

SUMMARY

CarnegieUK
TRUST

CHANGING MINDS • CHANGING LIVES



Gross Domestic Wellbeing (GDWe)[™]

An alternative measure
of social progress



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

Over 10 years on from the groundbreaking Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission, it's time to use a different measure of progress: GDWe

‘[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)¹.

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)[™] offers a more holistic and relevant alternative to measure social progress. Using the framework and data in the Office for National Statistics (hereafter ONS)

¹ 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].

Measures of National Well-being Dashboard², 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.

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.

² 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].

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



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.

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 Commission³ asserted the value of governments shifting their emphasis away from measuring economic production (GDP) to measuring citizens' wellbeing (GDWe). Some governments⁴ 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.

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 satisfaction⁵. The ONS Wellbeing Dashboard was similarly developed in 2011 as a response to the then Cameron

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].

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

Government's pledge to 'devise a new way of measuring wellbeing in Britain'⁶, 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.

It is worth noting 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.

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

Creating GDWe

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 Society⁷ survey, the Annual Population Survey⁸, and the Labour Force Survey⁹.

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

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

9 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 required¹⁰. 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. A full discussion of our methodology can be found in the full report.











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.

¹⁰ Note our GDWe analysis was based on 40 indicators, see methodology for further information.

Table 1 summarises the number of recommendations we categorised per each ONS Wellbeing domain. Table 2 (see page 8) offers suggestions for additional ONS measurement, following our analysis.

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
Total	873

So, what was GDWe in 2018/19?

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.

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 £1,941,155.¹¹ 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.

¹¹ 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.

