

# Focus on Disability

# Life in the UK





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# Introduction

## Life in the UK measures the collective wellbeing of people across the UK.

We started with a simple question: can we bring together data from different aspects of our lives to give a richer picture of how we are really doing? And if so, can we compare experiences of different groups to better understand the inequalities in society?

This insights paper presents further detail on the inequalities we identified in wellbeing according to disability.<sup>1</sup>

### About the index >

Life in the UK provides:

- > a single score for collective wellbeing that will show if we are living better or worse over time.
- > a score for each of the four domains of wellbeing: social, economic, environmental and democratic.
- > collective wellbeing and domain scores for each of the nations and regions of the UK.
- > collective wellbeing and domain scores for different demographics.

How to read the wellbeing scores

The Life in the UK index has been designed to provide an overall assessment of 'how life is'. The overall index score is an average of the scores for each of the four wellbeing domains: social, economic, environmental and democratic. Higher scores indicate a higher level of wellbeing.

- > The index is based upon a 26-question survey of more than 6,900 people across the UK. The questions relate to the different domains of wellbeing and were tested with focus groups and an Advisory Group.
- > The survey was administered through the Ipsos Knowledge Panel, a random probability survey panel based on a random sample of UK households.
- > The overall collective wellbeing index score and the wellbeing domain scores have a value of between 0 and 100. Note that although the scores are a scale of 0 to 100, they are not percentages.
- > The collective wellbeing scores, domain scores and individual questions were analysed to compare aspects of life for different types of people and different parts of the UK.
- > We used factor analysis to construct the index scores and regression analysis to help us understand which demographic characteristics (including gender, age, income, disability, area deprivation, tenure and ethnicity) are most associated both with collective wellbeing overall and with social, economic, environmental and democratic wellbeing specifically.

In taking this approach, the Life in the UK index is unique. In the coming years we will be able to use this measure to track whether lives are improving. This year, our focus is on what the data has revealed about the extent of inequality in the UK.

Carnegie UK and Ipsos designed, developed and analysed the index in partnership. The recommendations outlined in the full report are Carnegie UK's alone. More information on the methodology is available [here](#).

<sup>1</sup> We understand that there are different ways to describe disability and that individuals have their own preferences about how they would like to describe themselves. In this document we have used the phrasing 'disabled people' and 'non-disabled people'. We do so as in the UK, disabled people's organisations prefer this terminology to 'people with disabilities' as it makes it clearer that people are actively 'disabled' by society and that society needs to change. The UN uses the phrase 'people with disabilities' as it wants to ensure disabled people are seen as people first and in terms of their disability second.

In the survey underpinning this work, disability is asked about in two questions: 1) Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more? (scale: Yes/No/Don't know/Prefer not to say). All who answer Yes at 1) are then asked: 2) Does your condition or illness, or any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities? (scale: Yes, a lot/Yes, a little/Not at all/Prefer not to say).

# Collective wellbeing

Carnegie UK has been involved in understanding and measuring wellbeing for over a decade. We have supported governments to take a broader view of social progress, to consider social, economic, environmental and democratic (SEED) outcomes as equally important in decision making, allocating resources and tackling the challenges of our time. Taken in turn, these domain scores evidence whether:

- everyone has access to the services and support that they need (social wellbeing)
- we all have a decent minimum living standard (economic wellbeing)
- we are all able to access a quality local environment and collectively live within our planet’s natural resources to secure the environment for future generations (environmental wellbeing)
- we all have a voice in the decisions that affect us (democratic wellbeing)

