

# Findings from the National Well-being Debate

**Joanne Evans**

**Office for National Statistics**

**July 2011**

## Official Statistics

ONS official statistics are produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## About us

### The Office for National Statistics

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the executive office of the UK Statistics Authority, a non-ministerial department which reports directly to Parliament. ONS is the UK government's single largest statistical producer. It compiles information about the UK's society and economy, and provides the evidence-base for policy and decision-making, the allocation of resources, and public accountability. The Director-General of ONS reports directly to the National Statistician who is the Authority's Chief Executive and the Head of the Government Statistical Service.

### The Government Statistical Service

The Government Statistical Service (GSS) is a network of professional statisticians and their staff operating both within the Office for National Statistics and across more than 30 other government departments and agencies.

## Contacts

### This publication

For information about the content of this publication, contact the National Well-being team

Tel: 01633 455010

Email: [nationalwell-being@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nationalwell-being@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

### Other customer enquiries

ONS Customer Contact Centre

Tel: 0845 601 3034

International: +44 (0)845 601 3034

Minicom: 01633 815044

Email: [info@statistics.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@statistics.gsi.gov.uk)

Fax: 01633 652747

Post: Room 1.101, Government Buildings,  
Cardiff Road, Newport, South Wales NP10 8XG

[www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)

### Media enquiries

Tel: 0845 604 1858

Email: [press.office@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:press.office@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

## Copyright and reproduction

© Crown copyright 2011

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence.

To view this licence, go to:

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/)

or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU

email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to: [info@statistics.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@statistics.gsi.gov.uk)

This publication is available for download at:  
[www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)

# Contents

Executive summary.....	3
Introduction .....	4
How the national well-being debate was carried out.....	5
Summary of debate contributions .....	7
The wider debate: events.....	19
Conclusion .....	37
Annex A: Events .....	38
Annex B: Group responses.....	45
Annex C: Existing work referred to us during the national well-being debate.....	47

# List of Figures

Figure 1	Contributions to the national well-being debate, by type .....	4
Figure 2	Online mentions of the national well-being debate, by type .....	7

# List of Tables

Table 1	What things in life matter to you? .....	8
Table 2	What things in life matter to you? .....	10
Table 3	Of the things that matter to you, which should be reflected in measures of national well-being?.....	12
Table 4	What things matter to national well-being?.....	13
Table 5	Which sets of information help measure national well-being and show how life is changing in the UK? .....	14
Table 6	How should measures of national well-being be presented? .....	15
Table 7	What should measures of national well-being be used for? .....	16
Table 8	Themes and quotes from events .....	20
Table 9	Main themes raised by debate participants .....	26

## Executive summary

ONS set up the national debate asking ‘what matters to you?’ to get a wide range of views on what affects personal well-being, so that new ONS measures can be linked to these views. The debate included discussions with academic and other experts who have already worked on aspects of measuring well-being as well as interested members of the public. The range of responses, submitted either electronically or by attending meetings and discussing the issues, shows strong interest in this area.

The debate ran between 25 November 2010 and 15 April 2011 and during this time ONS received over 7,900 responses to the consultation paper which asked five main questions including ‘What matters most to you?’, ‘Which of these things should be reflected in measures of national well-being?’ and ‘How would you use measures of national well-being?’.

ONS established a national well-being website in English and Welsh where people could read what others had said about measuring national well-being and leave their own comments. This site also hosted regular ONS and guest blogs and people were able to leave their own comments in response. We also worked with existing online communities to continue the discussion, including holding a two-week discussion in the Netmums’ Coffee House forum.

In addition to our work on-line we set up and promoted a dedicated phone line, the address for written contributions and an email address. We worked with charities such as Platform 51 who encouraged people to write to us on pre-paid post cards and printed copies of the on-line questionnaire. The online debate and these other channels generated 34,000 responses. We met with various experts and established a National Statistician’s Advisory Forum and a Technical Advisory Group. We held 175 events across the country involving a range of groups, meeting with a total of 7,250 people.

The results showed that many different things matter to people, but with some common themes. These include the importance of our health to our well-being, the importance of having adequate income or wealth to cover basic needs, the environment around us, and the need we have to connect with other people, whether partners, children, wider family, the community (local, national, faith and on-line), or work colleagues. Also important was how we spend our time, including the balance we achieve between our work and home lives, the time we spend outdoors – and the availability of green spaces for us to use – and the extent to which we participate in cultural or creative activities. The quality and availability of Government provided services such as healthcare, education, and the transport network have significant impact on our well-being. Throughout all this ran the common feeling that there should be a greater sense of fairness and equality for the sake of our national well-being.

## Introduction

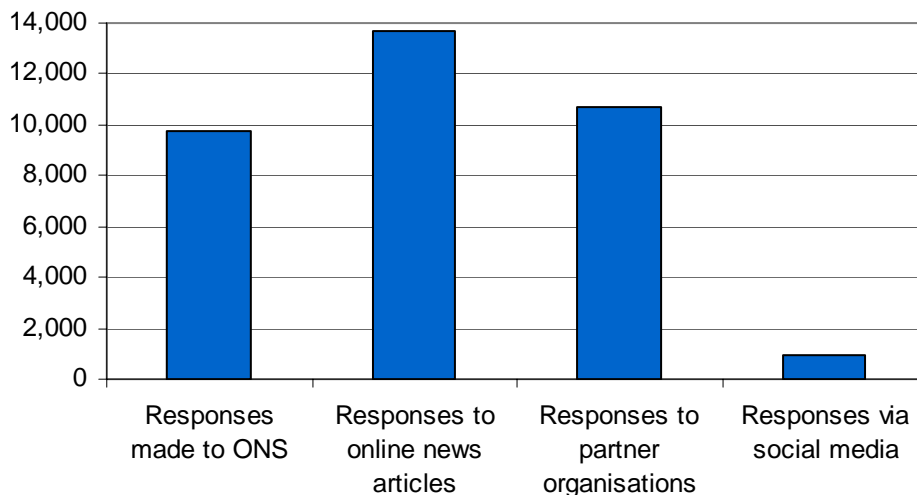
ONS conducted the national debate in order to engage with experts on well-being who would provide an insight to what to measure and how to measure it, and interested members of the public who not only know best about what matters to them but would also be affected by any policies that would result from this work.

The debate ran between 25 November 2010 and 15 April 2011. The ONS made an effort to provide the debate in several formats to ensure that the widest range of people could participate in the debate. We realised that the effectiveness of the debate and usefulness of any information to be obtained depended on how widely inclusive the debate was going to be. ONS employed a range of innovative ways of engaging with people. However, this was not a statistical exercise and these findings do not claim to be representative of the whole population.

People could contribute online via the debate website and also attend events at various venues in the UK and via questionnaire consultation. There was also an opportunity for people to participate using postcards, a blog page and twitter. The events were held across the UK and involved a wide variety of groups. Throughout this paper we have placed boxes containing quotes from participants in the debate.

During the debate ONS was impressed by the number of people who were willing to take part in the discussions and also by the sincerity of the responses. In total, ONS held 175 events involving 7,250 people. In addition, there was an online debate and other channels which received 34,000 responses (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1 **Contributions to the national well-being debate, by type**



## How the national well-being debate was carried out

### Online Participation

The Office for National Statistics set up a dedicated debate website where people with internet access could go in and engage in a discussion about what they understood about well-being, the things that mattered most to them and what should be included as measures of national well-being. The debate website, available in both English and Welsh, also provided the opportunity for people to contribute by writing their thoughts about well-being or responding to the blogs.

As part of the online debate, ONS embraced social networking media by providing the opportunity for people to contribute to this work via Twitter where people were able to post short messages about their thoughts. Others used the medium to provide instant feedback about well-being events that they were attending. While this method was successful, ONS was fully aware that it was limiting since not everyone has access to the internet and also that not all those with access visit social networking sites. Nevertheless, it made it easier for some people to participate who may not otherwise have been able to do so.

ONS also worked with existing online communities, such as Netmums, Mumsnet, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and others to continue the debate.

### Events

As part of this work, the ONS went around the country holding discussions on what matters to people and also getting professional advice from experts.

The events were in a range of formats including workshops, focus groups, seminars, round table discussions and informal chats about well-being. The measures we intend to develop will be used to compare the UK against other countries. As such it was important that views were collected from a cross section of the population that was as representative of the UK as possible.

However due to limitations in resources we were not able to visit each and every town but working with partners we ensured that events were publicised as widely as possible. These events involved organisations and people from all walks of life, including:

- school children
- retired people
- charities
- parents, including vulnerable mothers
- youth affected by mental health
- gypsy travellers
- religious groups
- hospital patients and carers
- employers
- other government departments
- academics and university students

In addition to events organised by ONS other organisations invited ONS well-being staff to events that they had organised. These included 'trade shows' and conferences. The advantage of these was that such events enabled ONS staff to discuss well-being with a wide range of professionals in one place where several events would have had to take place otherwise. Also some organisations and individuals took a proactive approach and organised their own events independently and fed their results into this work.

It was imperative that we also contacted experts in organisations with an interest in well-being to ensure that we had their input as their experiences would inform what well-being means to their clients. The work also benefited from ongoing work by other organisations including the new economics foundation (NEF) and from contributions from religious groups including the Church of England. This was an invaluable process and it reinforced the fact that well-being is multifaceted and can be affected by a lot of things. This was illustrated well at an event with a voluntary group in London that provides assistance to elderly people. They highlighted the connection between social connections, fuel poverty and car parking; for an elderly person living alone, the lengths of their visitors' stay was determined by how long they were allowed to park when they came to visit and how warm the house they were visiting was.

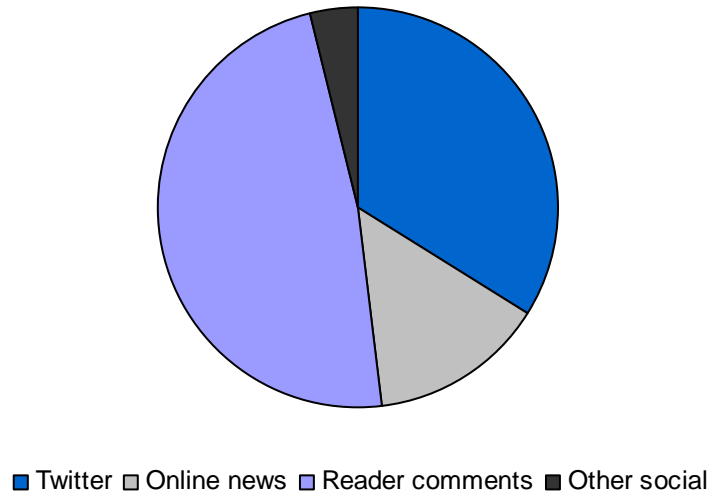
## Media

The national well-being debate was picked up quickly by both national and local media, resulting in widespread coverage and in-depth analysis and discussion. Internationally, the national debate reached many different countries, including the US, Canada, China and Australia. ONS staff, including the National Statistician, gave 30 TV and radio interviews and to date there have been more than 450 separate articles/news items with thousands more mentions in online news and social media.

