

Life in the UK 2025



The Life in the UK Index

Carnegie UK's Life in the UK wellbeing index measures collective wellbeing across the UK. It is based on what people in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales tell us about their lives.

The purpose of this index is to assist governments and other decision makers across the UK to focus their attention on the things that really matter to people and to help us understand whether we are collectively living better or worse over time. The index also helps identify where progress is being made and the areas of our lives that require policy intervention.

- The evidence for the 2025 index was collected via a 26-question survey of 7,106 respondents using [Ipsos' KnowledgePanel](#), a random probability survey panel with selection based on a random sample of UK households. The fieldwork was carried out between 8th and 14th May 2025.
- Questions are categorised into four domains to measure people's social, economic, environmental, and democratic wellbeing. The average of these scores results in the overall collective wellbeing score.
- The overall collective wellbeing index score and the wellbeing domain scores have a value of between 0 and 100. It should be noted these index scores are derived scores and not percentages.
- The collective wellbeing scores, domain scores, and individual questions were all analysed to compare aspects of life for different groups of people in different parts of the UK.
- Regression analysis is used to help understand which demographic characteristics are most associated both with collective wellbeing overall and with social, economic, environmental and democratic wellbeing, specifically. We have used this analysis to structure the discussion of the demographic characteristics impacting on wellbeing throughout this report.
- Throughout the report, figures with an asterisk (*) beside them are statistically significant changes, tested to 95%, which means that we can have a high level of confidence that these represent meaningful changes over time or differences between groups of people.

Many changes have happened in the world since we last conducted fieldwork in May 2024. Of particular note to the 2025 index, fieldwork was conducted in the week following local elections in 24 English council areas and six mayoral elections. This is also the first Life in the UK index since Labour won the UK general election in 2024 and formed the first Labour government in 14 years.

Carnegie UK has been working with leading social research agency Ipsos since the inception of Life in the UK, with Ipsos conducting the fieldwork and analysis of the survey. More information on the methodology used to create the index and the full technical report are available [here](#).

Carnegie UK is committed to following the principles of the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) in the production of our Life in the UK index. We outline how we adhere to these principles in our [Voluntary Statement of Compliance](#).

Carnegie UK works to put wellbeing at the heart of decision making. This report provides an independent and authoritative overview of collective wellbeing in the UK in 2025. We hope it makes the case for better measures of social progress and highlights where policy intervention is urgently required.

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> Introduction: Life in the UK 2025

At Carnegie UK, we are delighted to present the third edition of our Life in the UK index, a landmark research programme we have now committed to delivering until at least 2030.

This year's findings offer a nuanced picture of collective wellbeing across the UK, with persistent challenges, but also some emerging signs of hope.

The UK's overall collective wellbeing score sits at **62 out of 100**, largely unchanged from recent years. While this stagnation is once again concerning, we do now see some modest improvements in important policy areas. Economic wellbeing has edged up to **72** since 2023, with more people saying they are able to afford to heat their homes and socialise outside their homes, small but meaningful shifts.

Social wellbeing stands at **73**, and within this we have seen some slight improvements in mental and general health. Environmental wellbeing holds steady at **63**, albeit with growing dissatisfaction around noise pollution and litter.

Once again, however, it is the democratic wellbeing of people across the UK that stands out as the cause for most concern, recording the lowest overall score at just **41 out of 100**.

Underlying all these results is the inescapable fact that significant and damaging inequalities persist across all parts of the UK. Disabled people, those in social housing, and individuals in more deprived areas continue to report significantly lower wellbeing across all domains. These gaps are not new, but they remain urgent. Our data shows that our collective wellbeing is shaped by an interplay of income, housing, age, disability, ethnicity, and place.

We believe that everyone should have what they need to live well together. The improvements we've seen this year, however small, are a testament to the power of policy and practice to drive change in people's lives. But the scale of the challenges highlighted in this year's index demands bolder and more joined-up action across government.

We hope that this report goes some way to ensuring that those with the power to change things, from the local to the national, have the insight they need to put wellbeing at the heart of decision-making and deliver policies that meaningfully improve people's lives both now and into the future.



Sarah Davidson
CEO, Carnegie UK

Our collective wellbeing in 2025

Now in its third year, the Life in the UK index is beginning to tell a longer-term story of what life is like for people who live in the UK. Despite some signs of hope, in 2025 life in the UK predominantly remains characterised by persistent inequality and wellbeing stagnation.

