

Statistical bulletin

# Personal well-being in the UK: April 2017 to March 2018

Estimates of life satisfaction, feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiety at the UK, country, regional and local authority level.



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# 1 . Main points

At the UK and country level, between the years ending March 2017 and March 2018:

- The average ratings across the four measures of personal well-being in the UK were unchanged.
- Average ratings of feeling the things done in life are worthwhile increased in Scotland; this was driven by a higher percentage of people reporting very high levels for this measure.
- Compared with the UK, a larger percentage of people in Wales reported low levels of worthwhile and happiness; interestingly, a larger proportion of people in Wales reported both low levels of life satisfaction but also very high levels of life satisfaction, suggesting greater disparity in life satisfaction in Wales compared with the UK overall.
- Compared with both the UK and the other countries, people in Northern Ireland continued to report better average ratings across all personal well-being measures.

## 2 . Statistician's comment

“An important part of our work is looking beyond the economic health of the country to how its people are faring and inequalities in society.

“Today, for the first time, we have identified how factors such as health, access to services and crime levels may affect how people rate their well-being in different parts of the UK.

“This can help local authorities and other organisations to better understand where services could be targeted to help improve the well-being of people in their area.”

Silvia Manclossi, Head of Quality of Life Team, Office for National Statistics.

## 3 . Things you need to know about this release

In addition to providing a picture of personal well-being at national level, this publication also presents estimates for UK local authorities (LA). For the first time, possible explanations for the observed differences between LAs at a combined authority (CA) level have been examined. This provides further insights into how local circumstances affect well-being to enable better decision-making at local level.

### Measuring National Well-being programme

The four personal well-being questions are included as measures for the wider [Measuring National Well-being \(MNW\) programme](#). The programme began in November 2010 with the aim of developing and publishing an accepted and trusted set of National Statistics, which help people understand and monitor well-being. The statistics in this bulletin are displayed through our [well-being dashboard](#), which reports how the UK is doing for the different areas of life that people in the UK said matter most to their well-being.

Please see the [Quality and methodology](#) section for more information.

## What factors contribute to personal well-being in local areas?

Research shows that many factors influence our quality of life and well-being. Previous analysis published in the article, [What matters most to personal well-being?](#), highlighted that, at national level, how people view their health is the most important factor related to personal well-being, followed by employment status and relationship status.

More recently, Office for National Statistics (ONS) published another article, [Understanding well-being inequalities: Who has the poorest personal well-being?](#), which identified personal characteristics and circumstances of those people reporting the lowest scores across all the personal well-being questions. The findings showed that the most significant factor associated with poorest personal well-being is reporting “bad” or “very bad” health, followed by being economically inactive with long-term illness or disability; being middle-aged, being single, separated, widowed or divorced; renting rather than owning a home; and having low levels of education.

This bulletin changes the focus to consider how factors relating to where we live may affect how people rate their well-being in diverse local areas. ONS has worked in collaboration with the UK charity [Happy City](#) to consider a wide range of local circumstances and how these might help us to understand differences in personal well-being at local level. Happy City developed the [Thriving Places Index](#) (TPI) as a framework of measuring what matters at a local level; [Section 7](#) discusses this work in more detail. Many of the indicators that make up the TPI were used to explore differences in personal well-being within and between England’s six combined authorities (CAs), plus the Sheffield City Region and Greater London. All are presented as case studies from [Section 7](#) on.

The CAs are groups of local authorities (LAs) that have chosen to work collaboratively and have been given devolved powers through negotiation with central government. The CAs are particularly interesting as their local decision-makers have greater power to affect important aspects of people’s lives in their areas, or the ability to negotiate increases in such powers. A main focus of the CAs is to help drive growth, ideally inclusive growth, and to do so, an understanding of what good growth looks like for well-being is crucial. Each area faces a different set of well-being challenges, which we have highlighted in our analysis.

## Your feedback and our next publications

In February 2018, we launched a survey to gather user feedback about our personal well-being outputs and today [a summary report outlining the main findings](#) is published alongside this release. A similar survey was also launched for the Measuring National Well-being (MNW) outputs in April 2018 and [a summary report of that feedback](#) is also available.

As part of the feedback, users expressed a need for more information on lower geographies and more analysis on factors associated with personal well-being. Our release today aims to provide further analysis in this respect and we are planning to carry out more work on this for our next releases.

If you would like to provide additional feedback about this specific work at local level or any opinions you might have about our well-being outputs, please contact us at [QualityOfLife@ons.gov.uk](mailto:QualityOfLife@ons.gov.uk) or complete this [on-going feedback survey](#).