Analysis of the sentiment of online coverage of the national debate has shown that 40 per cent was positive, 35 per cent was neutral and 25 per cent was negative. Analysis also shows that almost half (48 per cent) of online mentions were reader comments, in response to online news which represented 14 per cent (see **Figure 2**). Twitter accounted for more than one third (34 per cent) of online mentions while other types of social media, including Facebook, accounted for the remaining 4 per cent.



Figure 2 **Online mentions of the national well-being debate, by type**



Much of the online discussion was around the complexity of well-being and whether or not it can be measured. There was considerable scepticism, particularly during the early part of the debate, but engagement in discussions increased and became more positive as the debate progressed. Much of the positive sentiment came from the belief that measures of national well-being could signal a move away from consumerism and towards greater social equality.

### Summary of debate contributions

The ONS asked five main questions to gather public information to help develop measures of well-being. These were used to lead into wider discussion:

- what things matter most in your life? What is Well-being?
- what matters to national well-being?
- how should we measure national well-being?
- how should measures of national well-being be presented?
- what should measures of national well-being be used for?

These questions were available in electronic format on line, for paper completion at events and sent to stakeholders, some of whom distributed them to their clients/beneficiaries.

### What things matter most in your life? What is Well-being?

Participants were asked to select all the options that applied to them (see **Table 1**). Extra space was available to write in other things that were important.

Table 1 **What things in life matter to you?**

What things in life matter to you? Please choose all that apply.	Percentages <sup>1</sup>
Health	89
Having good connections with friends and relatives	89
Job satisfaction and economic security	86
Present and future conditions of the environment	73
Education and training	69
Personal and cultural activities, including caring and volunteering	68
Income and wealth	62
Ability to have a say on local and national issues	59
Crime	56
Other – please specify	28

<sup>1</sup> Percentages will not add up to 100 per cent as this is a multi-code question

- A collective sense of purpose. A vision of a healthy, valued population who have pride and a stake in their community
- Having a loving, monogamous relationship with another

Between November 25<sup>th</sup> and February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 5,401 people answered this question and almost nine out of ten people told us that health (89 per cent), good connections with friends or relatives (89 per cent), and job satisfaction or economic security (86 per cent) were the things that matter most in their lives. Around three-quarters (73 per cent) of people told us that future and present conditions of the environment was one of the things that mattered most in their lives.

- Simple and efficient access to appropriate health care is my highest priority
- My family's health
- Does having good connections with friends and relatives convey the importance of having a partner and sex
- Having time to enjoy with family and friends
- I care about job satisfaction. Economic security is neither here nor there.
- Job satisfaction and economic security matter enormously, having lost house, income, savings in early 90's negative equity crisis when house prices fell off a cliff and interest rates soared... Work needs to be fulfilling and have some meaning

During these first few months, more than a quarter (28 per cent) of people used the write in, with comments like:

- I do not aspire to be wealthy, however I do want to be able to work and earn a fair wage for the work that I do.
- Pace of life - not having to live at 100 miles an hour and being able to take time to enjoy life
- Arts are vital to our society
- The well-being of my family and friends. Good coffee and tea. Nice food. Good books and music. Sleep. Many things matter to me

Many people wanted to tell us more about why they had selected the environment category. They said that as well as being concerned about sustainability issues like climate change, pollution, and energy or food supply, what really impacts on individual well-being is the quality of the local environment, such as access to green spaces, litter, graffiti, and the quality of the architecture:

- Ensuring we have a clean and green environment
- Free access to green spaces free of litter and noise and pollution
- .... not living in ugly surroundings, availability of parks and gardens, good architecture etc.
- The opportunity to be able to walk in open spaces.....enjoy animals, birds, plants ....and to know that grandchildren's grandchildren will also be able to enjoy them. This is vital to lift the spirits

The importance of community spirit was mentioned frequently, as was the need for people to be treated equally. Phrases such as 'community spirit', 'community coherence', 'fairness and equality for all', 'social responsibilities' and 'respect for all' appeared frequently in the 'Other' category.

- Kindness towards each other
- Sense of community, working together to achieve common goals
- Knowing that the most vulnerable in my community are supported and cared for
- Having a welfare state that truly protects those in need from poverty
- Improving equality and acceptance in the community for all diverse groups of people

Participants also used the space to comment on the suggested topics:

- I am surprised that you didn't mention religion as this is an important factor for many people
- I have not ticked income and wealth although I do think income is important...there has been and still is far too much emphasis on wealth
- Job satisfaction is not related to economic security. Not sure why these two are together
- For myself, and I suspect for others, having a sense of purpose and fulfilment in life is important ..... this also relates to a sense of a faith in a divine providence. For many others, religious belief is important, which often motivates and affects caring and volunteering

Taking this feedback on board, we revised the questionnaire by separating the category 'Job Satisfaction and Economic Security'. We also added a category about relationships with a spouse/partner and expanded the category about personal activities to cover cultural activities, caring and religion or spirituality. **Table 2** summarises the responses.

**Table 2**      **What things in life matter to you?**

What things in life matter to you? Please choose all that apply.	Percentages <sup>1</sup>
Having good connections with friends and relatives	85
Health	83
Job satisfaction	73
Having a good relationship with a spouse or partner	72
Economic security	68
Present and future conditions of the environment	66
Education and training	56
Personal and cultural activities, including volunteering	56
Ability to have a say on local and national issues	47
Cultural activities	46
Income and wealth	45
Unpaid caring, such as for children or other family members	41
Crime	30
Spirituality or religion	29
Other – please specify	16

<sup>1</sup> Percentages will not add up to 100 per cent as this is a multi-code question

A total of 2,206 people answered this question on the second version of the questionnaire. As with the original questionnaire, results from the revised version showed that the most commonly selected categories were having good connections with friends and relatives (85 per cent) and

health (83 per cent). Job satisfaction was the third most commonly selected category (73 per cent) followed by having good connections with a spouse or partner (72 per cent) and economic security (68 per cent).

In the 'Other' category, similar issues were raised on the revised questionnaire: community spirit, access to green spaces, family, friends, having a sense of purpose, hope for the future, and equality issues, including discrimination and the distribution of wealth, income and opportunity.

- Sustainability of all we do - as individuals, as communities, as a nation, and internationally
- Green spaces, nice places to walk, trees, clean beaches, nature reserves, historical places preserved
- 'Social' behaviour in the community as opposed to anti-social
- A vibrant and healthy local community
- Respecting individuality
- Being in a loving, monogamous relationship
- Making a positive contribution to the world
- For me, it is important that there are reduced inequalities in society, (e.g. on health, education) or at least I can perceive that governments are trying to achieve this
- That my children are happy. A parent is only as happy as their saddest child
- Meaning and purpose – from being stretched in what we do and think

Among the other things that people mentioned in response to the questionnaire were freedom and democracy, travel and transport, immigration and population, the need for a less materialistic society, a sense of national pride, food (supply, nutrition and enjoyment), the arts, technology, particularly internet access, freedom to smoke and, of course, the weather.

### What matters to national well-being?

The second question asked participants which of the things that were important to their individual well-being should be reflected in measures of national well-being (see **Table 3**). More than half of the 5,028 people who responded to the first version of the questionnaire selected 'same as the response to my previous question', suggesting that they feel measures of national well-being should reflect what was important to individuals. Their responses to the first question have been added to the table below to show what things people feel should be reflected in measures of national well-being. Most important was health (90 per cent), job satisfaction and economic security (85 per cent) and having good connections with friends and relatives.

**Table 3**      **Of the things that matter to you, which should be reflected in measures of national well-being?**

<b>Of the things that matter to you, which should be reflected in measures of national well-being? Please choose all that apply.</b>	<b>Percentages<sup>1</sup></b>
Health	90
Job satisfaction and economic security	85
Having good connections with friends and relatives	78
Education and training	73
Present and future conditions of the environment	72
Personal and cultural activities, including caring and volunteering	66
Crime	62
Ability to have a say on local and national issues	61
Income and wealth	58
Other – please specify	28

<sup>1</sup> Percentages will not add up to 100 per cent as this is a multi-code question.

Around half of the 2,094 people who responded to this question on the second version of the questionnaire elected 'same as the response to my previous question' (see Table 4). Again, suggesting that they feel measures of national well-being should reflect what was important to individuals. Their responses to the first question have been added to the table below to show what things people feel should be reflected in measures of national well-being. Their responses varied slightly to the first questionnaire. Health was once again the most commonly selected option (86 per cent), followed by economic security (72 per cent) and having good connections with friends and relatives (71 per cent).

Table 4 **What things matter to national well-being?**

Of the things that matter to you, which should be reflected in measures of national well-being? Please choose all that apply.	Percentages <sup>1</sup>
Health	86
Economic security	72
Having good connections with friends and relatives	71
Job satisfaction	68
Present and future conditions of the environment	67
Education and training	65
Having a good relationship with a spouse or partner	56
Crime	54
Ability to have a say on local and national issues	53
Personal activities, including volunteering	51
Cultural activities	47
Income and wealth	44
Unpaid caring, such as for children or other family members	35
Spirituality or religion	32
Other – please specify	14

<sup>1</sup> Percentages will not add up to 100 per cent as this is a multi-code question.

### How should we measure national well-being?

We asked participants about existing data sets and their suitability for measuring national well-being and showing how life in the UK changes over time. A total of 6,870 people answered this question. Health statistics and life satisfaction were both selected by around 80 per cent of participants (see **Table 5**). Almost three-quarters of participants selected employment/unemployment rates (74 per cent), and almost two-thirds felt that education levels and income distributions were good indicators of well-being or reflected how life in the UK changes over time (65 per cent and 62 per cent respectively). Less than one-third of participants felt that economic measures such as GDP were good indicators of well-being, or reflected how life in the UK changes over time.

**Table 5 Which sets of information help measure national well-being and show how life is changing in the UK?**

Which of the following sets of information do you think help measure national well-being and how life in the UK is changing over time?	Percentages <sup>1</sup>
Health statistics	80
Life satisfaction	79
Employment/unemployment rates	74
Education levels	65
Income distributions	62
Life expectancy	55
Environmental statistics	55
Crime figures	51
Social capital measures	43
Economic measures such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	30
Other – please specify	13

<sup>1</sup> Percentages will not add up to 100 per cent as this is a multi-code question.

A wide range of other measures were suggested; 19 per cent of those who used the 'Other' category to suggest an alternative felt that statistics relating to religion would help measure national well-being. Equality was mentioned by 8 per cent of those using the 'Other category' to recommend other measures, as was marriage and/or divorce statistics. Other issues raised included homelessness, community, work/life balance, transport, access to green spaces, rates of suicide and depression, environmental measures and culture. Just over one per cent of people who wrote in the 'Other' category questioned the trustworthiness of official statistics.