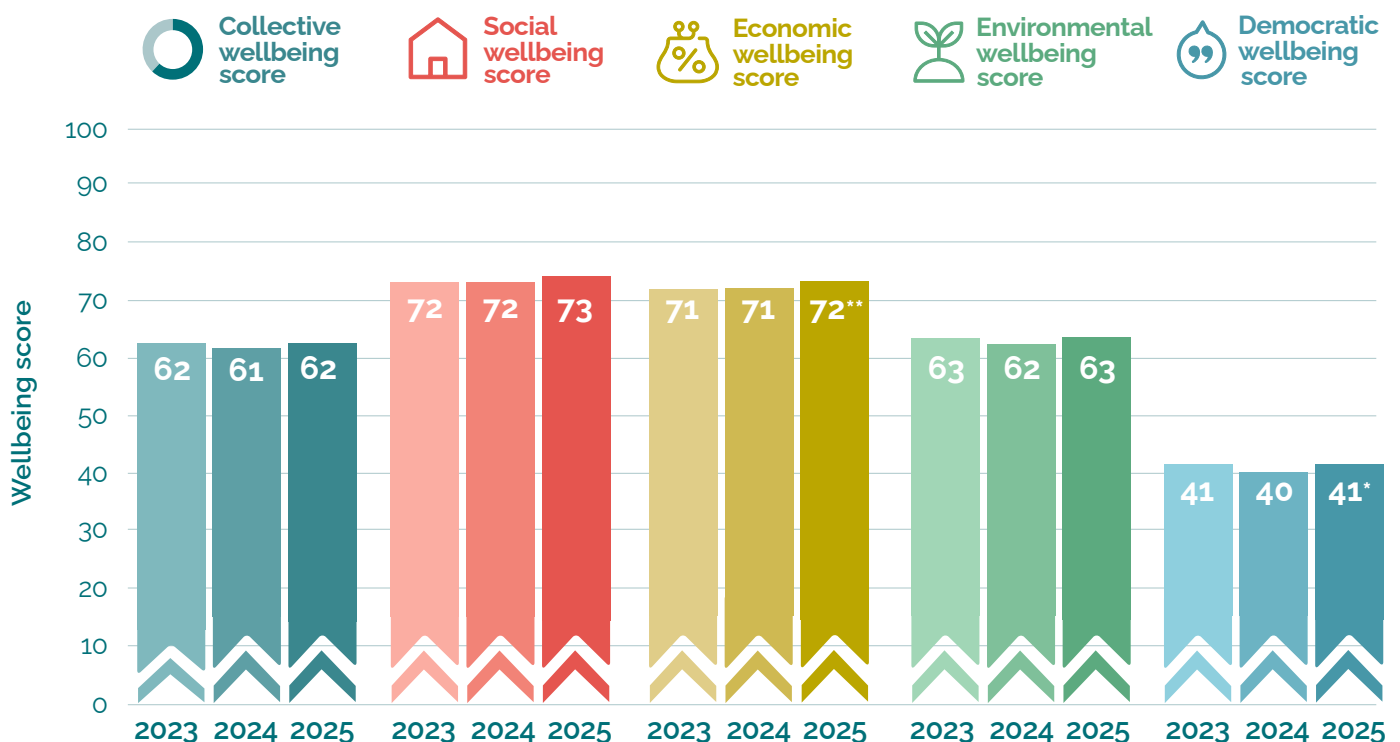
Overview of scores

The UK's collective wellbeing score for 2025 stands at **62** out of a possible 100. Although this number has fluctuated between 61 and 62 over the past three years, there has been no statistically significant change in the overall score.



Notably, some domains have demonstrated progress: since 2023, economic wellbeing has registered a statistically significant increase of one point, reaching 72. Similarly, democratic wellbeing has improved in comparison to 2024, returning to its 2023 value, primarily due to heightened trust in the UK Government. It should be emphasised, however, that despite this improvement, the democratic wellbeing score remains critically low at 41, the lowest among the four domains evaluated in this report.

Enhancing collective wellbeing across the UK is a gradual process. Shifts in the overall measure are likely to materialise more slowly than those observed in individual domains, demographic groups, or jurisdictions, as collective wellbeing is shaped by a broad array of factors that may not (and are unlikely to) advance simultaneously.



*Denotes statistically significant vs 2024 result, ** denotes statistically significant vs 2023 result.

Understanding what influences collective wellbeing

This year's results point to where change is already happening and where more work needs to be done to improve the wellbeing of everyone in the UK. The small shifts we have already seen show that change is possible, and that effective policy and practice interventions can create the foundations for good wellbeing.

The index tells us that people's experience of life in the UK varies substantially according to their circumstances, highlighting the reality of inequality between people and within communities across the UK.

In 2025 the following three factors stand out as particularly significant in predicting a lower or higher collective wellbeing score. These were also particularly significant in 2024: >

- **The higher the household income, the higher the collective wellbeing score.** People with annual household incomes of over £100,000 have a collective wellbeing score of **68**. This is 12 points higher than for those with an annual household income under £26,000, who have a collective wellbeing score of **56**. People with an annual household income of between £52,000 and £99,999 are also likely to have some of the highest collective wellbeing scores (**66**).
- **As the level of area deprivation worsens, collective wellbeing decreases.** People who live in the most deprived areas (IMD1*) have an average collective wellbeing score of **55**. This is 12 points lower than for people living in the least deprived areas (**67**).
- **Being disabled is strongly associated with lower wellbeing.** Disabled people have an average collective wellbeing score of **55**, which is nine points lower than for people who are not disabled (**64**).

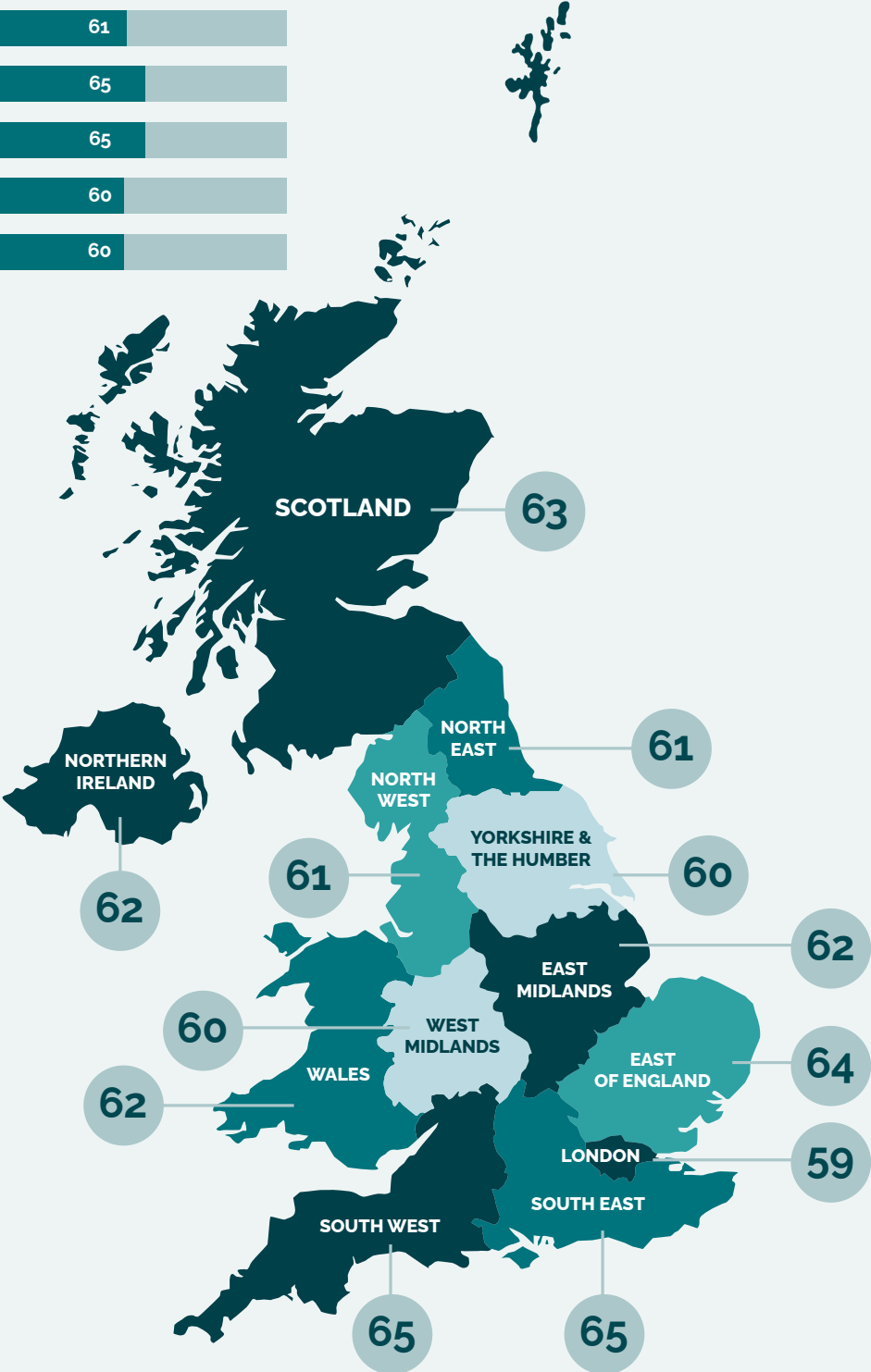
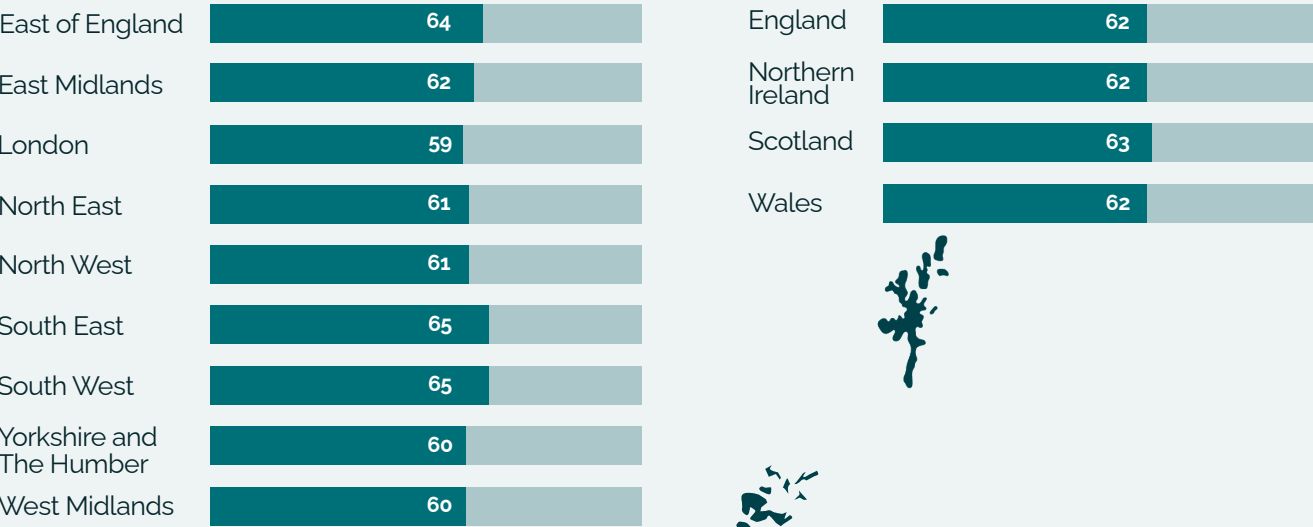
The following are also notable influences on people's collective wellbeing: >

