

Life in the UK 2023

The Life in the UK index is a three-year demonstrator project designed to measure the collective wellbeing of the people of the UK, looking at social, economic, environmental, and democratic aspects of life. This landmark Carnegie UK and Ipsos research is based on a survey of more than 6900 people.



Recommendations

- Current and future governments across the UK (national, devolved and local) must act to reduce the wellbeing gaps between socio-economic groups identified by Life in the UK.
- The UK Government must legislate to protect the wellbeing of future and current generations and require wellbeing outcomes and indicators to be meaningfully incorporated into priority setting and budgets.
- Political parties and governments across the UK (national, devolved and local) must invest in fresh and sustained efforts to reverse the sense of alienation from local and national decision-making and increase opportunities for meaningful participation.

Key findings



The research shows that older people in the UK have higher levels of wellbeing than younger people. **Improving the wellbeing of younger people must be a political priority for governments across the UK.**

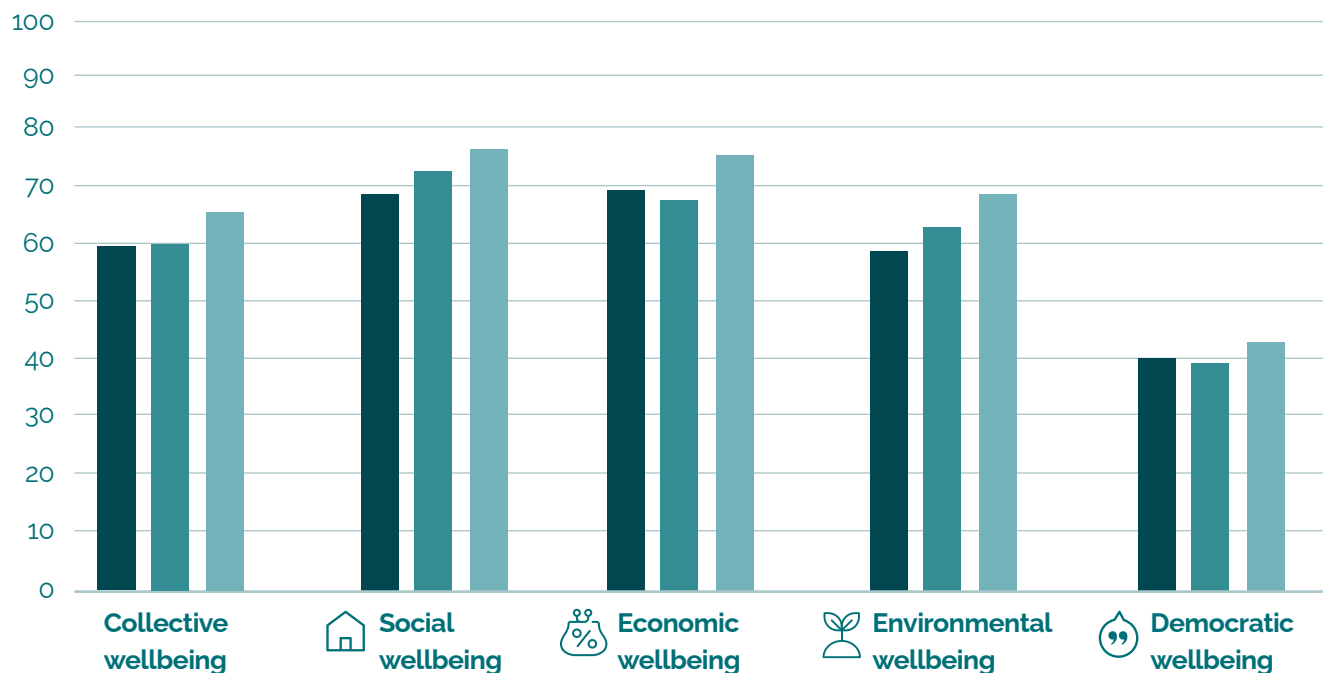


Chart 1: Older people have some of the highest levels of wellbeing while younger people experience multiple challenges to their wellbeing.