- The artistic vibrancy of British society - opportunities for active engagement in creative pursuits
- Rates of mental illnesses (such as depression, etc.)
- situation of families and marriages
- the above disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, economic and social background, and possibly by other equality grounds if the figures are sufficiently large

### How should measures of national well-being be presented?

**Table 6** shows that more than one-third, (34 per cent), of the 6,654 participants felt that a small selection of indicators would be the best way to give a picture of national well-being. More than one-quarter (28 per cent) felt that a large set of indicators would be appropriate. Nearly a fifth of participants (18 per cent) said they would like see the information combined into a single number while only 3 per cent of participants selected the economic measures category.



**Table 6 How should measures of national well-being be presented?**

Which of the following ways would be best to give a picture of national well-being? Please choose one option only.	Percentages <sup>1</sup>
Small selection of indicators	34
Large set of indicators	28
Single index of national well-being (lot of information combined into a single number)	18
Single measure of overall life satisfaction/happiness	17
Other – please specify	7
Economic measures	3

<sup>1</sup> Percentages will not add up to 100 per cent as this is a multi-code question.

Of those who specified an alternative in the ‘Other’ category, 14 per cent suggested a single index supported by further information, 8 per cent suggested a small selection supported by further information, 7 per cent wrote that it should not be a single index and 6 per cent said it should be a large set of indicators supported by further information.

However, some said that national well-being was a very complex concept and cannot be interpreted by a number or set of numbers alone.

- It's a complex question, not all people will agree the measure however it is formed.
- A complex subject with probably as many indicators of well being as there are people, thus probably impossible to measure
- I believe that measuring well-being is a complex and difficult. I think that a number of indicators would be needed to give an overview view of someone's well-being. How would you score someone's well-being who is completely unsatisfied with their job, but completely satisfied with their friends and relatives? Which of these is the most important?
- It is meaningless because people don't think in terms of well-being, they think about whether they are happy or not and this cannot be measured in statistics

### What should measures of national well-being be used for?

When asked how they would use measures of national well-being, 6,682 people responded. More than three-quarters (77 per cent) of respondents to this question said that they would use measures of national well-being to help understand the longer term implications of our current activities (see **Table 7**). Around two-thirds said that they would use the measures to compare how different groups of people and different parts of the UK are doing (66 per cent and 64 per cent respectively).

**Table 7      What should measures of national well-being be used for?**

<b>Which of the following ways would be best to give a picture of national well-being? Please choose one option only.</b>	<b>Percentages<sup>1</sup></b>
To help understand the longer term implications of our current activities	77
To compare how different groups of people are doing	66
To see how different parts of the UK are doing	64
To generally assess how the UK is doing	59
To assess the performance of government and public services	56
To see how the UK is doing compared with other countries	52
Other – please specify	9

<sup>1</sup> Percentages will not add up to 100 per cent as this is a multi-code question.

The responses to the 'Other' category varied considerably although many people said that they would use the measures to inform or assess policy design. Others said that the measures would be useful to make environmental assessments, to see how they are doing, or for further research. Several people used this space to express their pessimism about the measures.

- It should NOT be used to assess government performance, or it would be subjected to 'tinkering' from whatever the current government would be to suit its own ends.
- To compare the rise / fall of well-being to GDP and see how efficiently our money is converting into well-being. Could we get more well-being for our money, or less environmental impacts for the same well-being?

While there was some pessimism, the majority of the comments were in favour of the need to develop new measures and what they would be used for.

- To formulate government policy and direct public sector spending and hopefully, to give a factual, figure-backed evidence base to the general perception that the current Government has massively lost perspective on the necessity to pay off the deficit
- To guide future spending and policy formation - at its core, it challenges the hegemony of economic growth which evidence suggests has not produced any greater happiness in the last 30 years
- to get a true picture of development as a society rather than an economy
- as a tool to aid policy development
- To find out where we are failing and then take appropriate steps to rectify the situation
- To enable a change of direction from government and in public services

Others raised the concern to aim use the indicators to compare how the UK is doing against other countries

- It will not be possible to compare performance against other countries UNLESS comparable measures are made available for other countries!

### **Other comments regarding the measurement of national well-being**

On the questionnaire, we also asked participants to give us any comments they had regarding the measurement of national well-being. We are grateful to Julie Newton of the Centre for Business Relationships Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS), Cardiff University who kindly analysed the data.

The 2,480 responses to this question broadly covered comments related to well-being measurement (criteria, survey design and delivery, sampling strategy) as well as how the data could be analysed and used. Reference was made to examples of previous and existing attempts to measure well-being. Opinions on a range of specific questions as well as domains that should be covered were also provided. Respondents used this section of the questionnaire to express positive and negative opinions about whether or not measuring well-being was worthwhile and to voice particular concerns about the risks and challenges of measuring well-being. They also used this question as an opportunity to express what they understood by the term well-being, providing rich personal accounts of what aspects of well-being were important to their individual sense of well-being and noting particular interventions or actions that could be used to enhance well-being.

The key messages emerging from this first stage of analysis are summarised below.

There was scepticism that the views expressed within the debate will inform the process of developing well-being measures. There was also concern that the well-being agenda will be used by the current government to justify further spending cuts and that they will manipulate the findings

to demonstrate how well they are doing. There was a degree of cynicism that this consultation was merely a PR exercise. A plea for ‘transparency’ on how the indicators will be developed, analysed and more importantly how they will be used was also made.

There were strong positive and negative opinions on whether or not measuring well-being is worthwhile and respondents highlighted the risks and challenges of measuring well-being.

- I feel that this is a huge waste of time and money for the government...Happiness is not a thing to be quantified and can change rapidly according to a ridiculous amount of factors
- There will never be a perfect measure. After all look at the limitations of GNP as a measure, yet it worked well-enough over many decades. Beware of those academics and specialists (I recognize that I am one) who argue fiercely on small points of principle or methodology (often geared to their personal reputations and interests) but who steadily ignore the bigger picture
- If I thought we would be listened to, it would be worth commenting but I remain sceptical if this will come to anything
- I welcome a new measurement of national well-being – this type of measurement has been long overdue – we need other measures of progress beyond GDP that would capture quality of life issues and how we feel as a society. These are often much more important than GDP – which can increase whilst undermining social and environmental capital
- I welcome the policy of moving ‘away’ from economic measures of the state of the nation and towards a more holistic approach of understanding the state of the nation. However, I’m not optimistic that it will manage to do this in a way that will be acceptable to a broad spectrum of users

There were different understandings of the term well-being; some people used ‘well-being’ interchangeably with ‘happiness’ and ‘quality of life’. However, there was general agreement that it was a multi-dimensional concept which went beyond the idea of economic success or growth and begins to capture the more subjective dimensions of how people think and feel.

There was recognition that because well-being is a multi-dimensional concept a single index would not suffice. There was widespread agreement that a selection of indicators was required but there was some debate on whether or not a definition of well-being should be agreed before proceeding. However, there was general agreement that a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures were necessary. There was some concern about sampling methods for the indicators within a proposed ‘basket’ of measures, in that there were worries that certain groups would be overlooked. Emphasis was given to the need to include new measures that capture concepts akin to hedonic and eudemonic well-being, although these terms were not used. The absence of faith/religion/spirituality and green space in the consultation was highlighted.

- Genuine well-being arises from a sense of belonging and being valued; whether in a family, a group of peers, a local community, a job – no matter how hard or tedious – a faith, a political group or, of course, our nation...We should assess our well-being but it cannot be a substitute for the bonding power of a community that is working purposefully, is materially secure and has the capacity and belief in extending that security to support its most vulnerable members
- The middle earners may not consider wealth to be significant in terms of happiness but it is difficult to be happy when you have nothing!!!
- National well-being must include some way of capturing the impact of our current activities on future people. In my view, our impact on the environment – the basis of future well-being – is not captured in current measures, particularly as regards our depletion of natural capital, which is very expensive and time consuming (sometimes impossible) to replace
- I feel that there should be some method of asking people how they feel, as well as gathering objective statistics, as inevitably different people will be affected to differing degrees by the various factors being measured

There was a certain amount of criticism against the consultation exercise itself. This included concern that more vulnerable and deprived groups were excluded from the consultation and that not enough had been done to promote the debate. These issues are addressed elsewhere in this paper.

### **The wider debate: events**

We held 175 events across the UK over the five month period. A list of where and when the events took place can be found in Annex A: Events. We talked to 7,249 people at our events. Table 8 shows the types of issues raised by different groups of people. The following information is only representative of the people who engaged in the debate. This was a national debate; these were not focus groups.

Table 8 Themes and quotes from events

Group	Themes	Quotes
Children	<p>We asked children what made them happy. The most commonly occurring themes were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family – spending time with them</li> <li>Family – physical contact (hugs)</li> <li>Friends</li> <li>Playing – with toys, running around, playing at the park etc</li> <li>Food – mainly sweets, chocolate and other treats</li> <li>Technology – computers, games consoles etc</li> <li>Sports – watching and playing</li> <li>Achieving things, receiving praise</li> </ul>	<p>‘Cuddles with my mummy’ (boy, 6)            ‘Chocolate mini eggs’ (girl, 3)            ‘When I go to fun places and get treats like McDonalds and Pizza Hut and when people are kind to me and play with me’ (boy, 6)            ‘Playing cars, playing schools, my mummy, my daddy and my brother’ (boy, 4)            ‘What makes me happy is being at school and running around with all my friends at playtime’ (girl, 5)            ‘Batman’ (Boy, 3)</p>
Young People	<p>We spoke to a variety of teenagers, including some not in employment, education or training. Some of the themes that emerged from the main debate came up in our discussions with teenagers, such as relationships with friends and money. However, the following themes, not as common in our other discussions, emerged strongly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology – mobile phones, ipods, social networking sites</li> <li>Entertainment – reality tv, celebrity gossip</li> <li>Image – the right clothes, shoes, make-up and hairstyle</li> <li>Food and drink</li> </ul>	<p>‘Chocolate. Tea. Getting things done. Hugs’            ‘Clothes are important. Maybe not to follow fashion, but to have your own look’            ‘Not that bothered about the environment, dirty rivers and stuff don’t matter, because we don’t spend time there’            ‘Family and football’            ‘My camera, my ipod. Food. Family and friends, jobs and education’            ‘Family and friends, relationship. Phone, exercise, money, weekends, music’            ‘Phone, money, family, relationship’            ‘Family, heels, music, pet, TV, money, make up’            ‘Music, sun, The Only Way Is Essex, Facebook, Celebrity Juice, Alcohol, Bed’</p>