- **Living in social housing:** social tenants have a collective wellbeing score of **52**. This is 13 points lower than for homeowners (**65**). Those who rent privately have a collective wellbeing score of **57**.
- **Age:** people aged 55 and over have a collective wellbeing score of **66**. This is seven points higher than for 16- to 34-year-olds (**59**).
- **The number of children in a household:** people with three or more children under the age of 16 in the household have an average collective wellbeing score of **56**. This is seven points lower than for people with no children (**63**), and four points lower than for people with one or two children (each **60**).
- **Living in a rural area:** people who live in rural areas have a collective wellbeing score of **67**. People living in urban areas have a lower collective wellbeing score of **61**.
- **Gender:** men have a collective wellbeing score of **63**, compared to **61** for women.
- **Ethnicity:** People from an ethnic minority group (including White minorities), have a collective wellbeing score of **58**, compared to **63** for those of White British ethnicity.

All of the above were also notable influences on collective wellbeing in 2024.

* Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) is a measure of relative deprivation for small, fixed geographic areas of the UK. IMD classifies these areas into five quintiles based on relative disadvantage, with quintile 1 ('IMD1') being the most deprived and quintile 5 ('IMD5') being the least deprived.

Collective wellbeing scores by region and jurisdiction



The full visualisation of this map can be found on our website [here](#).

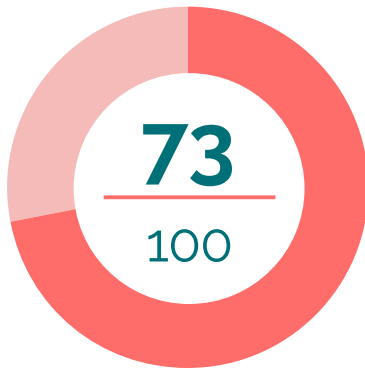


Social wellbeing in 2025

We all have the support and services we need to thrive.



100



The UK scores 73 out of a possible 100 for social wellbeing.

Social wellbeing is about everyone being able to achieve their potential and contribute to society because they have their basic needs met.

Our basic needs include having access to health and social care, education, housing, transport, digital resources and childcare.

To determine trends in social wellbeing across the UK, we asked questions about access to public services, community relationships, safety and community cohesion, and self-reported health and mental health.

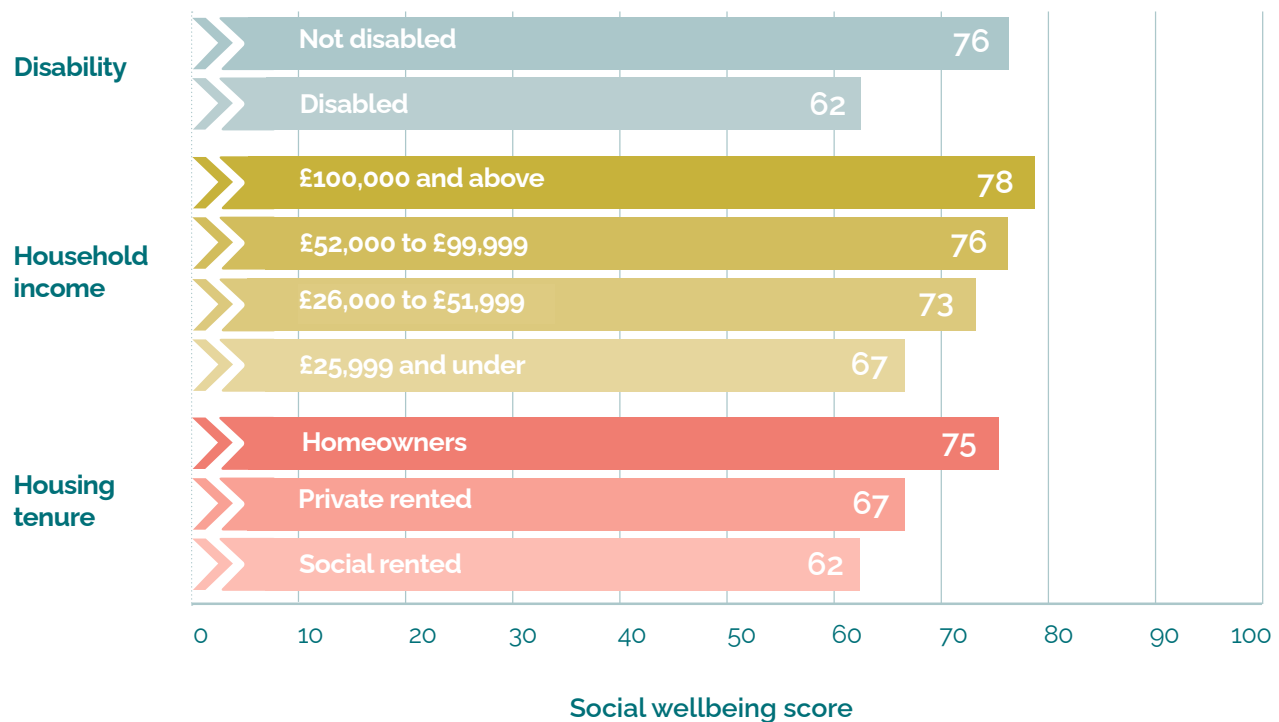
The groups most likely to experience **high** levels of social wellbeing in the UK in 2025 remain the same as those identified in previous years: >