Democratic wellbeing

While all domains of wellbeing are lower than 100, the scores for the democratic wellbeing domain are particularly low. The Life in the UK index shows a widespread lack of trust in UK political systems and institutions. Therefore, political parties and governments across the UK must invest in fresh and sustained efforts to reduce alienation from local and national decision-making and increase opportunities for meaningful participation.

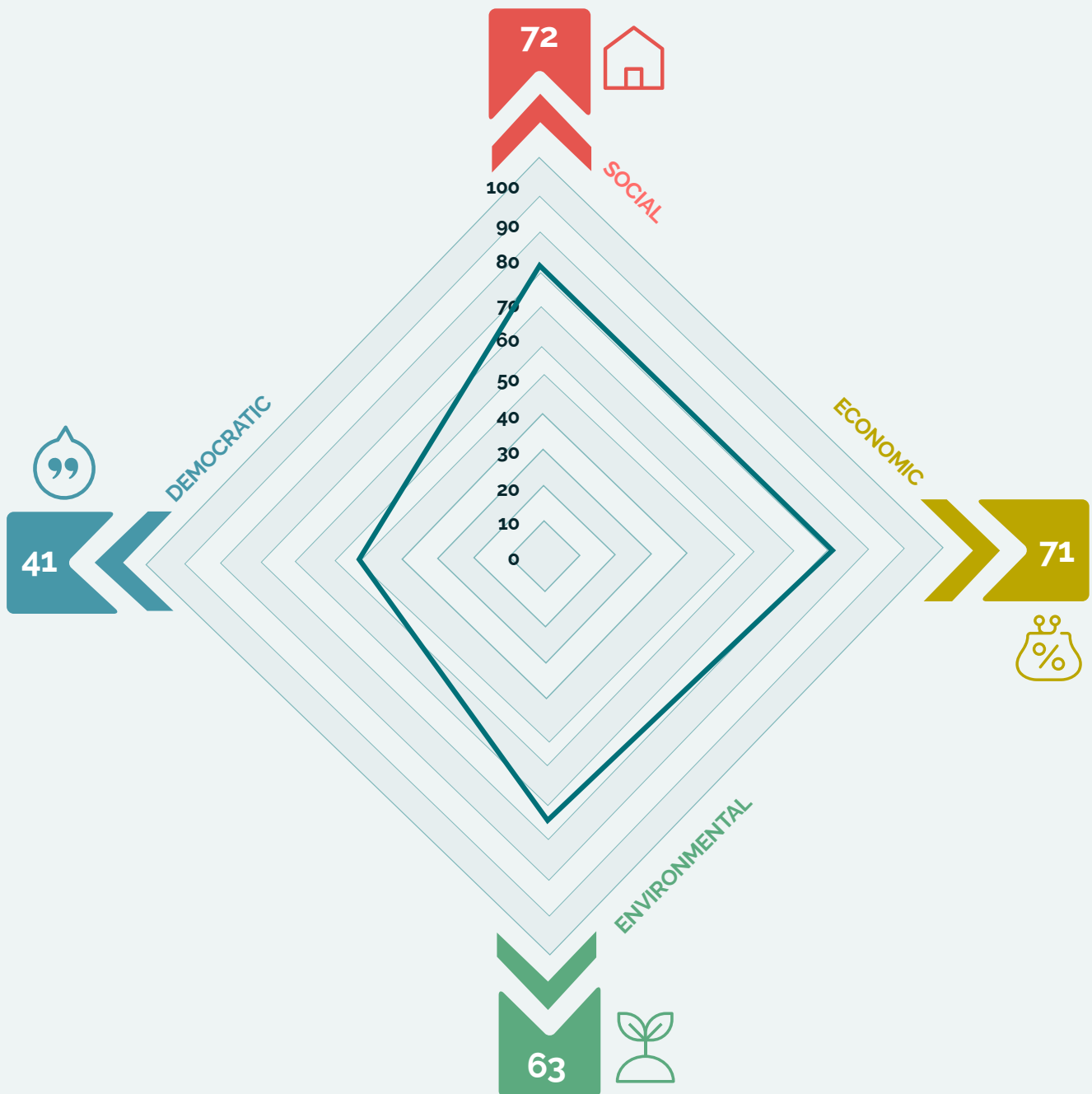


Chart 2: Democratic wellbeing is exceptionally low, indicating a crisis in trust in institutions across the UK.