<p>Students</p>	<p>In addition to mentioning the importance of health and family and friends, students were concerned about the cost of living, including education, and future employment prospects.</p> <p>Students also brought up international issues, such as the environment or military action abroad.</p>	<p>‘To have enough money to live without worries’  ‘Money, happiness, health, family well-being’  ‘A healthy, active society with a Government that cares more about the environment and a person’s quality of life than money and ‘big business’’  ‘Environment (energy saving), terrorism, economic stability, world peace, equal rights (for women!), alternative fuels, food supplies, water supplies’  ‘First time buyer – getting a house will be tough’  ‘Friends, family, mortgage rate, petrol prices’  ‘Being able to deal with ambiguity and change’</p>
<p>Parents</p>	<p>For parents, the health and well-being of their children was a primary concern. There was also a considerable amount of concern for the future – of the environment, and of living standards and education. Also discussed were issues of time pressure – the difficulties of working and raising children. Flexible working, including the ability to be self employed was seen as important. The cost of living was raised as a concern, with parents stressing how hard it is to provide healthy meals. Many parents mentioned the importance of having a good support network.</p>	<p>‘access to play groups is really important’  ‘money is important but you cut your cloth’  ‘...since becoming a mum I’ve been so much happier’  ‘I definitely want to make a good life for my children so a nice house in a lovely safe area is much more important to me now’  ‘whilst having loads of money would be lovely, it’s more important for me to give them [my children] good, happy memories’  ‘I miss the energy I had and I miss the social side of going to an exercise class. Just don’t have time.’  ‘Measure people’s contentment. People in the UK always want more and do not appreciate what they have.’</p>
<p>Women</p>	<p>In addition to usual comments about money and family, some of the themes women talked about were mental health, body image and equilibrium – between home and work, between men and women, between rich and poor. Many of the women were mothers, so issues of childcare were also mentioned. Security was also a concern.</p>	<p>‘It’s not about happiness; it’s about managing our emotions. We need to be teaching resilience to our kids to develop well-being’  ‘We need wealth – to flourish, not just survive’  ‘a sense of belonging, of not being judged’  ‘...need to feel safe from violence’  ‘We live in a very isolated society’  ‘child care is too expensive’  ‘It’s a juggling act to get through the day: what am I going to compromise on today?’</p>

<p>Retired people</p>	<p>We spoke to different groups of retired people. Many were concerned about the future prospects of their children and grandchildren as well as their own circumstances. Generally, retired people seemed as concerned about others in the community as much as themselves.</p> <p>There was a clear division between those who felt that there is very little real poverty in the UK and those who felt that poverty is a real problem.</p>	<p>‘Spending time with my family, seeing my grandchildren happy’  ‘Local shops, village life has disappeared; people aren’t as happy as they used to be’  ‘Pensions aren’t indexed – the allowance is very low’  ‘Measure what we value, not value what we measure’  ‘The happiness of yourself and people around you’  ‘I think that somehow we must educate the elderly, both men and women, to concept that being bereaved does not mean that their social lives must cease after the passing of a loved one’</p>
<p>Carers</p>	<p>We spoke to people who were employed as carers and to people who cared for relatives. Those employed as carers felt a sense of purpose was important to them. Carers of relatives mentioned the burden of cost, such as attending day centres and of time, for example struggling to attend their own medical appointments because of their caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Also mentioned were other issues such as work/life balance, cost of living, the importance of friends and good health.</p>	<p>‘Years ago the community was closer, people knew each other, and the police were more hands on’  ‘Health services focus on ‘popular’ illnesses, like cancer, heart disease, smoking [instead of Alzheimer’s]’  ‘...feel victimised. Paid National Insurance all our lives and now we have to pay for day care, even if he doesn’t go’  ‘Who cares for us carers?’</p>



<p>Equality groups</p>	<p>We spoke to various groups often excluded from consultations, including transgender, minority ethnic groups, people for whom English was a second language and disability groups.</p> <p>Again, much of the discussions concerned the importance of family and friends, health (physical, mental and emotional), money, employment and education. However, the issue of equality was raised many times.</p>	<p>‘English is our second language, so even using the internet can be difficult’ (this was from a deaf participant)</p> <p>‘The hearing community could learn something about tolerance from the deaf community’</p> <p>‘Better communication [in British Sign Language] would reduce our stress levels’</p> <p>‘Access to more women only classes, not just in basic English. Things like healthy cooking, driving theory and exercise classes’</p> <p>‘It’s important to keep in touch with family back home’</p> <p>‘If your children are settled, you feel better about yourself’</p> <p>‘Healthcare in the UK is excellent’</p> <p>‘The health service is not particularly joined up’</p> <p>‘I want to be free to be me’</p> <p>‘Feeling healthy and feeling at peace within yourself’</p> <p>‘Equality in applying for jobs, contentedness and opportunity’</p>
<p>Religious groups</p>	<p>We spoke to people from a wide variety of religious backgrounds and to various religious organisations. Many of them mentioned the importance of measuring contentment rather than happiness and of the need for people to focus less on material things in life. They also mentioned the need for close relationships, to feel valued and to have a sense of purpose.</p>	<p>‘People should learn self-appreciation’</p> <p>‘Well-being is too subjective to measure’</p> <p>‘Happiness is a misnomer. It’s more important to be content’</p> <p>‘Acceptances of difference are fundamental to the human race’</p> <p>‘Advertising is not conducive to well-being or self-esteem. It makes people greedy and greedy people are not happy’</p> <p>‘[we need] freedom within a ‘moral framework’’</p> <p>‘...need a positive frame of mind’</p> <p>‘having direction but being satisfied with life as it is’</p> <p>‘Money does not equate to well-being but lack of it equates to ill-being’</p>

A list of events held across the UK can be seen in Annex A.

## The wider debate: group responses

The national well-being debate also received responses from groups of people, including businesses, charities and other government departments. Many of these strongly supported themes mentioned above, for example The National Trust, The Aldersgate Group, Natural England, the RSPB and others focussed their contributions on environmental factors, while contributions from Race Online 2012 and The Post Office stress the importance of technology, in particular the internet, to well-being. A list of group responses can be found in Annex B.

Several contributions addressed more technical issues relating to the measurement of well-being and the way the debate was managed. For example, the Department for Work and Pensions raise the issue that well-being changes throughout the life course, meaning different factors vary in importance during the different stages of our lives. Unicef and Play Wales, among others, stress the importance of measuring the well-being of children. The National Centre for Social Research wrote about the importance of defining well-being and of developing measures that are comparable internationally. These issues will be addressed in the various supplementary papers accompanying the National Statistician's paper 'Measuring What Matters: The National Statistician's reflections on the findings of the national debate on measuring national well-being', available at [www.ons.gov.uk/well-being/wellbeing/understanding-wellbeing/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/well-being/wellbeing/understanding-wellbeing/index.html). For further information on academic work that was mentioned or recommended during the debate, please see Annex C.

Many organisations also offered their support to ONS in developing measures of national well-being.

## The wider debate: other responses

The debate took place in a variety of different formats. The consultation questionnaire and the events described above were just two ways for people to tell us what matters to them. In addition to this, people contributed via email, telephone, letters and postcards. Much of the debate was conducted online; we had a debate web-site where people could post their thoughts, either publicly or anonymously, and read and comment on our blogs. We worked with existing on-line communities to continue the debate beyond our own website. And we read with great interest the comments many people left in response to on-line newspaper articles about the Measuring National Well-being Programme and the national well-being debate.

We received a very wide range of answers to our question 'what things in your life matter most?' We read each contribution and categorised them into various groups; **Table 9** provides a list of the themes that emerged and examples of the information received. There were cross-cutting themes of freedom, equality and fairness. For example, some people said that religion was important to them, but many commented that it was the freedom to practise their religion that mattered. Similarly, services such as healthcare or education were considered important, as was equality of access to such services.

Below are the main themes that were raised during the debate, from all the different channels. They have been divided into nine different categories, or dimensions, which are:

- the environment
- economic issues

- health
- services
- political voice and governance
- social connections and relationships
- subjective well-being and behaviours
- time/use and personal activities
- cross-cutting

Table 9 **Main themes raised by debate participants**

Dimension: the environment	Theme	Evidence
Environment	Access to green spaces	<p>ONS received a lot of comments about the importance of having easy access to good quality green spaces:</p> <p>‘free access to green spaces free of litter and noise and pollution’                      ‘Having access to open, green space within walking distance of my home’                      ‘Access to natural green spaces (especially woodlands)’                      ‘Access to varied green space in urban areas’                      ‘Accessible green spaces, including areas that are good for wildlife, for all who live in built-up areas’</p>
	Quality of local environment	<p>Includes litter, graffiti, architecture, pleasant streets:</p> <p>‘What really matters to me is the quality of my local environment - I do not want to live in a place in which all green space has been concreted over or built on. I think that the essential character of my local area should be conserved as much as possible (I deplore the recent trend for everywhere to look and feel much the same with the same shops, businesses and architecture) and its history and traditions celebrated’                      ‘pleasant and healthy surroundings’                      ‘Neighbourhoods free of vandalism, graffiti and anti-social behaviour and noise’                      ‘Residential areas free of heavy traffic, aircraft noise, fumes’</p>
	Global environmental issues	<p>Includes climate change, pollution, biodiversity, food production, sustainability:</p> <p>‘The future of our food systems - I have grave concerns about factory farming and the damage it does to the nation's health and environment’</p>
	Animal welfare, including farming practices	<p>‘Animal well-being and protection’                      ‘The care and protection of domestic and wild animals’</p>

Dimension: economic issues	Theme	Evidence
Environment cont.	Weather	<p>We received a number of comments about how the weather – generally sunshine – impacts on well-being:</p> <p>‘Sunshine. Warmth.’                      ‘The weather! Sunshine can make up for a lot’</p>
Finances	Household finances	<p>Many people also wrote about the importance of household finances, usually just specifying that they need enough to get by</p> <p>‘It’s not about having millions of pounds, but working hard and earning a good amount to keep myself and any future family I have safe and well’</p> <p>This is a cross-cutting topic as it influences many other things that people said were important, such as taking holidays and buying healthy food:</p> <p>‘Sustainable and affordable food supplies, plus cheaper food that is healthier’</p>
	Distribution of wealth/income	<p>Finances came up as one of the things that matters most to participants. Not necessarily for the self but for society as a whole. One lady at an event in London said:</p> <p>‘I am financially well off but I would hate for someone to be worrying about whether they will have something to eat or a roof over their head. Also doing other things including recreation activities improves your mental well-being which in turn affects your general well-being but you can only do those things if you are in a good financial position.’</p> <p>This observation was shared in Ormskirk by a group of mostly retired professionals, and at a meeting involving ethnic minorities in Bradford where one participant observed that sometimes not having any disposable income after bills can harm one’s well-being and thereby negatively affect national well-being.</p> <p>‘A sense that everybody has access to a good standard of living’</p>

Dimension: economic issues	Theme	Evidence
Finances cont.	Poverty	<p>Much of the comments about poverty related to the distribution of wealth and income.</p> <p>‘the enormous disparity between the rich and poor in our country is damaging to our society's cohesion and is very detrimental to individual's perceptions of themselves’</p>
	Government spending	‘Having a welfare state that truly protects those in need from poverty’
	The economy	<p>‘Moving towards a steady state economy because continued growth in any system is simply unsustainable’</p> <p>‘I have no confidence in the economy’</p>
Employment	Job satisfaction	Some people also spoke about employment in terms of the relationships they formed at work. Working with friendly and interesting or like-minded people was cited as contributing to well-being.
	Job security	<p>‘Job security which is different from economic security’</p> <p>‘Job Security now and future job prospects for the workforce of the future’</p>
	Availability of employment	‘Availability of employment at all levels in the workforce from new graduate to older professional to school leavers with little or no qualifications.’
Home and housing	Access to affordable housing	<p>‘The principal problem in the UK, underlying all of our economic woes, and impacting most significantly on the happiness of future generations is the ludicrous cost of housing’</p> <p>‘House prices to reflect people's incomes so that young people and growing families can afford to buy their own homes’</p>
	Quality of housing	‘The quality of one's home.’

