* – undertaken in 2006 – because there have not been any comparable commissions that made recommendations on the state of democracy since then.

Following our selection of 48 reviews and commissions, we collated the 873 individual recommendations, before a review panel of four Carnegie UK Trust members systematically re-categorised each recommendation based on its ‘best fit’ across the 10 wellbeing domains. Once this initial review was carried out, two members reviewed the recommendations within each domain to identify where recommendations were consistent with the ONS measurement indicators. It quickly became apparent that many of these recommendations did not fit within the existing indicators provided by the ONS. A table with suggested additional categories for measurement is provided on page 61.

**Table 1: Number of recommendations per ONS wellbeing domain.**

ONS Wellbeing domain	Number of recommendations from review of commissions and inquiries
 Personal well-being	2
 Our relationships	16
 Health	121
 What we do	46
 Where we live	157
 Personal finance	50
 Economy	85
 Education and skills	54
 Governance	173
 Environment	23
Outliers	146
<b>Total</b>	<b>873</b>

The dominance of recommendations relating to the ‘economy’, ‘health’, and ‘governance’ is significant. Despite what we know about the impact of personal well-being, our relationships, and what we do on overall wellbeing (as demonstrated during the COVID-19 crisis), there were far fewer recommendations within these domains.

## 2.4. A note on COVID-19

It should also be noted that the analysis for this study was conducted prior to COVID-19. As there is a time lag in which data for the ONS indicators for wellbeing become available for analysis purposes, the early impact of COVID-19 is not included in the GDWe score at this stage. This does not render the results redundant, as the study provides a methodology by which to consistently measure GDWe and contributes to the conversation regarding using a broader set of indicators to measure and express social progress, which is of increased importance given the anticipated wellbeing implications of COVID-19.

# 3. GDWe

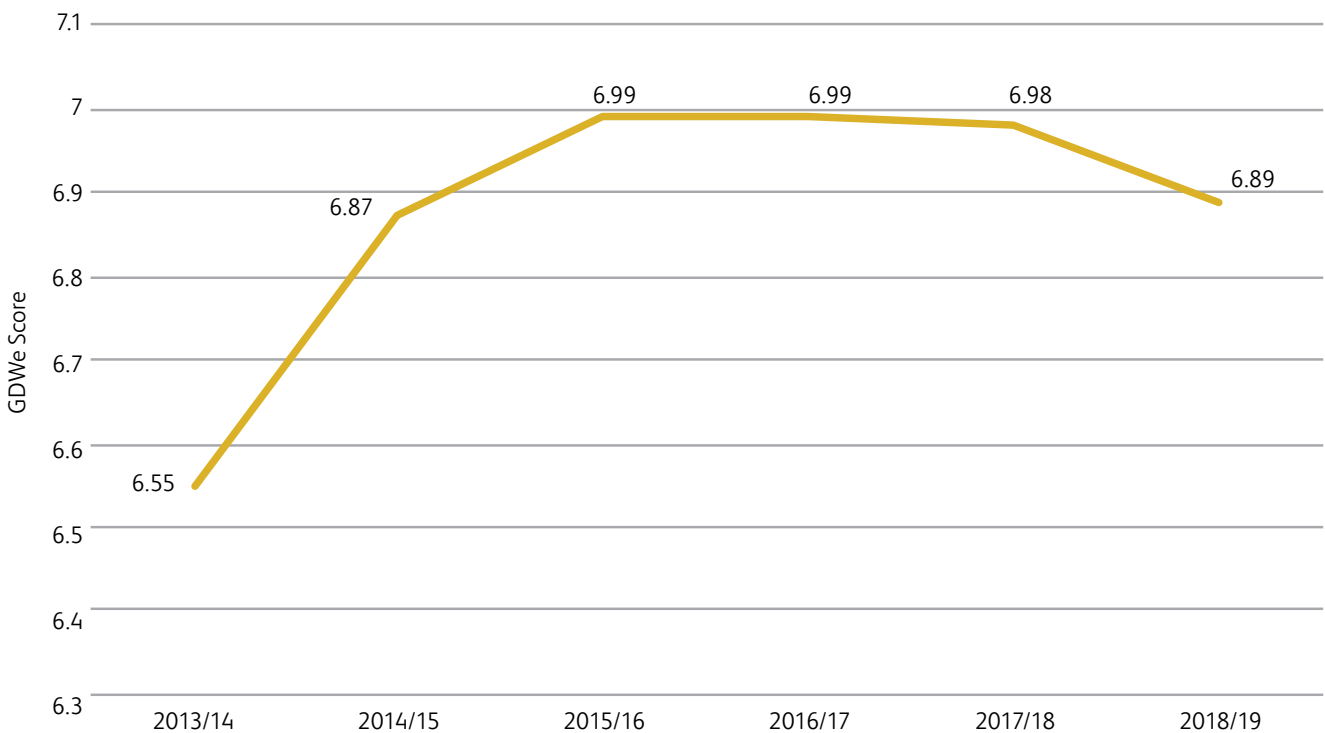
In 2018-19, the score for Gross Domestic Wellbeing (GDWe), measured on a 10-point scale, was 6.89. As can be seen in Figure 2, GDWe improved between 2013/14 and 2015/16, and remained steady for a further two years, before showing a slight dip in 2018/19. There is only a small variance of 0.44 between the highest and lowest scores across this 6-year period. However, the graph clearly shows that GDWe, as a broader reflection of societal wellbeing, has stagnated and – perhaps – begun a downward trend.

## 3.1. GDWe vs GDP

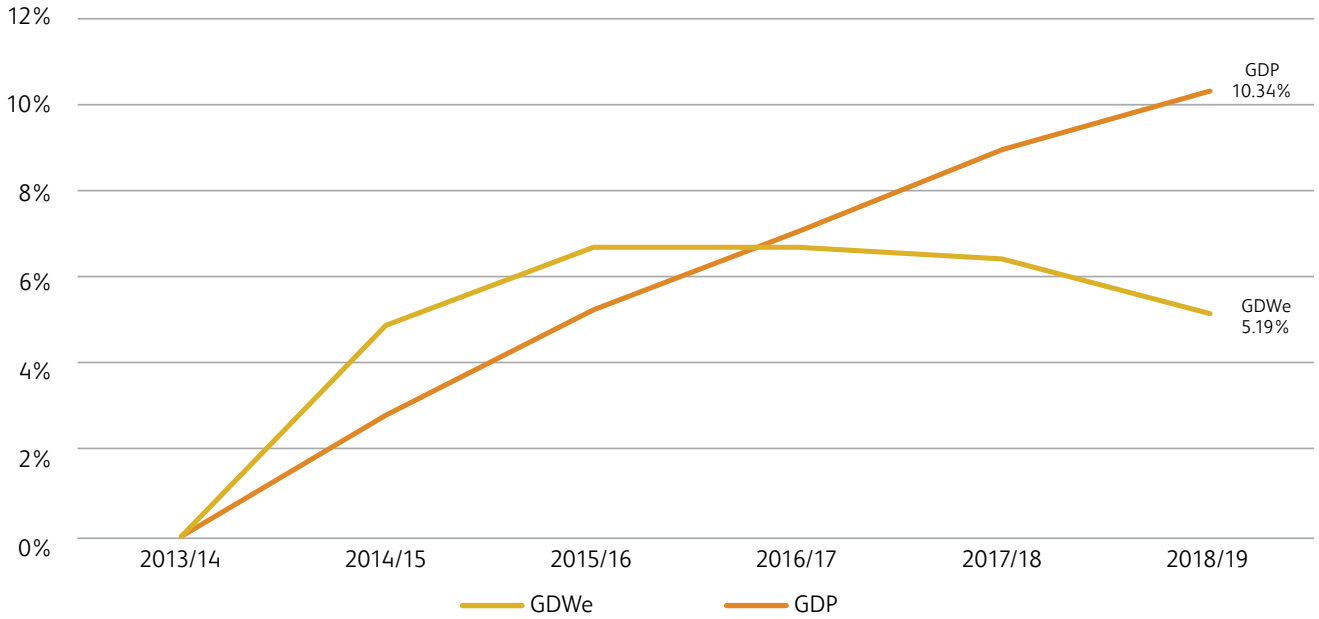
The trend in the GDWe score is particularly stark when plotted against GDP. Figure 3 plots the growth of GDWe as a percentage from a baseline of 6.55 in 2013/14, with GDP from a baseline of £1,941,155.<sup>21</sup> In the five years between the baseline and the latest available data in 2018/19, GDWe increased by 5.19%, including the small decline at the end of the data period; over the same timeframe, GDP increased by 10.34%. This analysis shows that well before the COVID-19 pandemic, our wellbeing was lagging behind economic growth: an important fact to remember in ongoing debates about how we ‘build back better’ and the type of recovery we are aspiring to achieve.

<sup>21</sup> Because of the difficulties of comparing the GDWe score (a single figure out of 10) with GDP, which is measured in £ millions, this comparison is based on percentage growth of GDWe and GDP.

**Figure 2: Change in GDWe between 2013/14 and 2018/19.**



**Figure 3: Growth of GDWe and GDP as a percentage from baseline in 2013/14.**



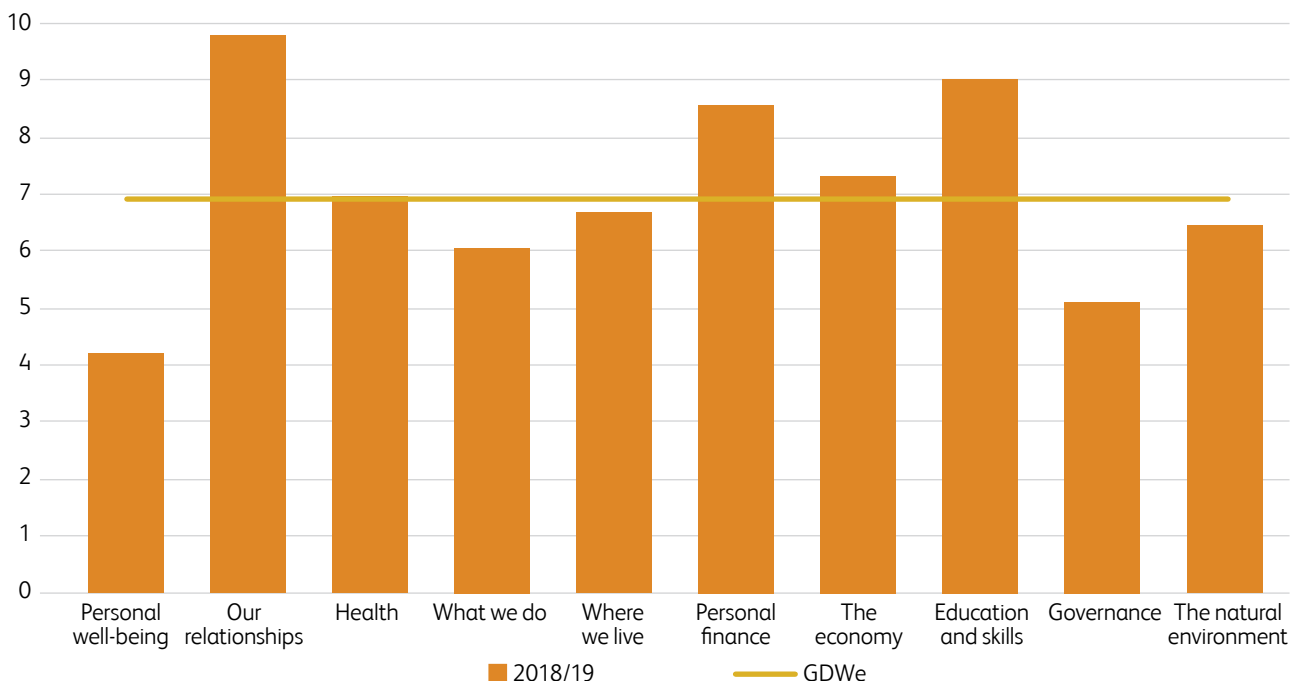
### 3.2. GDWe in 2018-19

This overall picture of gross domestic wellbeing helps us to better understand social progress as a whole, and particularly how overall policymaking is framed around GDP, rather than GDWe. However, as has been discussed, it is not always the best approach to examine index outputs as single figures, as this can oversimplify the output. GDWe is comprised of 40 indicators spread across 10 ‘domains’ of wellbeing; these are displayed in Figure 4, which shows the range of values that

make up the score for 2018/19. The results for personal well-being, what we do and where we live, governance and the environment are all less than the overall GDWe score; the reverse is true with regard to our relationships, personal finances, the economy and education and skills; while health sits very close to the final score of 6.89.

When we look ‘under the bonnet’ of GDP, it is very similar – i.e. some sectors are doing better than the GDP average, whilst some are doing worse.

**Figure 4: GDWe domain scores against overall GDWe score**





## 4. Domain 1: Personal Well-being

Personal well-being is defined by our individual judgments; our subjective experience of life such as how happy we feel; and our overall satisfaction with the **quality** of our lives.

The ‘Personal Well-Being’ domain includes a set of five subjective measures of individuals’ feelings of satisfaction with life, their sense of it being worthwhile, self-reported happiness, anxiety, and mental wellbeing. Most of these are measured using data collected within the ONS’s Annual Population Survey<sup>22</sup>.

Based on individuals’ own assessment of their life circumstances, the data in this domain is influenced by a wide range of factors that could influence wellbeing. It might therefore be predicted that the score is impacted by changes across the other domains within the ONS National Well-being dashboard.



22 Office for National Statistics Annual Population Survey, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/methodologies/annualpopulationsurveyapsqmi> [accessed March 2020].

## 4.1. Personal Well-being GDWe Score

Although the domain score for ‘Personal Well-being’ has remained fairly steady over the 6-year period, it tends to only be around 4 out of 10 and is the lowest scoring of all domains. We know that personal well-being has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis<sup>23</sup> and is likely to have dropped further, so this result is concerning.

While the score for personal well-being (4.12 in 2018/19) is lower than the overall GDWe score (6.89), it is important to have a clear understanding about how the individual indicators within this domain influence the overall results. In particular, the figures for life satisfaction, worthwhileness and happiness are based on *only* those with a *very high* rating of each variable and the figure for anxiety is

23 What Works Wellbeing, 2020. *New research on the emotional wellbeing impacts of COVID-19*. Available at: <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/new-research-on-emotional-wellbeing-impacts-of-covid-19/> [accessed October 2020].

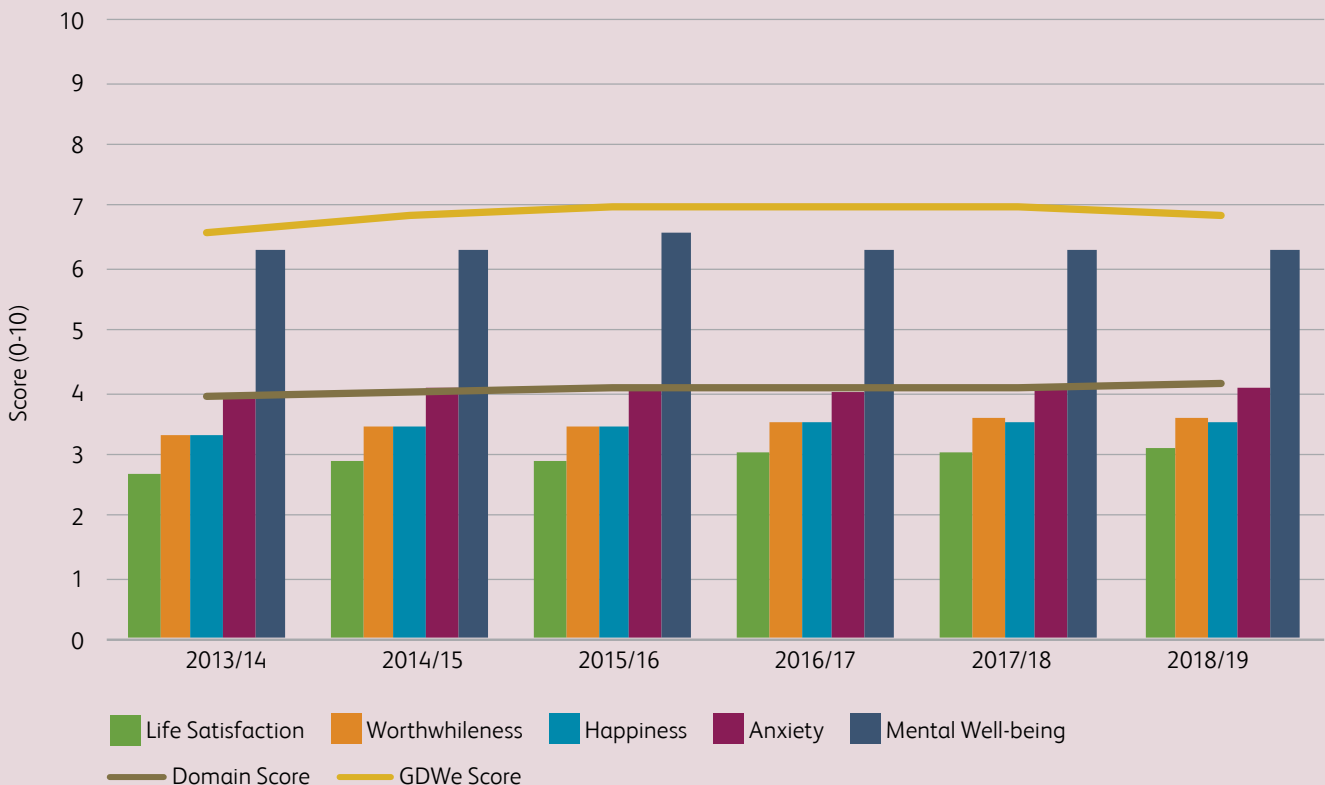
calculated from *only* those with a *very low* rating of anxiety. In contrast, the figure for mental well-being is based on an average of *all* respondents. These are two distinct measurement scales which explain much of the variance in the personal well-being domain; and how it compares to other domains and the overall GDWe score.

It is also significant that the data used to provide the score within this domain use very different methods of data collection, making it difficult to compare it ‘like for like’.

When analysing the scores for each variable over the times series, we can see that these remain relatively consistent as can be seen in Figure 5 below.

Of the 10 domains or ‘areas of life’ in the ONS dashboard, personal well-being has the lowest GDWe score.

**Figure 5: Personal well-being domain analysis, including domain and GDWe Score**



## 4.2. Recommendations from Inquiries and Commissions

The number of people that are happy, free from anxiety, and who feel their life is worthwhile, is a recognised measure of quality of life<sup>24</sup>. However, because these indicators of personal well-being depend on a combination of factors – from the quality of our relationships to our health, and right across the different domains within the ONS National Well-Being dashboard – they don't show up regularly in inquiries and commissions. The Trust's existing knowledge base and historic work on wellbeing<sup>25</sup> has consistently found that there are few policy levers to improve personal well-being without addressing the social, material and environmental conditions in a person's life. Measures of happiness and life satisfaction tend to be more of an indicator than a driver of wellbeing and GDWe.

Consequently, personal well-being could be viewed less as a domain, and more as a proxy for societal wellbeing, and indeed some economists argue that it should be<sup>26</sup>. It provides a subjective assessment of

a person's health, education, income, relationships, social network and social environment. This is how it is also used across OECD countries and within the OECD Better Life Index<sup>27</sup>. At the very least, we might expect to see Personal Well-being correlate with trends in the GDWe score, which can be seen in Figure 5. However, as indicated above, there are limitations to how much we can infer about the population as a whole from data sets that measure only 'very high' levels of life satisfaction, worthiness and happiness; and only 'very low' ratings of anxiety. They may miss important trends across the population and inadvertently mask over inequalities.

The Carnegie UK Trust also has concerns over the use of subjective wellbeing as the only measure of social progress. We know that people are remarkably good at getting used to their circumstances and therefore might report life satisfaction or happiness in situations that are objectively harsh<sup>28</sup>. Subjective wellbeing is also known to have a genetic component and there are well-known life cycle trends in personal well-being and distributive elements that require care in the analysis<sup>29</sup>.

24 Layard, R., & Ward, G. 2020. *Can we be happier?: Evidence and ethics*. UK: Pelican.

25 Smith and Herren, 2011. *More than GDP: Measuring What Matters: Report of the Round Table on Measuring Economic Performance and Social Progress in Scotland*. Available at: [https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie\\_uk\\_trust/2016/02/pub1455011685.pdf](https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2016/02/pub1455011685.pdf) [accessed March 2020].

26 Layard, R., & Ward, G. 2020. *Can we be happier?: Evidence and ethics*. UK: Pelican.

27 OECD Better Life Index, 2020. Available at: <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/life-satisfaction/> [accessed March 2020].

28 Frederick, S., & Loewenstein, G. 1999. 16 Hedonic Adaptation. Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology, 302-329.

29 Walker, P. and John, M. 2012. *From Public Health to Wellbeing: A New Driver for Policy and Action* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan





## 5. Domain 2: Our Relationships

There is a growing body of evidence that shows that positive relationships and kindness influence wellbeing<sup>30</sup>.

Our relationships, and more specifically the *quality* of our relationships – between individuals, communities and across generations – have a strong influence on individual, community and societal wellbeing. Personal connections can provide ‘capital’ which influences a range of different outcomes across the wellbeing domains: such as relating to education, employment, and health<sup>31</sup>.