## 4 . Average personal well-being ratings in the UK show no overall change

The average (mean) ratings across the four measures of personal well-being in the year ending March 2018 were:

- 7.7 out of 10 for life satisfaction
- 7.9 out of 10 for feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile
- 7.5 out of 10 for happiness yesterday
- 2.9 out of 10 for anxiety yesterday

Comparing the years ending March 2017 and March 2018, there was no change in average ratings of personal well-being for the UK overall.

In addition to reporting average ratings, potential inequalities in personal well-being have also been monitored by comparing those rating each aspect of their well-being at a very high or very low level within the UK. Table 1 in [section 18](#) displays how we define these ratings of personal well-being.

Figure 1 displays the changes in personal well-being ratings between the years ending March 2012 and March 2018. Specifically, it shows the change for very high ratings of life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness measures, and the change in those reporting very low anxiety. For the measure of “feeling the things done in life are worthwhile”, there was an increase in the percentage of people rating this aspect of their well-being as very high in the UK between the years ending March 2017 and March 2018.

### **Figure 1: Personal well-being ratings, year ending March 2012 to year ending March 2018**

**Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics**

## **5 . How do people rate their personal well-being in different UK countries?**

At a country level, average (mean) ratings of feeling the things done in life are worthwhile have improved in Scotland from 7.81 in the year ending March 2017 to 7.88 in the year ending March 2018. There were no other changes in average ratings of personal well-being for the other countries of the UK in the year ending March 2018.

Northern Ireland, however, continued to report the highest average life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness ratings, and the lowest anxiety ratings, when compared with the UK and the other constituent countries of the UK.

In the year ending March 2018, a larger proportion of people in Wales reported low levels of worthwhile (4.3%) and happiness (9.4%) ratings compared with the UK average at 3.6% and 8.3% respectively. A larger proportion of people in Wales also reported high levels of anxiety at 21.6% compared with the UK at 20%. Interestingly, a larger proportion of people in Wales reported both low levels of life satisfaction (5.2%) compared with the UK (4.4%), but also very high levels of life satisfaction at 31.7% compared with 30.1% in the UK. This suggests greater disparity in life satisfaction in Wales compared with the UK overall.

## **6 . How do people rate their personal well-being in your local area?**

Our personal well-being explorer tool lets everyone have a look at well-being in their local area and compare it with other areas too. Some of the most insightful comparisons may relate to how specific areas have progressed over time and this is easy to see using the tool.

Although it is possible to rank local authorities based on their average scores alone, this may be misleading due to various reasons such as different sample sizes, different confidence intervals and mode effects, as well as not comparing like with like (for example, we know that people in rural areas tend to rate their well-being more highly than people in urban areas). Comparisons between areas should be made with caution and [confidence intervals](#) should be taken into account when assessing differences.

## **Figure 2: Personal well-being explorer, UK, year ending March 2012 to year ending March 2018**

[Download the data](#)

## **Figure 3: Personal well-being interactive maps, UK, year ending March 2012 to year ending March 2018**

[Download the data](#)

## **7 . What factors contribute to personal well-being in local areas?**

A wide range of local conditions can affect people's well-being. To inform what role local indicators could play in understanding the differences in personal well-being at local level, the [Thriving Places Index \(TPI\)](#) developed by Happy City was used as a main framework to explore the relationships between local conditions and average personal well-being. Happy City, Office for National Statistics (ONS), Public Health England (PHE), and the What Works centre for Well-being previously collaborated to produce a report exploring [how best to measure well-being in local areas](#).

The TPI was designed to fill the gap for a framework that uses local-level indicators to measure and inform progress towards supporting the well-being of all citizens, now and in the future. The TPI consists of a set of 48 indicators that use existing, accessible data available nationally at local authority (LA) level. The indicators are sourced from ONS, PHE, the Index of Multiple Deprivation, and a range of other government departments.

The TPI is produced annually and the indicators from the latest 2017 to 2018 version have been used. The next version will be published in early 2019. It should be noted that the LA personal well-being estimates included in this release are based on the most recent available data (April 2017 to March 2018), while the data for the local context indicators are often from different sources with varying timeliness. In cases where the TPI indicator data were more than five years old, latest data were reported whenever possible. However, more timely data is not always available at LA level. In some of these cases, alternative data sources or indicators were substituted for the TPI indicators.