Dimension: economic issues	Theme	Evidence
Home and housing cont.	Homelessness	'Having a roof over my head' '...there should not be very disadvantaged and homeless people in society'
Health and healthcare	Personal health and fitness	Includes physical capability, healthy behaviours, nutrition
	Mental and emotional health	'Mental health is pretty much top of the bill' 'Mental health is the most important issue i.e. a relaxed lifestyle, less stress and pressure'
	The NHS	People talked about healthcare in a number of ways, including care in the community and caring for the most vulnerable in society. Many people mentioned the NHS as vital for our well-being.  'It gives me huge reassurance to know that I don't have to worry that I may not be able to pay for hospital treatment or educating my children and great reassurance to know that the majority of fellow citizens feel the same way'
	Care of, and support for, the vulnerable in society	Includes care for older people and those with disabilities
Education and learning	Quality education for children	'A high standard of relevant education for children, and youth activities/engagement to provide a good grounding for young people to become valuable and valued members of society'
	Free/affordable university education	'Free education up to and including university based on academic ability'
	Opportunities to improve your education or skills as an adult	'Access to libraries and adult education facilities'

Dimension: economic issues	Theme	Evidence
Transport		<p>The comments we received about transport mainly focussed on the availability, efficiency and affordability of public transport, including cycle networks. Some comments about congestion and safety on the roads were also received.</p> <p>'Good transport options that do not frustrate me and make life more difficult'                      'Available and affordable public transport. The built environment catering for walking and cycling'                      'Long journeys in overcrowded trains or sitting in traffic for a couple of hours a day can have a major negative impact'                      'Public transport enables you to connect with friends and family'</p>
Local services		<p>Comments were received about the quality and availability of a variety of different local services, from playgrounds and leisure centres to libraries and local shops.</p> <p>'Well funded and professionally run local resources such as libraries and sports facilities'</p>
Security	National security	ONS received a number of comments from people who said that national security mattered to them.
	Feeling safe in your home/neighbourhood	'Feeling safe on the street' 'Good quality of housing including feeling safe where I live'
	Crime rates	<p>Many people commented that improvements in other areas of well-being would help reduce crime rates.</p> <p>'Crime is an important issue, but I think when you have a quality environment, crime is decreased'                      'I also wish life was made more fun and enjoyable because I think that would have a direct impact on people, crime and many other issues'</p>
	Anti-social behaviour	'Social' behaviour in the community as opposed to anti-social'



Dimension: economic issues	Theme	Evidence
Security cont.	Justice	'Justice and all things being equal'  'Policing and the criminal justice system and how it impacts on those who are at the bottom of the social scale'
Technology	Internet access, communications technology	Many people told us about the importance of access to good quality internet and communications.
Children and Young People		Relationships with children are covered by the 'Close Relationships' category. This category includes child welfare and opportunities for young people.  'How we facilitate the lives of young people'  Children themselves often cited relationships with family and their own friends as important to their well-being.
Government and politics	Trust in/accountability of politicians	Many people told us about the importance of 'having a say' but many people also told us that it's being heard that counts:  'It's not so much about being able to have a say – it's whether what we say is listened to by politicians, which it generally isn't' 'The Government's ability to listen to what people in the country need and want' 'Not only do I think society should be able to 'have a say' on local and/or national issues, but they should be listened to and be shown to have been listened to/ taken on board when decision-making' 'Having local and national government officials who work together instead of this childish bickering and sarcasm between parties.....which leads to discontent and lack of respect to those in power' 'a government on which you can rely on to do what is best for THIS Country'
	Democracy	Many people said that democracy was important.  'a largely incorrupt democracy, albeit imperfect'

Dimension: economic issues	Theme	Evidence
Government and politics cont.	Citizenship and rights	People mentioned the importance of the human rights act, not being patronized by government, being free to smoke cigarettes and having a right to privacy. Although many people talked about the importance of living with religious values, we also received contributions to the debate about the importance of maintaining a secular society. For example the right to be 'free from religion' and the fact that being religious should not be a requirement to gain entry to faith schools.
	How the UK acts/is perceived abroad	'Knowing that the UK is meeting its international obligations and providing leadership on poverty reduction, climate change, combatting AIDS, fighting major causes of mortality etc'
Close relationships	With a spouse or partner	'Even if one has nothing left, if stable relationships are created, there will always be something to keep you going'
	With children	'A child reared in a stable, loving home will be far more likely to grow up as a balanced individual than one subject to break-up, rows, acrimony and verbal abuse'
	With wider family	'Having family around brings esteem, value, hope and love, and being healthy enables us to do good'
	With friends	We received comments that relations with 'family and friends' needed to be measured separately. Some people make life choices that alienate them from their family, which makes their relationships with friends even more important.
	With pets	'My pet animals also matter to me as much as anything else you have mentioned'
Community		Many people commented that they lack a sense of community but that it is important for both individual and national well-being.  'Feeling connected and involved in the community'

Dimension: time use/personal activities	Theme	Evidence
Immigration and population		<p>Comments about immigration and population generally referred to population density issues and the need to restrict immigration, although there were also comments about the need to encourage immigration.</p> <p>'Control of immigration from both inside and outside the EU'</p> <p>'Overpopulation - England is already massively overcrowded which is a seriously impacting on my quality of life'</p> <p>'Crowdedness - something akin to population density (but it needs to be understood across a range of different scales: London is uncomfortably overcrowded, but Hampstead Heath isn't, although of course every point on Hampstead Heath is in London)'</p>
Religion/faith/belief /spirituality		<p>This was quite a diverse category. People wrote about the importance of religion or spirituality to their lives in the sense of having a higher purpose, giving guidance, leading to inner peace or providing a welcoming community.</p> <p>'I am a committed Christian, and my faith is incredibly important to me'</p> <p>'Living Soulfully, by which I mean connecting to the deep, inner Self, being true to that Self and manifesting that truth in my relationships to all around me.'</p> <p>'The promotion and cultivation of physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing in society. In a word: Love.'</p> <p>'Spiritual goals in society - not just materialistic indicators of well-being'</p> <p>In terms of what the indicators should look like, one participant at an event organised by a people with a religious background in York observed that:</p> <p>'Well-being should not be...a 'smugness index' – even if respondents are individually content, it should reflect the situation of others in society'</p>

<b>Dimension: time use/personal activities</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Work/life balance		<p>We received a lot of comments about the importance of friends, family and hobbies. Many people went on to say that in order to be able to enjoy hobbies or spend time with family and friends there needs to be an appropriate work/life balance.</p> <p>'We all need to be able to go home, wherever and whatever that may be, and switch off from the daily stresses.'</p> <p>Many people mentioned the importance of being able to take holidays. This issue is a cross-cutting one as the ability to take holidays is determined by household finances.</p>
Recreation		<p>This included comments about watching sport, playing sport with friends, socialising, hobbies and other pastimes and generally having fun.</p>
Arts, culture and heritage		<p>'There is not enough emphasis on participation and access to cultural activities such as arts, libraries, museums, galleries, music and theatre'</p> <p>Closure of libraries by many local councils was also cited as impacting negatively on well-being. Participants said that libraries play more significant roles than just lending books in the community.</p> <p>Although this has been put in the time use/personal activities category, people who commented about the arts, culture and heritage stressed the important contribution that these areas make to both personal and national well-being.</p> <p>We also received contributions to the debate from various museums, who explained how they play various roles: as part of the community, in education, as recreation, as employers and, of course, preserving our heritage.</p>

Dimension: Subjective well-being and behaviours	Theme	Evidence
Subjective well-being		<p>This category covers comments about happiness and life satisfaction.</p> <p>‘Just generally how I feel - all things considered, how satisfied am I with my life as a whole these days?’</p> <p>‘Being happy - surely that is more important than money!!!’</p> <p>‘Happiness is a good proxy measure of well-being as the majority of people are able to consider how happy they are at a particular point in time’</p>
Purpose		<p>Participants told us that having a sense of purpose was important to them:</p> <p>‘Being able to make a meaningful contribution’</p> <p>‘Some way to feel that a life has made a net contribution to the sum of human achievement’</p> <p>This can overlap with other categories, for example:</p> <p>‘It is important for me to have a job that in a tiny way helps to make the world a better place’</p>
Morals and ethics		<p>Many comments focussed on how people and businesses behave, stressing the impact of poor behaviour on well-being.</p> <p>‘Businesses conducting themselves in an ethical way’</p> <p>‘Honest and ethical behaviour and principles from and for all the appalling lack of morals and family values and the continual portrayal in the media of anything or anyone who is bad as a good thing’</p> <p>Many comments concerned the impact of the media on well-being.</p> <p>‘Media (in all its forms) force stereotypes on vulnerable minds as an ideal of how everyone should be; when in reality this is not a true picture of the majority, but is a of a minority of individuals’</p>

<b>Dimension: Cross-cutting</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Future		<p>This category covers comments about hopes and aspirations, as well as concerns, for the future. Many of the comments expressed concern for future generations, rather than for the participant's own future.</p> <p>'Knowing that my children will have a future. I feel so uncertain about their future, not only economically but socially'</p> <p>'The confidence that the future of our children and grandchildren is not compromised by current economic and environmental practises'</p> <p>'A good future for my son'</p>
Less consumerism		<p>Some of the responses were about the need to change our culture to one that is less reliant on material wealth and consumption.</p>
Freedom, equality and fairness		<p>These were cross cutting themes (equality of access to education, for example) but were often mentioned in their own right:</p> <p>'A fair and equitable society with more social mobility'</p> <p>'A sense of autonomy – that I have some control over the important things in my life'</p> <p>'I think the overall one is something as vague as opportunity - to improve one's lot through access to education and jobs - and not to be disadvantaged through background and location'</p> <p>There were also some participants who felt that there was a high level of institutional discrimination and that this would impact national well-being because some segments of the population would be adversely affected:</p> <p>'A perception of equality, i.e. absence of racism, sexism, ageism and other forms of exclusion'</p> <p>'An equitable society where all are treated with the same degree of respect'</p> <p>The importance of being freed to travel was mentioned quite frequently, both abroad and within the UK.</p>
Sustainability		<p>Includes environmental issues but also national 'knowledge'. Some participants raised the importance of Research and Development and Technology and their importance to the well-being of the country.</p>

## Conclusion

The different themes and points of view described in this paper illustrate that well-being – both national and individual – is a complex, multi-dimensional issue. However, throughout the debate we have seen common threads running through many of the contributions. These include the importance of our health to our well-being, the importance of having adequate income or wealth to cover basic needs, the environment around us, and the need we have to connect with other people, whether partners, children, wider family, the community (local, national, faith and on-line), or work colleagues.