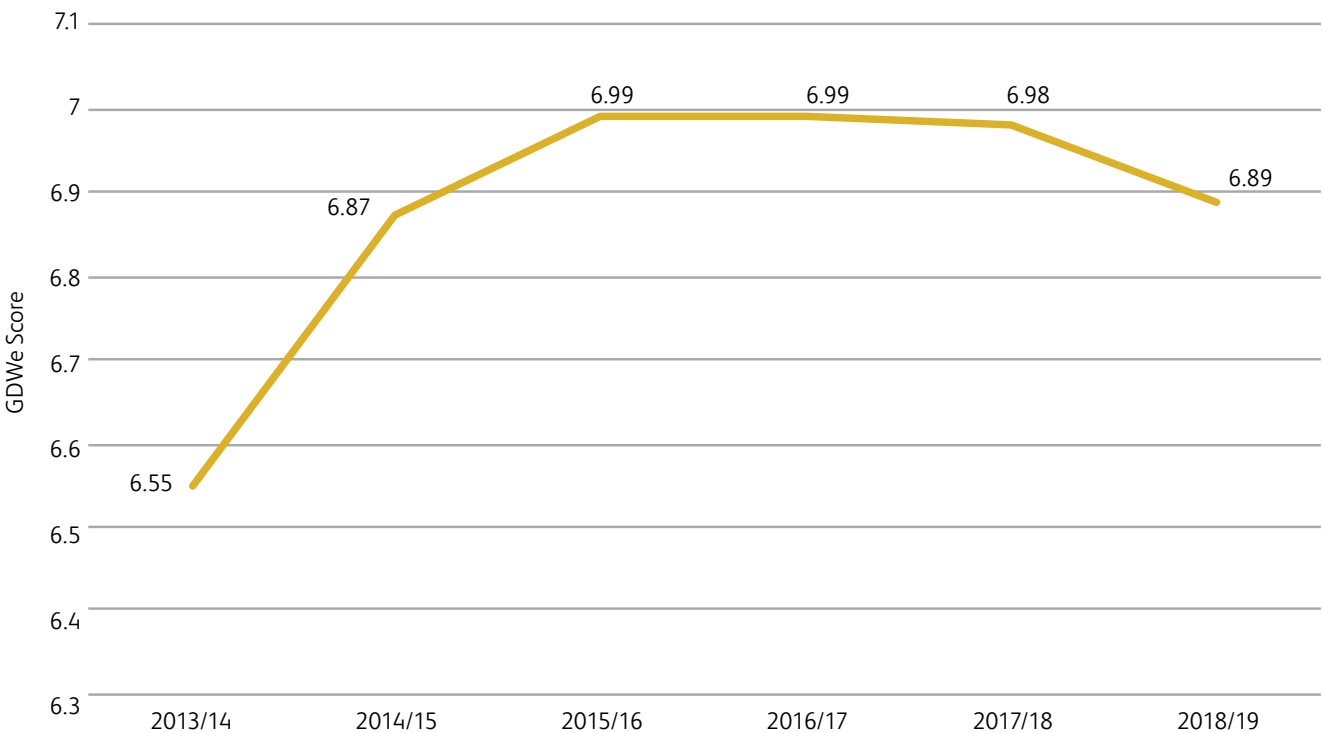
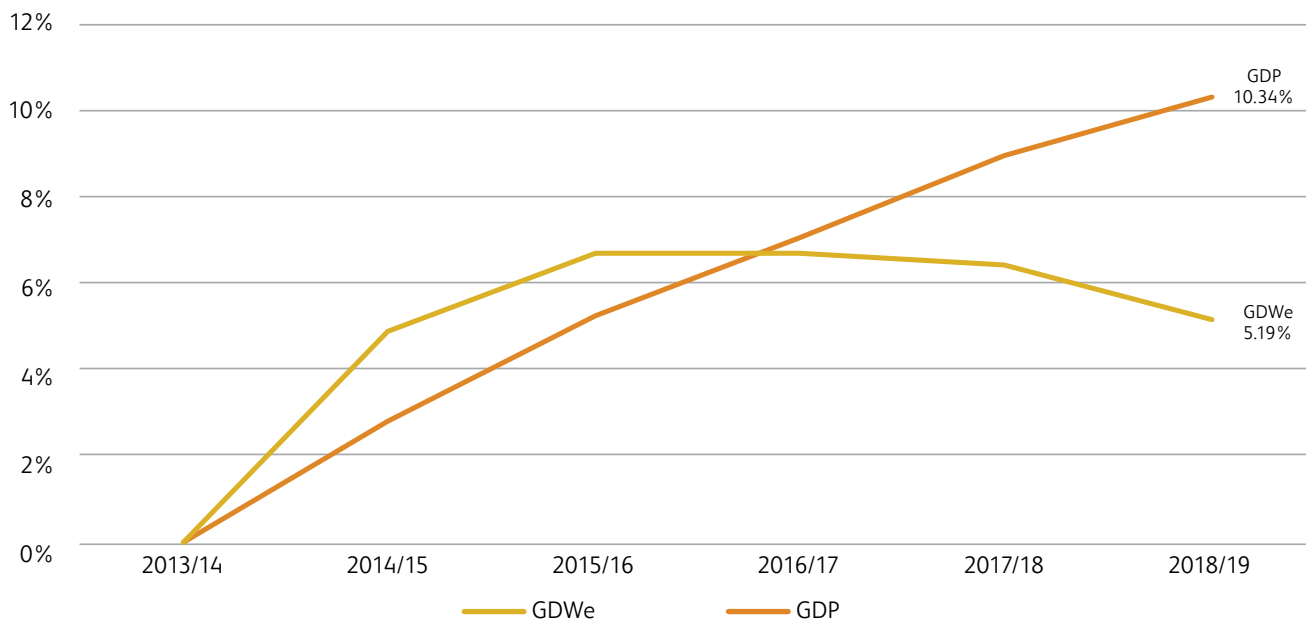


Figure 3: Growth of GDWe and GDP as a percentage from baseline in 2013/14.