The ‘Our Relationships’ domain aims to measure individuals’ satisfaction with their personal relationships. This domain includes data on whether people have positive relationships (or ‘people to rely on’), derived from the Understanding Society survey. It also indicates where people’s relationships are not as strong as they would like (those in ‘unhappy relationships’ and those that report feelings of loneliness).



<sup>30</sup> Ferguson, Z., 2017. *The Place of Kindness Combating Loneliness and building stronger communities*. Dunfermline: Carnegie UK Trust.

<sup>31</sup> Putnam, R. D., 2000. *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community*. New York; London: New York; London: Simon & Schuster.



## 5.1. Our Relationships GDWe Score

The domain score for ‘Our Relationships’ is higher than the overall GDWe score each year (9.6 in 2018/19), as Figure 6 demonstrates.

However, it should be noted that the data in this domain isn’t collected as frequently as other domains in the ONS dashboard and is the source of a large proportion of missing data (40%) which causes a small flatline in the results. However, this is not too concerning as when new data is collected there are no large dips in any of the variables, suggesting that there has been no significant change over time.

When analysing these results, it should be noted that wording/framing can have a significant impact on the results of the data. For example, data on loneliness which is taken from the Understanding Society survey is based on those who report that they always or most often feel lonely; this is a high threshold for this issue comparative to other data

collection on this topic. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that only 6% in England report that they always or most often experience loneliness. This result corresponds with a high GDWe score as the issue concerns a small segment of the population.

For example, we observe that data taken from the Scottish Household Survey<sup>32</sup>, which finds that that 21% have experienced loneliness in 2018, the question wording concerns experiences of loneliness in the last week. Therefore, question framing, and scope can have a large influence on results.

Moreover, ONS data on relationships is based on those who are extremely/fairly unhappy with their relationship with their partner/spouse; this is again a high threshold for assessing individual relationships which corresponds with a lower prevalence of this issue reported among the population.

32 Scottish Household Survey, 2019. *Annual report*. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2019-annual-report/> [accessed October 2020].

**Figure 6: Our relationships domain analysis, including domain and GDWe score**



## 5.2. Recommendations from Inquiries and Commissions

Given the well-documented rise in loneliness<sup>33</sup> and a narrative about changing dynamics and tensions across communities and society<sup>34</sup>, it is surprising that the domain score has remained consistent over the five-year period and is actually higher than the GDWe score. A number of commissions and inquiries foregrounded the urgency of taking action to improve social connection at an individual and community level; these were:

- Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness
- Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review
- Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on
- Civil Society Futures: The independent inquiry
- The Commission on Wellbeing and Policy

While the total number of commissions listed above and their 16 discrete recommendations may be less than in other domains, the scope of the recommendations and their centrality to inquiries on issues ranging from loneliness to health, wellbeing policy to civil society, shows the importance of relationships for societal wellbeing. There were two main themes within our analysis of the commissions and inquiries: reducing loneliness and social isolation and building community participation and action.


### 5.2.1. Reducing Loneliness and Social Isolation

The majority of recommendations relating to ‘Our Relationships’ came from the **Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness**<sup>35</sup>. The Commission made a series of calls on national leadership; on measurement and building the evidence base; and on ‘catalysing action’ through working with funders to support

and stimulate innovation in solutions to loneliness. Encouragingly, several of the recommendations relating to national leadership have now been realised, such as through the creation of a Minister for Loneliness and the development of a National Strategy<sup>36</sup>. However, there is still much work to do.

The latter recommendations – about the need to catalyse action and stimulate innovation – were detailed in the **Marmot Review**<sup>37</sup> which called on the government to support “locally developed and evidence-based community regeneration programmes that reduce social isolation”. That these same recommendations were repeated in the **Marmot Review 10 years on**<sup>38</sup>, both highlights that the quality of our relationships remains a significant driver of health inequalities, and that the information captured within the ‘Our Relationships’ domain may not tell the full story.

Alongside specific policy recommendations, across the commissions there was a recognition that loneliness, in particular, is a societal issue. Whilst the UK government has a role in leading and galvanising action, the solutions depend on everyone working together.

 **‘Tackling loneliness is a generational challenge. Each and every one of us will need to come together – as individuals, in our communities, with civil society organisations, businesses, schools, employers and with government – to play our part in taking forward Jo’s vision for a less lonely, more connected, world’ (p.5).**

**JO COX COMMISSION  
ON LONELINESS (2017).**

33 See, for example, Age UK, 2018. *The Lonely People*. Available at: [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/loneliness/loneliness-report\\_final\\_2409.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/loneliness/loneliness-report_final_2409.pdf) [accessed March 2020].

34 Civil Society Futures: The Independent Inquiry, 2018. *Civil Society in England: Its current state and future opportunity*. Available at: [https://civilsocietyfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/11/Civil-Society-Futures\\_\\_Civil-Society-in-England\\_\\_small-1.pdf](https://civilsocietyfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/11/Civil-Society-Futures__Civil-Society-in-England__small-1.pdf) [accessed March 2020].

35 The Jo Cox Loneliness Commission, 2017. Available at: [https://www.jocoxfoundation.org/loneliness\\_commission](https://www.jocoxfoundation.org/loneliness_commission) [accessed March 2020].

36 PM launches Government’s first loneliness strategy, 2018. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-launches-governments-first-loneliness-strategy> [accessed March 2020].

37 Institute of Health Equity (The Marmot Review), 2010. Available at: <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review> [accessed March 2020].

38 Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on. Available at: <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on> [accessed March 2020].

## 5.2.2. Building Community Participation and Action

A second theme within the recommendations focused on strengthening relationships at a community level. Community wellbeing, (as the ‘Where we live’ chapter later discusses), is about living well together locally. In highlighting the influence of social relationships on health inequities, the **Marmot Review** cited critical factors, such as people’s involvement in local decision making; access to social resources; and communal capabilities. This evidence led to a policy recommendation to promote community participation and action.

These themes also formed part of the PACT put forward by **Civil Society Futures**<sup>39</sup>. Although not ending with a set of formal policy recommendations, the Inquiry gathered stories and evidence on the changing dynamics, tensions and divisions across society, highlighting the importance of place, belonging and purpose. Its ‘call to action’ for civil society is rooted in shifting power, in rebuilding trust with people and communities, and at its centre is based on strengthening relationships.

39 Civil Society Futures: The Independent Inquiry, 2018. *Civil Society in England: Its current state and future opportunity*. Available at: [https://civilsocietyfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/11/Civil-Society-Futures\\_\\_Civil-Society-in-England\\_\\_small-1.pdf](https://civilsocietyfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/11/Civil-Society-Futures__Civil-Society-in-England__small-1.pdf) [accessed March 2020].

‘We will build real and meaningful relationships between people, meeting as equals – especially where this is hard to do. We will create and invest in better ways to connect that are fit for the 21st century, to create a national people–power grid, energising and universalising social action across communities and across our country’ (p.37).

CIVIL SOCIETY FUTURES:  
THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY (2018).

The links between community action and subjective wellbeing also formed part of the **Commission on Wellbeing and Policy**<sup>40</sup>, which called on government to create opportunities for people to engage in volunteering and giving. It is worth noting here that there is a degree of read across with both the ‘What we do’ (levels of volunteering) and ‘Where we live’ (belonging to a neighbourhood) wellbeing domains, both of which formed part of the commission’s recommendations on reducing loneliness and improving social cohesion.

40 The Legatum Institute Commission on Wellbeing and Policy, 2014. Available at: <https://li.com/reports/the-commission-on-wellbeing-and-policy/> [accessed March 2020].





## 6. Domain 3: Health

The ONS ‘Health’ domain measures life expectancy, disability, mental health and health satisfaction.

Mental and physical health is influenced by a variety of different factors, such as our environment, physical surroundings and access to greenspace<sup>41 42</sup>, our relationships, employment, and quality of public services<sup>43</sup>.

Within the UK, mental health is consistently identified as a key challenge for wellbeing. Younger generations are increasingly showing difficulties with mental health, anxiety and loneliness<sup>44</sup>. The UK has a high rate of deaths from mental ill health (including dementia), the figure of 9.3% is almost double the EU average. Men, and in particular younger and middle-aged men, have a higher rate of death from suicide<sup>45</sup>.



41 Bell, S. L., Phoenix, C., Lovell, R., & Wheeler, B. W. 2015 . *Seeking everyday wellbeing: The coast as a therapeutic landscape*. *Social Science & Medicine*, 142, 56-67. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.08.011.

42 Knight, S., Howley, P. 2017. *Can clean air make you happy?* Examining the effect of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) on life satisfaction. Available at: <https://www.york.ac.uk/media/economics/documents/hedg/workingpapers/1708.pdf> [accessed March 2020].

43 Castelli, A., Jacobs, R., Goddard, M., Smith, P.C., 2009. *Exploring the impact of public services on quality of life indicators*. Working Papers 046cherp, Centre for Health Economics, University of York.

44 Mental Health Foundation, 2019. *State of a Generation: Preventing mental health problems in children and young people*. Available at: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/state-generation-preventing-mental-health-problems-children-and-young-people> [accessed October 2020].

45 Office for National Statistics, 2018.

## 6.1. Health GDWe Score

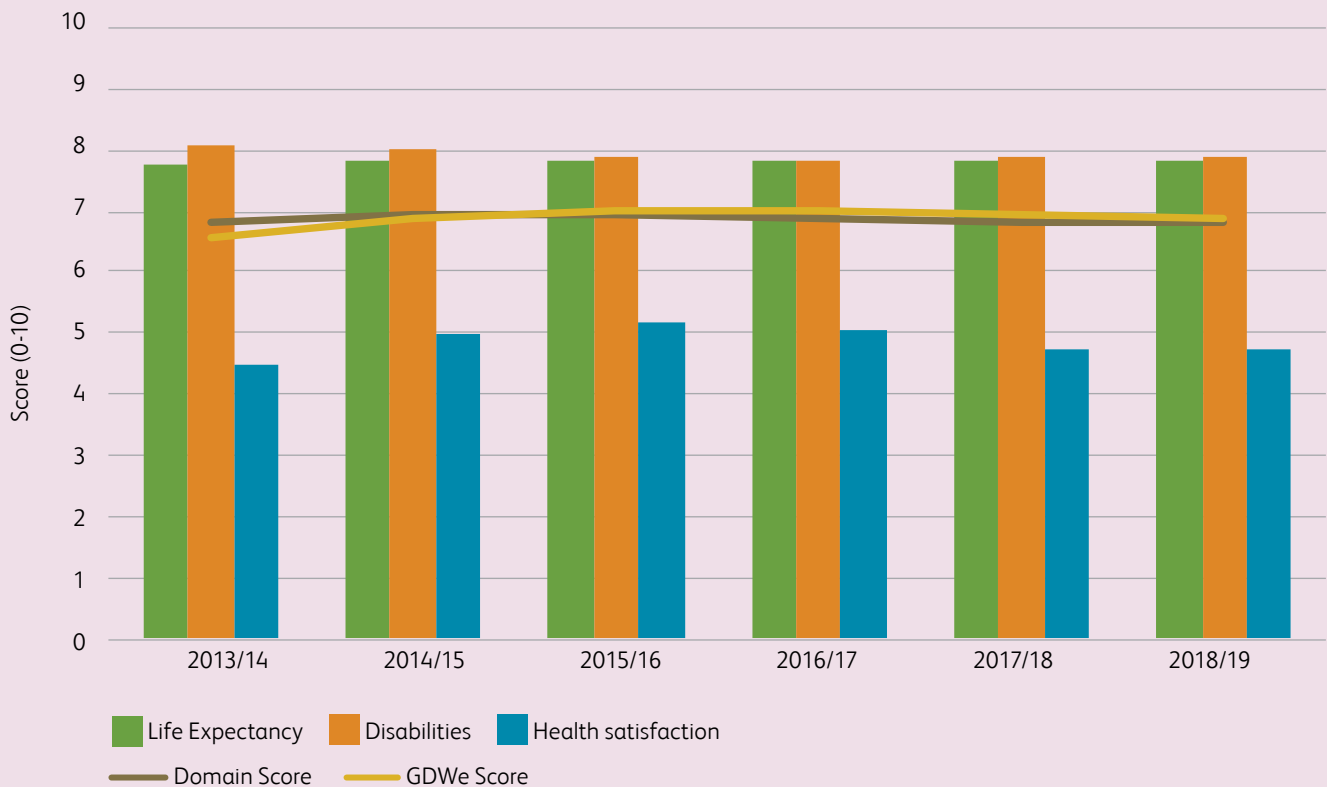
The overall score for the ‘Health’ domain and that of the GDWe is very similar (6.82 in 2018/19). However, we were disappointed that the measure of mental health could not be used in the domain calculation due to the extent of missing data.

We strongly suspect the domain score would be lower if we were able to include mental health and that this is part of the reason for the disparity between physical health and satisfaction with health observed.

The analysis found that *health satisfaction* is consistently lower than both *life expectancy* and *disabilities* in each period. This is explained by the data only summarising those who are mostly or completely satisfied with their health and not an average score of the full population.

*Health satisfaction* has started to decrease over the most recent time periods, indicating a downward trend. This is only likely to worsen as a result of COVID-19.

Figure 7: Health domain analysis, including Domain and GDWe Score



## 6.2. Recommendations from Inquiries and Commissions

In total, 15 of the commissions and inquiries made 121 recommendations directly relating to health. There were initially 213 recommendations, however we removed 92 on further analysis as they related to very detailed or technical changes in policy, practice and legislation. The majority of the removed recommendations were from the Review of Mental Health and Policing. Unlike many of the reviews we considered, the recommendations were highly specific and detailed. We retained those recommendations that had applicability outwith the Metropolitan Police Service.

The Commission making most recommendations in this domain was the **Commission on Modernising the Mental Health Act**<sup>46</sup>, with the two **Marmot Reviews** (2010 and 2020) coming close behind.

Other Commissions that made recommendations included:

- Independent Review of Poverty and Life Chances
- Independent Commission for the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP)
- Independent Commission on Mental Health and Policing
- Joint Voluntary and Social Enterprise Review
- The Topol Review: Preparing the healthcare workforce to deliver the digital future
- Dilnot Commission on funding of care and support
- Intergenerational Commission


Our analysis identified four key themes within the recommendations: reducing health inequalities, co-production, improving training and practice, and integrating services for health.

46 UK Government, 2018. *Modernising the Mental Health Act – final report from the independent review*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modernising-the-mental-health-act-final-report-from-the-independent-review> [accessed March 2020].

### 6.2.1. Reducing health inequalities

The largest single group of recommendations related to the need to reduce inequalities, mentioned across 11 different commissions. These recommendations generally related not to practice per se, but rather the systemic issues around which population groups are prioritised to reduce health inequalities. Many of the reviews which discussed health inequalities considered mental as well as physical health.

In the reviews we considered, there was a consensus that reducing health inequalities requires a shift upstream towards prevention. This included discussion and recommendations on primary and secondary prevention.

 **‘We have heard from professionals and carers that a greater focus on prevention and early action would be highly beneficial. Many have highlighted the dilemma under the current system that tight resources need to be focused on those with the higher-level needs to the detriment of prevention and early intervention’ (p.60).**

**DILNOT COMMISSION ON FUNDING OF CARE AND SUPPORT (2011)**<sup>47</sup>.

In many cases, primary prevention meant investing more in the early years (including pregnancy).

The **Independent Review of Poverty and Life Chances**<sup>48</sup>, published in 2010, recommended that the Government gradually moves funding to the early years; this funding should be weighted toward the most disadvantaged children as we build the evidence base of effective programmes. In discussion, the Commissions and Inquiries invariably noted that health outcomes were related to many other social outcomes. Both **Marmot Reviews** (2010 and 2020) highlighted the significant positive impacts that could be made to health across the life course by starting in the early years.

47 Dilnot Commission on Funding of Care and Support, 2011. *Fairer Care Funding: the report of the Commission on Funding of Care and Support*. Available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130221121529/https://www.wp.dh.gov.uk/carecommission/files/2011/07/Fairer-Care-Funding-Report.pdf> [accessed March 2020].

48 The Independent Review of Poverty and Life Chances, 2010. *The Foundation Years: Preventing poor children from becoming poor adults*. Available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110120090141/http://povertyreview.independent.gov.uk/media/20254/poverty-report.pdf> [accessed March 2020].

The recommendations were not related to health care however, but rather related to social security, childcare, parenting education and family support:

-  **‘Support families to achieve progressive improvements in early child development, including:**
- **Giving priority to pre-and post-natal interventions that reduce adverse outcomes of pregnancy and infancy.**
  - **Providing paid parental leave in the first year of life with a minimum income for healthy living.**
  - **Providing routine support to families through parenting programmes, children’s centres and key workers, delivered to meet social need via outreach to families.**
  - **Developing programmes for the transition to school’ (p22).**

MARMOT REVIEW: FAIR SOCIETY, HEALTHY LIVES (2010).

These recommendations are **cross-cutting** in that they also appear in our review under other aspects of wellbeing – including the ‘Education and Skills’ and ‘Personal Finance’ domains.


A second core area of primary prevention recommended by **Marmot** (2010 and 2020) with echoes in other commissions was the need to improve access to blue and green space. Here, a direct link is made between the local environment, the global environment and health outcomes. As with early education, these primary prevention policies are also **cross-cutting**, appearing in reviews relating to ‘Environment’ and ‘Where we live’, though the Marmot reviews are the only ones that specifically makes the link between health outcomes and climate change.

Public health activities such as smoking cessation, addiction services and support for weight reduction were also recommendations made in both **Marmot Reviews** (2010 and 2020) but again, emphasis can be seen in other reviews such as the **Joint Voluntary and Social Enterprise Review**<sup>49</sup> and the **Independent Review of the Mental Health Act**.

49 VCSE Review: Investing in Partnerships for Health and Wellbeing, 2016. *Final Report*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-partnerships-and-investment-in-the-voluntary-sector> [accessed March 2020].

## 6.2.2. Coproduction

Several of the reviews and commissions referred to the need to involve communities and people who use services more in their planning. Think Local Act Personal’s definition of co-production was used in more than one commission as a useful way to think about and shape practice.

-  **‘Coproduction means professionals and citizens sharing power to plan, design and deliver support together. It’s about recognising that everyone has an important contribution to make to improve quality of life for people and communities.’**

THINK LOCAL, ACT PERSONAL, 2020.

We have separated out co-production with users and co-production with communities as they have different tools and outcomes associated with them<sup>50</sup>. While in many cases, the community and voluntary sector is included in these discussions, we have also separated out (as best as we can) the recommendations relating to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector’s role as service provider, and their role as advocate for users and communities. Not all commissions and inquiries made this distinction with many fluctuating between the two functions of the VCSE sector.

The commissions and inquiries relating to the health sector itself included reference to the need to work directly with patients to improve outcomes. The **Independent Commission on Medical Generalism**<sup>51</sup> focused on the need to see the person as a whole and in the context of their family and wider social environment. They concluded that shared decision-making between clinicians and patients should be used to develop care and treatment plans and all treatment decisions as far as is practicable.

50 Boyle, D. and Harris, M. (2009) The Challenge Of Co-Production Available at: [https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/the\\_challenge\\_of\\_co-production.pdf](https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/the_challenge_of_co-production.pdf) [accessed November 2020]

51 Independent Commission for the Royal College of General Practitioners and The Health Foundation, 2011. Available at: [https://www.rcgp.org.uk/-/media/Files/Policy/A-Z-policy/COMMISSION\\_REPORT\\_ON\\_MEDICAL-GENERALISM-\\_rev\\_7-OCTOBER-2011.ashx?la=en](https://www.rcgp.org.uk/-/media/Files/Policy/A-Z-policy/COMMISSION_REPORT_ON_MEDICAL-GENERALISM-_rev_7-OCTOBER-2011.ashx?la=en) [accessed March 2020].

The **Joint Voluntary and Social Enterprise Review** similarly concluded that this new model would necessitate a core role for those VCSE services which demonstrate that they can provide support which is whole-person, whole-family and whole-community (also highlighted in the **Independent Review of the Mental Health Act**). To move forward, the commissions recommended improving and extending access to personal care budgets work through better connection to small and local providers; developing further tools for self-management, developed through engagement with patients and carers; and empowering users through better information and advice about services and funding sources. A key barrier identified was the performance management structure of the NHS, with recognition that change would require service objectives to:

**‘Be developed in partnership with funded organisations and service users and include a focus on the health, wellbeing and experience of service users’ (p.13).**

**THE JOINT VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE REVIEW (2016).**

Co-production with users was a significant area of concern for the **Independent Review of the Mental Health Act**, where the balance between autonomy and coercion is particularly contentious. The review itself firmly placed itself on the side of greater autonomy, with recommendations requesting more information for patients and more opportunities for them to use their voice within service provision and planning. They also recommended that mental healthcare providers should be required to demonstrate that they are co-producing mental health services, drawing the connection between voice mechanisms and the audit and scrutiny mechanisms that regulate public services.

As noted above, it was sometimes hard to identify whether reviews were considering co-production with users in service delivery or with communities (of interest or place) in service design and evaluation – with many conflating the two. At the service design level, the relationship between communities and service providers was a particular focus of the **Joint Voluntary and Social**

**Enterprise Review**. It included recommendations on co-producing service objectives, involvement in commissioning, and involvement in evaluation of services.

**‘Health and Wellbeing Boards should work closely with local VCSE organisations to ensure that their strategies are co-designed with local citizens, particularly as they try to reach those groups and communities which may be under-represented or overlooked’ (p.11).**

**JOINT VOLUNTARY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE REVIEW (2016).**

### 6.2.3. Improving training and practice

Improving training and practice within the health and care sectors was referred to by a small number of the commissions we considered. Their recommendations fell into two categories: those aimed at providing better services for all users, and those largely about ensuring that health and social care services better meet the needs of a diverse population.