Also important was how we spend our time, including the balance we achieve between our work and home lives, the time we spend outdoors – and the availability of green spaces for us to use – and the extent to which we participate in cultural or creative activities. The quality and availability of Government provided services such as healthcare, education, and the transport network have significant impact on our well-being. Throughout all this ran the common thread that there should be a greater sense of fairness and equality for the sake of our national well-being.

The findings from the debate will be used to help ensure ONS's Measuring National Well-being programme is focused on 'what matters', with the next step being to develop a set of measures of national well-being which reflect the themes outlined in this paper.

## Annex A: Events

Event	Location		Event	Location
National OAP Association	Aberdare		Universal Beneficent Society	London
Pontlloftyn Primary School (5 year olds)	Bargoed		National Council for Voluntary Organisations Annual Conference	London
St Gwladys Primary School (9/10/11 year olds)	Bargoed		Labour Market Conference	London
St Gwladys Primary School – (9/10 year olds)	Bargoed		Children England Annual Conference	London
Ulster University Student's Union	Belfast (Jordanstown campus)		Platform 51	London
Ulster University	Belfast		Royal Statistics Society: Statistics User Forum	London
RNID: Ulster Institute for the Deaf	Belfast		London Social Research Association	London
Ulster Cancer Foundation	Belfast		Treasury for Government Social Researchers	London
Be Birmingham	Birmingham		National Statistician's Measuring National well-being Advisory Group	London
Health and Well-being @ Work	Birmingham (NEC)		Tesco Occupational Health Therapists	London
Big Lotto Fund: The Future of Well-being - A Learning Event	Birmingham		British Academy	London



Libanus Primary School (5 year olds)	Blackwood		Audit Commission	London
Libanus Primary School (10 year olds)	Blackwood		City University	London
Markham Primary School (10/11 year olds)	Blackwood		King's Health Centre	London
Markham Primary School (9/10 year olds)	Blackwood		Office for National Statistics	London
Bryn Primary School (5/6 year olds)	Blackwood		Institute for Government, a discussion with John Helliwell	London
Bolton Devise Open Day (Entrepreneurs)	Bolton		Institute of Fiscal Studies	London
Bolton Health and Well-being Festival	Bolton		Well-being workshop with policy officials and analysts	London
Bolton University	Bolton		Loughborough Students' Union	Loughborough
Powerhouse International Church	Bradford		Manchester Metropolitan University, Psychology Lecturers	Manchester
Archbishop McGrath School (Techniquet event) (14/15 year olds)	Bridgend		Manchester University, chaired by Mark Easton	Manchester
Archbishop McGrath School (Techniquet event) (16/17 year olds)	Bridgend		Manchester University Students' Union	Manchester

Bridgend College (Techniquet event) (age 17/18 plus)	Bridgend		Phillipstown Primary School (8 year olds)	New Tredegar
6 <sup>th</sup> form college (philosophy students)	Brighton		White Rose Primary School (11 year olds)	New Tredegar
Heolddu school (Techniquet event) (17/18/19 year olds)	Caerphilly		Philipstown Primary School (7/8/9 year olds)	New Tredegar
Ysgol Gyfun Cwn Rhymni (Techniquet event) (17/18 year olds)	Caerphilly		White Rose Primary School (7 year olds)	New Tredegar
Caerphilly Borough Youth Forum	Caerphilly		Newcastle University	Newcastle
YGG school	Caerphilly		Newcastle University, Students' Union	Newcastle
Twyn school	Caerphilly		Northern Guild for Psychotherapy	Newcastle
Youth and community works in Wales, Carmarthen, University of Wales	Carmarthen		Sustaine	Newcastle
Carmarthen County Council	Carmarthen		Office for National Statistics, Business Data Division	Newport
Cambridge University, event chaired by Claudia Hammond	Cambridge		Royal Gwent Hospital	Newport
Cambridge University, Students' Union	Cambridge		Pillgwenlly Millennium Centre, Happy Hearts	Newport

Transition Group	Cambridge		Public Health Wales	Newport
Huntington Business Fair	Cambridge		Pillgwenlly Primary School - Student Group 1	Newport
Somali Integration Society	Cardiff		Pillgwenlly Primary School - Student Group 2	Newport
GDP and Beyond - Challenges and Opportunities for Measuring Well-being	Cardiff		Pillgwenlly Primary School - Student Group 3	Newport
ACT Training	Cardiff		Pillgwenlly Primary School - Student Group 4	Newport
Stonewall	Cardiff		Guinness World Book of Records - Zumba Class Challenge- Celtic Manor	Newport
Welsh Assembly Government	Cardiff		Office for National Statistics, Health Statistics Division	Newport
Sheltered Housing	Cardiff		Public Health Wales	Newport
Switched On Project	Cardiff		Senior Citizen Forum	Newport
Sarn Helen 50 plus Forum	Ceredigion		National well-being session: IM Leadership Conference	Newport
Regional Field Managers (OF WHOM?) Conference	Chelmsford		Office for National Statistics	Newport
Coast for Change for Good	Cornwall		Glan Usk Primary School (9/10/11 year olds)	Newport
Volunteer Cornwall	Cornwall		Health Network Group	North Dorset

Environment Kernow Conference, 2011	Cornwall		School of Health, University of Northampton	Northampton
Coleg Gwent, Techniquest event	Cross Keys		East Midlands Development Agency	Nottingham
Ulster University	Derry		Southport Alzheimer's Support Group	Ormskirk
Socialist Health Association (check – is this Social Health or Socialist?)	Dundee		Edge Hill University (restaurant)	Ormskirk
ASH Conference	Edinburgh		University of the Third Age Group	Ormskirk
Buddhist Monastery	Edinburgh		Cowley Road Methodist Church Centre	Oxford
Gender re-assignment group	Edinburgh		Detached Youth Work Team	Oxford
Director of Scottish Council of Jewish Communities	Edinburgh		Witney Church	Oxford
'The Melting Pot' Royal Statistical Society	Edinburgh		OXFAM Christian Fellowship Group	Oxford
Equality Network Edinburgh	Edinburgh		Ciorcal Comhra (Irish language)	Oxford
Humanist Society of Scotland	Edinburgh		Art for Adults	Oxford
New Concepts	Fareham		Oxford City Council, in partnership with Oxford Data Observatory	Oxford
Mid Century	Fareham		Town Hall Public Meeting	Oxford

Tir-y-Berth Primary (7/8 year olds)	Gelligaer		Crossroads, Caring for Carers	Pontypridd
Gly-gear Primary School	Gelligaer		All Wales Strategic Play Network	Rhayader
Children in Scotland	Glasgow		Ategi	Rhydyfelin
Outreach Health	Gosport		Sheffield University	Sheffield
Northumberland	Hexham		Living Well with Dementia	Southport
Maternity clinic	Isle of Wight		Rathbone Cymru	Swansea
Aldersgate Group	Islington		Broad Hinton Kids Club (Parents)	Swindon
Lambeth Council Hall, 'Which Way Britain?', (new economics foundation event)	Lambeth		Mindful Employer Network/Swindon Psychology Service	Swindon
Lancaster University	Lancaster		Swindon Arts Centre	Swindon
Leeds University	Leeds		Christian Research Centre	Swindon
Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE)	Leeds		Central Community Hall	Swindon
Leicester University	Leicester		Regional Registration Meeting	Taunton
Samworth Enterprise Academy (5 year olds)	Leicester		Office for National Statistics, Field Staff	Titchfield
Samworth Enterprise Academy (10 year olds)	Leicester		Office for National Statistics	Titchfield

Samworth Enterprise Academy (15 year olds)	Leicester		Fairwater School (Techniquet event) (17/18/19 year olds)	Torfaen
Liverpool University, chaired by Mark Easton	Leicester		Glan Usk Primary School (5/6/7 year olds)	Usk
Regional Registration Meeting	Llandrindod Wells		Warwick University, chaired by Professor Sarah Steward-Brown	Warwick
Cabinet Office	London		Flintshire Mental Health Strategic Planning Group	Wrexham
British Academy - the inaugural lecture of the Anglo-German Foundation	London		Ynysddu Primary School (10/11 year olds)	Ynysddu
Franco-British Council Debate	London		St Martin's Church	York
National Statistician's Measuring National well-being Technical Advisory Group	London		York University	York
London Well-being Conference	London			
London School of Economics, chaired by Mark Easton	London			

## Annex B: Group responses

- Action Support
- Basildon Borough Council
- Bethlem and Maudsley Hospital School
- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
- British Library
- Campaign for National Parks
- Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics
- Centre for Leadership Studies, Exeter University
- Chartered Institute of Personnel Development
- Church of England
- City University
- College of Occupational Therapists
- Department for Communities and Local Government
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Department for Work and Pensions
- East Northants Faith Group
- Equality Trust
- Faculty for Public Health
- Foundation for Holistic Spirituality
- Government Equalities Office
- Health and Safety Executive
- Health Economics Unit, University of Birmingham
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Historic Houses Association
- Imperial War Museum
- Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)
- Journal of Holistic Healthcare
- Keep Britain Tidy
- Leisure Studies Association
- Luton Borough Council
- Museums and Libraries Archive Council
- Museums Association
- National Centre for Social Research
- National Trust
- Natural England

- New economics foundation
- Newlife
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
- Oxford Analytica
- Pan London NHS Group
- Platform 51
- Play Wales
- Race Online 2012
- Regional Equality and Diversity Partnership, East Midlands
- Right Property
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Shelter
- Socialist Health Awareness
- South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Mental Health Promotion team
- South West Observatory
- The Aldersgate Group
- The Centre for Business Relationships Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS), Cardiff University
- The Children's Society
- The British Psychological Society
- The Money Advice Service
- The Place 2 Be
- The Post Office
- The Wildlife Trust
- UK Online Centres
- Unicef
- University College London
- University of Bath
- Voluntary Arts
- Woodland Trust
- World Health Organisation Quality of Life Measure
- Young Minds



## Annex C: Existing work referred to us during the national well-being debate

### Capabilities Approach

The capabilities approach provides a framework for developing measures of well-being. The basic framework is one in which the functioning of an individual depends on the resources available to them. Capabilities are defined as the set of potential functionings to which the individual has access.