- People with an annual household income of above £100,000, who have an average social wellbeing score of **78**. This is 11 points higher than for those with an income of up to £25,999 (**67**).
- People living in the UK's least deprived areas (IMD5), who have a social wellbeing score of **77**. This is 11 points higher than the score of people living in the most deprived areas (IMD1) (**66**).
- People aged over 55, who have a social wellbeing score of **76**. This is seven points higher than the social wellbeing score of people aged 16 to 34 (**69**).
- Men, who have a social wellbeing score of **74**. This is three points higher than for women (**71**).

The groups most likely to experience **low** levels of social wellbeing in the UK in 2025 are: >

- Disabled people, who have a social wellbeing score of **62**. This is 14 points lower than the average score of people who are not disabled (**76**).
- People living in social housing, who have a social wellbeing score of **62**. This is 13 points lower than the score of homeowners (**75**).
- People from an ethnic minority group (including White minorities), who have a social wellbeing score of **67**. This is seven points lower than for those of White British ethnicity (**74**).
- People living in urban areas, who have a social wellbeing score of **71**. This is six points lower than for those living in rural areas (**77**).

Factors that have the biggest impact on social wellbeing



Social wellbeing - standout statistics

Several social wellbeing statistics have changed slightly in 2025.

- 68% report that their general health is good or very good, and 65% that their mental health is good or very good, each three percentage points higher than in 2023.
- More than two in five (44%) have experienced discrimination in the last 12 months, four percentage points higher than in 2023.
- 34% report that it is easy to get a GP appointment at a time when they need one, three percentage points higher than in 2024. Almost half (48%) still say that they find it difficult.

Summary

The UK's social wellbeing score of **73 out of 100** in 2025 offers cautious optimism but it also demands urgent attention.

We are seeing small but meaningful improvements in people's reported general health and mental wellbeing: these are welcome signs that progress is possible. However, the data continues to reveal deep and persistent inequalities. Disabled people, those on low incomes and social renters consistently report lower levels of social wellbeing. The downward pull of these factors remains significant and is not weakening.

This is not just a matter of individual hardship. It is a systemic issue that undermines our collective wellbeing. When basic needs, such as access to healthcare, housing, education, and community support are not met equitably, we all lose out.

The evidence is clear: income, place, and circumstance continue to shape people's ability to live well. People with higher incomes, older adults and those in less deprived areas report significantly better outcomes. Meanwhile, those facing disadvantage are being left behind.

Carnegie UK believes that everyone should have what they need to live well together. Social wellbeing is the foundation of a thriving, resilient society.

The small improvements we see in 2025, which are particularly evident in how healthy people feel, show that change is possible with the right policy focus and sustained effort. But the scale of the challenge requires bold leadership and a shared purpose across government and civil society.



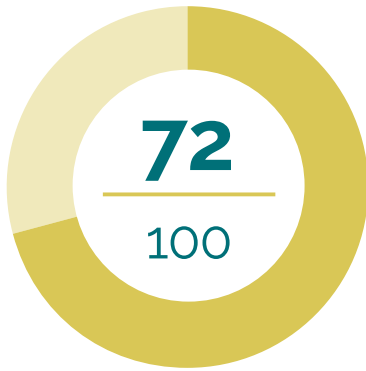


Economic wellbeing in 2025

We all have a decent minimum living standard.

72

100



The UK scores **72** out of a possible **100** for economic wellbeing.

Economic wellbeing means that everyone has a decent minimum living standard and can absorb financial shocks. This includes access to a decent income, affordability, financial resilience, job opportunities and skills.

To determine trends in economic wellbeing across the UK, we asked questions about skills and job availability, and the affordability of essential items like food and fuel.

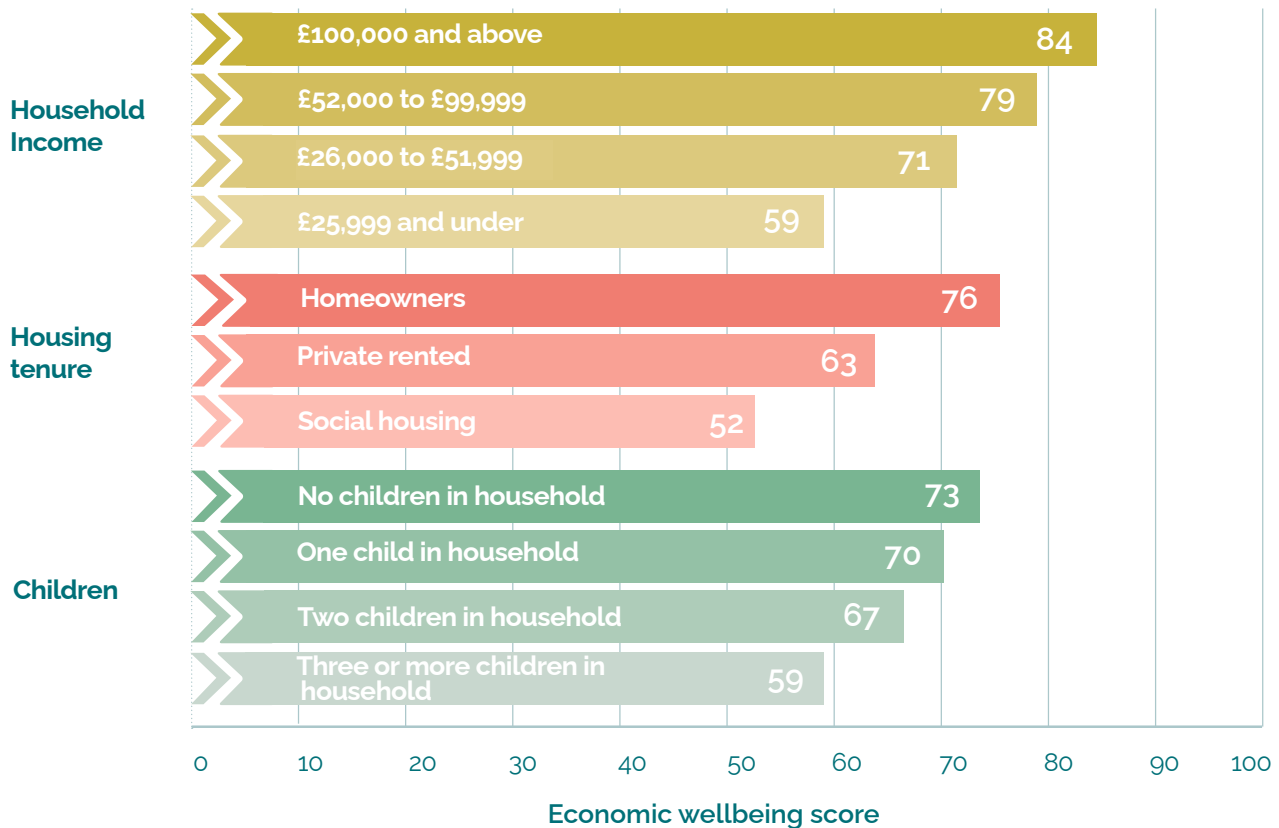
The people most likely to experience **high** levels of economic wellbeing in the UK in 2025 are: >