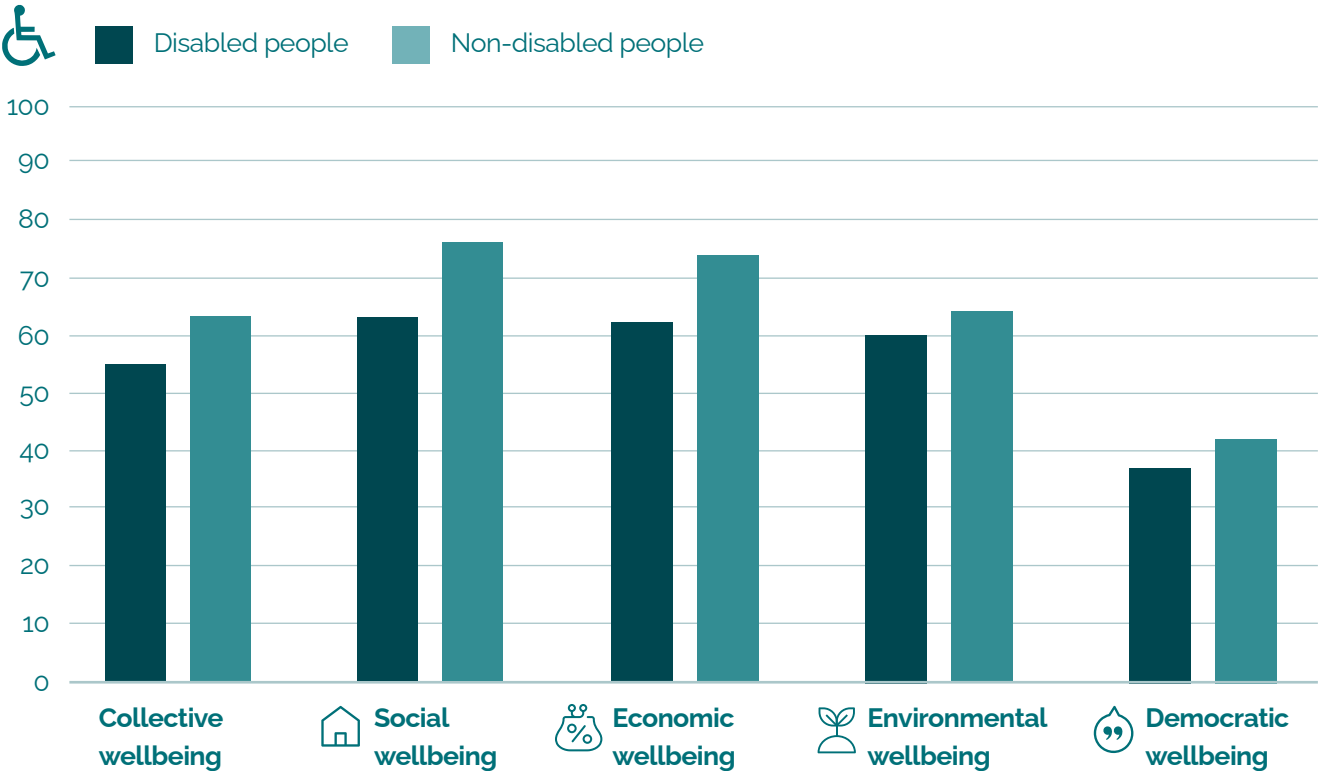
Our analysis found that disabled people consistently have a lower collective wellbeing score than non-disabled people. This gap is particularly large in relation to social and economic wellbeing.

Table 1: Collective wellbeing and domain scores by disability

	Disabled people (1693)	Non-disabled people (5063)
Collective wellbeing	55	64
Social wellbeing	63	76
Economic wellbeing	62	73
Environmental wellbeing	60	64
Democratic wellbeing	37	42



Chart 1: Collective wellbeing and domain scores by disability



 **Social wellbeing** 

Social wellbeing includes aspects from health and mental health to neighbourhood safety and relying on each other. A higher score for a particular demographic or geographic area means that we found higher levels of social wellbeing for those people or places.

We found that disabled people have a lower social wellbeing score than non-disabled people (63 compared with 76).

Looking at what drives this disparity in scores, disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to report poor health and mental health, feeling unsafe and not having someone to rely on in the neighbourhood, as well as being more likely to report experience of discrimination.