<b>Academic</b>	
Anand, P, et al. The Development of Capability Indicators	<p>This paper was submitted as part of an ONS commissioned research into the Capabilities approach.</p> <p>Paper supports the multi-dimensional view of well-being, with indicators from a wide variety of domains linked to life satisfaction. The authors argue that human capabilities can be measured as part of household surveys</p>
Anand, P, Krishnakumar, J, Tran, N. Measuring Welfare: Latent variable models for happiness and capabilities in the presence of heterogeneity	<p>This paper was submitted as part of an ONS commissioned research into the Capabilities approach.</p>
Human Development and Capabilities Association	<p>The work of this organisation was referred to the ONS by the Government Equalities Office.</p> <p>The Human Development and Capabilities Association promote research related to impoverishment, justice and well-being.</p>
Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative	<p>The work of this organisation was referred to the ONS by the Government Equalities Office.</p> <p>Based at Oxford University's department of international development. Their aim is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is grounded in people's experiences and values. OPHI's work is grounded in Amartya Sen's capabilities approach.</p>
Health Economics Unit, University of Birmingham	<p>The Health Economics Unit at the University of Birmingham submitted their work on using the capabilities approach to capture the gain from health and social care interventions.</p> <p>In this survey patients are asked to complete a questionnaire following treatment asking their views on how the treatment has affected the life they are able to lead.</p>

<b>References</b>
Anand P, et al 'The Development of Capability Indicators' Journal of Human Development and Capability Indicators, Vol.10, No.1, March 2009
Human Development and Capabilities Association <a href="http://www.capabilityapproach.com/Home.php">www.capabilityapproach.com/Home.php</a>
Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative <a href="http://www.ophi.org.uk">www.ophi.org.uk</a>
Health Economics Unit, University of Birmingham <a href="http://www.icecap.bham.ac.uk">www.icecap.bham.ac.uk</a>

### Synthetic Indices

Synthetic Indices are typically constructed as weighted averages of summary measures of social performance in various domains. Weighting allows many domains to be expressed within a single indicator. Examples include; the Human Development Index, Indices of Deprivation

<b>Other Government Departments</b>	
Indices of Deprivation	<p>This work was referred by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.</p> <p>Indices of deprivation have been created for the four countries of the UK. Indices for each country are closely related if not directly comparable. Country indices are formed by weighting together component indices which cover themes such as income, employment, health, housing, crime etc.</p>
English Indices of Deprivation 2010	<p>Submitted by Department for Communities and Local Government.</p> <p>Measures of deprivation have been calculated since the 1970s. Seven domains are weighted together to form the measure. Domains are; income, employment, health, education, barriers to housing and services, environment and crime.</p>
<b>Commercial</b>	
Legatum Prosperity Index	<p>This work was undertaken and submitted by Oxford Analytica, who the ONS held a follow up meeting with.</p> <p>The index uses Gallup World Poll data as a measure of life satisfaction and GDP per capita as a measure of income. Variables from eight sub indices are regressed upon both life satisfaction and income. The eight sub indices are then averaged to give an overall score by which to rank countries.</p>

<b>International</b>	
United Nations Human Development Index	Referred to in contributions to the National Debate.  Weighted index of life expectancy, degree of education and income. Countries are ranked by their overall score. Scores are calculated annually and countries re-ranked.
UNICEF Well-being report	Referred to in contributions to the National Debate.  Report assesses well-being of children and young people in 21 nations of the industrialised world. UK is placed bottom of the rank. Six dimensions are measured; material well-being, health & safety, educational well-being, family & peer relationships, behaviour & risks and subjective well-being. Final country ranks are calculated by averaging the ranks over the six dimensions.
<b>References</b>	
Indices of deprivation <a href="http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Info.do?page=analysisandguidance/analysisarticles/indices-of-deprivation.htm">www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Info.do?page=analysisandguidance/analysisarticles/indices-of-deprivation.htm</a>	
English indices of deprivation <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/research/indicesdeprivation/deprivation10/">www.communities.gov.uk/communities/research/indicesdeprivation/deprivation10/</a>	
Legatum Prosperity Index <a href="http://www.prosperity.com">www.prosperity.com</a>	
United Nations Human Development Index <a href="http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/">http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/</a>	
UNICEF Well-being report <a href="http://www.unicef.ca/portal/Secure/Community/502/WCM/PRESS/IRC7/RC7.pdf">www.unicef.ca/portal/Secure/Community/502/WCM/PRESS/IRC7/RC7.pdf</a>	

## Money Measures

Monetising non-monetary aggregates so as to enable direct comparisons between domains with non-comparable units. Once aggregates are in monetary units then measures of national income can be 'corrected' to make additions or subtractions. Examples include; Green GDP, Measures of Human Capital, alternative measure of national income.

<b>Government</b>	
Measuring the UK's Human Capital Stock (Jones, 2010)	<p>This paper was referred to in the National Debate.</p> <p>The paper covers the work undertaken to estimate the UK's stock of human capital. The inclusion of measures of human capital within the National Accounts framework was one of the recommendations of the CMEPSP and the Atkinson Review. Human capital in this paper is defined as people's knowledge, skills and competencies. Alternative methods for measuring human capital are considered.</p> <p>The lifetime labour income approach is used with data from the Labour Force Survey to produce estimates of the UK's human capital stock. The value of the UK's human capital stock in 2009 was estimated at £16.6 billion.</p>
Measures of economic activity and their implications for societal well-being (Chiripanhura, 2010)	<p>This paper was referred to in the National Debate.</p> <p>The paper presents alternative measure of economic activity that may be more suitable indicators of society's well-being. Four measures of national income are analysed; Gross Domestic Product, Net Domestic Product, Gross National Income and Net National Income.</p> <p>As the reported by the CMESPSP, 'material living standards are better followed through measures of household income and consumption.' In light of this the paper analyses Household Disposable Income, Household Adjusted Disposable Income, Household Final Consumption Expenditure, and Household Actual Consumption Expenditure. It is shown that ranks of nations through economic activity are highly dependent on the measure used.</p> <p>The paper concludes that it is necessary to give prominence to national accounts indicators other than GDP when considering material well-being. Given that well-being is a multi-dimensional concept measures of it should go beyond purely economic criteria.</p>
Total Public Service Output, Inputs and Productivity (Phelps, 2010)	<p>This paper was referred to in the National Debate.</p> <p>Both the CMEPSP and the Atkinson Review recommend that measures of government output are improved to produce more accurate measures of GDP. Because there is often no market for goods and services produced by the government, they have traditionally been valued at cost rather than market prices.</p> <p>Within the ONS the UK Centre for the Measurement of Government Activity (UKCeMGA) have worked to improve the measurement of public service output.</p>
Social Return on Investment	<p>Referred to in the National Debate.</p> <p>Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis is a method for understanding the environmental and social value created by organisations in addition to the financial value generated. It is a method for measuring extra-financial value (i.e. environmental and social value not reflected in conventional financial accounts) relative to resources invested, to articulate whether on balance, the benefits of an undertaking outweigh the costs.</p>

<p>'Does Economic Growth Improve the Human Lot? Some Empirical Evidence' (Easterlin, 1974)</p>	<p>This paper was referred to in the National Debate.</p> <p>This paper first revealed what has now become known as the 'Easterlin Paradox'. The situation in which comparisons of individuals within countries reveals that those who earn a higher income report higher levels of life satisfaction. However international comparisons show that levels of life satisfaction do not vary much with national income per head.</p>
<p>Subjective Well-Being, Income, Economic Development and Growth (Sacks et al, 2010)</p>	<p>Referred to in the National Debate.</p> <p>This paper presents results that are contrary to those obtained in the 'Easterlin Paradox'. Evidence finds that first, within a country richer individuals report higher levels of life satisfaction. Second, richer countries on average have higher levels of life satisfaction. Third, by analysing time series of countries it is observed that as economies grow so life satisfaction increases. Analysis suggests that subjective well-being rises with the log of income many previous studies have used a linear function of income.</p>
<p><b>References</b></p>	
<p>Chiripanhura B 'Measures of economic activity and their implications for societal well-being' Economic and Labour Market Review, Vol 4, No 7, July 2010  <a href="http://www.statistics.gov.uk/elmr/07_10/downloads/ELMR_Jul10.pdf">www.statistics.gov.uk/elmr/07_10/downloads/ELMR_Jul10.pdf</a></p>	
<p>Easterlin R, 'Does Economic Growth Improve the Human Lot?' in Paul A. David and Melvin W. Reder, eds., Nations and Households in Economic Growth: Essays in Honor of Moses Abramovitz, 1974</p>	
<p>Jones R, Chiripanhura B 'Measuring the UK's Human Capital Stock' Economic and Labour Market Review, Vol 4, No 11, November 2010  <a href="http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/elmr/elmr-nov10-jones.pdf">www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/elmr/elmr-nov10-jones.pdf</a></p>	
<p>Phelps M, et al 'Total Public Service Output, Inputs and Productivity' ONS, July 2010  <a href="http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=2488">www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=2488</a></p>	
<p>Sacks D et al, 'Subjective Well-Being, Income, Economic Development and Growth' NBER working paper, October 2010</p>	

## Subjective Well-Being

Measures of subjective well-being aim to capture individuals self-reported perceptions of their own well-being. Respondents are asked to answer a number of questions regarding their feelings in on various domains of their life. The results of these can then be used to investigate the subjective well-being of a country.

<b>Academic</b>	
Recommendations to the ONS for Measuring Well-Being (Deaton et al, 2011)	<p>Submission to the National Debate</p> <p>Recommendations are based on analysis of the Gallup Daily Poll, Day Reconstruction Method and Ecological Momentary Assessment data. The authors recommend; that additional negative affect questions be used on the Integrated Household Survey, that Cantril's life evaluation is used rather than a life satisfaction question, to use the monthly Opinions Survey as a test for future questions on the HIS, to initially use a broader set of questions and narrow them down as analysis is undertaken on the data, that question order matters and proper analysis such as to be done to minimise the effects.</p>
Comparing measures of subjective wellbeing and some tentative results on the role they should play in policy (Dolan, Metcalfe, 2011)	<p>The paper analyses early results from the Opinions Survey and YouGov surveys to make recommendations for how ONS should measure subjective well-being.</p> <p>Recommendations include; increasing the measurement of daily lives including negative affects, analysing the reasons why respondents score themselves at the maximum end of the scale, understand the reasons why respondents think a measure of well-being should or should not be used for setting public policy, analyse the robustness of the data to ordering and mode effects.</p>
Population measures of subjective wellbeing: How useful are they? (Eckersley, 2009)	<p>This paper was submitted as part of the National Debate.</p> <p>The paper argues that subjective well-being is an imperfect measure of population well-being. It is just one of a number of needed indicators and its importance should not be overstated. Subjective well-being presents a partial picture, differing from that of other indicators. The paper also criticises comparisons of subjective well-being scores between nations, As cultural and attitudinal differences between nations need to be considered.</p>
Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University	<p>This work was submitted by City University whom the ONS has held a number of follow up meetings with.</p> <p>The Centre for Comparative Social Surveys (CCSS) coordinates the European Social Survey. In rounds three and six the survey carried a well-being module. The results of this enable cross-national comparisons to be made.</p> <p>The CCSS encourage the use of attitudinal indicators at the macro level; asking individuals their feelings on aspects of society as a whole.</p>

