

A Socially connected recovery: feeling good and functioning well

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1. Joanne’s context setting

Wellbeing is defined as “how we’re doing” as individuals, communities and as a nation, and how sustainable that is for the future¹. It is sometimes referred to as social welfare or social value. It’s about feeling good and functioning well. When we use [wellbeing as a measure of progress](#), we can assess how well places are doing at supporting people to thrive: wellbeing is a unifying goal of effective policy making, evidence informed commissioning and community action.

We measure the personal wellbeing using four questions:

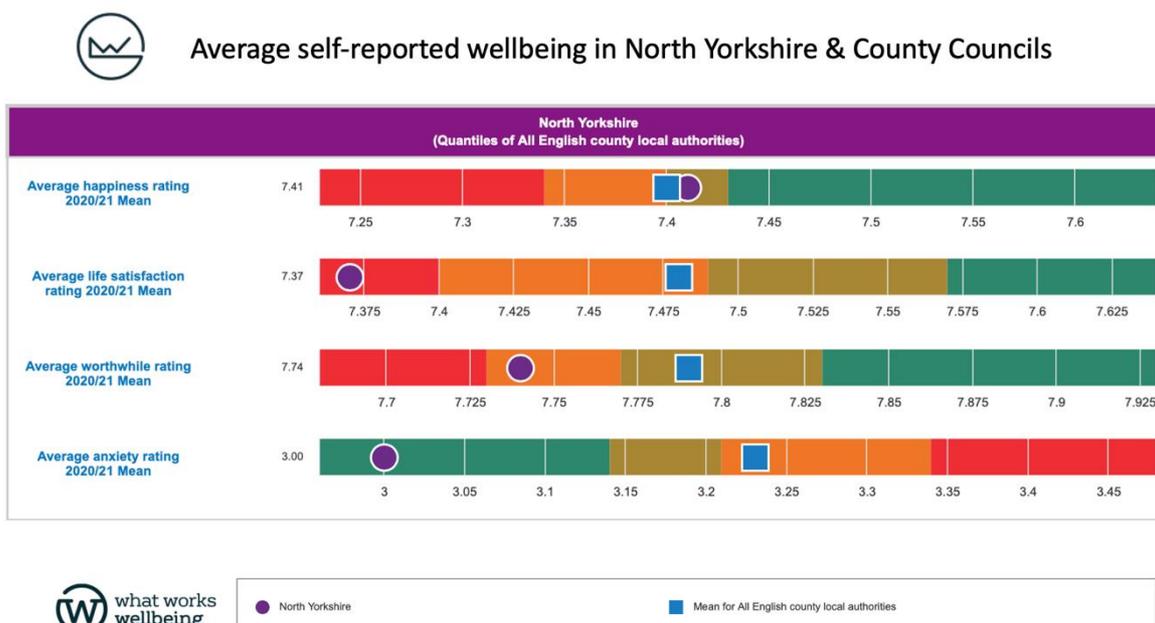
On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
2. Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
3. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?

On a scale where 0 is “not at all anxious” and 10 is “completely anxious”

4. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

From [LG Inform](#) data for adults



¹ Office of National Statistics (ONS) Measures of National Wellbeing, 2019.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuresofnationalwellbeingdashboard/2018-04-25>

The [ONS website](#) has a measures of national wellbeing dashboard, and data available at [district level](#) data



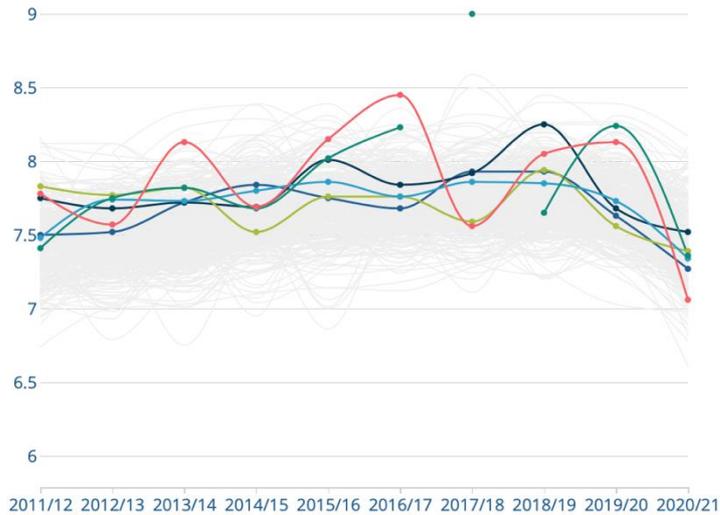
Average ratings, UK, years ending March 2012 to March 2021