The **Independent Commission on Medical Generalism** recommended that medical training become much more generalist in content. All medical undergraduates should have greater experience of core disciplines (paediatric care, learning disability, mental health, care of people with life-limiting conditions, and end-of-life care for patients and their families); opportunities for shared training modules across health and social care should be pursued. Such a generalist, and whole-person approach would, they argue, improve outcomes for patients and their families.

In relation to diversity, a number of interconnected issues were raised by the commissions and inquiries. For example, the **Independent Review of the Mental Health Act** argued that greater representation of people of black African and Caribbean heritage should be sought in all health professions, but particularly in senior levels and in psychology and psychiatry.



While this was the only review that argued for more equal representation within the workforce, inclusion through training was highlighted in several areas. **The Independent Inquiry into Access to Healthcare for people with Learning Disabilities**<sup>52</sup> argued that clinical training must include mandatory training in learning disabilities. In addition, mental health and suicide prevention recommendations were made for improved health outcomes, but actually related to training and awareness raising amongst other professions, including education and policing.

#### 6.2.4. Integrating services for health

A number of commissions referred to the need to consider further integration of public services to improve health and care outcomes. The difficulties caused by different cultures (reinforced by training), performance management systems, and accountability were seen as contributing to poorer outcomes, particularly for people experiencing multiple conditions.

However, there were differences regarding the extent of integration sought. The **Commission**

**on the Future of Health and Social Care**<sup>53</sup> recommended moving to a single, ring-fenced budget for the NHS and social care in England, with a commissioner for local services. **The Dilnot Commission on the Funding of Care and Support** similarly recommended greater integration.

Away from the arguments around structural integration, most commission and inquiries focused on what could be achieved largely within existing structures. The first **Marmot Review** argued for both place-based integration and population-based integration. Full local integration was seen as broader than health and care, including planning, transport, housing and the environment – a sentiment echoed in the **Joint Voluntary and Social Enterprise Review**. Service based integration focuses on the need to bring together services for population groups into single physical locations. Finally, at a functional level, there were calls for the greater integration of ICT to provide communication between services, and for the integration of research and evaluation to ensure the best use of knowledge to improve outcomes for people (**The Topol Review**<sup>54</sup>).

52 Healthcare for all: report of the independent inquiry into access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities, 2008. Available at: [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130105064250/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_099255](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130105064250/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_099255) [accessed March 2020].

53 The Kings Fund Commission on the future of health and social care in England, 2014. Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/commission-future-health-and-social-care-england> [accessed March 2020].

54 NHS Health Education England, 2019. *The Topol Review: Preparing the healthcare workforce to deliver the digital future*. Available at: <https://topol.hee.nhs.uk/> [accessed March 2020].





## 7. Domain 4: What we do

The ONS ‘What we do’ domain covers a range of economic and non-economic activities. It uses both subjective and objective measures and seeks to capture job quantity (unemployment) and job quality (job satisfaction and satisfaction with leisure time).

It also recognises that how we live our lives extends beyond employment and includes volunteering, arts engagement and physical activity.

Unemployment is one of the key causes of low income and is covered in the ONS Wellbeing dashboard under ‘personal finances’. But for those who are unemployed, there is a documented effect on self-worth and self-esteem as well as social connectedness<sup>55</sup>. The relationship between employment and a wide range of economic, social and health outcomes is well known and has been widely documented<sup>56</sup>.



55 Clark, A. E. & Oswald, A. J., 2002. *A simple statistical method for measuring how life events affect happiness*. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 31(6), p. 1139–1144.

56 Waddell, G., Burton, A.k., 2006. *Is work good for your health and well-being?* <https://cardinal-management.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Burton-Waddell-is-work-good-for-you.pdf>

## 7.1. What We Do GDWe Score

There is a wide variation of results across the ‘What we do’ domain, as shown in Figure 8. The range of scores between indicators is larger than within any other domain, and the score (5.94 in 2018/19) consistently sits below the overall GDWe score (6.89 in 2018/19).

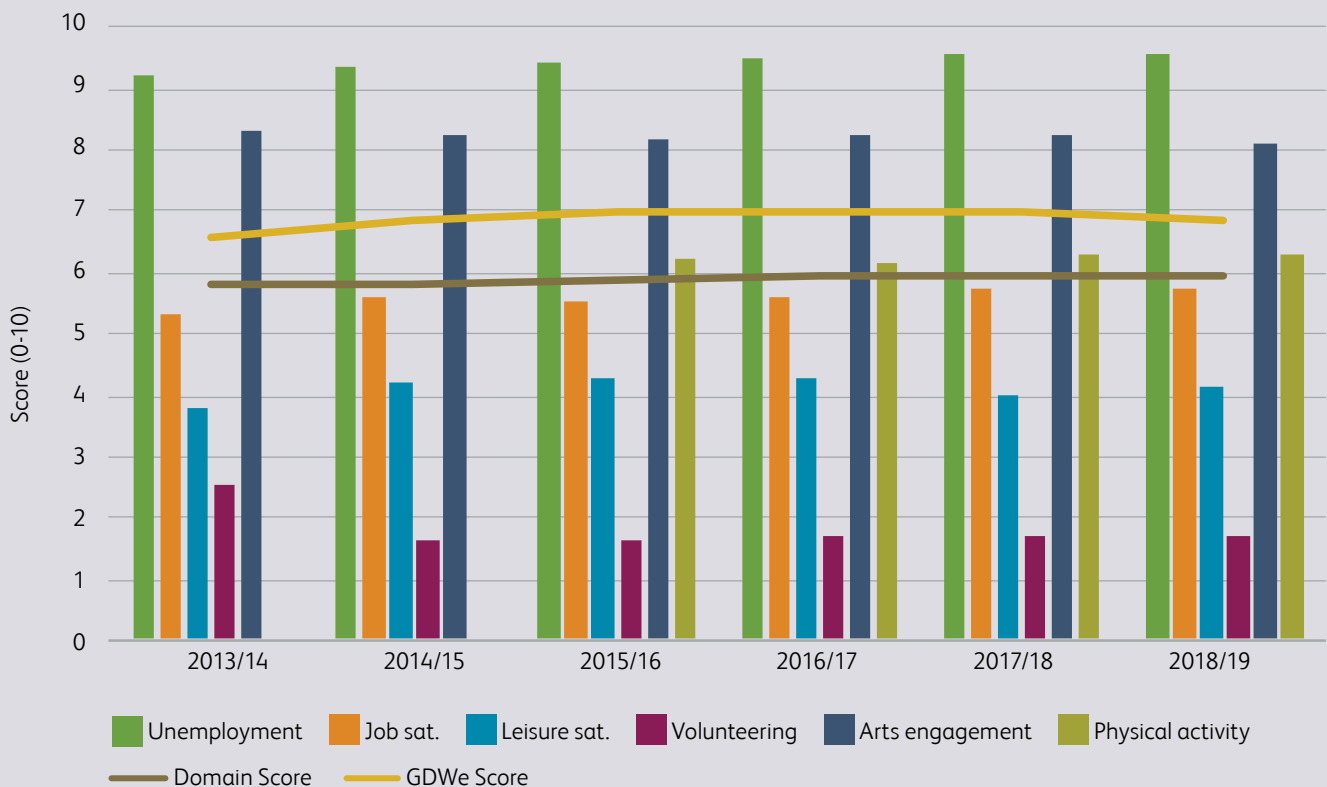
There has been a steady decrease in the *unemployment rate*, which is shown as an increase in Figure 8 due to this being the desirable direction of change when considering wellbeing. Significantly, the output suggests that *job satisfaction* is not increasing despite more of the population (during this period) being in employment. The results indicate that while there may be a higher proportion of the population in employment, only a little over a half of the population are mostly or

completely satisfied with their work. These results, in part, reflect broader trends which show that more people are in precarious work – discussed further below – including through the expansion of the gig economy and zero-hours employment contracts, which do not necessarily espouse job satisfaction or job quality.

Volunteering rates are consistently low across the period of the analysis and are continuing to decrease.

With respect to *leisure satisfaction* scores, despite an increase over the time series, the indicator still scores reasonably low when compared to the other indicators within this domain. It should be noted that physical activity was asked by a different survey and question before 2014 and as such can only be included after this point.

Figure 8: ‘What we do’ domain analysis, including Domain and GDWe Score.



## 7.2. Recommendations from Inquiries and Commissions

In total, 15 of the commissions and inquiries we reviewed covered issues relating to the ONS category ‘what we do’. There were 46 discrete recommendations identified, with a quarter coming from the **Commission on Economic Justice**<sup>57</sup>. Other Commissions with multiple recommendations were:

- Good Work: Taylor Review modern working practices
- Commission on Equality and Human Rights: Is Britain Fairer?
- Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review
- Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on
- Independent Commission on Skills and Lifelong Learning in a Changing Economy

The recommendations were almost entirely focused on the economic elements in this domain of wellbeing (employment and job quality). The timing of our analysis – 2010 to early 2020 – means that most commissions were largely taking place against the backdrop of the financial crisis of 2008 and the immediate impact on work. However, as the decade moved on, and employment rates increased, these concerns gave way to new anxieties about the type of employment and quality of work that people were able to secure.

### 7.2.1. Reducing Unemployment

**Factors including technological advancements and demographic changes are likely to make current difficulties worse. These changes are also likely to fundamentally disrupt and distort the nature of education and work. Increasingly, individuals are likely to move between careers, re-training and up-skilling as necessary. Our career advice and guidance is not as good as it should be and fails to support individuals of all ages looking to improve their skills and opportunities’ (p.4).**

**INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN A CHANGING ECONOMY (2018).**

57 IPPR Commission on Economic Justice, 2018. *Prosperity and justice: A plan for the new economy – IPPR Commission on Economic Justice final report*. Available at: <https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/prosperity-and-justice> [accessed March 2020].

The changing nature of work, with less security and more requirements to re-train were considerations for the **Independent Commission on Skills and Lifelong Learning in a Changing Economy**<sup>58</sup> and the **Commission on Economic Justice**<sup>59</sup>. The former recommended increased careers advice and training, with requirements for more resources for this activity. The **Commission on Economic Justice** went further; it recommended the introduction of a ‘Technology Displacement Fund’ to support workers displaced by new technologies, enabling them to be retrained and supported back into the labour market.

More access to technical education was also recommended by the **Intergenerational Commission**<sup>60</sup> which called on government to provide £1.5 billion to tackle persistent under-funding of technical education routes. The **Independent Commission on Skills and Lifelong Learning in a Changing Economy** noted that the introduction of the apprenticeship levy had brought about a welcome and substantial increase in investment. However, it recommended that it be reviewed to ensure it can be used to support a more holistic approach to workforce development. The **Commission on Equality and Human Rights**<sup>61</sup> argued governments across Britain should hold apprenticeship providers to account for improving participation rates for women, ethnic minorities and disabled people, including through funding mechanisms. Both of the **Marmot Reviews** also called for greater investment in incentives for employers to recruit lone parents, carers and people with mental and physical ill health.

Several commissions argued for reducing discrimination to improve employment rates, noting the lower employment rates for women, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with disabilities. The **Commission on Equality and Human Rights** argued for strengthening the Equality Act 2010 relating to pregnancy and

58 Independent Commission on Skills and Lifelong Learning in a Changing Economy, 2018. Available at: <https://www.pearson.com/uk/about-us/news-and-policy/news/2018/12/independent-commission-highlights-urgent-need-focus-skills-lifelong-learning-in-changing-economy.html> [accessed March 2020].

59 IPPR Centre for Economic Justice, 2016. *Prosperity and Justice: a plan for the new economy*. Available at:

60 Resolution Foundation, 2018. *A New Generational Contract: the final report of the Intergenerational Commission*. Available at: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/advanced/a-new-generational-contract/> [accessed March 2020].

61 Commission on Equality and Human Rights, 2018. *Is Britain Fairer?* Available at: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/britain-fairer-2018> [accessed March 2020].

maternity discrimination; while the **Commission for Economic Justice**<sup>62</sup> argued that the government should ensure jobs are advertised on a flexible and potentially job-share basis, except with good reason.

The **Commission for Economic Justice**, taking a macro-economic approach, argued that the Treasury should formally revise the Monetary Policy Committee's mandate to include explicit targets for unemployment (including under-employment) and the level of nominal GDP, either alongside inflation, or as intermediate guide to a primary inflation target.

### 7.2.2. Improving Job Quality

As noted above, as the decade developed a large number of commissions included recommendations on the quality of work. Many of these related to the emergence of the 'gig' economy, with new digital platforms allowing workers to be hired on an extremely flexible basis. While there are advantages to flexibility, most commissions that commented on this field reflected that the loss of employment rights was detrimental to wellbeing, echoing the Trust's knowledge-base and research in this area<sup>63</sup>.

The **Taylor Review**<sup>64</sup> recommended a new category of worker – a 'Dependent Contractor' – to be clearer about how to distinguish workers from those who are legitimately self-employed. Key arguments from the **Commission on Economic Justice** called for the right to a regular contract for those doing regular hours on a zero-hours contract; extended statutory rights for the self-employed; and minimum notice periods for shift work.

62 Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), 2018. *Prosperity and Justice: A Plan for the New Economy*. Available at: <https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/prosperity-and-justice> [accessed March 2020].

63 Irvine, G., 2020 *Good Work for Wellbeing in the Coronavirus Economy*. Dunfermline: Carnegie UK Trust.

64 UK Government, 2017. *Good Work: The Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/good-work-the-taylor-review-of-modern-working-practices> [accessed March 2020].

**'The same basic principles should apply to all forms of employment in the British economy – there should be a fair balance of rights and responsibilities, everyone should have a baseline of protection, and there should be routes to enable progression at work' (p.9).**

THE TAYLOR REVIEW OF  
MODERN WORKING PRACTICES (2017).

Rather than outline in detail the potential ways to improve job quality, most of the commissions that touched on job quality referred to the need to improve employee representation as a means to better outcomes. Reductions in union representation was a concern for both the **Commission for Economic Justice** and the **Taylor Review**, with the former arguing for a new 'right to access' that would give unions stronger rights of physical access to workplaces, combined with a 'digital right of access' to reach remote workers, and a new 'right to join' for workers. They also argued for greater staff representation on boards and on remuneration committees.

Wellbeing at work was also considered by the **Review of Mental Health and Policing**<sup>65</sup> and both **Marmot Reviews**. Marmot was particularly focused on jobs at the lower end of the social gradient, arguing that employers should implement guidance on stress management, and the effective promotion of wellbeing and physical and mental health at work.

There were calls to ensure that existing legislation is adhered to within companies. Enforcement relating to harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation was specifically referred to by the **Commission on Equality and Human Rights**.

65 Metropolitan Police Authority, 2005. *Joint Review: Policing and Mental Health*. Available at: <http://policeauthority.org/metropolitan/downloads/committees/mpa/051205-07-appendix01.pdf> [accessed March 2020].

## 8. Domain 5: Where we live

The ONS ‘Where we live’ domain measures include local crime statistics and how much access we have to green and blue space, alongside the analysis of subjective measures such as how safe we feel, and how satisfied we are with our accommodation.

Overall, the relationship between our personal well-being and our community wellbeing is underdeveloped with significant gaps in knowledge in this area<sup>66</sup>. The inclusion of housing within this domain differs from other dashboards which would place housing in material conditions or personal finance rather than necessarily connected to community wellbeing.



66 What Works Wellbeing/Happy City, 2019, *Understanding Thriving Communities*. Available at <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/insights/documents/Understanding-Thriving-Communities.pdf?mtime=20191218130904&focal=none> [accessed November 2020]).

## 8.1. Where we live GDWe Score

There is a mixed picture in relation to the ‘Where we live’ domain, with the score sitting slightly below the overall GDWe score (6.70 in 2018/19) when analysing the trend for 2014/15 onwards.

There was a rise in the observed domain score in the 2014/15 period, which is due to the addition of *travel time* data<sup>67</sup>. Travel time data has only been reported consistently since 2014 and as such could not be included for the 2013/14 period. Although decreasing, *travel time* does score quite highly which had had a positive impact on the domain score. The inclusion of this data brings the domain in line with the GDWe

67 This is the average travel time to 8 key services (employment, primary school, high school, further education, doctors, hospital, supermarket and the town centre).

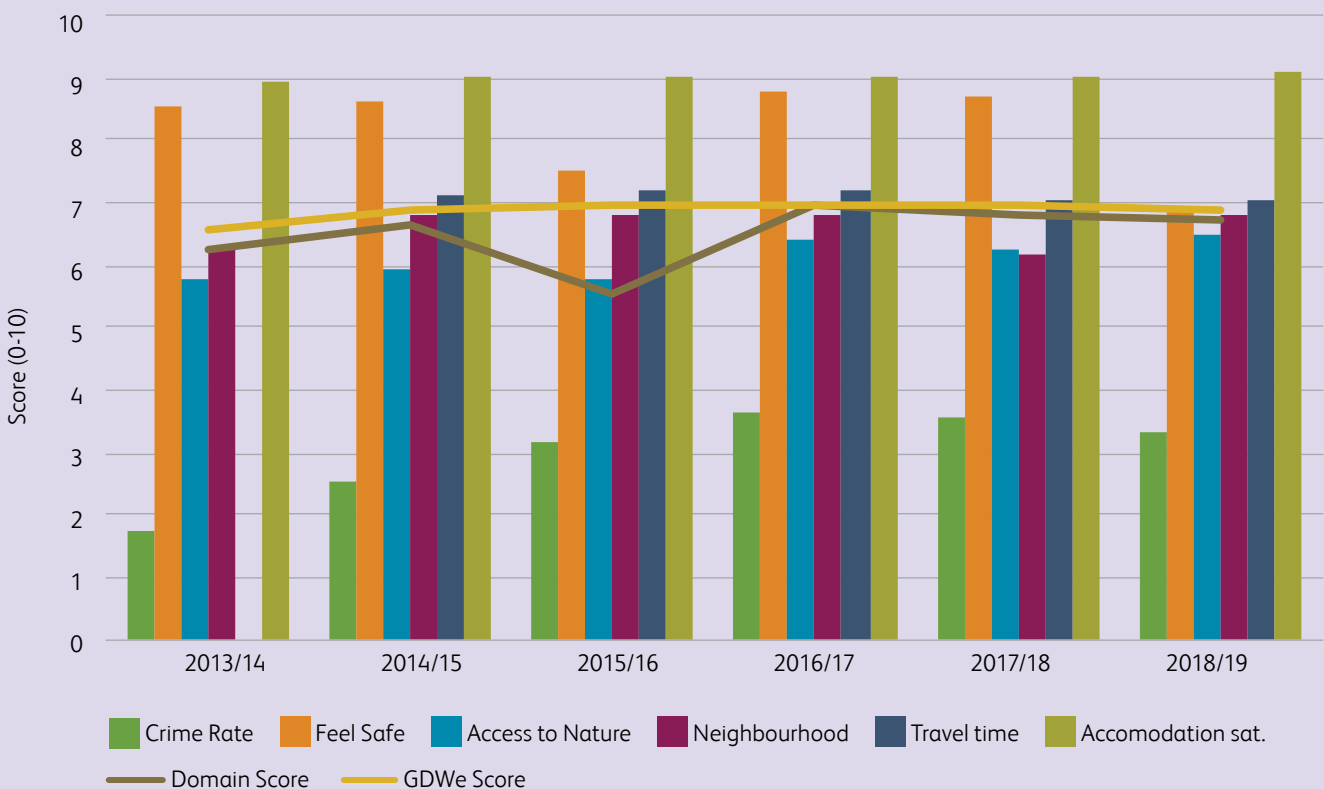
score each year. In 2015/16 there was a slight increase in crime rates which, combined with the decline in feeling safe, caused a small dip in the GDWe score.

However, there is a slight decrease in the proportion of people reporting a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood.

All other indicators within the domain stay reasonably consistent over time except for *crime rate*. The score for crime rate has improved more than any other indicator within the domain over time. This is due to a steady decrease in reported crime rates<sup>68</sup>.

68 Office for National Statistics, 2019. *Crime in England and Wales: year ending June 2019*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingjune2019> [accessed October 2020].

Figure 9: Where we live domain analysis, including Domain and GDWe Score.



## 8.2. Recommendations from Inquiries and Commissions

In total, 21 of the commissions and inquiries we reviewed covered issues relating to the ONS category ‘where we live’. There were 142 discrete recommendations identified, with many coming from the **Affordable Housing Commission**. Other Commissions with multiple recommendations in this domain were:

- The Grimsey Review
- The Grimsey Review 2
- A Vision for Social Housing
- The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets.

Many of the recommendations are **cross-cutting** in that they highlight the need for community empowerment to improve local relationships and for flourishing local relationships to support participation. Both are not mutually exclusive. Housing affordability, availability and quality was also a recurring theme within the commissions we reviewed – the recommendations further demonstrate how our wellbeing is impacted by multiple concurrent factors that cannot be understood on their own. Our personal finances and what we do impacts our ability to choose where we live, and the local environment near our home affects our health, relationships and personal wellbeing.

Our analysis identified six key themes within the recommendations: access to key services; access to the natural environment; community empowerment, participation and increasing inequalities; housing affordability, availability and quality; land reform; planning, infrastructure and town centre regeneration.