<p>Developments in the Measurement of Subjective Well-being (Kahneman, Krueger, 2006)</p>	<p>This paper was submitted as part of the National Debate.</p> <p>The paper proposes the U index as an alternative measure of subjective well-being. The U index measures the proportion of time an individual spends in an unpleasant state, where negative ranking outweigh positive rankings for that particular time period. The results in the paper show a correlation between life satisfaction and the amount of time spent in an unpleasant state.</p> <p>The authors conclude that a measure of gross national happiness is overly ambitious with regard to the present state of knowledge and the limitations of subjective well-being measures. Targeted approaches such as the U index are seen as more promising measures of subjective well-being.</p>
<p>Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)</p>	<p>This was submitted as part of the national debate.</p> <p>There is a need to capture mental health as well as physical health to accurately measure well-being. WEMWBS was developed to assess mental well-being in the UK. Respondents are asked to record their answers to statements using a 5-point scale.</p>
<p>Leisure Studies Association</p>	<p>Formal submission as part of the National Debate.</p> <p>The Association argues that a measure of national well-being needs to capture an understanding of the work-life balance. As part of this, individuals' freedom from constraints and obligations in their lives need to be measured.</p>
<p>World Database of Happiness</p>	<p>Referred to in the National Debate.</p> <p>The World Database of Happiness, based at the Erasmus University Rotterdam is a register of scientific research on methods for measuring happiness.</p>
<p>The development and validation of a general measure of well-being: the BBC well-being scale (Kinderman et al, 2010)</p>	<p>This paper was submitted as part of the National Debate.</p> <p>Paper presents the well-being scale developed with BBC Lab UK. The scale proposed is a 24-item scale with respondents scoring themselves from 1- 4 on each item. Domains were selected in order capture physical health, psychological health, social relationships, environment, self acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive relations, personal growth and negative affect.</p>
<p>'Quality of Life in Britain' surveys</p>	<p>Referred to in the National Debate.</p> <p>Surveys conducted in the 1970s by the Mark Abrams and John Hall at the Social Science Research Council's survey unit. Two national surveys containing measure of subjective well-being were run, in 1973 and 1975.</p>

<b>Government</b>	
Health and Safety Executive	<p>Paper submitted as a contribution to the National Debate.</p> <p>With most people spending much of their adult lives at work the Health and Safety Executive submission underlined the importance of work to a measure of national well-being. Previous work by the Executive defined nine dimensions as being key factors in the quality of working life these include; work-life balance, type of job, work environment, employee / employer relationships.</p>
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	<p>Paper submitted as a contribution to the National Debate.</p> <p>DCMS strongly support the inclusion of a measure of the degree to which individuals partake in cultural and sporting activities. The links between partaking in cultural and sporting activities and improving well-being have been recognised in the Taking Part survey.</p> <p>DCMS also argue against the use of a single indicator for a measure of national well-being. Highlighting the difficulties of weighting and combining indices in different units.</p>
<b>Commercial</b>	
Gallup – Healthways Well-Being Index	<p>The Gallup – Healthways Well-Being Index interviews 1000 adults daily to assess the well-being of the U.S across six domains; life evaluation, emotional health, physical health, healthy behaviour, work environment and basic access. Life evaluation is measured using Cantril's ladder. Thresholds of 'thriving', 'struggling' and 'suffering' are used to describe scores of 7 or above, 4 – 6 and 0 – 3 respectively</p>
EuroQol EQ-5D	<p>The EQ-5D is a subjective measure of health. Respondents are asked to assess themselves on mobility, self-care, usual activities, pain / discomfort and anxiety / depression. With each domain ranked on a 3-point verbal scale. Overall health is assessed subjectively on a 100-point scale.</p>



<b>Third sector</b>	
The Children's Society	<p>Submitted as part of the National Debate.</p> <p>The Children's Society has carried out a number of surveys of child subjective well-being in the UK. The Society has created the 'Good Childhood Index' which is the average of score of ten questions using a 0-10 scale. Domains used include family, health, money, school... In addition a five-item measure of overall well-being is used with respondents asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with statements such as 'My life is going well', 'I have what I want in life'.</p> <p>In their formal response to the national debate. The Children's Society recommended that the ONS include an index of children and young people's well-being in the well-being framework; this should include both subjective and objective measures.</p>
new economics foundation	<p>nef national accounts of well-being.</p> <p>nef's national accounts of well-being was carried out in conjunction with the results from the subjective well-being modules of the European Social Survey. Around 40,000 responses were received from respondents in twenty-two different countries.</p> <p>In 'Measuring our Progress: The power of well-being' nef outline their recommendations for how national well-being should be measured. The framework used is one which puts human well-being as the key goal, environmental resources as the key resources and the economy as one of the most important human systems.</p>
World Health Organisation Quality of Life Measure	<p>The World Health Organisation defines quality of life as 'Individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.' The short for of the measure is a series of 26 questions, where respondents rank themselves on a 5-point scale in relation to different aspects of their life, including; health, lifestyle and environment. Respondents are asked to consider their answers in relation to the past four weeks of their life.</p>
<b>References</b>	
Deaton A, Kahneman D, Krueger A, Schkade D, Schwartz N and Stone A, 'Recommendations to the ONS for Measuring Well-Being', February 2011	
Dolan, P. & Metcalf, R. (2011) Comparing measures of Subjective well-being and views about the role they should play in policy <a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/well-being/wellbeing">http://www.ons.gov.uk/well-being/wellbeing</a>	

Eckersley R, 'Population Measures of Subjective Wellbeing: How useful are they?' Social Indicators Research, Vol94, No 1, 2009
EuroQol <a href="http://www.euroqol.org/">www.euroqol.org/</a>
Gallup – Healthways Well-Being Index - <a href="http://www.well-beingindex.com/default.asp">www.well-beingindex.com/default.asp</a>
Kahneman D and Krueger A 'Developments in the Measurement of Subjective Well-Being' Journal of Economic Perspectives, Vol 20, No 1, 2006
Leisure Studies Association <a href="http://www.leisure-studies-association.info/LSAWEB/">www.leisure-studies-association.info/LSAWEB/</a>
nef National Accounts of Well-being - <a href="http://www.nationalaccountsofwellbeing.org/">www.nationalaccountsofwellbeing.org/</a>
'Quality of Life in Britain' surveys <a href="http://www.surveymethods.com">www.surveymethods.com</a>
Stewart-Brown S, et al. 'The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): development and UK validation' Health and Quality of Life Outcomes, 2007
World Database of Happiness <a href="http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/index.html">worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/index.html</a>
World Health Organisation <a href="http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/research_tools/whoqolbref/en/">www.who.int/substance_abuse/research_tools/whoqolbref/en/</a>

## Other

<b>Academic</b>	
The British Psychological Society	<p>Formal response to the National Debate.</p> <p>The Society recommends that a measure of national well-being should use both subjective and objective indicators across a range of domains in order to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of well-being. The Society would also favour that a single index is used to present a measure of well-being but acknowledges the difficulties faced with this approach. Relationships, health and meaning are identified as the three key domains to capture in a measure of subjective well-being.</p>

Leisure Studies Association	<p>Formal submission as part of the National Debate.</p> <p>The Association argues that a measure of national well-being needs to capture an understanding of the work-life balance. As part of this, individuals' freedom from constraints and obligations in their lives need to be measured.</p>
Young People and Well-being: contemporary science debates in Wales	<p>A measure of national well-being needs to include all social groups. This paper looks at what well-being means and how best to measure it for those aged 16 – 19. The research identifies the key well-being domains for the age group as the people in their lives (friends and family), how they socialise (technology, drinking, sport) and where they socialise (home, school, weekend). These are inline with other studies in the same area. The report also highlights young people's views on the importance of measuring well-being.</p>
<b>Government</b>	
Pan London NHS Group on Measuring Mental Well-being	<p>Paper submitted as part of the National Debate.</p> <p>Paper describes the work of London's Measuring Wellbeing Taskforce. The Taskforce are developing a set of well-being indicators that can be adopted by all the Primary Care Trusts across London. The indicators have been selected so as to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of well-being and to reflect the sub-groups across society. The Taskforce decided against the creation of a single composite score of well-being as it does not reflect the variation in scores across the separate domains.</p>
The Marmot Review: Fair Society, Healthy Lives	<p>Referred to in the National Debate.</p> <p>In November 2008 the then Health Secretary commissioned Sir Michael Marmot (Advisory Forum member) to undertake a review into strategies for reducing health inequalities. The report outlined the health inequalities within England and the impact these have on the lives individuals are able to lead. Power, money and resources are outlined as the drivers of health inequality.</p> <p>The report stated that economic growth without decreasing income inequality is not the answer. There is more to health inequality than just income, but income is linked to health inequality in a number of ways. As the capabilities approach argues, income inequalities affect the lives people are able to lead.</p>

<b>International</b>	
Netherlands framework	<p>This was referred to in the National Debate.</p> <p>The Netherlands statistic office uses a System of Economic and Social Accounting Matrices (SESAME) to measure well-being.</p> <p>The paper begins by describing how not to measure well-being. A single indicator approach should be abandoned as well-being is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Weighing different indices together to form a single index is dangerous as the weights themselves are subjective. In order for the measure to be useful as a policy guide the interrelationships between different aspects of well-being need to be visible. This is not possible with a single indicator.</p> <p>Well-being should be measured via multiple statistics. The SESAME describes trends in the main indicators whilst keeping them separate and allowing each indicator to be displayed in its most suitable measurement unit.</p>
<b>Third sector</b>	
WWF Living Planet Report	<p>Refereed to in the National Debate.</p> <p>The report outlines the impact of human activity on the planet. In the 'pathway to a green economy' the report argues that GDP is no longer the best way to measure human progress. GDP must be complemented by other indicators such as ecological sustainability, individual and social well-being, and human development.</p>
Socialist Health Association	<p>In a response to the consultation the Socialist Health Association highlighted the level of inequality within a country as a key determinant of well-being and social progress. Measures of national well-being should also capture collective measures of well-being such as solidarity, social justice and traditions of collective struggle.</p>
<b>References</b>	
Brass / techniquet report <a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/well-being/wellbeing/child-wellbeing/index.html">http://www.ons.gov.uk/well-being/wellbeing/child-wellbeing/index.html</a>	
Socialist Health Association <a href="http://www.sochealth.co.uk">www.sochealth.co.uk</a>	
British Psychological Society <a href="http://www.bps.org.uk">www.bps.org.uk</a>	

Marmot Review - [www.marmotreview.org/](http://www.marmotreview.org/)

WWF Living Planet Report [wwf.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/all\\_publications/living\\_planet\\_report/](http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/all_publications/living_planet_report/)