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

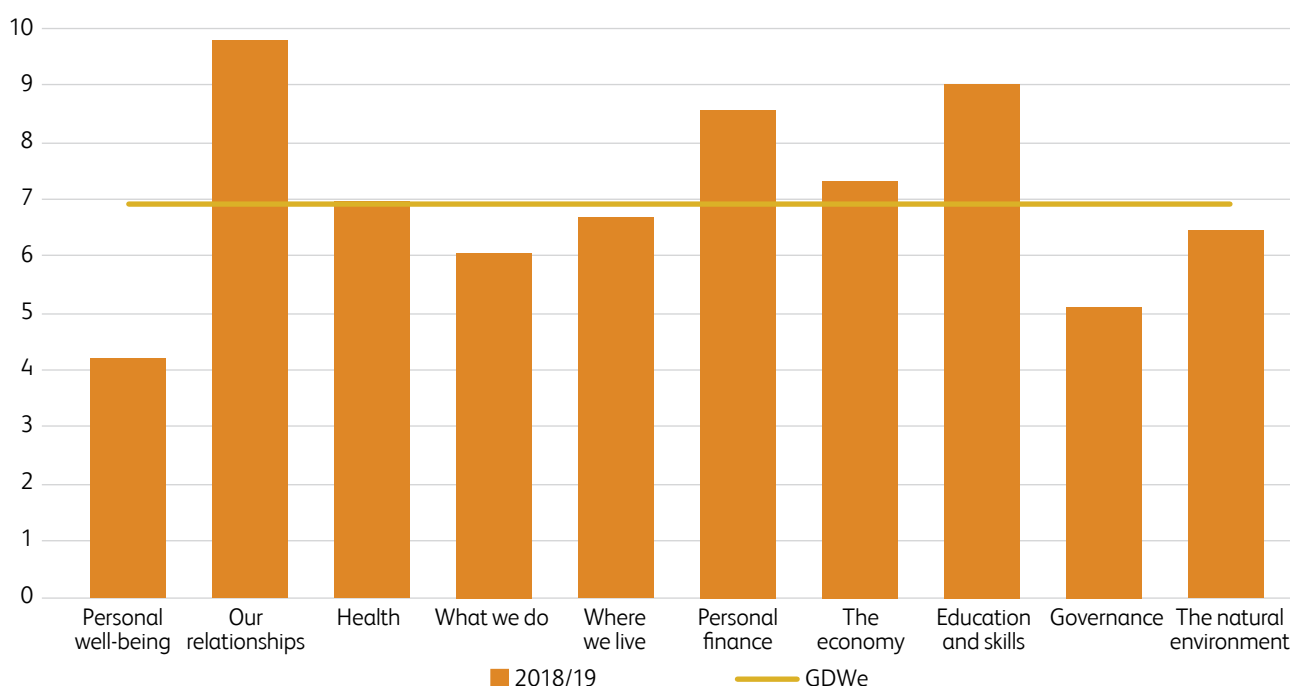













Table 2: Carnegie UK Trust suggested additional wellbeing measurement categories arising from Commissions and Inquiries.

ONS Measures of National Wellbeing Dashboard	ONS Domain subcategories	Additional categories emerging from Commissions and Inquiries
Carnegie UK Trust SEED Wellbeing Domain: Social		
 Personal well-being	Life satisfaction Worthwhile Happiness Anxiety Mental wellbeing	
 Education and Skills	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
 Health	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
 Our relationships	Unhappy relationships Loneliness People to rely on	Building social connection Volunteering
 Where we live	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
 What we do¹²	Satisfaction with leisure time Volunteering Art and culture participation Sports participation	
Carnegie UK Trust SEED Wellbeing Domain: Economic		
 Personal Finance	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
 What we do	Unemployment rate Job satisfaction Disposable income	Reducing unemployment Improving job quality
 The Economy	Public sector debt Inflation	Improving economic growth Reducing regional inequalities Financial systems
Carnegie UK Trust SEED Wellbeing Domain: Environmental		
 The Environment	Greenhouse gas emissions Protected areas Renewable energy Household Recycling	Just Transition Low Carbon Economy Reducing waste Renewable energy Sustainable agriculture Transport infrastructure
Carnegie UK Trust SEED Wellbeing Domain: Democratic		
 Governance	Trust in government Voter turnout	Parliamentary powers Accountability/Transparency Values Taxation Participatory Democracy Wellbeing Frameworks Data and Research

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

Summary of themes arising from the review of Commissions and Inquiries

Table 2 maps the Carnegie UK Trust's SEED approach to wellbeing against the ONS Measures of National Well-being Dashboard. We have made recommendations for additional categories of data collection, based on the emerging themes from our review of 47 commissions and inquiries. A further breakdown of these findings can be found in the full report.

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 ones¹³.
- 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**¹⁴.
- In the year ending March 2020, average ratings of life satisfaction, happiness and anxiety, *in the UK*, all deteriorated for the first time since

13 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].

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

2011¹⁵. 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 pandemic¹⁶).
- There has been a large reduction in the amount of time travelling (walking or driving) – which could affect access to nature and health¹⁷.
- Trust in national government fell by 11 percentage points in the year to autumn 2019¹⁸ – this would be reflected in the next update of GDWe.
- Public debt and inflation is highly likely to be affected by the pandemic, impacting the Economy domain¹⁹.
- 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.