- People with an annual household income of above £100,000, who have an average economic wellbeing score of **84**. This is 25 points higher than for people with an annual household income of up to £25,999 (**59**). People with a household income of £52,000 to £99,999 have an economic wellbeing score of **79**.
- People who live in the least deprived areas, who have an economic wellbeing score of **78**. This is 15 points higher than the score of people living in the most deprived areas (**63**).
- People over the age of 55, who have an economic wellbeing score of **76**. This is seven points higher than for people aged 16 to 34 (**69**).
- Men, who have an economic wellbeing score of **73**. This is two points higher than the economic wellbeing score of women (**71**).

The groups most likely to experience **low** levels of economic wellbeing in the UK in 2025 are: >

- People living in social housing, who have an economic wellbeing score of **52**. This is 24 points lower than the score for homeowners (**76**).
- People with three or more children under the age of 16 in the household, who have an average economic wellbeing score of **59**. This is 14 points lower than for people with no children (**73**), 11 points lower than for people with one child (**70**), and eight points lower than for people with two children (**67**).
- Disabled people, who have an economic wellbeing score of **61**. This is 14 points lower than the average score of people who are not disabled (**75**).

Factors that have the biggest impact on economic wellbeing



Economic wellbeing - standout statistics

With the exception of being dissatisfied with job opportunities in the local area, a number of small improvements can be seen in economic wellbeing over time.

- 79% agree that they can afford to keep their home warm, two percentage points higher than in 2024, and six percentage points higher than in 2023.
- 62% agree that their household could afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of £850, unchanged from previous years.
- Just over a quarter (26%) are satisfied with the availability of job opportunities for people in their local area, five percentage points lower than in 2023 and 2024.

Summary

Economic wellbeing in the UK has shown small signs of improvement over the past year, with modest gains in people's ability to meet essential needs and participate in everyday life. However, these gains are not evenly distributed, and longstanding inequalities continue to shape people's experiences.

Economic wellbeing is not solely defined by having a certain level of income. It encompasses the capacity to afford basic necessities, withstand financial shocks, access secure and fulfilling employment, and develop the skills needed for future opportunities. This year's findings reflect a complex picture: while some individuals report greater financial stability and improved living conditions, others remain at risk of exclusion and hardship.

Unsurprisingly, people living in households with higher incomes continue to report a higher sense of economic security than those on lower incomes, who experience greater difficulty in meeting day-to-day costs and planning for the future.

Individuals living in areas with lower levels of deprivation tend to report more positive experiences, while those in more disadvantaged communities face ongoing challenges. Similarly, people living in social housing often face greater financial strain and fewer opportunities than homeowners.

Family composition and disability further influence economic wellbeing. Larger families, particularly those with three or more children under the age of 16, often face increased financial pressure. Disabled people continue to report lower levels of economic wellbeing than people who are not disabled.

Despite these challenges, there are encouraging signs. More people feel able to keep their homes warm and participate in social activities. These improvements suggest that some aspects of economic life are becoming more manageable for a broader segment of the population. However, concerns remain and dissatisfaction with local job opportunities is rising.

If we are to address these issues, it should be our aspiration that everyone has access to fair work with a decent income, so that no one falls below a dignified living standard that enables them not just to survive but to prosper.



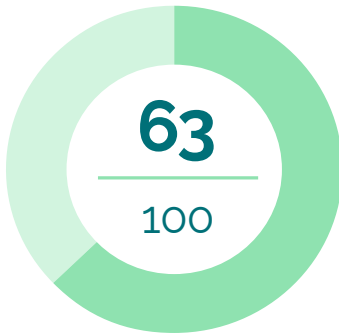


Environmental wellbeing in 2025

We all live within the planet's natural resources.



100



The UK scores 63 out of a possible 100 for environmental wellbeing.

Environmental wellbeing means that everyone has access to green and blue spaces and collectively we live within the planet's natural resources, protecting the environment for future generations.

To determine trends in environmental wellbeing across the UK, we asked questions about access to and the quality of local parks, rivers and other green and blue spaces, and about noise pollution, air pollution, and litter in local areas. We also asked about levels of satisfaction with efforts to preserve the environment.

The people most likely to experience **high** levels of environmental wellbeing in the UK in 2025 are: >