Life satisfaction Worthwhile Happiness Anxiety

Start typing some areas, or click the lines to select up to six areas

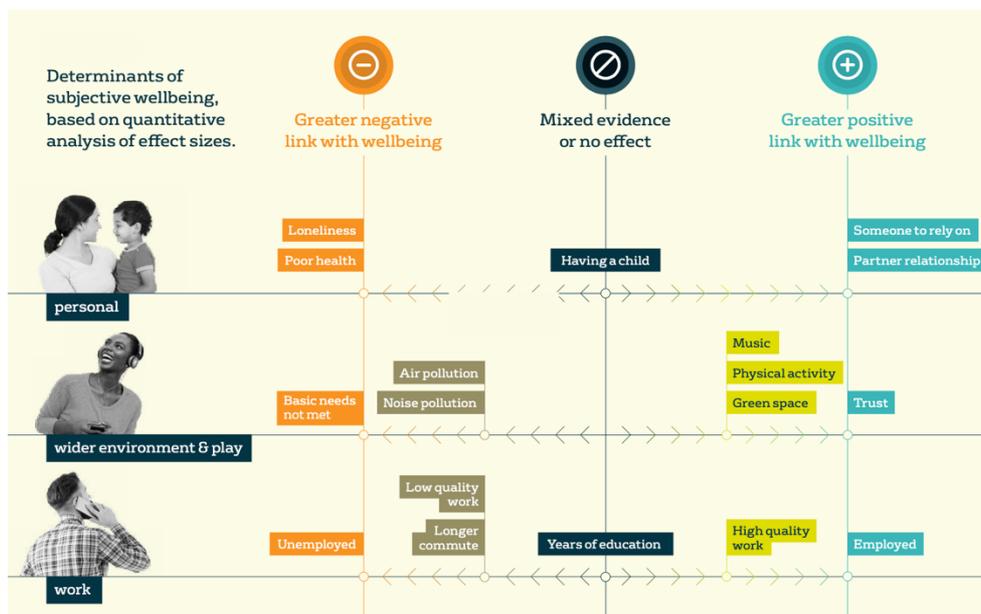
Scarborough X Hambleton X Selby X Harrogate X Richmondshire X
 Craven X

Out of ten



Could we build on the [work underway in Manchester](#), and measure children & young people's wellbeing in North Yorkshire? Add to the Growing up in North Yorkshire survey?

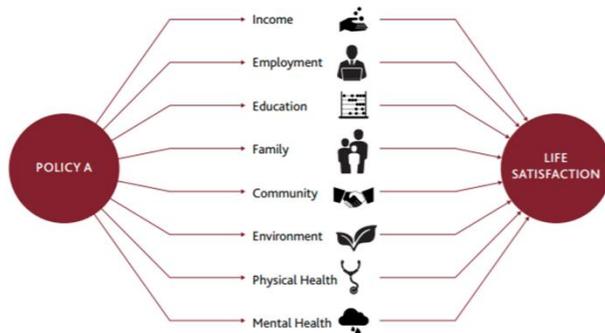
This diagram shows how much things effect our wellbeing



If we are to ensure wellbeing is at the heart of recovery planning – we need to design policy for the outcomes that matter for people.

Policy for the outcomes that matter

IMPACT OF POLICY A UPON LIFE SATISFACTION



We can divide the main factors influencing life satisfaction as follows:

- Economic: income; education; work
- Social: family life; community life and values; environment
- Personal: physical health; mental health

Feeling safe

financially comfortable, having good physical and mental health, good food, job, housing, access to natural environment and transport

Feeling loved

respected and appreciated, belonging, having positive connections, time alone, appreciation of difference and feeling part of something bigger

Feeling fulfilled

a sense of achievement, inspiration, feeling valued, fun, learning, opportunities, control, agency and choice

2. Workshop discussions

In smaller breakout groups, participants discussed policy making for the outcomes that matter: Feeling safe, feeling loved, feeling fulfilled.

We explored two questions:

- **What are we currently doing in North Yorkshire that works well?**
- **What could we do to make things even better?**

What are we doing that works well from the perspectives of feeling safe, feeling loved, feeling fulfilled?

What we do well in North Yorkshire is policy that is primarily protective in nature; born from a deep sense of commitment to making sure no resident is left behind, focused on investment in people with greatest need or the most vulnerable. This is well exemplified through work around loneliness and isolation particularly the pandemic response through Community Support Organisations. The emphasis on locally driven / community led services has proved itself has a successful strategy in delivering services that work for wellbeing. Alongside the direct impacts of these on individuals and communities, this has also served to raise the profile of this strategy within the public sector and also build increased trust with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) as an equal partner.