### 8.2.1. Access to Key Services

The **Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances**, both **Grimsey Reviews** and the **Casey Review** all signalled the need to develop local access to key services. Each focused heavily on the importance of community spaces and infrastructure to support children and young people: the **Casey Review** highlighting the need for welcoming, inclusive, socially mixed and non-stigmatising hubs within the local community. The **Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances** also highlighted that:

**‘Government should develop and publish annually a measure of ‘service quality’ which captures whether children, and in particular children in low income families, have suitable access to high quality services’ (p.9).**

### 8.2.2. Access to the natural environment

The importance of developing a better understanding of how the physical environment in which we live impacts community wellbeing, and using this evidence in the design of buildings, towns, and cities was notably highlighted by the **Commission on Wellbeing and Policy**:

**‘This needs to go beyond the traditions of intuition and design, and instead systematically factor in the ability of built environments to create opportunities for controlled social interaction by residents, and a sense of connection to the natural environment’ (p.66).**

However, this theme – and recommendation – is **cross-cutting**, demonstrating the direct link between our relationships, access to blue and green infrastructure within our local area, and personal well-being<sup>69</sup>.


<sup>69</sup> Vivid Economics Limited, 2019. *Natural Capital Account for Derry City and Strabane District*. Available at: <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/natural-capital-account-for-derry-city-and-strabane-district/>. [accessed March 2020].



### 8.2.3. Community empowerment, participation and reducing inequalities

Many of the recommendations relating to community empowerment and participation within this domain outlined the need for **equality of participation**. Indeed, this theme was implicit in a large proportion of the recommendations the team reviewed beyond 'Where we live' and across many of the domains.

Although it is recognised that not everyone may want to contribute in the same way, there was a clear focus within the reviews on the need for increased methods of participation; mechanisms of accountability that look beyond voter turnout and place value on ongoing participation; the value of relationships; and local action. As the **Commission on the Future of Localism**<sup>70</sup> led by Lord Bob Kerslake outlines:

 **'Relational localism: changing culture and behaviours requires embracing risk and establishing trust in devolution to communities, local leaders acting as facilitators for community expertise, and disrupting hierarchies' (p.17).**

Practical solutions focused on the need for investment in local approaches (localism), powers and planning. Whilst some recommendations saw investment in campaigns and communicating to the public as essential, others detailed why ensuring that there are meaningful powers, levers and resources for communities to take action locally should be a priority. In addition, the need to reduce inequalities to both increase community cohesion *and* enable greater participation in all aspects of life was a consistent theme in this domain. The recommendations highlighted a central role for local government, with area-based plans and projects aimed at reducing inequality for young people, women (and women in the labour market), improving IT literacy, and digital inclusion.

<sup>70</sup> Locality, 2020. *Findings from the Commission on the Future of Localism*. Available at: <https://locality.org.uk/about/key-publications/findings-from-the-commission-on-the-future-of-localism/> [accessed March 2020].

### 8.2.4. Housing affordability, availability and quality

Housing affordability, availability and quality most closely relates to the ONS indicator that measures satisfaction with accommodation, a subjective judgement. Yet, the review of commissions and inquiries exemplified that this indicator is far from sufficient when considering the complexity of housing, and its relationship to other domains of wellbeing, particularly personal finance, personal well-being, health and the environment.

The **Affordable Housing Commission** led by Lord Richard Best made the following calls on government:

- to rebalance the housing system to provide affordable housing opportunities for all by 2045;
- to make affordable housing a national priority and to put it at the centre of a national housing strategy;
- to adopt a new definition and measures of housing affordability, which relate to people's income and circumstances;
- to increase investment in new social housing, alongside reforms to help rebalance the system away from the private rented sector to social housing;
- to constrain rent increases, end Affordable Rent and reform the right to buy;
- to support first-time buyers stuck in the private rented sector by levelling the mortgage market, providing targeted support for deposits and increasing supply; and
- to improve the safety net for struggling renters and homeowners, and to bring all homes up to a safe and decent standard (p.11).

These recommendations typified many of the themes within the other commissions and inquiries (particularly **A Vision for Social Housing** and the **Raynsford Review of Planning in England**<sup>71</sup>).

It is **A Vision for Social Housing** that makes the crucial link between housing and the wider community in which it sits. It highlights the significance of citizen engagement, community participation and relationships, calling for residents of social housing to have a voice within local, regional and national government.

A further analysis of the **cross-cutting** link between housing and personal finance is provided in the next chapter.

### 8.2.5. Land reform

Land use and reform policies, such as giving planning authorities more powers, and developing the relationship between central and local government, were cited in the recommendations as opportunities for development. The desire for a reform of the Land Compensation Act 1961, a national land use framework, and a rebalance of the sale of land to the private sector, to increase community asset ownership were cited by the **Commission on Economic Justice**, the **Food, Farming and Countryside Commission**<sup>72</sup> and the **Raynsford Review of Planning in England**.

71 TCPA, 2018. *The Raynsford Review of Planning in England*. Available at: <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/raynsford-review> [accessed March 2020].

72 RSA, 2019. *Our Future in the Land*. Available at: <https://www.thersa.org/reports/future-land> [accessed March 2020].

### 8.2.6. Planning and infrastructure and town centre regeneration

Town centre regeneration was a focus of **The Grimsey Reviews** (2013 and 2018) and the **The Portas Review**. Both focused on the need to reframe the ‘traditional’ perspective of the high street, shifting towards the idea that they could have a renewed purpose; providing places for relationships to flourish and for education and skills to develop, as well as contributing to the local economy:

 **‘Set an objective to repopulate high streets and town centres as community hubs encompassing: more housing, education, arts, entertainment, business/office space, health and leisure – and some shops’ (p.6).**

THE VANISHING HIGH STREET (2013).

Similarly to many of the other recommendations in this domain was the call to devolve more power to local communities and decision makers; the need for strong leadership at local authority level; and to consider the role of digital technology in town centre regeneration. The introduction of free public WiFi, well connected ‘networked highstreets’ and public services were offered as ways to reimagine town centres as community hubs. In addition, visionary, strategic town centre planning to make high streets accessible, attractive and safe was of central concern for the commissioners.

It’s clear, from this analysis that the questions used to obtain data within this ONS domain – such as asking people if they feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood – are not adequate in measuring how we live well together.



## 9. Domain 6: Personal Finance

The ‘Personal Finance’ domain includes a number of key indicators on financial security, including households living on low incomes (and those experiencing difficulty managing financially), household income (and satisfaction with that income), and household wealth.

While the ONS domain relates to personal finance, the indicators and issues considered by the commissions and inquiries in the study are more clearly focused on tackling poverty and inequality.

There are, quite literally, thousands of studies on the relationship between wellbeing and income and wealth. There are two key themes within the evidence:

- The ability to purchase basic needs such as food, fuel and housing of a sufficient quality to protect wellbeing and/or to cope with an unexpected essential purchase (absolute poverty). Data shows that 14% of people in England fell into this category in 2018; and
- The ability to participate in the norms of society (relative poverty). Data shows that 17% of those in England fell into this category in 2019 <sup>73</sup>.



<sup>73</sup> Francis-Devine, B. 2020. *Poverty in the UK: Statistics House of Commons Research Briefing* Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn07096/> [Accessed November 2020].

## 9.1. Personal Finance GDWe Score

The domain score for ‘Personal Finance’ (8.40) is higher than the overall GDWe score (6.89) as shown in Figure 10 below. This reflects the slight increase in measures concerning household wealth and income, which have been slowly increasing since the 2008 financial crash. However, it should be noted that this upward trend remains low when compared to the levels seen before 2008<sup>74</sup>.

It should also be noted that the data on household wealth and household income are reported as the median values for the population. As with measures of central tendency with a skewed distribution, these tend not to capture the distribution of the values as

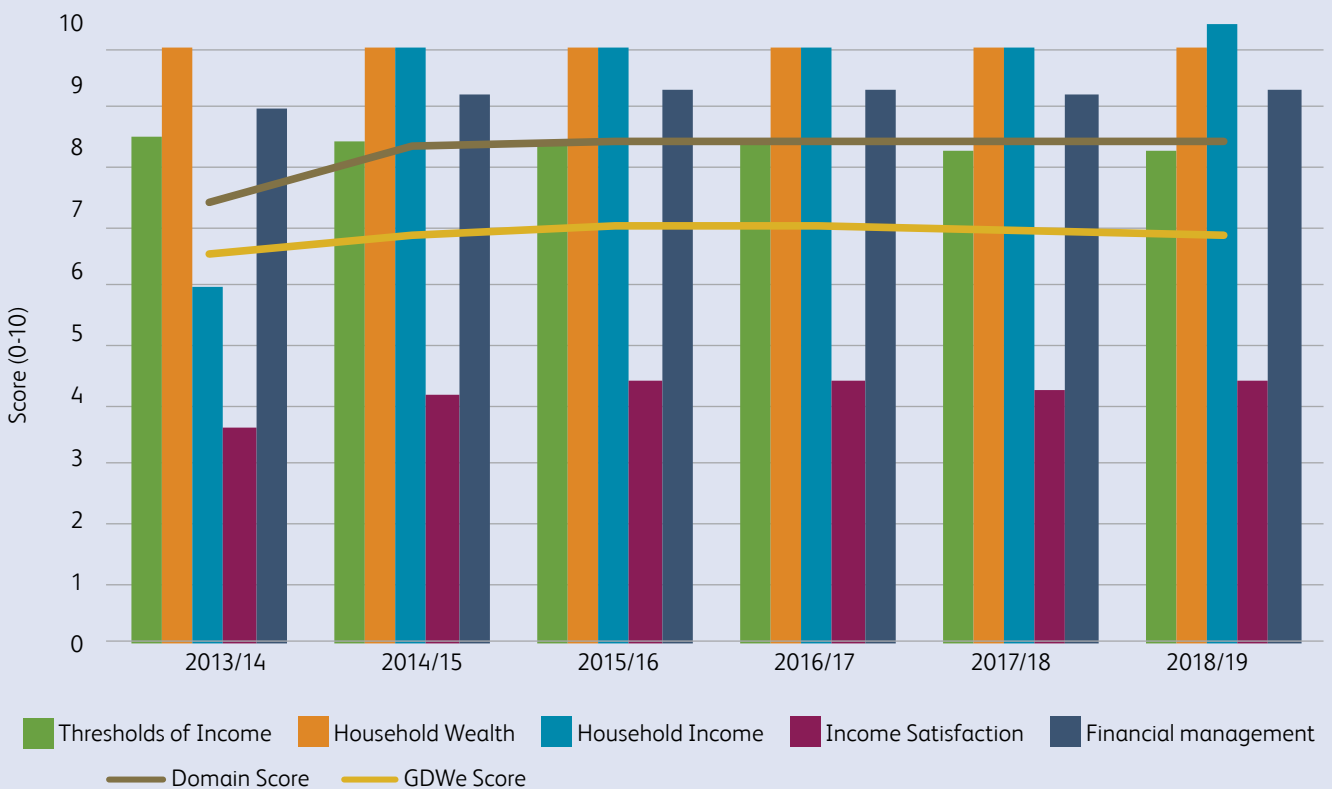
74 Resolution Foundation, 2020. *Charting the UK’s lost decade of income growth*. Available at: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/comment/charting-the-uks-lost-decade-of-income-growth/> [Accessed October 2020].

they are taken from the midpoint. Therefore, they do not account for the range of values within the string and may be skewed towards higher values e.g. those on higher household incomes.

Importantly, this is illustrated through the disparity between the values for *household income* and *wealth* compared with *income satisfaction*. Only a small proportion of the population are mostly or completely satisfied with the income of their household.

On *financial management*, the data shows that in 2017/18 period, 9.1% report that they are finding it quite or very difficult to manage financially; this is statistically higher than pre-2008 figures, where only 6% reported that they are struggling to manage their finances.

Figure 10: Personal finances domain analysis, including Domain and GDWe Scores



## 9.2. Recommendations from Inquiries and Commissions

There were 52 discrete recommendations identified, with over a third coming from the **Affordable Housing Commission**<sup>75</sup>. Other commissions with multiple recommendations in this domain were:

- The Commission on Economic Justice
- The Intergenerational Commission
- Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review
- Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on
- Commission on Equality and Human Rights: is Britain Fairer
- Gaining from Growth: Commission on Living Standards
- The Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances

Our analysis identified four main themes within the recommendations: reducing poverty, improving the affordability of housing, tackling pay gaps, and reducing wealth inequality.

### 9.2.1. Reducing Poverty

**‘Our tax and benefit system aligns poorly with modern preferences for work, giving and taking away money at the wrong times. And for all but a relatively fortunate few, the words part-time and flexible turn out to be synonymous with low paid and insecure, resulting in careers that are thwarted and skills that are wasted. Shaping a jobs market and policy stance that reflects the reality of today’s workforce will be vital to securing future gains in living standards’ (p.116).**

**GAINING FROM GROWTH: COMMISSION ON LIVING STANDARDS (2012)<sup>76</sup>.**

75 The Nationwide Foundation, 2019. *A National Housing Conversion Fund: buying properties to boost affordable housing supply*. Affordable Housing Commission. Available at: <http://www.nationwidefoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Affordable-Housing-Commission-report-on-A-National-Housing-Conversion-Fund-23-sept-2020.pdf> [accessed March 2020].

76 Resolution Foundation, 2012. *Gaining from Growth: the final report of the Commission on Living Standards*. Available at: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/gaining-growth-final-report-commission-living-standards/> [accessed March 2020].

The analysis and recommendations relating to reducing poverty were explicit in seven of the 48 commissions and inquiries we reviewed. This number surprised us, given the topics covered in the other commissions and inquiries. We reflected that this was because few took the structural economic inequalities into consideration as part of their reviews. While poverty was the context of many of the reports, explicitly addressing poverty was often seen as outwith the remit of the groups. Considerations focused on three areas: making work pay, social security and supporting families.

The **Commission on Economic Justice** was concerned with the failure of the economy to provide financial security and stability for an increasing number of people in England, and across the UK more widely. Overlapping with the findings and our analysis relating to the ‘what we do’ domain of wellbeing discussed earlier, the emergence of the gig economy in the 2000s was considered detrimental to the economy as a whole. The Commission recommended using the National Living Wage<sup>77</sup> to better meet the needs of the population, raising it to a higher level and applying a 20 per cent higher rate for those who are on zero hours contracts and other uncontracted hours.

Union representation was also seen as a key mechanism for improving pay and conditions for those in the lowest paid sectors (also a key consideration in the **Commission on Living Standards**, but here the focus is on improving pay rather than the mechanism to do so effectively). The **Intergenerational Commission** also had several recommendations aimed at improving the gig economy.

Both of the **Marmot Reviews** focused heavily on the social security system with the stated aim of developing an integrated system of taxation, benefits, pensions and tax credits to provide a ‘minimum income for healthy living standards and pathways for moving upwards’ (2010:28). In the updated 2020 report, Marmot addressed this issue again, calling for the redesign of Universal Credit, and in particular the removal of sanctions and reduction in conditionalities in welfare payments.

77 Living Wage Foundation, 2020. *What is the real Living Wage?* Available at: <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage> [accessed September 2020].

The **Affordable Housing Commission** also aimed their recommendations at Universal Credit, proposing a reduction in the delay in the initial payment from five weeks to under two; for payments to be made on a weekly basis; and for the housing benefit element of universal credit to be paid directly to landlords by default, with an option for tenants to receive the payment themselves if they so wish.

The two **Marmot Reviews** also recommended mechanisms to reduce family poverty through greater access to childcare and improved rights to parental leave and statutory maternity/paternity pay. It should be noted that these recommendations also appear under other wellbeing domains, relating to **health**. As such we have identified them as **cross-cutting** recommendations.

### 9.3.2 Improving the affordability of housing

The focus on housing was most apparent within the recommendations of the **Affordable Housing Commission**, though others – most notably the **Intergenerational Commission** – also covered the same issues.

The Commissions covered all types of housing supply (owner occupied, private rented and social housing) identifying the importance of seeing the housing system as a whole. Concerns were raised about the impact of poor housing quality, terms and conditions in the private rented sector, and the longer-term impacts of this given the age and socio-economic profile of private renters<sup>78</sup>.

The most common policy recommendation was to increase housebuilding – the root cause of many issues around affordability being a mismatch between supply and demand. The **Affordable Housing Commission** concluded that while

<sup>78</sup> Office for National Statistics, 2018. UK private rented sector:2018. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/ukprivaterentedsector/2018> [accessed October 2020].

governments have committed to building more affordable housing, the pace is too slow and requires a significant ‘step change’ in pace and political priority with an increase to about 90,000 social rented homes a year within the overall target of 300,000.

Both commissions identified significant issues for private renters. Those under 40 are increasingly unable to own property due to prohibitive costs of housing. While additional housebuilding would potentially increase the amount of affordable housing in the owner-occupied sector, more is still required to improve the rights of those living in private rented accommodation until the housing market is rebalanced. Recommendations included extending the length of private rental contracts and introducing a light touch rent control.

The **Affordable Housing Commission** is the only Commission that we reviewed that published after the significance of the COVID-19 pandemic was widely understood. As they note, while repossessions were low in the years running up to the pandemic ‘*the impact of the pandemic and the threat of a serious economic downturn could change the picture*’. They therefore also recommend restoring Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) as a benefit, rather than a loan and suggest the UK Government establishes a new form of mortgage support as a measure of last resort.

### 9.3.3 Tackling pay gaps

There were three key areas of recommendations within this category: openness and transparency; governance; and flexible working.

The **Commission on Equalities and Human Rights** report *Is Britain Fairer?* and the **Commission on Economic Justice** both considered the issues of tackling pay gaps as a key element of strategies to reduce poverty. The pay gaps identified related to older workers, workers from minority ethnic groups, women, and disabled people.

Despite consistent overperformance of girls in science and maths at school, they experience a lower employment rate and earn less<sup>79</sup>. When both paid and unpaid work are taken into account, women in the OECD countries work on average 30 minutes longer a day. Men on the other hand are more likely to experience long hours in paid employment and poorer social connections<sup>80</sup>.

On openness and transparency, the **Commission on Economic Justice** recommended that organisations with more than 250 employees should be required to publish their pay scales, report on pay gaps, and have equality plans to close both gender and ethnicity gaps.

Representation of diversity is a **cross-cutting** recommendation, with many of the commissions and inquiries making recommendations specific to the needs of their sectors. However, the similarity across these led the team to classify them as **cross-cutting** recommendations. Within this domain, the **Commission on Economic Justice** (2018) recommends that company and public sector boards should move to balanced boards, with representation from women and people from BAME groups.

Within the labour market, **Is Britain Fairer?** recommends the UK Government requires employers to offer all jobs as open to flexible or part-time working (unless there is a justifiable reason to prevent it) and introduce rights to flexible working from day one of employment. This recommendation is **cross-cutting** as it also came up in the 'What we do' domain.

79 UK Parliament, 2020. *House of Commons Library: Women and the Economy*. Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06838/> [accessed October 2020].

80 OECD, 2020 <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/building-back-better-a-sustainable-resilient-recovery-after-covid-19-52b869f5/>

### 9.3.4 Reducing wealth inequality

Reducing wealth inequality was covered by both the **Intergenerational Commission** and the **Commission on Economic Justice**. The discussions centred around the correct balance of coercion and personal autonomy in planning for future retirement needs, and the fairness of current taxation systems for inheritance. The **Commission on Economic Justice** concluded that land and property are currently under-taxed in the UK, with council tax, business rates and stamp duty all causing serious distortions and unfairness.

Both commissions recommended the complete abolition of inheritance tax and its replacement with a lifetime receipts tax. The **Commission on Economic Justice** estimates that this could raise an additional £9 billion a year. The **Intergenerational Commission** argues that this revenue should be used to transfer wealth to the younger generation, with 'citizen's inheritances' of £10,000 available from the age of 25.

As with concerns about the benefits system creating both cliff-edges and perverse incentives, the **Commission on Economic Justice** calls for a clearer, simplified tax system whereby all income, whether from work or wealth, be taxed in the same way. This would mean abolishing capital gains tax and the separate rates of tax on dividends and incorporating income from dividends and capital gains into the income tax schedule, creating a more level-playing field of taxation.

Finally, both commissions were concerned about pensions, both in the short-term and in the medium to long term. The **Intergenerational Commission** recommended a legislative framework for new 'collective defined contribution' pensions that better share risk; and reform pension freedoms to include the default option of a guarantee income product purchased at the age of 80.



## 10. Domain 7: Economy

‘The Economy’ domain focuses on macroeconomic indicators within the ONS dashboard consist of National Net Disposable Income (the income which is at the disposal of the nation as a whole for spending), the level of public debt and the level of inflation.

This domain is distant from people’s everyday lives but the indicators selected are essential to the governance of the economy. It is interesting to note that GDP is not itself included in this domain, and as such does not exist within the ONS dashboard on measuring national wellbeing.