**Table 2:** Positive and negative responses to individual questions on social wellbeing (%)

	Disabled people (1693)	Non-disabled people (5063)
Self-reported health is good or very good	27	78
Self-reported health is bad or very bad	24	2
Self-reported mental health is good or very good	39	71
Self-reported mental health is bad or very bad	24	4
Feels safe/fairly safe walking alone in local neighbourhood after dark	58	76
Feels a bit unsafe/very unsafe walking alone in local neighbourhood after dark	40	24
Able to rely on someone if alone and needed help	62	69
Not able to rely on someone if alone and needed help	21	14
Easy to access a grocery shop or supermarket in person	78	93
Difficult to access a grocery shop or supermarket in person	12	2
Experience of being unfairly treated or discriminated against in the last 12 months	49	37
Not unfairly treated or discriminated against in the last 12 months	48	61



## Health and mental health

- Almost a quarter (24%) of disabled people report **very bad or bad health** in comparison to 2% of non-disabled people.
- Disabled people are six times more likely to report **very bad or bad mental health** compared with people who do not have a disability.

## Safety and community

- 2 in 5 (40%) of disabled people feel **unsafe walking alone** in the local neighbourhood after dark compared with a quarter (24%) of non-disabled people.
- Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to disagree that they have **someone to rely on** in the neighbourhood if alone and needing help.
- Disabled people are six times more likely to report that they find it difficult to **access a grocery shop** or supermarket in person compared to non-disabled people.

## Discrimination

- Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to report having experienced **discrimination** in the 12 months prior to being surveyed.





## Economic wellbeing



Economic wellbeing includes access to a decent income, affordability, financial resilience, job opportunities and skills. A higher score for a particular demographic or geographic area means that we found higher levels of economic wellbeing for those people or places.

We found that disabled people have a lower economic wellbeing score than non-disabled people (62 compared with 73).

Looking at what drives this disparity in scores, disabled people are more likely to be dissatisfied with their education, skills and job opportunities compared with non-disabled people. When it comes to what people can afford, disabled people score lower across the board. They are more likely than non-disabled people to be unable to keep their homes warm, provide enough food for everyone in their household, take a week's annual holiday away from home, socialise once a month outside the home and meet an unexpected but necessary expense of £850.

**Table 3:** Positive and negative responses to individual questions on economic wellbeing (%)

	Disabled people (1693)	Non-disabled people (5063)
<b>Satisfied with education and skills</b>	69	84
<b>Not satisfied with education and skills</b>	11	5
<b>Satisfied with job opportunities in the local area</b>	24	33
<b>Not satisfied with job opportunities in the local area</b>	31	21
<b>Can afford to keep home adequately warm</b>	61	77
<b>Cannot afford to keep home adequately warm</b>	28	13
<b>Can afford to buy enough food for everyone in the household</b>	81	91
<b>Cannot afford to buy enough food for everyone in the household</b>	10	4
<b>Can afford to pay for a week's annual holiday away from home (not staying with relatives)</b>	52	73
<b>Cannot afford to pay for a week's annual holiday away from home (not staying with relatives)</b>	36	18
<b>Can afford to socialise with friends or family outside of the home once a month if desired</b>	67	83
<b>Cannot afford to socialise with friends or family outside of the home once a month if desired</b>	21	9
<b>Can afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of £850</b>	48	65
<b>Cannot afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of £850</b>	42	25



### Education, skills and job opportunities

- Disabled people are twice as likely to report dissatisfaction with their **education and skills** compared with non-disabled people.
- Disabled people are more likely to report dissatisfaction with **job opportunities** in their local area.

### Affordability: absolute poverty

We included two measures that relate to absolute poverty – the ability to keep one's home adequately warm and the ability to buy enough food for everyone in the household. We found that:

- Disabled people are over twice as likely to disagree that they can keep their **homes adequately warm** compared to non-disabled people.
- Disabled people are over twice as likely to disagree that they can afford enough **food for everyone in their household**.

### Affordability: relative poverty

The focus groups that informed survey design were clear that when it comes to money, it is also important to be able to afford to 'make memories' and enjoy life. Following from this, we included two measures that relate to relative poverty – the ability to afford a week's annual holiday away from home (not staying with relatives) and to socialise with friends or family outside of the home once a month if desired. We found that:

- Disabled people are twice as likely to disagree that they can afford a **week's annual holiday** away from home compared to non-disabled people.
- Disabled people are over twice as likely to disagree that they can afford to **socialise outside of the home** once a month if they choose to do so compared to non-disabled people.