In this section, England's six combined authorities (CAs), plus the Sheffield City Region and Greater London<sup>1</sup> are presented as case studies to explore how well-being differs in each area and how this may be related to the range of local circumstances considered by the TPI. This could be used as a baseline for monitoring how well local decision-makers help to create the right conditions for supporting the well-being of local residents over time.

For each CA, the personal well-being scores of its constituent LAs were compared with the average ratings for England. It is important to note that the aim of this work is not to rank local areas against each other. Our work provides an overview of the personal well-being scores for each LA within a chosen CA, highlighting where they score significantly differently to the England average. A summary of the main indicators that could help explain the differences has also been provided, to offer further insight into local conditions and their relationship to local well-being. The aim is to help identify well-being strengths and challenges for the whole CA going forward as they attempt to ensure inclusive growth in which everyone across the CA area can share.

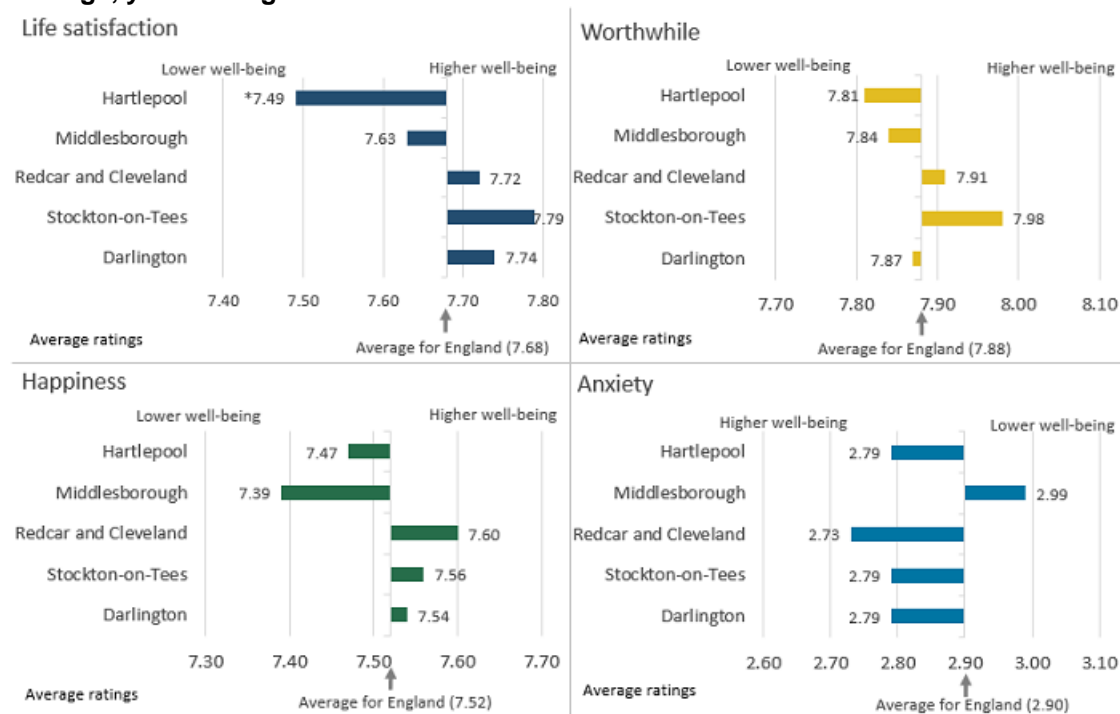
## Notes for: What factors contribute to personal well-being in local areas?

1. Although the Sheffield City Region is not an official combined authority (CA), it matches the former geography of South Yorkshire, it remains in negotiations with HM Treasury about its CA status, and it recently elected a mayor with an associated Mayoral administration. The Greater London Authority is also not considered an official CA in England, but it is a well recognised regional governing body with pre-existing devolved powers.

## 8 . Tees Valley

Figure 4 provides average personal well-being ratings in the Tees Valley combined authority (CA) compared with the England average. In the year ending March 2018, the only area in the CA to report a significant difference was Hartlepool in terms of lower levels of life satisfaction compared with the England average.

**Figure 4: Personal well-being ratings in the Tees Valley combined authority compared with the England average, year ending March 2018**



Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

### Notes:

1. Estimates that are significantly different statistically to the England average are denoted with an asterisk (\*).
2. Statistically significant differences have been determined on the basis of non-overlapping confidence intervals.