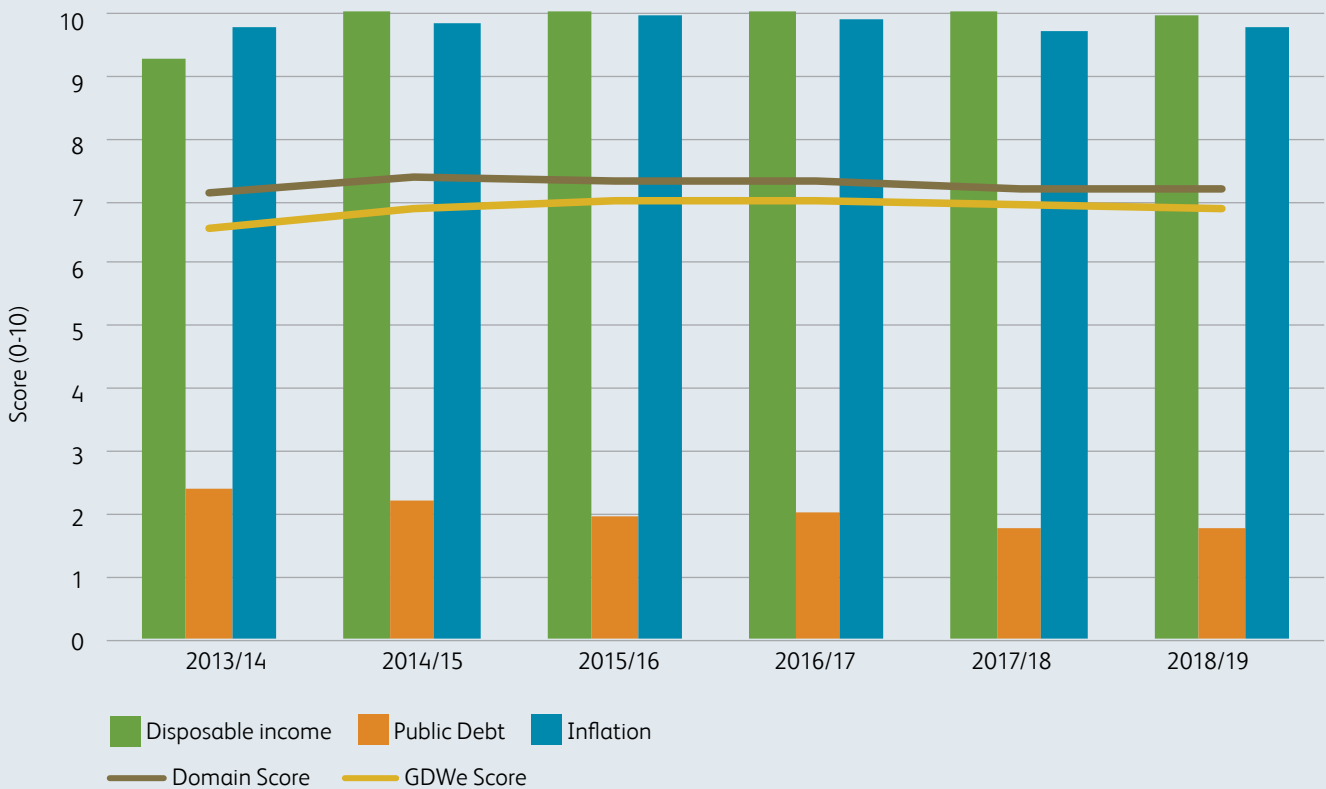
## 10.1. The Economy GDWe Score

Both *National Net Disposable Income* and *inflation* contribute high scores to the domain score for the 'Economy' (7.18 in 2018/19) as shown in Figure 11 below. Disposable income has been steadily increasing over time, while the inflation rate has fluctuated slightly. However, it remains consistent in

contributing positively to the GDWe Score. It should be noted that these figures are increasing but are not yet consistent with pre-2008 figures.

In contrast, *public debt* has increased over time, contributing to a lower GDWe score. The score for public debt decreases from 2.39 in 2013/14 to 1.78 in 2018/19.

**Figure 11: The Economy domain analysis, including Domain and GDWe Scores**



## 10.2. Recommendations from Inquiries and Commissions

In total, 13 of the commissions and inquiries we reviewed covered issues relating to the ONS category ‘Economy’. There were 85 discreet recommendations identified, with more than a third coming from the **Commission on Economic Justice** (31 recommendations). Other commissions with multiple recommendations were:

- Independent Review of the Creative Industries
- Growing the AI industry in the UK
- Grimsey Reviews
- Independent Review of UK Economics Statistics

Our analysis identified the following main themes within the recommendations: economic growth in the Fourth Industrial Revolution; boosting productivity; alternative business models; reducing regional inequalities; and strengthening financial systems.

### 10.2.1. Economic Growth in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Many of the commissions in our review referred explicitly or implicitly to the digital revolution, or the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The disruptive effects of technological change were acknowledged as commissioners sought to identify ways that England could capitalise on these global shifts. The **Commission on Growing the AI Industry in the UK**<sup>81</sup> recommended a new centre of excellence for the analysis of emerging and future issues in measuring the modern economy. Mirroring the concern about the lack of timely data, the **Independent Review of UK Economics Statistics**<sup>82</sup> suggested that the government initiate an ambitious work programme to evaluate the quantitative implications for the measurement of economic activity associated with the digital economy.

81 UK Government, 2017. *Independent report: Growing the artificial intelligence industry in the UK*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/growing-the-artificial-intelligence-industry-in-the-uk> [accessed March 2020].

82 UK Government, 2016. *Independent review of UK economic statistics: final report*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-uk-economic-statistics-final-report> [accessed March 2020].

The **Commission on Economic Justice** notes the gap in strategic economic thinking and calls for the establishment of a National Economic Council (NEC) as a forum for economic policy consultation and coordination. This would have responsibility for drawing up and agreeing a 10-year plan for the UK economy, to provide a coordinated framework for the management of economic policy, with more opportunity for public engagement on non-market sensitive Budget proposals. This links to our **cross-cutting** theme of participatory democracy.

The **UK 2070 Commission**<sup>83</sup> recommended that the UK Government reinforce the UK’s global economic role as a leader in the digital revolution by accelerating its target on research and development expenditure to meet the current best international standards of 3% of GDP within the current parliamentary cycle. It also suggested establishing a National Adaptation Programme (NAP) to embed digital and automation technology and accelerate the roll out of future digital infrastructure.

The **Independent Review of the Creative Industries**<sup>84</sup> argued that the role of the creative industries in the economy should be strengthened as key area for economic growth. These considerations were strongly linked to the Fourth Industrial Revolution with a focus on digital creativity. They argued that the government should conduct a comprehensive joint work programme on Intellectual Property (IP) valuation to increase awareness of the availability of IP valuation resources, map the market and identify barriers to investment, and take bold action to address market failures. To strengthen UK creative exports, they recommend a Creative Industries Trade Board with sub-sector committees pledging specific, ambitious support to drive up the number of exporting companies via measures such as business mentoring schemes, export masterclasses and networking events. At a local level, they suggested launching a ‘Key Creative Clusters’ competition, supported by a new five-year £500 million Creative

83 UK 2070 Commission, 2020. *A New Deal for Levelling Up the United Kingdom*. Available at: <http://uk2070.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Go-Big-Go-Local.pdf> [accessed October 2020].

84 UK Government, 2017. *Independent review of the creative industries*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-the-creative-industries> [accessed March 2020].


Clusters Fund, to accelerate regional growth and create models that can be passed on to other creative clusters and sectors.

The **Commission on Growing the AI Industry in the UK** also highlighted the need for government, industry and academia to recognise and support diversity in the AI workforce, calling on them to work together to develop public information aimed at breaking down stereotypes and broadening participation. This links to our **cross-cutting** theme of diversity and inclusion.

Reflecting on some of the more disruptive elements of the digital revolution, the **Commission on Economic Justice** recommended that a new body, 'Productivity UK', should have a core objective of accelerating 'managed automation' and the diffusion of digital technologies across the economy.

### 10.2.2 Boosting productivity

The **Commission for Economic Justice** recommended the establishment of a National Investment Bank with the power to borrow to finance economically and socially productive lending in areas such as infrastructure, innovation, and business development. They make a specific link between investment and the need to support small and medium sized businesses and what they call the 'real economy':

 **'Raising productivity across the UK economy as a whole will require a sustained focus on raising the productivity of small and medium-sized businesses' (p.99).**

COMMISSION FOR  
ECONOMIC JUSTICE (2018).

They go on to recommend that the National Investment Bank have several funding instruments, including:

- The provision of equity financing, particularly for innovation.
- Offering innovative start-up companies a 'first customer' guarantee which can reduce the risk for other businesses of becoming an early customer.

- The creation of a National Factoring Agency to help SMEs improve their cashflow at low cost.

Specifically addressing infrastructure, the **Armitt Review**<sup>85</sup> recommended that government publish good quality data on infrastructure costs and performance. All public bodies taking decisions on strategic economic infrastructure should publish the forecast costs and benefits of their major infrastructure projects at each appraisal stage and at a suitable point after completion, by the end of 2019.

### 10.2.3. Alternative business models

The **Commission on Economic Justice** recommended diversification of business models by reforming the tax incentives available to Employee Ownership Trusts, under which companies can be majority-owned by their employees. They also advocated for the introduction of a Co-operative Development Act to help support the expansion of the co-operative and mutual sector, including a statutory underpinning for the principle of 'asset-locked reserves' to enable co-ops to raise long-term investment capital.

### 10.2.4. Reducing regional inequalities

Five of the commissions we considered addressed the issue of the widening regional inequalities in England. The analysis contained in the reports highlights the centralisation tendency of the UK Government, and the focusing of power within Whitehall with the replacement of Regional Development Agencies with much weaker Local Economic Partnerships in 2010. Against this backdrop, the solutions to regional inequalities were invariably found in the localism agenda – devolving more power to local democratic structures<sup>86</sup>.

85 The Labour Party, 2013. *The Armit Review: an independent review of long term infrastructure planning commissioned for Labour's Policy Review*. Available at: [https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/uploads/editor/files/The\\_Armit\\_Review\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/uploads/editor/files/The_Armit_Review_Final_Report.pdf) [accessed March 2020].

86 Local Government Association, 2010. *An introduction to the Localism Act*. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/introduction-localism-act> [accessed at October 2020].

The **Commission for Economic Justice**, for example, argued for four ‘economic executives’ (regional economic authorities) to be responsible for a regional industrial strategy, including infrastructure planning, inward investment and immigration. Noting the patchwork of local democracy in England, they recommend the creation of combined local authorities throughout England, in both city and county regions. These should be responsible for place-based elements of the industrial strategy, including labour market planning, further education and skills, business support services and the development of ‘local wealth-building’ using public procurement. The **Inclusive Growth Commission**<sup>87</sup> would also build on this with encouragement for the establishment of regional banks and building connections between city regions and sectoral committees to bring together industry with place-making.

The 2013<sup>88</sup>, 2018<sup>89</sup> and COVID-19<sup>90</sup> **Grimsey Reviews** focused on the role of the high street and town centres in economic growth. The 31 recommendations in the original review offer a level of detail that other commissions, with wider remits, do not. For example, they proposed making it easier for motorists to shop by building in a two hour free high street and town centre car parking system to the overall the business plan for the location and for local authorities to freeze car-parking charges for a minimum of 12 months. **The Portas Review**<sup>91</sup> covered similar ground in their recommendations, including the need to review business rates while the **Transport Resilience Review**<sup>92</sup> drew links

87 RSA, 2017. *Inclusive Growth Commission: Making our Economy work for Everyone*. Available at: [https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/reports/rsa\\_inclusive-growth-commission-final-report-march-2017.pdf](https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/reports/rsa_inclusive-growth-commission-final-report-march-2017.pdf) [accessed March 2020].

88 The Grimsey Review: An Alternative Future for the High Street, 2013. Available at: <https://www.didobi.com/the-grimsey-review-2013/#:~:text=The%20Grimsey%20Review%20'An%20Alternative,it%20contains%2031%20recommendations> [accessed March 2020].

89 The Grimsey Review 2, 2018. Available at: <http://www.vanishinghighstreet.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GrimseyReview2.pdf> [accessed March 2020].

90 Build Back Better: Covid-19 Supplement for town centres. Available at: <http://www.vanishinghighstreet.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Grimsey-Covid-19-Supplement-June-2020.pdf> [accessed June 2020].

91 UK Government, 2011. *The Portas Review: the future of our high streets*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-portas-review-the-future-of-our-high-streets> [accessed March 2020].

92 UK Government, 2014. *Transport Resilience Review: recommendations*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-resilience-review-recommendations> [accessed March 2020].

between business and the planning framework. It called for a new flexible and local approach to unlock the potential of areas by encouraging more small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and making it easy to pilot new business concepts at low risk.

With their focus on local business, the **Portas** and **Grimsey Reviews** often felt in tension with other commissions in this review, arguing for reducing business tax and property tax (in apparent conflict, for example, with the **Commission for Economic Justice**). However, this difference is largely about scale. The Grimsey Reviews were concerned for smaller enterprises, and keen to rebalance towards local businesses. They recommended, for example, making it compulsory for national retail and leisure chains to invest 0.25% of one year’s sales into a local economic development fund to sponsor start-up businesses in a similar way to the Prince’s Trust.

Meanwhile, the **Commission on Inclusive Growth** recognised the linkages between investment in physical infrastructure and investment in social infrastructure, calling on government to commission an assessment of the social infrastructure gap. Such an assessment would allow future policies to maximise the impact of national and local investment and mainstream inclusive growth in all public investments, including physical infrastructure projects. The Commission also recommended:

- Central government establish a new independent UK Inclusive Growth Investment Fund, incorporating repatriated ESIF funds and other relevant funding streams, to pump-prime innovative place-based investment designed to boost inclusive growth.
- Applications for funding would be based on their expected impact on broad based ‘quality GVA’.
- The Fund would be overseen by a multi-stakeholder board, including city leaders, private sector leaders, Whitehall officials and the chair of the National Infrastructure Commission.

### 10.2.5 Strengthening financial systems

The **Commission on Economic Justice** made several recommendations that related specifically to the need to strengthen financial systems to ensure that they meet the needs of the public.

London is a global hub for international finance, providing capital for businesses all over the world, however *'it's development over recent decades has generated serious structural challenges for the UK economy which make it hard to achieve the prosperity and justice we wish to see'* (p.170).

The Commission also provides evidence on the role of UK financial services in money laundering, tax avoidance and tax evasion. For this reason, they make recommendations on restating the purpose of business. The 'directors' duties' in Section 172 of the 2006 Companies Act should be reformed to make explicit that the primary duty of directors is 'the promotion of the long-term success of the company', and companies should be required to report on this in an integrated financial and strategic report.

The need for openness and transparency around company ownership was the target of a number of the commission recommendations:

- The data on the public company register of 'people with significant control' should be verifiable.
- Named individuals should be required to provide proof of identity.
- The threshold for inclusion on the register should be lowered from 25 per cent to 5 per cent of shares or voting rights.
- Trusts should be included in the public register of people with significant control.

Noting that many shareholders now only own shares for a miniscule amount of time, they recommend that automatic voting rights for shareholders should only be awarded to shares held for more than a year, to ensure those voting have a stake, as well as a share, in the company.





## 11. Domain 8: Education and Skills

The ONS 'Education and skills' domain contains data on the proportion of young people (aged 16-24) that are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) and that have no qualifications, taken from the Labour Market and Labour Force surveys.

It also includes the annual Human Capital Estimates, which measure the value of individuals' skills, knowledge and competencies in the labour market. In doing so, it provides insight into the level of educational achievement and skills development, which has clear links to the indicators in the 'What we do' and 'Economy' domains.

It is worth noting that this is the only domain that really considers the wellbeing of children, and even then, many of the indicators are more geared towards the impact of children's education and skills on the labour market, rather than their wellbeing more widely. That said, lots of the commissions and inquiries in our policy analysis included recommendations on educational inequality and the need to provide adequate early years support. They reinforce the view that measuring growth (or decline) in employment rate overlooks the wider relationship our education and skills has with other domains, such as 'personal well-being', 'personal finance', or 'what we do'.



## 11.1. Education and Skills GDWe Score

The domain score for ‘Education and Skills’ is consistently higher (8.85 in 2018/19) than the associated GDWe score across the observed period (6.89) (Figure 12).

The main point of variance in this domain is observed between 2013/14 and 2014/15 and is due to an increase in *Human Capital*. As the unemployment rate falls, *Human Capital* will increase as a result, so it is no surprise that after 2014/15 the value for this indicator remains consistent.

It should be noted that there are differences in the units of measurement for Human Capital. In 2017, the value of Human Capital expressed in £trillions grew by 1.8% in 2017, which is the lowest annual growth since 2010. However, Human Capital stock fell by 0.8% reflecting slower growth in earnings relative to inflation. Furthermore, annual growth of Human Capital stock was the lowest for younger people.

Reporting the base level value of Human Capital conceals some important variations in the real

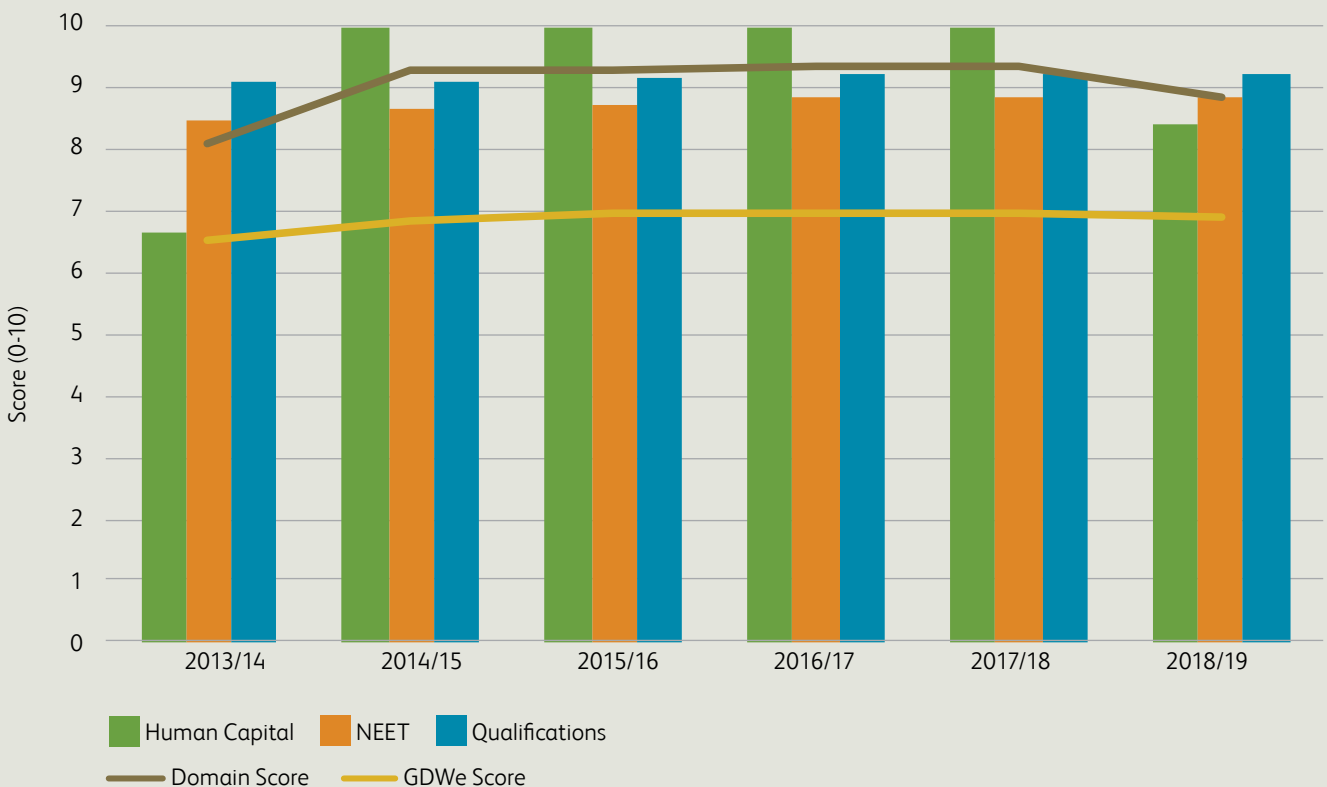
Human Capital stock observed among subgroups of the population. Analysis conducted by ONS, shows that the Human Capital Stock for 16-25-year olds with a higher degree or qualification has decreased by 8% between 2004 and 2017; while for 16-25-year olds with no qualifications, the figure has increased by 1% over this period<sup>93</sup>. Moreover, there are regional variations in the results, e.g. within a decrease in the Human Capital stock in the West Midlands, which reflect lower growth in earnings for those with qualifications in this area.

These results reinforce the point that growth in the employment rate is a crude measure of social progress as this does not necessarily mean higher rates of Human Capital stock, earnings potential or job satisfaction.

As with the score for *Human Capital*, the score for *NEET* (Not in Education, Employment or Training) improves over time which is again consistent with the decrease in the unemployment rate.

93 ONS, 2018. *Human capital estimates, UK: 2004-2017*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/humancapitalestimates/2004to2017> [accessed November 2020].

Figure 12: Education and Skills domain analysis, including domain and GDWe scores



## 11.2. Recommendations from Inquiries and Commissions

After an initial upward trend, the domain score for ‘Education and Skills’ remained steady and higher than the overall GDWe score. However, as noted above, these are relatively narrow measures that do not fully capture the complexities of educational inequalities and intergenerational dynamics, nor the ‘softer’ elements of education, such as life skills.

Comprising 16 commissions and inquiries, with 54 recommendations, our review encompassed greater breadth, demonstrating the multifaceted ways in which education and skills can impact on wellbeing: from skills development targeting specific sectors of the economy, to reducing inequality and improving access to good work, and investing in early years and family support. Outside of those reports that targeted sector-specific skills, the majority of recommendations under this domain were derived from the following commissions:

- Commission on Equality and Human Rights: Is Britain Fairer?
- Commission on Economic Justice
- Independent Commission on Skills and Lifelong Learning in a Changing Economy
- Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances
- Commission on Wellbeing and Policy
- Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review
- UK 2070 Commission

The main emerging themes within these were: skills development, reducing educational inequalities, improving access to good work, and early years and family support.