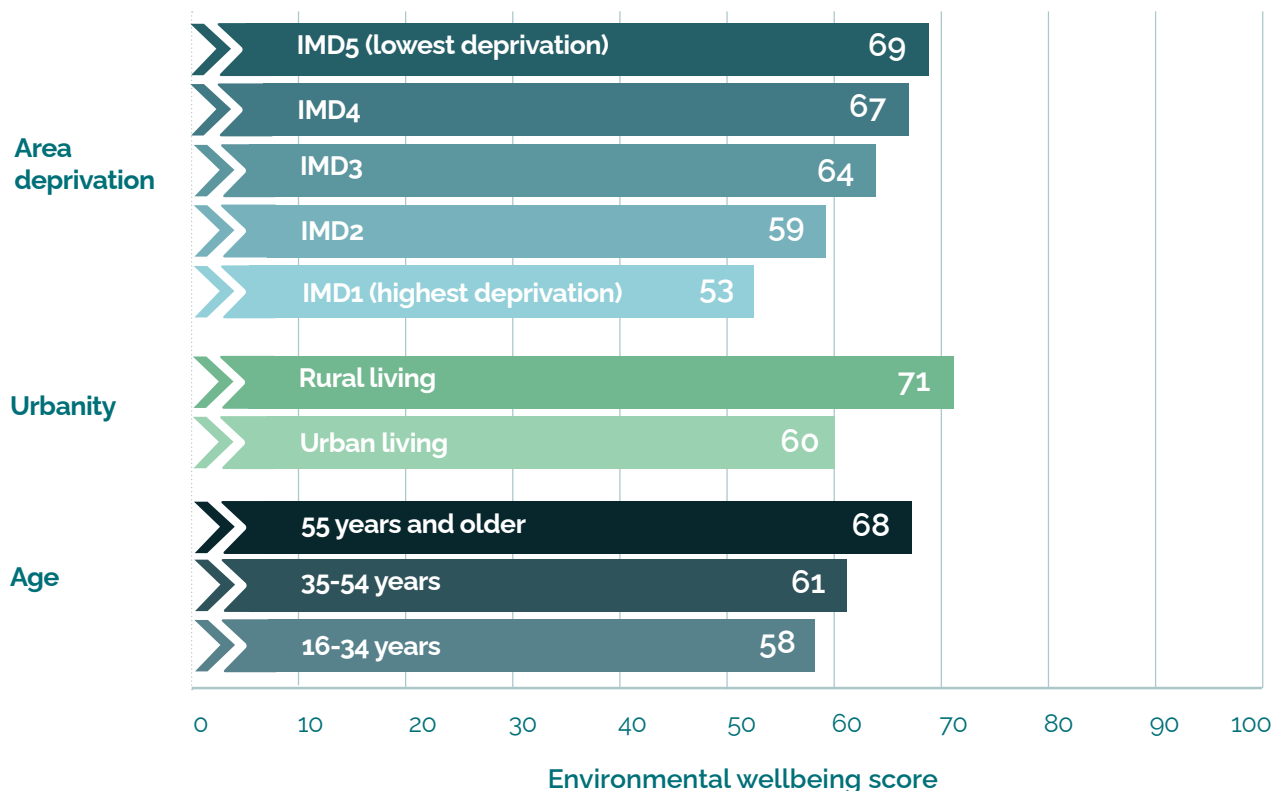
- People who live in the least deprived areas (IMD5), who have an environmental wellbeing score of **69**. This is 16 points higher than for those in the most deprived areas (IMD1) (**53**).
- People aged over 55, who have an environmental wellbeing score of **68**. This is 10 points higher than the score of 16- to 34-year-olds (**58**).

The people most likely to experience **low** levels of environmental wellbeing in the UK in 2025 are: >

- People living in urban areas, who have an environmental wellbeing score of **60**. This is 11 points lower than for those living in rural areas (**71**).
- Disabled people, who have an environmental wellbeing score of **59**. This is five points lower than for people who are not disabled, who have an environmental wellbeing score of **64**.
- People from an ethnic minority group (including White minorities), who have an environmental score of **57**. This is seven points lower than for those of White British ethnicity (**64**).

There is no notable difference by income alone on this domain.

Factors that have the biggest impact on environmental wellbeing



Environmental wellbeing - standout statistics

There has been little overall change, but dissatisfaction remains high.

- Many people experience issues with litter (**83%**), noise (**64%**) and air quality (**52%**) in their neighbourhood. The proportion of people experiencing problems with litter and with noise pollution are each three percentage points higher than in 2023.
- 40%** are dissatisfied with current efforts to preserve the environment. This dissatisfaction has lessened since 2024, when it was 44%.
- 12%** are dissatisfied with the quality of their nearest local public, green or open space, the same as in previous years.

Summary

Like many of the other domains in this report, this year's findings for environmental wellbeing indicate that it is shaped by a range of factors, including geography, age, whether or not a person is disabled, and ethnicity.

Individuals who live in the least deprived areas report better environmental conditions than those in the most deprived. Older people once more report higher levels of environmental wellbeing than younger people. Urban residents face greater exposure to negative environmental factors than those in rural areas, and disabled people consistently report lower levels of satisfaction with their local environment. These disparities have remained largely unchanged over the past year.

Ethnic inequalities are also evident. Respondents from ethnic minority groups (including White minorities) report lower levels of environmental wellbeing than those of White British ethnicity.

Across the UK, a substantial proportion of the population continues to report problems with litter, noise, and air pollution in their local areas. Except for air pollution, these issues have become slightly worse over the past year.

There are clear key demographic differences in environmental wellbeing, but the widespread nature of environmental problems and dissatisfaction with efforts to preserve the environment also point to a common understanding among people across the UK that our current environmental conditions are not good enough. Two fifths of people feel dissatisfied with efforts being taken to preserve the environment in the UK. This would suggest that there is appetite across the country for bold action in this space.





Democratic wellbeing in 2025

We all have a voice in decisions that affect us.

41

100



The UK scores 41 out of a possible 100 for democratic wellbeing.

Democratic wellbeing is about everyone having a voice in decisions that affect them. This means having local and national leaders who support participation, foster trust, and encourage diversity.

To understand democratic wellbeing in the UK in 2025, we asked questions about levels of trust in local, regional and national government(s) as well as other national institutions, perceptions of personal ability to influence decisions, and experiences of discrimination.

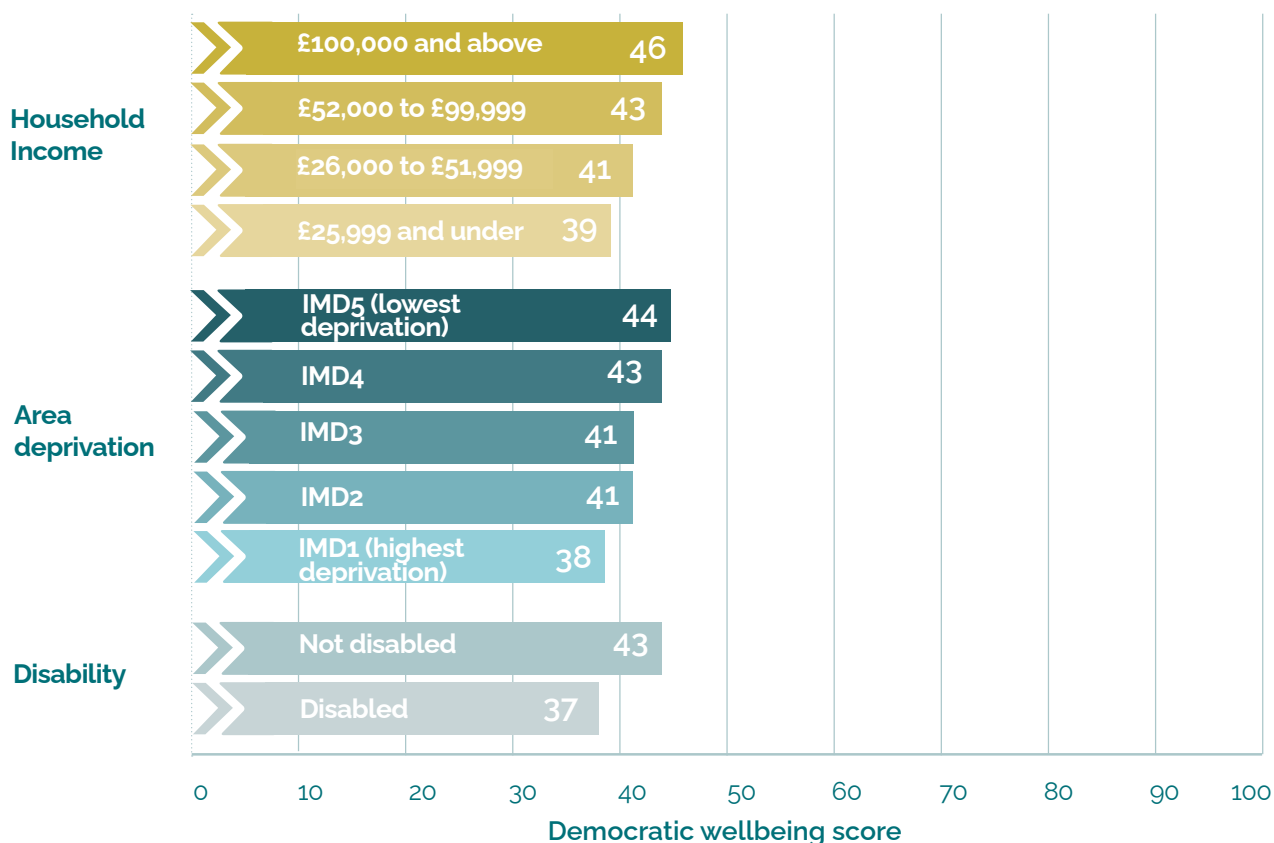
While markedly low across the board, and the lowest of any of our four wellbeing domains, the groups with the **highest** levels of democratic wellbeing in the UK in 2025 are: >