The adaption and responsive nature of services has worked particularly well for example the recognition of many services, such as Home Libraries Service, that their link to their members could be vital through the pandemic for people at most risk of isolation.

The groups welcomed the broad definition of 'feeling safe' – recognising that 'feeling safe' was different for each person – like wellbeing. Important to start from where people are at, for some it will be about meeting basic need and financial safety; examples cited were the North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund and the engagement with credit unions in some areas.

Safe places – highlighted in both groups; libraries, public buildings, and the domestic abuse services. Tailoring support to need – and recognising that this changes across our lives. Key life events are important here e.g. school/leaving home/work, mid-life relationship breakdown, retiring etc. Helping people move on, from where they are – key to reducing anxiety, and building purpose and meaning in lives – important role of VCSE in being trusted person/organisation.

Many of our current policies recognise great assets in the county from our national parks and countryside. This is used well in particular in response the developing activities following restrictions. This has driven innovation and maximised the benefits of outdoors on wellbeing which is known to be particularly beneficial. The flipside; large rural areas, the group said, face particular challenges and these have to be recognised in policy – particularly population living in sparse areas in terms of both provision and transport. So, linking policy to the findings of the evidence-informed rural commission would be helpful.

What could we do better from the perspectives of feeling safe, feeling loved, feeling fulfilled?

Looking forward, the new arrangements are an opportunity to make services even more accessible, joined up so that any person, whatever their life stage, can access things they need or would like to do, when they need it. No one seems to be saying we don't have enough opportunities for people to connect, get involved socially if confident enough to do so, form and maintain friendships, feel like they belong. BUT... some of the enablers aren't strong enough to maximise the opportunities to increase outcomes around feeling safe, loved and fulfilled – transport especially was raised as something that could be done better repeatedly, and digital.

Groups felt it has been inspiring to see activity return as lockdowns eased and individuals and communities came together in person again. People feel they have been "let out of jail." However, some participants also observed that not everyone had returned. There is a need and opportunity to ensure that services and activities meet the needs of all North Yorkshire Communities through increased understanding of the current themes and impacts for example the impacts on parental wellbeing and young children, for example 2-4 year olds needing to develop social skills challenged by lockdowns.

People are more fulfilled when having their voices heard and the opportunities to do this better are growing. Understanding the virtual world - think more out of the box especially engaging with young and the digital world. Doing with not doing to: Some activities got larger audiences on line than in person, understanding some people are tech savvy and others are not. Need to understand how people want to be communicated with on-line (video/no video), in person, type of media. TRUST is really important.

Working with and listening to local communities has been done well but it was felt to do even better, policy needs to be driven by a sincere and vigorous commitment to empowering individuals to influence decisions and change in the areas, places and spaces that matter to them. Are we confident enough in North Yorkshire to do co-creation and co-production really well – a gap to be filled across the system? Really important that people *feel* their voices are heard, and that they can shape decisions that matter to them. [How do we measure this?](#) We think we do it – how do we know? Is it making a difference?

Could we do more to take a wellbeing life-course approach in our policy making? Health and Adult Services / Public Health appreciate the need to have things ready for people at different stages of their life. When we come up with strategy demanding slightly non-traditional approaches e.g. that work for people when they face a life event, a transition or a moment of significant change, we're not quite there because people are either 'young' or 'old' or 'working' or 'in a workless household'. If we derived policy around levels of wellbeing across the life course, it could change the way services were then designed and delivered at a local level and they might look very different? Reflecting how people are actually experiencing their lives (subjective) rather than objective measures can add value here. . A lot of the actual delivery is downstream rather than where we'd like it to be in an ideal situation, upstream (more preventative or linked to early intervention).

What could be done better? Develop policy that is as much strengths-based as it is deficit-based. We are currently talking more about deprivation and vulnerability in North Yorkshire than about equality or even equity; and possibly, over time we will have a more overt set of policies linked to a deeper understanding of poverty. Role for more holistic assessment of need – possible to use [ONS 4 questions](#) to identify people in misery (i.e. score 0-4)/with very low wellbeing.

Although some participants felt much council/partner policy is currently more explicitly oriented towards health rather than wellbeing, there was a real sense this was changing, and the COVID response has brought into sharp focus qualities of kindness, neighbourliness and as the NY film attested this morning, to the 'spirit' of people in North Yorkshire looking out for one another. There is a real opportunity to put wellbeing at the heart of NYC new policy in future, at least on par with health (as per [Marmot Report](#) p. 250).