### 11.2.1. Skills development

A subset of commissions presented recommendations to upskill workforces and grow specific sectors of the economy: the AI industry, the creative industries, planning, and digital capacity within the healthcare workforce. These often focused on careers ‘attraction strategies’, particularly through creating higher education opportunities, and on measures to enhance opportunities for lifelong learning and training, all of which might enhance wellbeing for workforces within those industries.

In addition, a series of commissions proposed more general (and wide-reaching) reform to produce the future skills needs for the economy by promoting lifelong learning.

‘...that cities become places of life-long learning, with a commitment to human capital development from ‘cradle to grave’ through coordinated investment and support at every level from pre-school, through schools, to FE colleges, technical institutes and universities’ (p.10).

THE INCLUSIVE GROWTH COMMISSION (2017).

### 11.2.2. Reducing educational inequalities

In his two reviews on health inequities, **Marmot** recommends that governments ‘ensure that reducing social inequalities in pupils’ educational outcomes is a sustained priority’ (Marmot, 2010:24). Recommendations on *how* to do this, fell under three broad categories.

The **Equality and Human Rights Commission** proposed a series of measures to record, monitor, and challenge prejudice-based bullying; to promote inclusion and reduce the high exclusion rates for children sharing certain protected characteristics (including through professional development for teachers); and to improve representation of particular groups in higher education, through both outreach and tuition fee mitigation. The importance of addressing exclusion, in particular, was echoed in the **Casey Review**<sup>94</sup> on opportunity and integration.

Across inquiries into health, wellbeing policy and poverty, the ‘systematic, structured teaching of life-skills and values throughout school life’ (Commission on Wellbeing & Policy, 2014:61) emerged as a core policy recommendation that might foster resilience and wellbeing and provide better outcomes beyond school. Finally, several commissions highlighted the importance

94 UK Government, 2016. *The Casey Review: a review into opportunity and integration*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration> [accessed March 2020].



of measurement: both the introduction of measurement of children’s wellbeing in general, and the use of existing measures on attainment to deliver better outcomes on inequality.

**‘The Department for Education should ensure schools are held to account for reducing the attainment gap in the same way they are for improving overall attainment. Where a school has a persistent or increasing attainment gap, this should have a significant bearing...’(p.8).**

THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW ON  
POVERTY AND LIFE CHANCES (2010).

### 11.2.3. Improving access to good work

All seven of the commissions listed above included measures where the intention was to improve access to good work. Specific policy recommendations included:

- Providing accessible support and advice on training and employment for those aged 16-25, entering the workforce.
- Increasing the availability of non-vocational lifelong learning: through promoting apprenticeships and work-based learning for those entering the workforce and those changing careers; and through the introduction of personal training credits for low-paid workers and unemployed adults to invest in their own skills.
- Reviewing whether programmes are consistently reaching those in marginalised communities that need them most.

These recommendations had similarities to those under ‘skills development’. However, they were assessed as a separate theme because of their clear focus on work as a lever to reduce inequality and deliver economic justice. That these measures would benefit the economy by improving productivity – as well as reducing inequality – highlights lifelong learning as a **cross-cutting** policy agenda.

### 11.2.4. Early years and family support

The reviews led by Sir Michael Marmot on health inequalities and Frank Field on poverty and life chances both highlighted the importance of a ‘whole child approach’ to education that recognises the role of family support in reducing educational inequalities.

**‘As with health inequalities, reducing educational inequalities involves understanding the interaction between the social determinants of educational outcomes, including family background, neighbourhood and relationships with peers, as well as what goes on in schools. Indeed, evidence on the most important factors influencing educational attainment suggests that it is families, rather than schools, that have the most influence’ (p.24).**

FAIR SOCIETY, HEALTHY LIVES:  
THE MARMOT REVIEW (2010).

As well as calling on government to invest in ‘the Foundation Years’ from pregnancy to age five (a theme that is picked up in more detail under ‘Health’), these reviews recommended a ‘whole child approach’ to education based on: encouraging parental engagement in children’s learning, particularly among disadvantaged families; and developing workforce skills to work across the school-home boundaries.

In terms of financing the policy interventions that were included under ‘Education and Skills’, one distinct recommendation was replacing the ‘apprenticeship levy’ with a ‘productivity and skills levy’ that allowed for a much wider range of training and learning opportunities. However, it is worth noting that some of these recommendations – particularly on ‘early years and family support’ – connect with priorities identified under ‘Health’ and are **cross-cutting**.



## 12. Domain 9: Governance

The ONS ‘Governance’ domain looks at democracy and trust in institutions. It uses two indicators to measure this: ‘voter turnout’ and ‘trust in government’.

More broadly, democratic wellbeing refers to an individual’s ability to meaningfully participate in society and decision-making processes. Emerging methods of citizen engagement and deliberation – such as citizens’ assemblies and participatory budgeting – are just two examples of approaches that seek to increase citizen engagement and participation. Each aims to give greater power to individuals and communities, by starting a dialogue about key issues of collective importance<sup>95</sup>. Research into such approaches has indicated many wellbeing benefits at both an individual and societal level, including increased community cohesion, access to public services, and improved social relationships<sup>96</sup>.



95 Briggs, S. 2008. *Democracy as problem solving: civic capacity in communities across the globe*. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

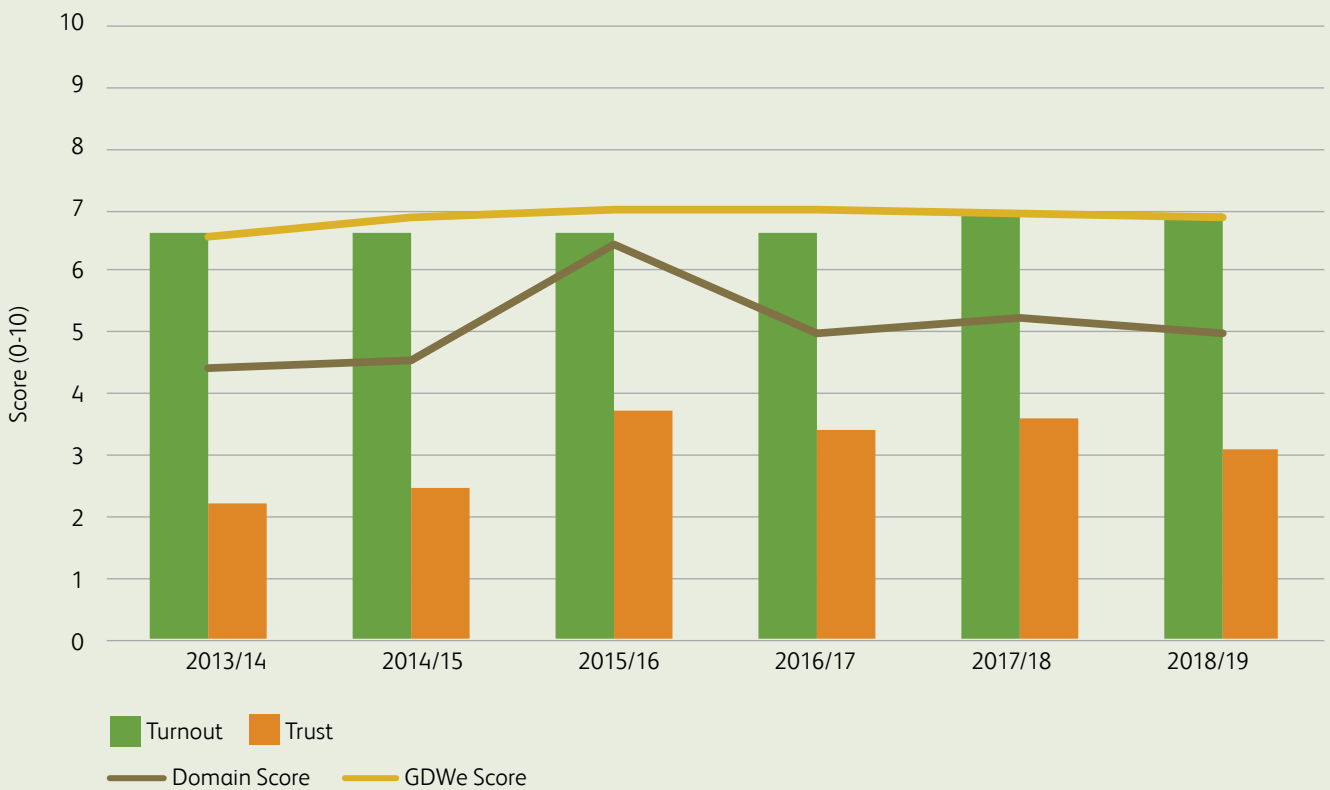
96 Creasy, S., Gavelin, K., & Potter, D. 2008. *Everybody needs good neighbours: A study of the link between public participation and community cohesion*. Available at: <https://www.involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/Everybody-Needs-Good-Neighbours-a-study-of-the-link-between-public-participation-and-community-cohesion.pdf>.

## 12.1. Governance GDWe Score

The domain score for *Governance* is consistently lower (5.01 in 2018/19) than the overall GDWe score each year (see Figure 13). *Turnout* remains consistent over the time periods as data is only collected in 2015 and 2017 for this indicator, when general elections take place.

We observe a rise in the score for *trust* between the 2014/15 and 2015/16 period (Figure 13). After this, the score declines again. This may in part be related to the outcome and approach to the results of the Brexit referendum in 2016, which divided public opinion.

Figure 13: Governance domain analysis, domain and GDWe Scores



## 12.2 Recommendations from Inquiries and Commissions

The review of commissions and inquiries identified 166 discrete recommendations relating to this domain. Many in the research touched on governance issues in one way or another, and as a result a large proportion of them included in our review featured in this domain category. However, those primarily focusing on ‘governance’ and of significance for this domain are:

- Commission on Equality and Human Rights: Is Britain Fairer?
- Power to the People – the report of Power: an independent inquiry into Britain’s democracy.

Other Commissions and Inquiries that touch on issues of governance include:

- The Independent Commission on Mental Health and Policing
- Affordable Housing Commission
- Inclusive Growth Commission
- The Commission on the Future of Localism

The analysis identified the following main themes: democratic elections; equality, diversity and human rights; devolution and government effectiveness; procurement; trust in government and data; and wellbeing frameworks.

### 12.2.1. Democratic elections

The process of democratic elections was a significant concern for **the Independent Inquiry into Britain’s democracy**, which highlighted the need to give voters a greater choice and diversity of parties and candidates. For example, they suggested that the closed party list system should be removed and highlighted a need for the appointment of Lords to the House of Lords should be overhauled. Relating issues of equality and diversity, the review also advocated for increased representation amongst candidates:

‘The Electoral Commission should take a more active role in promoting candidacy so that more women, people from black and minority ethnic communities, people on lower incomes, young people and independents are encouraged to stand’ (p.23).

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO BRITAIN’S DEMOCRACY (2006).

### 12.2.2. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

A considerable proportion of the recommendations within this domain related to human rights, equality and diversity issues. Many advocated for the UK Government to show an increased commitment to human rights, such as by implementing all provisions of the Equality Act 2010, and creating an expert group of stakeholders that can offer MPs ongoing and specific advice (**The Independent Commission on Mental Health and Policing**). Equally, some raised concerns about the need for the UK Government to clearly state their continued commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights after Brexit, by publishing action plans for implementing the United Nations recommendations:

‘The UK Government should ensure that equality and human rights protections are safeguarded and enhanced during the Brexit process and beyond, and should legislate to replace gaps in rights in domestic law resulting from the loss of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights’ (p.201).

COMMISSION ON EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: IS BRITAIN FAIRER? (2018).

In addition, there was a clear theme relating to the role of public services, and the need for governments across the UK to ensure public bodies perform their Public Sector Equality Duty<sup>97</sup>, set equality objectives and publish evidence of how they are working to achieve these.

<sup>97</sup> The equality duty was developed in order to harmonise the equality duties and to extend it across the protected characteristics. More information is available at: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty>.

### 12.2.3. Devolution and Government Effectiveness

Relating to the earlier discussion in the ‘Where we live’ chapter, many of the recommendations here were **cross-cutting**, highlighting the need to give greater powers and financial resource to the devolved administrations and local authorities in which they sit:

**‘Localism requires meaningful powers and integrated structures: local powers should not be easily dismissed by ‘higher’ tiers of governance, without clear reasons and means of redress’ (p.10).**

THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF LOCALISM (2017).

This was a strong theme, demonstrating the role of governance across all of the domain areas, and exemplifying how they correlate:

**‘National standards, local flexibility; combined authorities to be able to pool budgets and co-commission public services for their places, within the context of national standards and entitlements’ (p.10).**

INCLUSIVE GROWTH COMMISSION (2017).

**‘The Commission welcomes the government’s commitment to publish a devolution white paper. There is a need to “level up” the housing powers and resources and ensure that the funding and flexibility is in place to meet the metro mayors’ housing targets’ (p.208).**

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION (2020).

The **UK 2070 Commission** recommended that a comprehensive devolution framework is developed to deliver a more balanced economy. It suggests local strategic engagement strategies such as through participatory democracy approaches like Citizens’ Assemblies; a package of powers open to all in England and the UK but tailored to local circumstances and timescales; and a new regional framework for England.

### 12.2.4. Procurement

Also relating to government effectiveness were many recommendations about procurement. They detailed the need for more simplified funding mechanisms, the better implementation of social value into commissioning approaches, and the need to strengthen the 2012 Social Value Act which requires all public procurement decisions above a certain size to account for their wider social and economic benefits (**Commission on Economic Justice**).

There were also several recommendations in this category which discussed how current data use is insufficient, particularly in regard to the use of statistics and research to inform decision making. Significantly, the **Independent Review of UK Economics Statistics** detailed that the ONS should:

**‘Establish an effective and transparent process for prioritising and allocating resources, supported by better management information...[and] support the greater use of microdata by ONS and approved researchers by improving the available metadata, and simplifying approval processes, while continuing to respect confidentiality issues’ (p.15).**

### 12.2.5. Trust in Government and Data

Trust in government was a clear focus of several recommendations in the commissions and inquiries we reviewed, if not explicitly than implicitly. Many of the key themes discussed within this domain demonstrate the concerns of commissioners about the current or future governance of England and more widely, the UK. Where commissions mentioned trust in government explicitly, they detailed the need for more accountability and transparency measures, particularly for MPs and senior members of government. Increased public consultation and the use of innovative engagement techniques was frequently sighted as an appropriate methodology for building trust.

### 12.2.6. Wellbeing frameworks

‘Measure wellbeing and make it a policy goal: If we want a society with better wellbeing, governments must have the data on wellbeing, and then use it’ (p.57).

COMMISSION ON WELLBEING AND POLICY (2014).

Alongside recommendations detailing the need for a new Sustainable Development and Wellbeing Act (such as the ones currently being progressed by Caroline Lucas MP and Lord Bird through the House of Commons and House of Lords<sup>98</sup>), the **Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances**, the **UK 2070 Commission**, and the **Commission on Wellbeing and Policy** all detailed how a holistic approach to measuring wellbeing could support substantial progress on many of the areas detailed within this report. The **Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances** advocates for cross-cutting measurement methodologies, aimed at addressing several different outcomes for children and young people:

98 UK Parliament, 2020. *Wellbeing of Future Generations (No.2) Bill 2019-21*. Available at: <https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2019-21/wellbeingoffuturegenerationsno2.html> [accessed October 2020].

‘A new suite of measures to run alongside the existing financial poverty measures. The new measures will inform and drive policy, as well as spending decisions aimed at narrowing the outcome gaps between children from low and higher income families. The Review’s primary measurement recommendation is that the Government adopts a new set of **Life Chances Indicators**. These indicators will measure annual progress at a national level on a range of factors in young children which we know to be predictive of children’s future outcomes, and will be created using national survey data’ (p.8).

It is significant that building wellbeing frameworks that measure social progress in a holistic way were also offered as a mechanism for improving trust, procurement, government effectiveness, democratic elections and equality and diversity across the commissions detailed.





## 13. Domain 10: Environment

The climate emergency is clearly one of, if not the, biggest challenges we face both as a society, and as a global community. We are not taking action fast enough. And indeed, the scale of the crisis is not adequately reflected in either the GDWe domain score, or the policy analysis.

Though there are promising conversations which focus on a ‘green recovery’ post COVID-19 currently taking place, the indicators used to collect data on environmental wellbeing need to be urgently reviewed. At present, the domain considers four indicators collected on an annual basis by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: greenhouse gas emissions; renewable energy; protected areas; and household recycling. These indicators – for example - do not capture the importance of active travel, access to green and blue space, or energy efficiency for our individual and collective wellbeing.

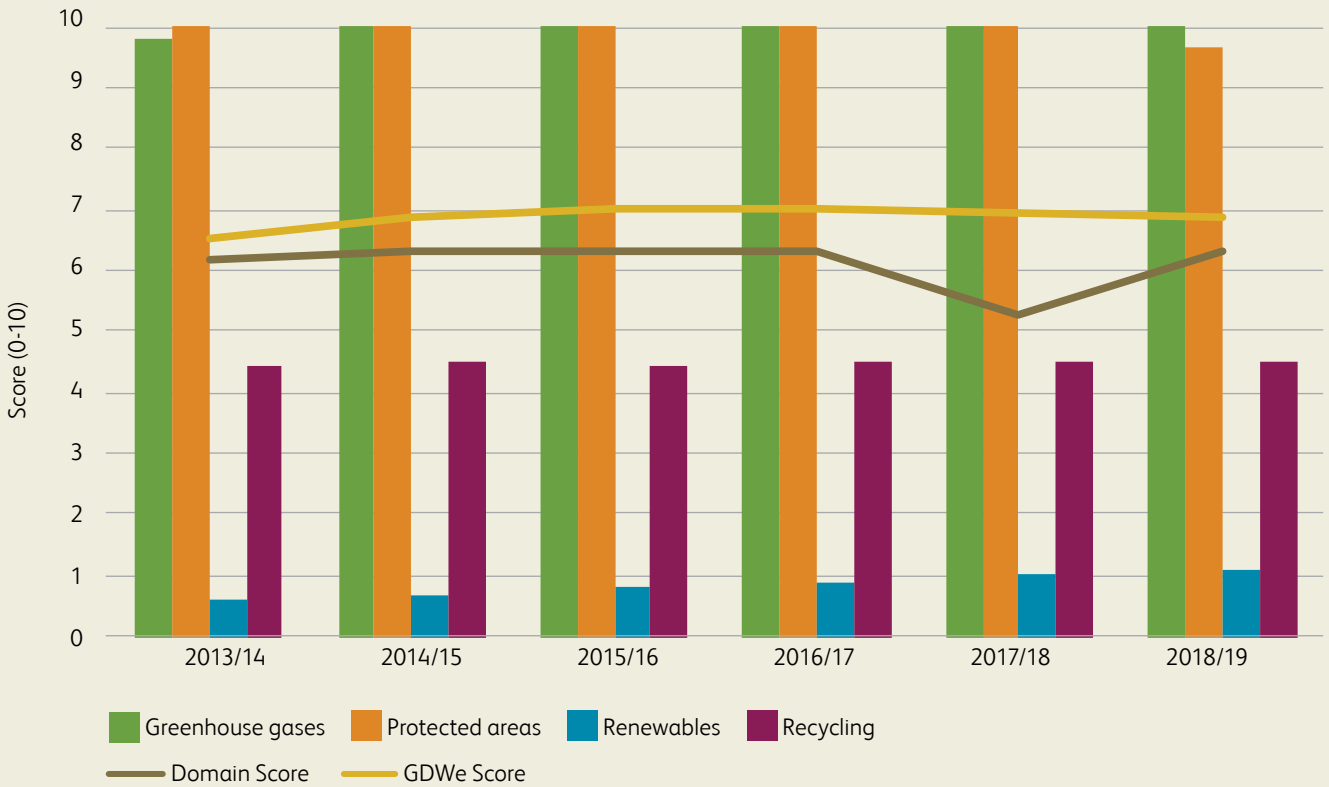


### 13.1. Environment GDWe Score

The domain score for ‘Environment’ sits slightly lower (approximately 0.5 points) than the GDWe score despite improvements within the areas of greenhouse gases and protected areas. Greenhouse gas emissions have been steadily decreasing overtime, and since 1990, it has almost halved causing it to score highly in the GDWe Index. The UK Government has a target of reducing emissions to net-zero by 2050.

Yet the figures for renewables are pertinent. When examining the output for 2018/19 alone, only 11% of the total energy consumed in England comes from renewable energy sources which has a negative effect on the domain score. Whilst the value for renewables has been increasing over time, and can be monitored again when new data becomes available, there is still a large amount of progress to be made.

Figure 14: The natural environment, domain and GDWe Scores





## 13.2. Recommendations from Inquiries and Commissions

When compared to other domains on the ONS Well-being dashboard, the score for ‘Environment’ is perhaps the least satisfactory in terms of its ability to provide a steer on how well England is doing on environmental issues. Sitting just under the GDWe score, it averages out the upward trends on reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and designation of protected areas, with only modest increases in household recycling and renewable energy. All four of these indicators are going in a positive direction, yet none of them adequately measure whether the UK is meeting ‘social foundations’ within its ‘ecological ceilings’<sup>99</sup> nor do they predict the impact that today’s decision-making on climate-related policy will have on the wellbeing of future generations.