- People with an annual household income of above £100,000, who have an average democratic wellbeing score of **46**. This is seven points higher than for people with an annual household income of up to £25,999 (**39**).
- People living in the least deprived areas (IMD5), who have a democratic wellbeing score of **44**. This is six points higher than the score of people living in the UK's most deprived areas (**38**).
- People over the age of 55, who have a democratic wellbeing score of **43**. This is two points higher than for people aged 16 to 34 (**41**).

The people most likely to experience **low** levels of democratic wellbeing in the UK in 2025 are: >

- Disabled people, who have a democratic wellbeing score of **37**. This is six points lower than for people who are not disabled (**43**).
- People living in social housing, who have a democratic wellbeing score of **37**. This is six points lower than for people who are homeowners (**43**).

Factors that have the biggest impact on democratic wellbeing



Democratic wellbeing - standout statistics

Trust in the UK Government has improved, but trust in other institutions is declining.

- **72%** do not feel that they can influence decisions affecting the UK, unchanged on previous years.
- **68%** have medium or high trust in local councils, four percentage points lower than in 2023.
- **54%** have medium or high trust in the UK Government, nine percentage points higher than in 2024.
- **60%** have low trust in social media and **42%** have low trust in big tech companies like Google and Apple, both four percentage points higher than in 2024.



Summary

Democratic wellbeing in the UK remains notably low in 2025, with this domain continuing to score significantly lower than any other area of wellbeing. The findings again point to widespread public disengagement and a lack of trust in decision-making structures at both national and local levels. This is despite 2024 having seen the first major change in national party leadership in 14 years, and wide-ranging changes to local government administrations in 2025.

Democratic wellbeing is about whether people feel they have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. The index tells us that too many people across the UK feel disconnected from political processes and unsure about their ability to shape outcomes.

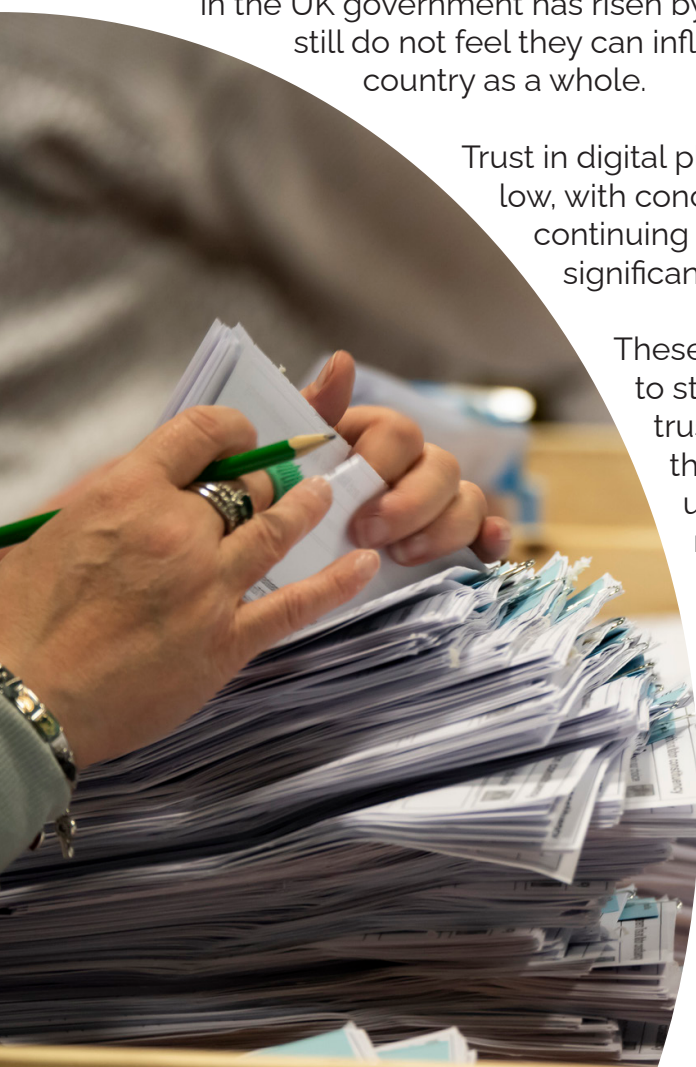
While scores are low across the board, some groups report slightly more positive experiences. People with higher household incomes and those living in less deprived areas tend to express greater trust in institutions and a stronger sense of influence. Older adults also report higher levels of democratic wellbeing than younger people.

Conversely, disabled people and those living in social housing continue to report lower levels of democratic wellbeing. These groups are more likely to feel excluded from decision-making and less confident in political institutions.

In addition, public trust in government and local councils remains fragile. Although trust in the UK government has risen by seven percentage points since 2024, most people still do not feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area or the country as a whole.

Trust in digital platforms and large technology companies is also low, with concerns about transparency and accountability continuing to grow. There has, however, been a small but significant improvement to trust in the news media.

These findings highlight the need for renewed efforts to strengthen democratic engagement. Improving trust, fostering inclusive participation, and ensuring that all voices are heard – especially those from underrepresented groups – will be essential to reverse current trends and build a more responsive and equitable democratic culture.



Collective wellbeing: standout statistics overview



Social wellbeing – standout statistics

Several social wellbeing statistics have changed slightly in 2025.