Ratings for personal well-being in the Tees Valley CA have been compared to see how local circumstances vary. Given that people in Hartlepool rated their life satisfaction below the average for England, we have focused on this area to see how it may vary from the other local authorities (LAs) in the CA. The areas of life in Hartlepool and the wider CA that seem to provide context around the differences in personal well-being ratings observed include health, physical activity, education, employment and crime.

## Health

In terms of both [life expectancy and healthy life expectancy](#), in 2014 to 2016 males in all areas listed in Figure 4 showed lower scores compared with the England average. All CAs in the Tees Valley had a higher rate of [preventable mortalities](#) in 2014 to 2016 compared with the England average. The rate in Hartlepool and Middlesbrough was also higher than in the other three areas in the Tees Valley CA.

## Physical activity

Figures from [Public Health England](#) (for 2016 to 2017) show that Hartlepool reported lower levels of physical activity, at 60.9%, compared with the England average, at 66%.

## Education

In the year ending December 2017, all LAs listed in Figure 4 reported a higher percentage of people having [no qualifications](#) compared with England (7.6%). Hartlepool and Middlesbrough were significantly higher than all the other three areas. The percentage of students in 2014 to 2015 attaining [at least five GCSEs grade A\\* to C](#) including English and Mathematics was also considered. Although Hartlepool did report a lower percentage than the England average (53.8%), it was only slightly higher at 53.4%. Middlesbrough was the area to report the lowest percentage in the Tees Valley CA at 46.1%.

## Employment

In the year ending March 2018, three areas in Tees Valley CA had higher [unemployment rates](#) compared with the England average (4.3%). The unemployment rate was highest in Hartlepool at 8.7%, followed by Middlesbrough at 7.3% and Redcar and Cleveland at 5.7%. No other area showed a significantly higher rate when compared with the England average.

In the year ending December 2016, the percentage of people on average in England who reported being in a [good job](#)<sup>1</sup> was 53.2%. All areas listed in Figure 4 reported lower percentages than the England average, with Hartlepool reporting the lowest at 41.8%.

## Crime

Using [Crime Severity Score](#)<sup>2</sup> data, in the year ending March 2018, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-On-Tees reported lower levels of crime than the England average and the averages for the other three areas in the Tees Valley. Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Darlington all showed higher levels compared with England. It should be noted that a number of studies have found [fear or worry about crime happening to someone can have a real impact on personal well-being](#). Therefore, if Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Darlington are viewed as high-crime areas, this may have a spill-over effect on well-being not just in that area, but in surrounding areas too.

## Notes for: Tees Valley



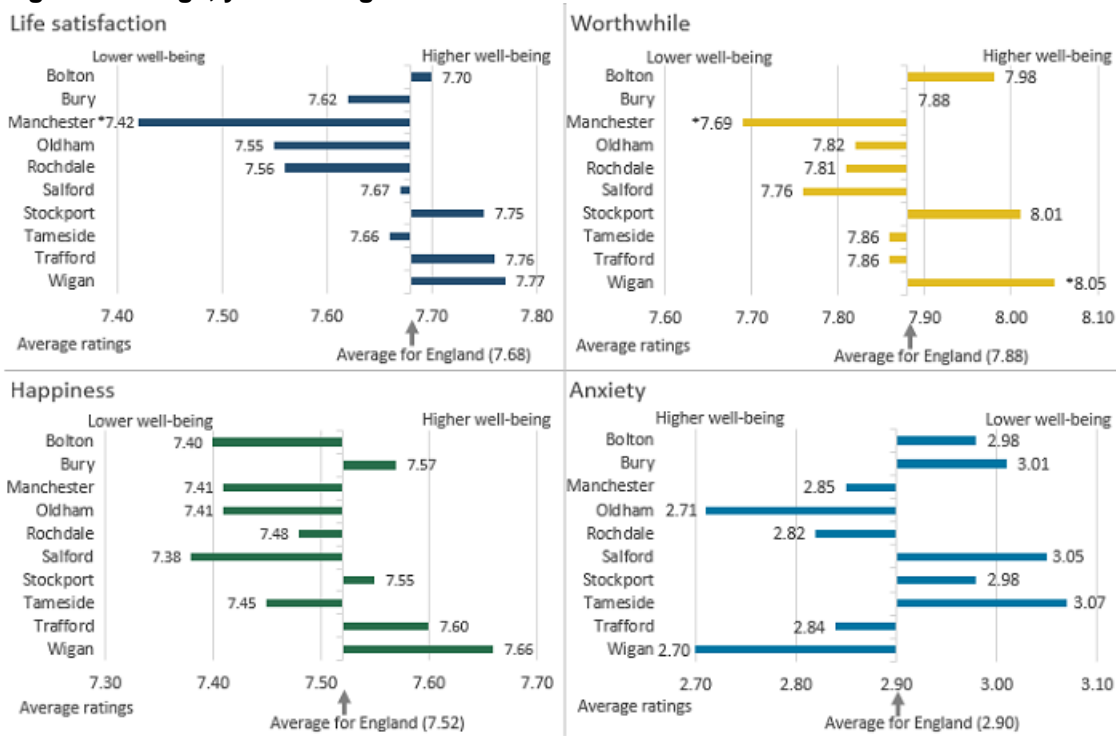
1. The good jobs indicator takes into account a number of factors including being employed on a permanent contract or a temporary contract but not seeking permanent employment, earning at least two-thirds of the UK median hourly wage, and working less than 49 hours a week and not unwillingly working part-time (for example, because they could not find a full-time job).
2. The Crime Severity Score has been designated as Experimental Statistics and developed as an additional measure to supplement existing Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics on crime. This new measure weights different types of crime according to severity, with more serious crimes carrying a higher weight to better reflect the level of harm to society and demand on the police caused by crime.