A total of 23 recommendations were identified across the review. Several of these were contained in the two ‘environment-focused’ commissions:

- Net Zero: The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming
- Our Future in the Land: The food, farming and countryside commission

But a further nine commissions included recommendations that would have an impact – sometimes a negative one – on the climate emergency (for example, **the Portas Review** made a recommendation to increase access to parking, rather than providing sustainable transport provision). Covering health and housing, economy and inequality, transport and infrastructure, town centres and the high street, they demonstrate how policies relating to natural capital influence and intersect with all other areas of wellbeing and therefore why many of the recommendations are **cross-cutting**. Perhaps more than in any other domain, this points to the salience of developing ‘super policies’ that have a positive impact across social, economic, environmental and democratic (SEED) outcomes.

<sup>99</sup> Raworth, K., 2017. *Doughnut Economics Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist*. UK.

### 13.2.1. Low carbon economy

Several reviews called for legislation and strategies at a national level in order to move towards a low carbon economy. The **Commission on Economic Justice** recommended the introduction of a Sustainable Economy Act to deliver on short- and long-term targets, and a green industrial strategy that would integrate policies on decarbonisation with support for UK business and innovation. The **Grimsey Review** on town centres advised that town commissions’ economic blueprints must meet sustainability criteria; and the **Food, Farming and Countryside Commission**<sup>100</sup> advocated establishing a National Nature Service to stimulate the regenerative economy.

The most striking legislative recommendation was headlined in the *Net Zero* report by the Committee on Climate Change.

 **‘The UK should legislate as soon as possible to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The target can be legislated as a 100% reduction in greenhouse gases (GHGs) from 1990 and should cover all sectors of the economy, including international aviation and shipping’ (p.15).**

**NET ZERO: THE UK’S CONTRIBUTION TO STOPPING GLOBAL WARMING (2019).**

Published in May 2019, the UK Government signed legislation to commit the UK to this legally binding target in June 2019. The rest of this section summarises the policy recommendations for achieving this goal.

<sup>100</sup> RSA, 2019. Food, Farming and Countryside Commission: *Our Future in the Land*. Available at: <https://www.thersa.org/reports/future-land> [accessed March 2020].

### 13.2.2. Increasing renewable energy and reducing waste

Contained within the Committee on Climate Change's report is the clear recommendation that this reducing emissions should be achieved through domestic policy and not international carbon units; while not prescribing how this should be achieved, improving resource and energy efficiency, developing low carbon and renewable energy, and hydrogen and carbon capture and storage are highlighted as key priorities. These are endorsed by the **Affordable Housing Commission** (reducing carbon emissions in homes) and the **Independent Armitt Review of Infrastructure** (which sets targets for recycling of municipal waste and plastic packaging, and 50% renewable generation by 2030).

### 13.2.3. Transport infrastructure

There were a number of recommendations relating to transport. **The Armitt Review** called for government, Ofgem and local authorities to roll out charging infrastructure for electric vehicle sales; and the Review(s) led by Sir Michael Marmot included recommendations to improve active travel across the social gradient (Marmot, 2020:118).

Alongside this, a number focused more on *resilience* to the effects of climate breakdown, as opposed to mitigating actions. Given that Committee on Climate Change identifies the need for societal choices that lead to a lower demand for carbon-intensive activities, it is also worth noting that recommendations for improving parking for town centre regeneration arguably conflict with these goals. As the *Net Zero* and Marmot reports note, shifting to more sustainable modes of transport, where possible, could also confer health benefits.

### 13.2.4. Sustainable agriculture

Food, agriculture and land use was one of the priorities identified by the Committee on Climate Change and was further developed in the report of the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission. Their final report, *Our Future in the Land*, outlines a series of recommendations to create a fair

food system (including through the use of public procurement); to transition towards sustainable, agroecological farming by 2030, with initiatives including the National Agroecology Development Bank established to support producers; and to invest in rural communities – from housing, to skills and infrastructure, to a new national land use framework – to build a fair, green economy.

### 13.2.5. Just transition

**'HM Treasury should undertake a review of how the transition will be funded and where the costs will fall. It should develop a strategy to ensure this is, and is perceived to be, fair. A broader strategy will also be needed to ensure a just transition across society, with vulnerable workers and consumers protected' (p.33).**

NET ZERO: THE UK'S CONTRIBUTION TO STOPPING GLOBAL WARMING (2019).

Across the review, a number of commissions made clear recommendations to ensure a just transition. This was a headline recommendation from the **Commission on Climate Change** (above) and addressed by the **Commission on Economic Justice**. The UK 2070 Commission, too, called on governments to commit to a 'Spatially Just Transition' that included funds to mitigate the impacts on disadvantaged communities and a Transition Strategy for particular regional economies.

Alongside this focus on climate and inequality, Sir Michael Marmot identified policies and interventions (on active travel, green space, the food environment and energy efficiency) that could both reduce health inequalities *and* mitigate climate change. However, within the parameters of the review criteria, this example of drawing links between environment and other domains of wellbeing was the exception, which perhaps indicates the extent to which public policy conversations have given sufficient priority to climate in recent years, and indeed to joined-up policy interventions that improve outcomes across different issues.

# 14. Conclusion

‘Life matters more than wealth. Amidst all the fear and upset, people want a different future, and one that is not about who has the most toys when you die. Relationships – family and friends – matter more than growth’ (p.6).

(KNIGHT, 2020)<sup>101</sup>.



101 Knight, Barry. 2020. *Build Back Better*. Available at: [https://www.compassonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BuildBack\\_FINALPDF.pdf](https://www.compassonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BuildBack_FINALPDF.pdf) [accessed October 2020].

# Today, for a Better Tomorrow

## 14.1. Wellbeing as the goal

When people talk about putting wellbeing at the centre, they are connecting to a broader change in what we think of as the goal for society. The circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic have made us reflect collectively on our shared future. The prominent #BuildBackBetter campaign, which continues to call on government to think differently; to amend their predominantly economic focus; and to re-write the rules and goals, is one example of many calling for change<sup>102</sup>. COVID-19 has shown why we need to act now, to prevent a recovery that further exacerbates the inequalities that have persisted for many, even before the pandemic began.

We know that GDWe is not perfect. But, by incorporating a range of different indicators it provides an opportunity for decision makers to think beyond current silos and election cycles and to start a **new narrative on social progress as wellbeing**.



### Recommendation 1:

The UK Government should commit to putting wellbeing at the heart of decision making.

<sup>102</sup> OECD, 2020 <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/building-back-better-a-sustainable-resilient-recovery-after-covid-19-52b869f5/>

## 14.2. Wellbeing as a conversation

Wellbeing is a way to have a different conversation with the public about social progress; a way to identify groups in society who are currently falling behind in all areas of wellbeing; a way to think more holistically – to ‘join the dots’ – between different policies; and a way to make comparisons to identify the areas where social progress is stalling.

While there is general agreement on the domains of wellbeing, there is less agreement about the level at which they are set, or the priority given to different domains. There are two ways of finding the answers to these questions. We can ask experts to carry out research that looks for links between indicators of wellbeing and domains of wellbeing (the technocratic approach) or we can ask the people what is important to them (the democratic approach).

At the Carnegie UK Trust we believe in blending these approaches. Expert analysis can tell us a lot about inequalities for example, but we need to balance this with people’s own experiences – it is at an individual, family and community level that the domains of wellbeing come together in lived experience. In this sense, people are the best experts we have on how the domains of wellbeing interact with each other, whether they conflict and if, as a society, we are prioritising the right domains.



### Recommendation 2:

The UK Government should hold a national conversation on wellbeing in England as part of preparations to Build Back Better.

### 14.3. Wellbeing as a framework

A wellbeing framework is a device used by governments to measure each of the domains of wellbeing and to monitor whether we are moving forward as a society. There are strong examples in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as further afield in Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and at city and state level in the USA.

Wellbeing frameworks tend to include:

- A mission statement putting wellbeing at the centre.
- A set of outcomes, like a good place to bring up children, or a more equal society.
- A larger set of indicators that measure progress towards these outcomes.

A wellbeing framework goes further than a measurement dashboard by linking to political and citizen aspirations for society and crucially by linking explicitly to mechanisms for decision-making such as budgets and programmes for government.

When a wellbeing framework is working well, it provokes debate amongst policy makers, practitioners and citizens. Why is crime going down, why isn't health improving, why do some people still do better than others? GDWe is a mechanism to make that framework more accessible to the public but it relies on there being timely and appropriate data within the indicator set.

It is 10 years since the ONS first developed their Measures of National Well-being Dashboard. In developing GDWe, we have reflected on some key considerations for the future measurement of wellbeing in England:

- **The current ONS wellbeing indicators are insufficient:** It's clear from our analysis that the dashboard is not adequate in measuring national wellbeing. The ONS should take cognisance of the National Conversation on Wellbeing to determine the best measures of social progress (Recommendation 2).

- **There is a high proportion of missing data:** Given that the ONS wellbeing data encompasses trusted and accepted measures of wellbeing, there should be a commitment to ensuring these indicators and their data collection methodologies are reviewed and developed to accurately reflect societal wellbeing. See table 2.
- **Data delays limit the ability of wellbeing measures to be incorporated into policy making:** There is currently more than a 12-month time lag on the availability of data, at which point much of it is out of date and not relevant to policy making. A purpose-built survey – similar to New Zealand's Living Standards Framework<sup>103</sup> could enable more timely, robust measurement, with a range of indicators designed to collect data on the different aspects of national wellbeing.
- **Inequalities are obscured by measurement:** Much of the data that feeds into the ONS measures of wellbeing are taken from samples of private households; they do not capture data from those who are homeless, in residential care, that reside in caravan parks or gypsy/traveller communities. Children and young people are also systematically ignored in these measures except where referring to their future economic potential. Similarly, it is a choice to present data as the population average rather than the gap between those who are best and least well off in society. Explicit commitments to equalities by governments should be matched by equality measures in the wellbeing dashboard.














#### Recommendation 3:

The UK Government should require the ONS to review the national wellbeing measures in light of the national conversation and provide timely and regular updates to inform decision making through the budget process and Programme for Government.

<sup>103</sup> The New Zealand Treasury, 2020. *Living Standards Framework*. <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/our-living-standards-framework> [accessed September 2020].

Table 2: Carnegie UK Trust suggested additional wellbeing measurement categories arising from Commissions and Inquiries.

ONS Measures of National Wellbeing Dashboard	ONS Domain subcategories	Additional categories emerging from Commissions and Inquiries
<b>Carnegie UK Trust SEED Wellbeing Domain: Social</b>		
 <b>Personal well-being</b>	Life satisfaction Worthwhile Happiness Anxiety Mental wellbeing	
 <b>Education and Skills</b>	NEETS (those not in Education, Employment or Training) No qualification Human Capital	Early years and family support Improving access to good work Reducing educational inequalities Skills development
 <b>Health</b>	Healthy life expectancy Disability Health satisfaction Depression or anxiety	Coproduction (communities) Coproduction (users) Improving mental health Improving training/practice Integrating training for health Reducing health inequalities
 <b>Our relationships</b>	Unhappy relationships Loneliness People to rely on	Building social connection Volunteering
 <b>Where we live</b>	Crime Feeling safe Accessed natural environment Belonging to neighbourhood Access to key services Satisfaction with accommodation	Access to key services Community empowerment and participation Housing: affordability, availability and quality Land reform Reducing inequalities Planning and infrastructure Town centre regeneration
 <b>What we do</b> <sup>104</sup>	Satisfaction with leisure time Volunteering Art and culture participation Sports participation	
<b>Carnegie UK Trust SEED Wellbeing Domain: Economic</b>		
 <b>Personal Finance</b>	Low income households Household wealth Household income Satisfaction with household income Difficulty managing financially	Affordability of basic needs Reducing wealth inequality Reducing poverty Tackling pay gaps
 <b>What we do</b>	Unemployment rate Job satisfaction Disposable income	Reducing unemployment Improving job quality
 <b>The Economy</b>	Public sector debt Inflation	Improving economic growth Reducing regional inequalities Financial systems
<b>Carnegie UK Trust SEED Wellbeing Domain: Environmental</b>		
 <b>The Environment</b>	Greenhouse gas emissions Protected areas Renewable energy Household Recycling	Just Transition Low Carbon Economy Reducing waste Renewable energy Sustainable agriculture Transport infrastructure
<b>Carnegie UK Trust SEED Wellbeing Domain: Democratic</b>		
 <b>Governance</b>	Trust in government Voter turnout	Parliamentary powers Accountability/Transparency Values Taxation Participatory Democracy Wellbeing Frameworks Data and Research

104 Note we have separated the sub-categories within the 'What we do' domain into two separate groups which span both.

## 14.4. Wellbeing as an approach

A wellbeing framework will tell you what is going on, and dialogue can tell you more about why, but the question of what should be done often comes down to political choices. More needs to be done to help policy makers assess options on the basis of all domains of wellbeing.

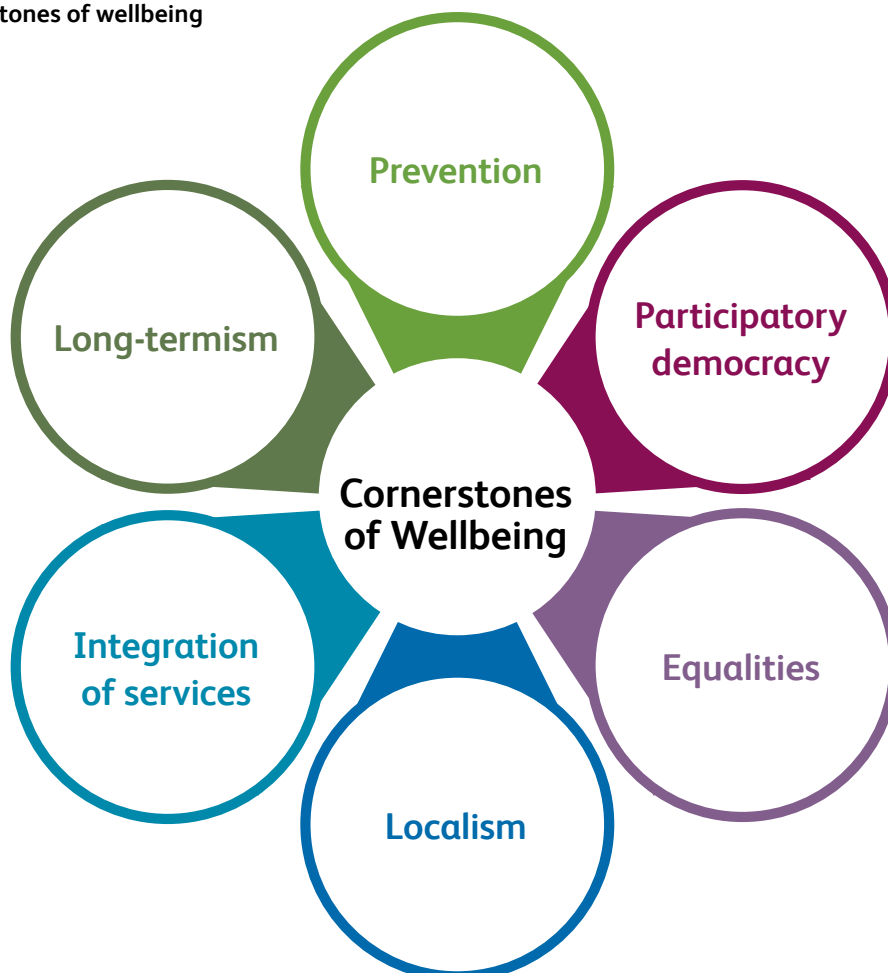
We live our lives in the round, not as single issues or consumers of individual services. We need an approach to making decisions at all levels of government that reflects the connectedness and interdependency of policies that affect our lives and collectively shift the dial in favour of wellbeing.

The analysis of Commissions and Inquiries highlighted that there are six areas of cross cutting recommendations that could guide decision making and underpin a wellbeing approach (see Figure 16):

**Prevention:** A wellbeing approach requires problems to be identified and responded to before they become too entrenched and difficult to resolve or mitigate. The lost opportunities of intervening too late are often recognised as costly for today’s public purse. But, more fundamentally, they are costly for overall wellbeing. Examples from the Commissions and Inquiries reviewed include investing in early years, active labour market policies, access to green and blue space and life-long learning.

**Participatory Democracy:** Our analysis demonstrates that social progress cannot be understood without engaging people about what matters to them and that wellbeing cannot be ‘done to’ people. Examples from the Commissions and Inquiries reviewed include Citizens’ Assemblies and community empowerment.

Figure 15: Cornerstones of wellbeing



**Equalities:** Inequality and exclusion are areas of significant wellbeing challenge for England. They are not always visible in the statistics which measure population averages. Many Commissions focused on the need to improve outcomes for equalities groups (primarily women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities). Poverty and income inequality were often implicit rather than explicit within the Commissions and Inquiries. Examples from the Commissions and Inquiries reviewed include pay transparency, representation of equalities groups in professions and decision-making structures and targeted wealth taxes.

**Localism:** There are repeated calls to create a new relationship between central, regional and local government, based on a shared understanding of their objectives and allowing for local tailoring to suit the needs and priorities of individual communities. Examples from the Commissions and Inquiries reviewed include greater powers for combined authorities and greater local flexibility on spending.

**Integration of services:** Governments are increasingly realising that the solutions to wicked and complex policy problems can only be found by working together. Each part of the system (education, health, housing, and so on) is dependent on the other to achieve its objectives. Whole-of-government approaches go further than joined-up or interagency working, they ensure that all stakeholders have the same vision and strategic priorities. Examples from the Commissions and Inquiries include further joining up of health and social care and between public sector and voluntary and community organisations.

**Long-termism:** Recognising that we operate with finite resources, there is a growing acceptance of the principle that policy making should not benefit current generations at the expense of future ones. Although the implications of the climate emergency were not fully or adequately considered in all of the reviews, a number of examples have begun to identify policies and interventions (on active travel, green space, the food environment and energy efficiency) that could both reduce inequalities and mitigate the effects of climate breakdown; in doing so they demonstrate ambition to achieve positive outcomes right across the SEED domains *and* prevent negative consequences for generations to come.

**These are the cornerstones of a wellbeing approach to government.** They have been identified consistently in other reports on reforming government<sup>105</sup>, including our own work on the Enabling State and our review of wellbeing in the devolved jurisdictions of the UK (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)<sup>106</sup>, but emerged organically from the analysis of Commission and Inquiries.



#### Recommendation 4:

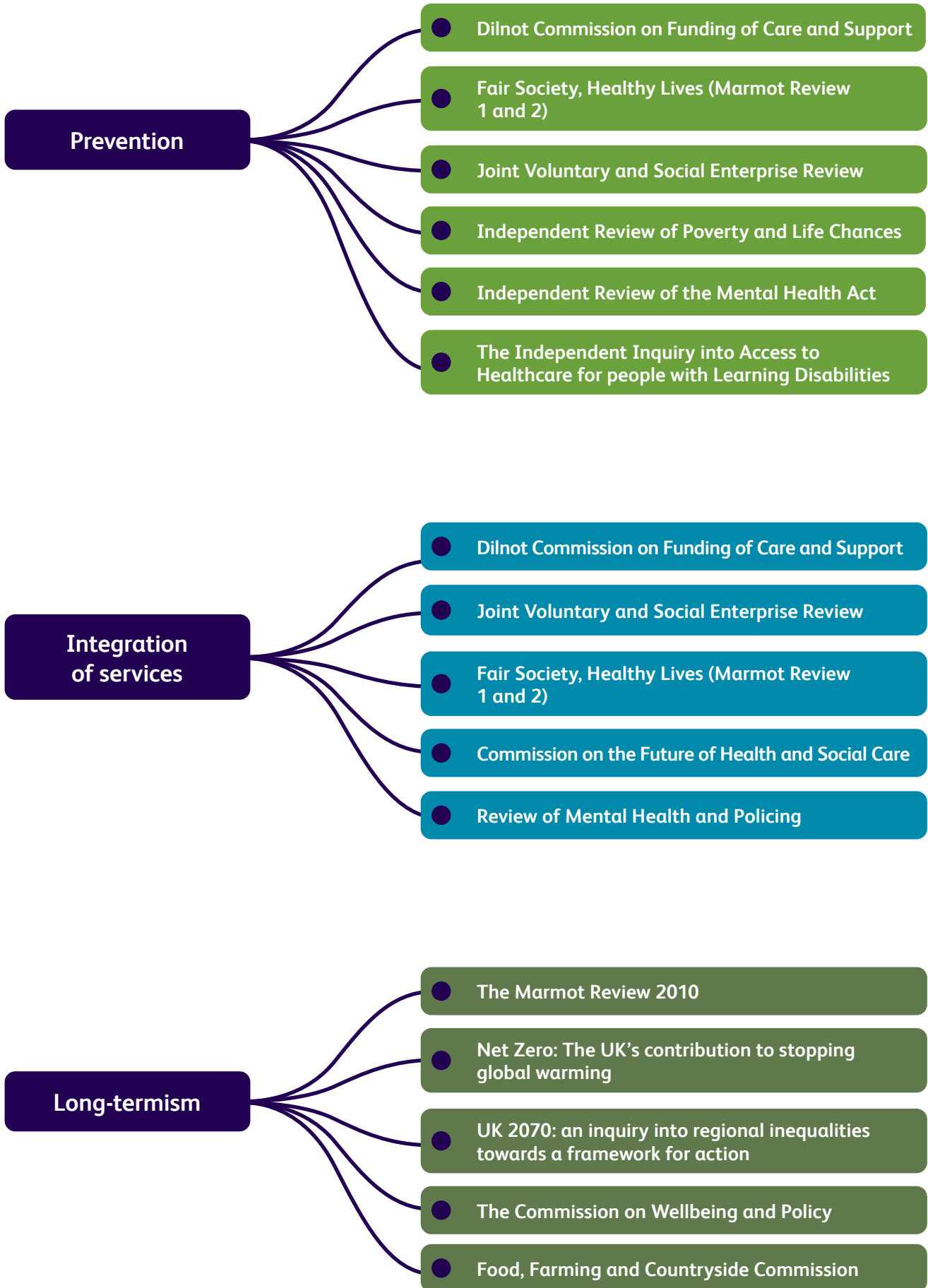
The UK Government should commit to the six cornerstones of wellbeing as a new approach to delivering better outcomes for citizens to be applied across all policy areas.