- 68% report that their general health is good or very good, and 65% that their mental health is good or very good, each three percentage points higher than in 2023.
- More than two in five (44%) have experienced discrimination in the last 12 months, four percentage points higher than in 2023.
- 34% report that it is easy to get a GP appointment at a time when they need one, three percentage points higher than in 2024. Almost half (48%) still say that they find it difficult.



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With the exception of being dissatisfied with job opportunities in the local area, a number of small improvements can be seen in economic wellbeing over time.

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- 62% agree that their household could afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of £850, unchanged from previous years.
- Just over a quarter (26%) are satisfied with the availability of job opportunities for people in their local area, five percentage points lower than in 2023 and 2024.



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- Many people experience issues with litter (83%), noise (64%) and air quality (52%) in their neighbourhood. The proportion of people experiencing problems with litter and with noise pollution are each three percentage points higher than in 2023.
- 40% are dissatisfied with current efforts to preserve the environment. This dissatisfaction has lessened since 2024, when it was 44%.
- 12% are dissatisfied with the quality of their nearest local public, green or open space, the same as in previous years.

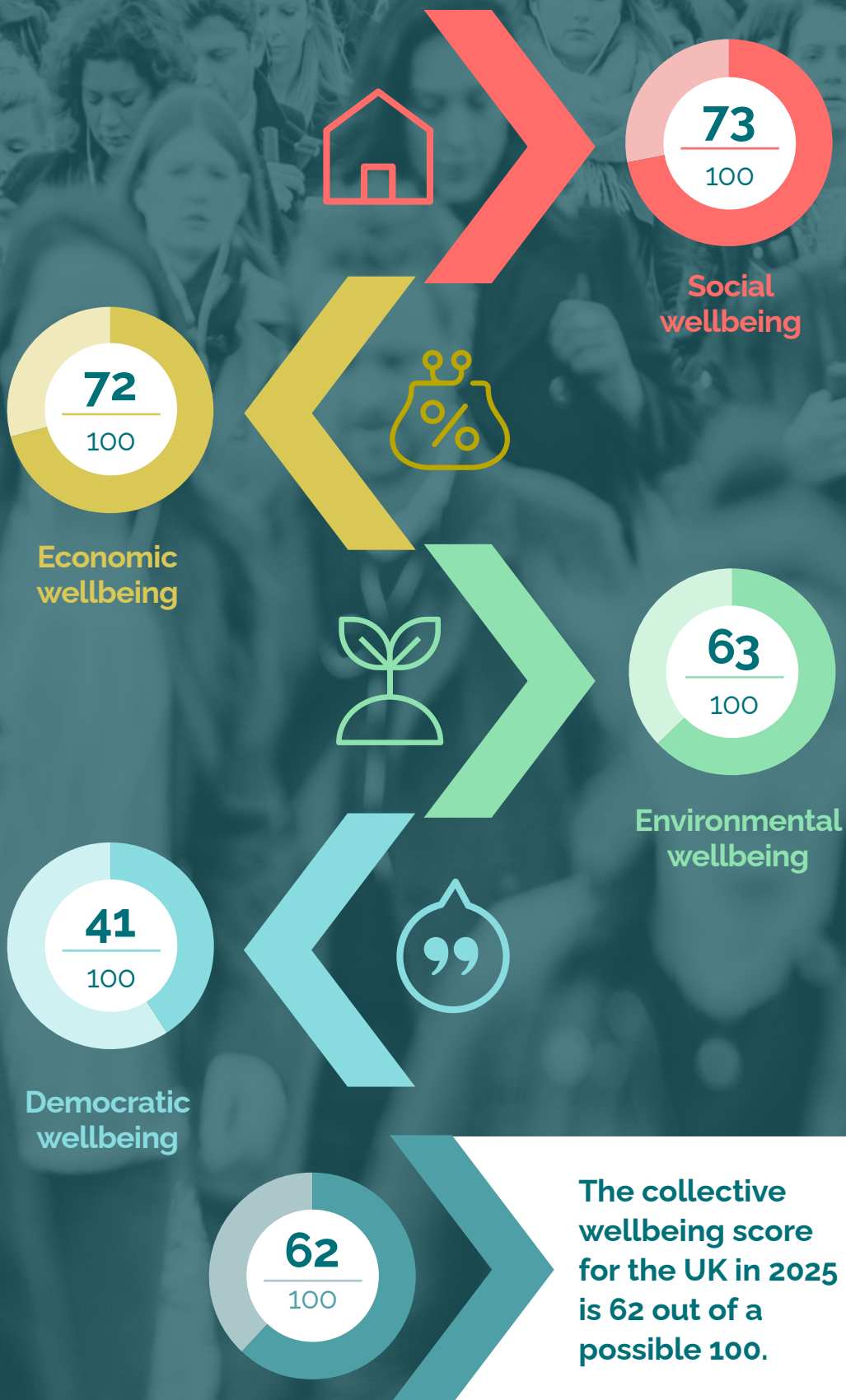


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- 54% have medium or high trust in the UK Government, nine percentage points higher than in 2024.
- 60% have low trust in social media and 42% have low trust in big tech companies like Google and Apple, both four percentage points higher than in 2024.

Collective wellbeing in 2025: Scoring summary



Summary table of domain scores by key demographic characteristics

		Collective wellbeing	Social wellbeing	Economic wellbeing	Environmental wellbeing	Democratic wellbeing
	Total	62	73	72	63	41
Disability	Not disabled	64	76	75	64	43
	Disabled	55	62	61	59	37
Age	16-34 years	59	69	69	58	41
	35-54 years	60	72	69	61	40
	55 years & over	66	76	76	68	43
Household Income	£25,999 and under	56	67	59	60	39
	£26,000 to £51,999	62	73	71	63	41
	£52,000 to £99,999	66	76	79	65	43
	£100,000 & above	68	78	84	65	46
Area deprivation	1st quintile (highest deprivation)	55	66	63	53	38
	2nd quintile	60	70	69	59	41
	3rd quintile	63	74	72	64	41
	4th quintile	65	75	76	67	43
	5th quintile (lowest deprivation)	67	77	78	69	44
Housing tenure	Social rented	52	62	52	55	37
	Private rented	57	67	63	58	39
	Homeowners	65	75	76	65	43
Gender	Women	61	71	71	62	41
	Men	63	74	73	63	41
Ethnicity	Asian	55	64	63	53	40
	Black	56	67	60	59	38
	Mixed/multiple	59	68	69	59	39
	Other ethnicity	59	67	66	59	41
	Other White	60	71	72	56	42
	White British	63	74	73	64	41
	Ethnic minorities (including White minorities)	58	67	66	57	40

cont.

		Collective wellbeing	Social wellbeing	Economic wellbeing	Environmental wellbeing	Democratic wellbeing
Children	One child in household	60	72	70	60	40
	Two children in household	60	72	67	62	40
	Three or more children in household	56	68	59	57	39
	No children in household	63	73	73	63	42
Urban areas	Urban living	61	71	70	60	41
	Rural living	67	77	76	71	42



Life in the UK 2025



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