Wellbeing metrics

Disabled

Not disabled

The Life in the UK index shows we can create a robust and comprehensive measure of social progress rather than rely on GDP data alone. This allows us to show the cumulative effect of inequalities on different groups, such as people with disabilities (see chart 3). Patterns of disadvantage exist for those with lower household incomes, those living in deprived neighbourhoods, those who identify as minority ethnic. **The UK Government should put similar measures of wellbeing at the centre of its decision-making.**

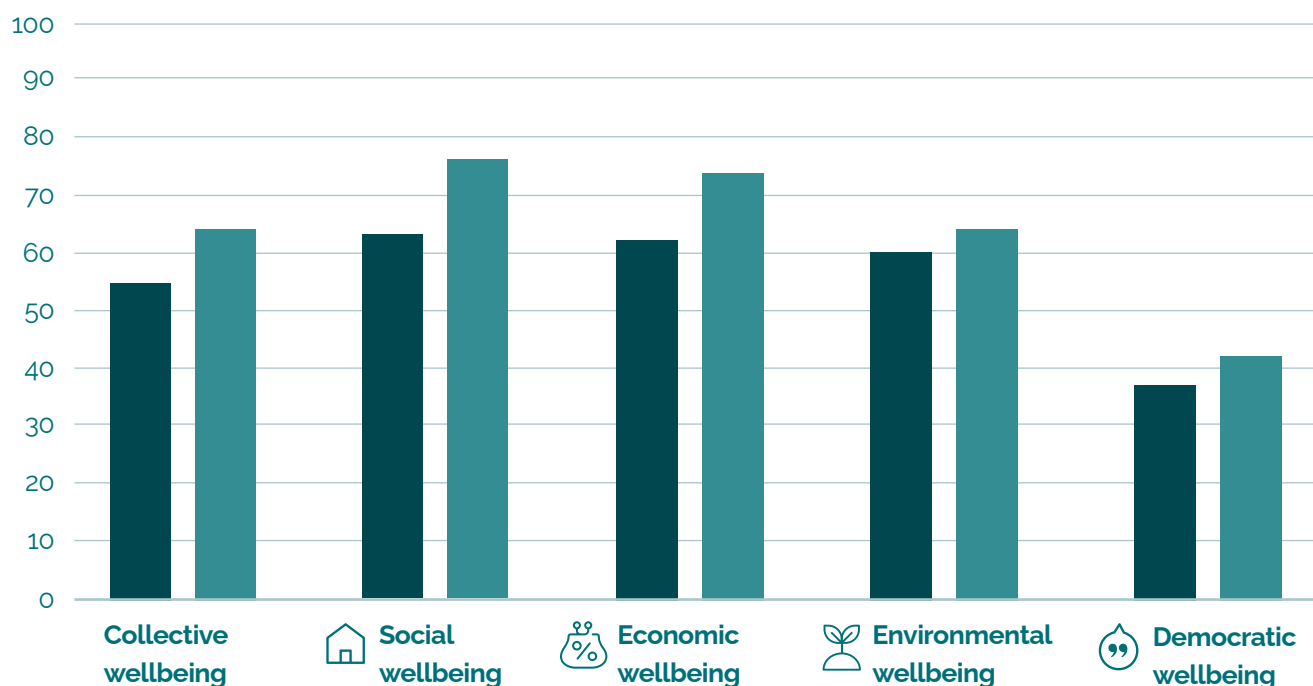


Chart 3: People who have a disability experience lower collective wellbeing scores.

Regional variations

Collective wellbeing scores are broadly similar across England, Scotland and Wales. There are, however, differences between English regions, with the North East recording the lowest collective wellbeing score (at 58 out of 100) compared to the highest in the South West (65 out of 100). More detailed information can be found in the [UK report](#).

Next steps

We will supplement the UK report with jurisdiction reports for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We have also carried out additional analysis on key demographics such as age, ethnicity, poverty and disability. These will be available on our website in due course.

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Carnegie UK is committed to producing the Life in the UK index for 2024 and 2025 to show whether the life is improving over time. If you would like to discuss these findings in more detail please contact the team via adam.milne@carnegieuk.org