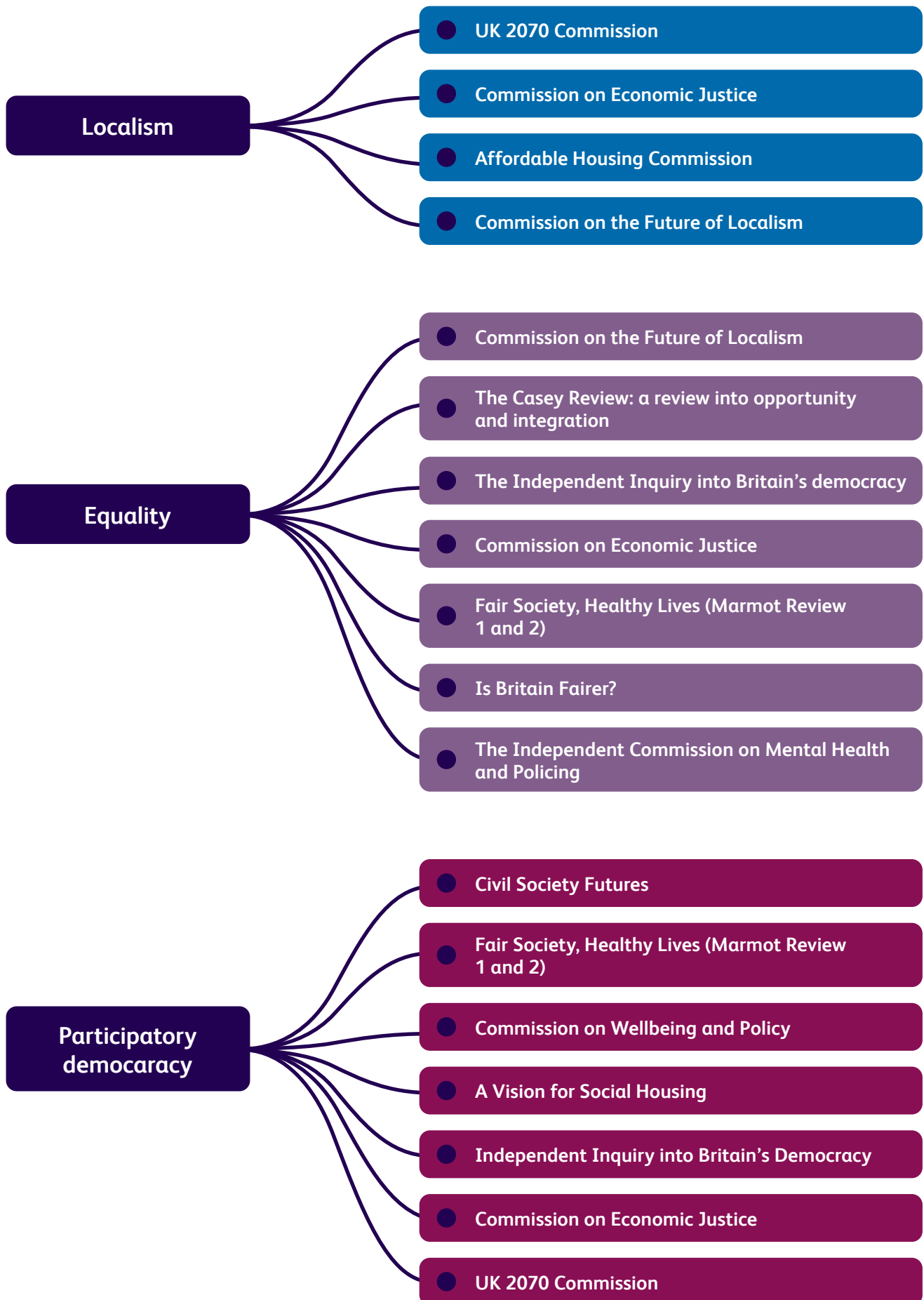
<sup>105</sup> See for example OECD. 2017. *Trust and Public Policy: How Better Governance Can Help Rebuild Public Trust* Paris: OECD

<sup>106</sup> See Wallace, J. 2019. *Wellbeing and Devolution: Reframing the Role of Government in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*. Palgrave MacMillan



Figure 16: Commissions and Inquiries making recommendations on the six cornerstones of a wellbeing approach.





‘You never change things by fighting the existing reality.  
To change something, build a new model that makes the  
existing model obsolete.’

**BUCKMINSTER FULLER<sup>107</sup>**



107 Cited in Sieden, S 2011. *A Fuller View – Buckminster Fuller’s Vision of Hope and Abundance for all*. Divine Arts Media.

# Appendix 1: Commissions and Inquiries included in study<sup>108</sup>

YEAR	COMMISSIONING ORGANISATION	COMMISSION/REVIEW	REVIEW TITLE	CHAIR
2006	Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust	An Independent Inquiry into Britain's Democracy.	Power to the People: the report of Power	Helena Kennedy QC
2008	Independent	Independent inquiry into access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities	Healthcare for all: The report of the independent inquiry into access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities	Sir Jonathan Michael
2010	UK Government	Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances	The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults	Frank Field
2010	Institute of Health Equity	The Marmot Review	Fair Society Healthy Lives	Sir Michael Marmot
2011	UK Government	Dilnot Commission on Funding of Care and Support	Fairer Care Funding: The Report of the Commission on Funding of Care and Support	Sir Andrew Dilnot
2011	UK Government	The Portas review: the future of our high streets	The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets	Mary Portas
2012	Resolution Foundation	Commission on Living Standards	Gaining from Growth: the final report of the Commission on Living Standards	Clive Cowdery
2013	Independent	Independent Commission on Mental Health and Policing	Independent Commission on Mental Health and Policing Report	Lord Victor Adebawale
2013	Independent	The Grimsey Review	The Vanishing High Street.	Bill Grimsey
2014	Department of Health, Public Health England, and NHS England	The Joint Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Review	The conclusions of the Joint Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Review	Alex Fox OBE
2014	UK Government	Transport Resilience Review	A review of the resilience of the transport network to extreme weather events	Richard Brown
2014	Labour's Policy Review of Infrastructure	The Armitte Review	The Armitte Review: An independent review of long-term infrastructure planning	Sir John Armitte

108 48 commissions and inquiries were included in the study. Most of which were undertaken between 2010-2020. For a discussion about

YEAR	COMMISSIONING ORGANISATION	COMMISSION/REVIEW	REVIEW TITLE	CHAIR
2014	The King's Fund	Commission on the future of health and social care	A new settlement for health and social care	Dame Kate Barker DBE
2014	Legatum Institute	The Commission on Wellbeing and Policy	Wellbeing and Policy	Lord Gus O'Donnell
2016	UK Government	The Casey Review: a review into opportunity and integration	The Casey Review: a review into opportunity and integration	Dame Louise Casey
2016	UK Government	Independent review of UK economic statistics	Independent Review of UK Economics Statistics: final report	Professor Sir Charles Bean
2016	UK Government	Independent Commission on Freedom of Information	Independent Commission on Freedom of Information	Lord Burns
2017	UK Government	The Taylor Review Modern Working Practices	Good Work: the Taylor review of modern working practices	Matthew Taylor
2017	UK Government	Independent review: Growing the Artificial Intelligence Industry In The UK	Growing the Artificial Intelligence Industry in The UK	Prof Dame Wendy Hall and Jerome Pesenti
2017	RSA	Inclusive Growth Commission	Making our Economy Work for Everyone	Stephanie Flanders
2017	UK Government	Independent Review of the Creative Industries	Independent Review of the Creative Industries	Sir Peter Bazalgette
2017	The Jo Cox Commission	The Jo Cox Loneliness Commission	Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness	Seema Kennedy MP and Rachel Reeves MP
2018	Independent	The Grimsey Review 2	The Grimsey Review 2	Bill Grimsey
2018	Locality and Power to Change	Commission on the Future of Localism	People Power: Findings from the Commission on the Future of Localism	Lord Bob Kerslake
2018	Pearson	Commission on Sustainable Learning for Work, Life and a Changing Economy	Report from the Commission on Sustainable Learning for Work, Life and a Changing Economy	Neil Carmichael MP
2018	Learning and Work Institute	The Youth Commission	Opportunity knocks? First report of the Youth Commission	N/A
2018	UK Government	Modernising the Mental Health Act – final report from the independent review	Modernising the Mental Health Act	Professor Sir Simon Wessely

YEAR	COMMISSIONING ORGANISATION	COMMISSION/REVIEW	REVIEW TITLE	CHAIR
2018	TCPA	Raynsford Review of Planning in England	Planning 2020: Raynsford Review of Planning in England	Rt Hon Nick Raynsford
2018	Resolution Foundation	Intergenerational Commission	A New Generational Contract: The final report of the Intergenerational Commission	Lord David Willetts
2018	Commission on Equality and Human Rights	Commission on Equality and Human Rights	Is Britain Fairer? The state of equality and human rights	David Isaac CBE
2018	IPPR	Commission on Economic Justice	Prosperity and justice: A plan for the new economy	Tom Kibasi
2018	Baring Foundation, Barrow Cadbury, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, City Bridge Trust, Esmée Fairbairn, Lankelly Chase, Lloyds Bank Foundation and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.	Civil Society Futures	Civil Society Futures: The Independent Inquiry	Dame Julia Unwin
2019	Shelter	Commission on the future of social housing	A Vision for Social Housing: The final report of the commission on the future of social housing	Rev Dr Mike Long
2019	UK Government	The Topol Review	The Topol Review: Preparing the healthcare workforce to deliver the digital future	
2019	Climate Change Committee	Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming	Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming	The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, Lord Deben
2019	RSA	Food, Farming and Countryside Commission	Our Future in the Land	Sir Ian Cheshire
2020	Institute of Health Equity	The Marmot Review	Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On	Sir Michael Marmot
2020	UK 2070 Commission	UK 2070 – An Inquiry into Regional Inequalities Towards a Framework for Action	Make no little plans: acting at scale for a fairer and stronger future	Lord Bob Kerslake
2020	The Smith Institute	Affordable Housing Commission	Making Housing Affordable Again: Rebalancing the Nation's Housing System	Lord Richard Best

# Appendix 2: The Methodology, in detail

The following methodological summary was written by Diffley Partnership, who were commissioned by the Carnegie UK Trust to construct the framework and undertake the analysis to produce the GDWe score.

The methodology is summarised in the figure below.

The rest of this chapter sets out each of these stages in more detail.

## Stage 1: Data Collection

The data required to construct the GDWe index is mainly collected and published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and as such a request was submitted to receive and use the data.

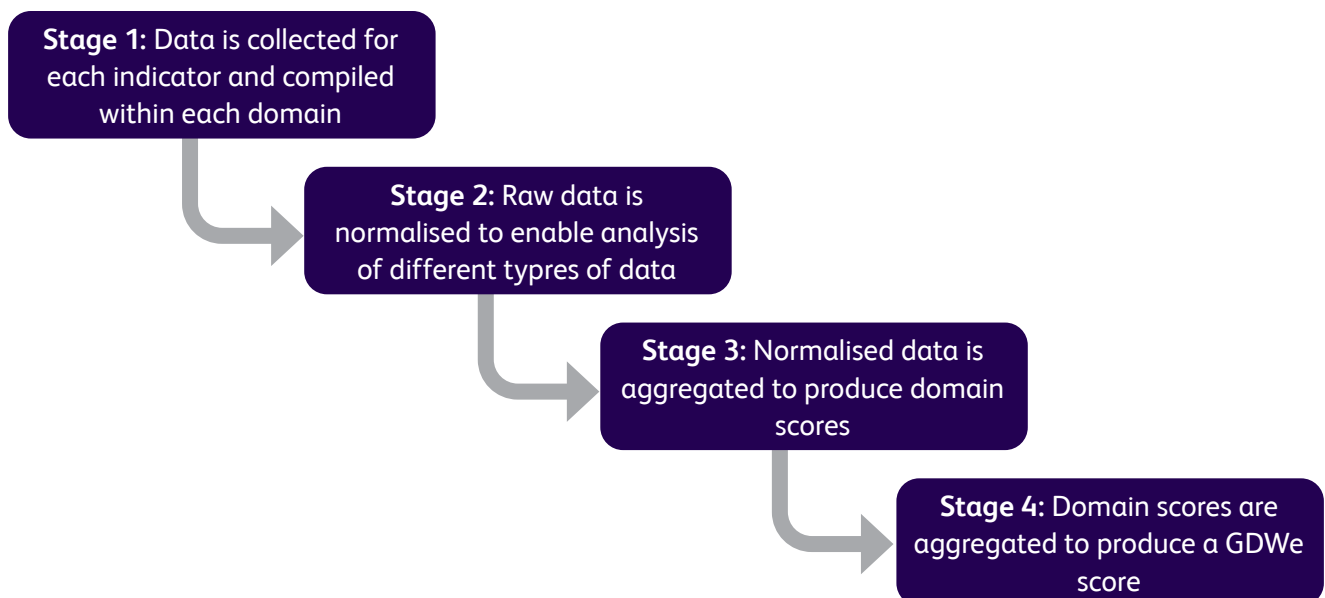
Due to the vast number of indicators utilised in the GDWe Index, there are several different sources of data. A total of 12 surveys by the ONS to collect data for 28 of the indicators; the remaining 13 indicators are sourced from 9 ONS publications. The sources of the indicators are outlined in the tables below.

Once the data was compiled for each of the 40 indicators of wellbeing, it was cleaned and in some cases the data for England only was extracted from the dataset. This analysis was completed using R Studio. The quality of the data was also assessed during this time.

This assessment highlighted a range of inconsistencies within the data, from missing data to the change of survey question and method of data collection. The main reason for this is that the indicators which are compiled arise from a range of different data sources.

Importantly, there is the issue of the scale of missing data – 22% of the data within the past 9 periods is missing across the range of indicators included in GDWe. Table 5 below outlines the number of indicators that are missing from each period of analysis.

The most up to date and comprehensive version of GDWe will be the analysis created for the 2018/19 period and as such, this is the last period for which GDWe is calculated within this report. This is due to data lagging and the waiting period for data to become available for publication.



**Table 3: Data sources from surveys**

Survey Title	Indicator Number
Annual Population Survey	1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4
Understanding Society	1.5; 2.1; 2.3; 3.3; 3.4; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 5.4; 6.4; 6.5
Community Life Survey	2.2
Labour Force Survey	3.2; 4.1; 8.3
Taking Part Survey	4.5
Active Lives Survey	4.6
Crime Survey	5.1; 5.2
English Housing Survey	5.6
Family Resources Survey, DWP	6.1
Wealth and Assets Survey	6.2
Monitor of engagement with the natural environment	5.3
Eurobarometer	9.2

**Table 4: Data sourced from publications**

Published Data	Indicator Number
Health analysis and reporting, ONS	3.1 – Healthy Life Expectancies
Journey Time Statistics, Department for Transport	5.5
National Accounts	6.3; 7.1; 7.2
Consumer Prices, ONS	7.3
Human Capital Estimates	8.1
Labour Market	8.2
Electoral Commission	9.1
BEIS	10.1; 10.3
DEFRA	10.2; 10.4

**Table 5: Missing variables within each time period.**

Year	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Variables Reported	32	33	34	35	37	35	37	35	10
Missing Variables	9	8	7	6	4	6	4	6	31



Timeseries analysis was conducted over a 5-year period, going back to the 2013/14 period, as this is where there are a higher number of reported indicators, enabling a consistent methodology to construct the GDWe analysis.

For occasions where there is a gap in data collection and an estimate for a year cannot be derived for an indicator, the last reported figure is used as a substitute. This approach was used to avoid adding artificial variation by using data imputation methods. However, it should be noted that this approach allows the values of an indicator to remain the same over several consecutive periods. This could cause the GDWe score – at least for the domain – to flatline across these years, depending on the variation within the other indicators of the domain.

It is worth noting that most of the missing data is due to the irregular structure of the *Understanding Society: UK Household Longitudinal Survey*<sup>109</sup> as some variables are reported less frequently than others.

While the ONS collect 41 variables as part of their Well-being Dashboard, we have based our analysis on 40 indicators. Indicator 3.4 concerning *depression/anxiety* was removed from the analysis due to the scope of missing data. Imputing data for these years based on historical data (pre-2010) would in effect be “guesswork” and lead to distortion and error within the dataset.

## Stage 2: Normalisation

Normalisation of the data was necessary as the 40 indicators did not have the same unit of measurement and differ in scale. Normalisation allows data to become comparable rather than aggregating apples and oranges – it avoids giving importance to outliers or extreme values if the original distribution of the data is skewed.

The standard method of normalisation is the creation of z-scores, using the mean and standard deviation across all the values of an indicator. However, this was not possible in this case as we can only obtain these values for survey data, and the dataset encompassed other types of data e.g. economic data which is

reported as a single figure. Hence, we used min-max scoring to create a normalised figure for each indicator. This approach is also used in the United Nations Human Development Index<sup>110</sup>. The process converts indicators of different values into a unitless score, which is referred to as the normalised score. This is achieved by using a min-max transformation to rescale the indicator value, resulting in a figure between 0 to 10.

Each indicator was then rescaled by applying the following formula:

$$\text{Normalised score} = \frac{X_{ind} - X_{min}}{X_{max} - X_{min}} \times 10$$

Where,  $X_{ind}$  is the value of the indicator to be normalised,  $X_{min}$  is the minimum possible value of the indicator and  $X_{max}$  is the maximum possible value of the indicator.

If a value is below the minimum performance value its score is 0; if a value equals the maximum value its score is capped at 10.

There were 13 instances where a higher value corresponds to a worse outcome (e.g. level of greenhouse gas emissions) and for these indicators the normalised score became 10 minus the expression in the above formula, so 10 always corresponds to the ideal outcome. Each of these instances is listed in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Desired movement of indicators**

Increase	Decrease
1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5	
2.3	2.1; 2.2
3.1; 3.3	3.2
4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 4.6	4.1
5.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.6	5.1; 5.5
6.2; 6.3; 6.4	6.1; 6.5
7.1	7.2; 7.3
8.1	8.2; 8.3
9.1; 9.2	
10.2; 10.3; 10.4	10.1

109 Understanding Society, 2020. *The UK Household Longitudinal Survey*. Available at: <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/> [accessed March 2020].

110 United Nations, 2020. *Human Development Index*. Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi> [accessed March 2020].

## Working example of the min-max calculation

To illustrate min-max normalisation, we will look at *Indicator 1.5 – Mental well-being*.

The data for mental well-being is extracted from Understanding Society: The UK Household Longitudinal Study. An individual's mental well-being is calculated using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) and takes a value between 7 (minimum) and 35 (maximum). The latest figure for national mental well-being is 24.6, these values are summarised in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Population mental well-being, current data.**

Indicator	Population mental well-being	
Latest figure	24.6	$X_{ind}$
Minimum	7	$X_{min}$
Maximum	35	$X_{max}$

The formula for normalisation is given below:

$$\text{Normalised score} = \frac{X_{ind} - X_{min}}{X_{max} - X_{min}} \times 10$$

Inputting these values into the formula:

$$\text{Normalised score} = \frac{24.6 - 7}{35 - 7} \times 10$$

This then results in a normalised score of 6.29 and the methodology is then repeated for all other indicators.

## Stage 3 and 4: Domain level and GDWe score

The indicators, which have been adopted from the ONS measures of wellbeing, are treated equally, as no indicator was regarded as more important than the others. As a result, there is no weighting applied to the GDWe domains. Adding disproportionate weighting to indicators or domains would have inevitably introduced subjective bias to the analysis by making value judgements regarding the comparative importance of each domain/indicator. At this stage, without robust testing of normative weighting, we recommend applying

no weights to the data. This is consistent with the Carnegie UK Trust's perspective that our social, economic, environmental and democratic wellbeing and associated outcomes are interconnected; they cannot be understood in silos.

The data was then aggregated to produce a domain level and overall GDWe score; the aggregation process occurs over two stages. First the data for each indicator is normalised and the normalised scores are aggregated to provide a *domain score*. Then, the domain scores are aggregated to provide the overall GDWe Score. Arithmetic means are used to compile both domain scores and the overall GDWe Score.

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**Andrew Carnegie House**  
**Pittencrieff Street**  
**Dunfermline**  
**KY12 8AW**

**Tel: +44 (0)1383 721445**  
**Fax: +44 (0)1383 749799**  
**Email: [info@carnegieuk.org](mailto:info@carnegieuk.org)**  
**[www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk](http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk)**

This report was written by Jennifer Wallace, Hannah Ormston, Ben Thurman, Mark Diffley, Mhairi McFarlane and Sanah Zubairi

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