### Affordability: an emergency expense

We asked whether people could afford an unexpected but necessary expense of £850 as a loose estimate of whether people had financial security or a degree of wealth. We found that:

- Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to disagree that they could afford an **unexpected but necessary expense of £850**.



## Environmental wellbeing

Environmental wellbeing includes access to green and blue spaces, the quality of the local environment and collectively living within the planet's natural resources. A higher score for a particular demographic or geographic area means that we found higher levels of environmental wellbeing for those people or places.

We found that disabled people have a lower environmental wellbeing score than non-disabled people (60 compared with 64).

Looking at what drives this disparity in scores, disabled people are more likely to be dissatisfied with the quality of local green or open spaces and with efforts to preserve the environment, and they are more likely to report major or moderate problems with litter and noise.

**Table 4:** Positive and negative responses to individual questions on environmental wellbeing (%)

	Disabled people (1693)	Non-disabled people (5063)
Satisfied with the quality of the public, green or open space in local area	64	73
Dissatisfied with the quality of the public, green or open space in local area	15	11
Satisfied with efforts to preserve the environment in the UK	20	27
Not satisfied with efforts to preserve the environment in the UK	50	43
Major/moderate problems with noise	25	20
Minor/no problems with noise	74	80
Major/moderate problems with litter or rubbish on the street	37	32
Minor/no problems with litter or rubbish on the street	62	67



### Local green space

- Disabled people are more likely to be dissatisfied with the **public, green or open space in their local area** nearest to their home compared to non-disabled people.

### Efforts to preserve the environment

- Disabled people are more likely to report dissatisfaction with **efforts to preserve the environment in the UK** than non-disabled people.

### Problems with noise, air pollution and litter

- A quarter of disabled people experience major or moderate problems with **noise**, compared to one in five non-disabled people.
- Disabled people are more likely to experience major or moderate problems with **litter** compared to non-disabled people.



## Democratic wellbeing >

Democratic wellbeing includes participation, trust in key institutions and ability to influence decisions at a national and local level. A higher score for a particular demographic or geographic area means that we found higher levels of democratic wellbeing for those people or places.

Low scores for democratic wellbeing are common across the population. Analysis shows that demographic variables explain less of the variation between people's democratic wellbeing scores compared with other wellbeing domains. This reflects that there are wider issues influencing respondents' democratic wellbeing (for example, trust and influence) that go beyond core demographic characteristics.

Nevertheless, analysis shows that disabled people have a lower democratic wellbeing score than non-disabled people (37 compared with 42).

Looking at what drives this disparity in scores, disabled people have lower levels of trust in the UK and local government, legal systems and courts, the police, news media and banks.

**Table 5:** Responses to individual questions on democratic wellbeing (%)

	Disabled people (1693)	Non-disabled people (5063)
<b>Low trust in the UK Government</b>	59	49
<b>Low trust in local councils</b>	30	24
<b>Low trust in the legal system and courts</b>	22	14
<b>Low trust in the police</b>	23	18
<b>Low trust in news media</b>	44	36
<b>Low trust in banks</b>	20	15
<b>I can influence decisions affecting the UK</b>	4	6
<b>I cannot influence decisions affecting the UK</b>	79	72
<b>I can influence decisions affecting the local area</b>	10	15
<b>I cannot influence decisions affecting the local area</b>	62	54



### UK Government: trust and ability to influence

- Disabled people are more likely to report low levels of **trust in the UK Government** than non-disabled people.
- Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to disagree that they can **influence decisions affecting the UK** as a whole.

### Local councils: trust and ability to influence

- Disabled people are more likely to report low levels of **trust in local councils** than non-disabled people.
- Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to disagree that they can **influence decisions affecting their local area**.

### Law and order: legal system, courts and the police

- Disabled people are more likely to report low levels of **trust in the legal system and courts** than non-disabled people.
- Disabled people are more likely to report low levels of **trust in the police than non-disabled people**.

### Other institutions: news media and banks

- Disabled people are more likely to report low levels of **trust in the news media** than non-disabled people.
- Disabled people are more likely to report low levels of **trust in banks** than non-disabled people.



# Life in the UK



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