15 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].

16 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].

17 As above.

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

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

Today, for a Better Tomorrow

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 change²⁰. 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.

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

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.

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 Framework²¹ 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.

21 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].

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.

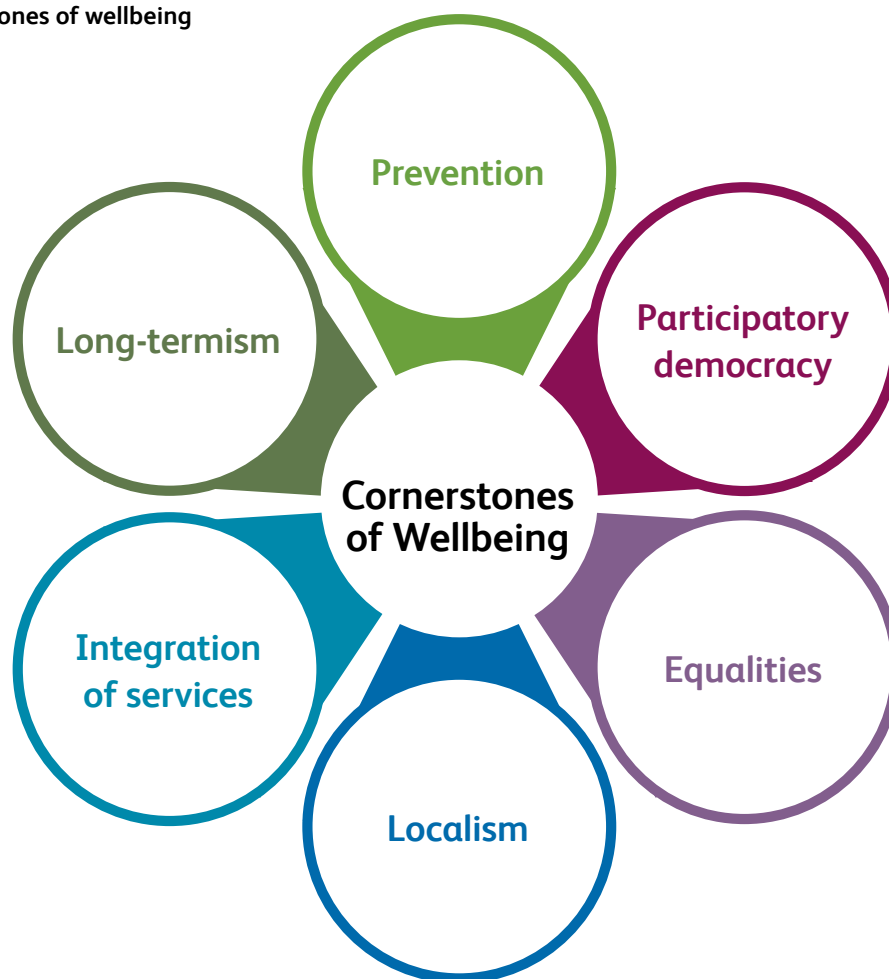
Participatory Democracy: Our analysis demonstrates that social progress cannot be understood without engaging people about what matters to them and that wellbeing cannot be 'done to' people. Examples from the Commissions and Inquiries reviewed include Citizens' Assemblies and community empowerment.

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.

Figure 5: Cornerstones of wellbeing



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 government²², 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)²³, 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.

²² See for example OECD. 2017. *Trust and Public Policy: How Better Governance Can Help Rebuild Public Trust* Paris: OECD

²³ See Wallace, J. 2019. *Wellbeing and Devolution: Reframing the Role of Government in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*. Palgrave MacMillan

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

BUCKMINSTER FULLER²⁴



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

The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913.

Andrew Carnegie House
Pittencrieff Street
Dunfermline
KY12 8AW

Tel: +44 (0)1383 721445
Fax: +44 (0)1383 749799
Email: info@carnegieuk.org
www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk

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

December 2020



CHANGING MINDS • CHANGING LIVES

Carnegie United Kingdom Trust
Registered Charity No: SC 012799 operating in the UK
Registered Charity No: 20142957 operating in Ireland
Incorporated by Royal Charter 1917

ISBN 978-1-912908-58-5



9 781912 908585