## 9 . Greater Manchester

Figure 5 provides average personal well-being ratings in the Greater Manchester combined authority (CA) compared with the England average for the year ending 2018. The only areas to report significant differences were Manchester and Wigan:

- Manchester reported lower life satisfaction and worthwhile ratings compared with the England average
- Wigan reported higher scores than the England average for feeling the things done in life are worthwhile

**Figure 5: Personal well-being ratings in the Greater Manchester combined authority compared with the England average, year ending March 2018**



Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. Estimates that are significantly different statistically to the England average are denoted with an asterisk (\*).
2. Statistically significant differences have been determined on the basis of non-overlapping confidence intervals.

Given that Manchester had two aspects of personal well-being below the England average, while Wigan reported higher than the England average for feeling the things done in life are worthwhile, ratings for each of these areas specifically have been compared to see how local circumstances vary. The areas of life that seem to provide context around the differences in personal well-being ratings across the local authorities (LAs) in Greater Manchester are education, employment, access to services, crime and community cohesion.

## Education

The percentage of students in 2014 to 2015 attaining [at least five GCSEs grade A\\* to C](#) including English and Mathematics was lower in Manchester (47.5%) than the England average (53.8%).

## Employment

Using a three-year dataset from January 2014 to December 2016, Manchester had a lower percentage of people who reported being in a [good job](#)<sup>1</sup> (45.9%) compared with the England average (53.2%); while Wigan had a higher percentage at 55%. Manchester also reported a higher [unemployment rate](#) when compared with the England average.

## Access to services

The report by Manchester City Council [Barriers to Housing and Services Deprivation](#) in 2015 showed that, compared with the other LAs within Greater Manchester, Manchester was the most deprived in terms of access to housing and services. The report was based on data from the [English Indices of Deprivation 2015](#). One of the indicators included in the Indices of Deprivation is “housing affordability”, where a higher score refers to a poorer rating. In 2012, the score for England was 0.04, whereas in Manchester the score was 1.83. This finding is also supported by tenure data from the [2011 census](#).

The percentage of people in England who owned their home outright or with a mortgage or loan was 63.4% and the percentage either socially renting or privately renting was 34.5%. In comparison, the numbers in Manchester were 37.8% and 60% respectively, while Wigan showed figures closer to England at 67.8% and 30.6% respectively. This is important to consider as the report [Understanding well-being inequalities: Who has the poorest personal well-being?](#) has found that those who rent their homes do tend to report lower average ratings of personal well-being.

## Crime

In 2017, Manchester had a higher proportion of [first-time entrants to the youth justice system](#) compared with the proportion for England. Manchester reported 427.9 entrants per 100,000 population, compared with 292.5 per 100,000 for England. Wigan had a lower level of first-time entrants, at 160.9 offenders per 100,000 population. It should be noted that a number of studies have found [fear or worry about crime happening to someone can have a real impact on personal well-being](#). Therefore, if Manchester is viewed as a high-crime area, this may have a spill-over effect on well-being not just in that area, but in surrounding areas too.

## Community cohesion

In the [latest report from Happy City looking at the TPI \(PDF, 4.4MB\)](#), Manchester scored poorly in the “People and Community” domain, which comprises aspects such as civic participation, culture and community cohesion. One indicator within this domain is the [social fragmentation index](#), which looks at aspects of social connection such as the percentage of the population living alone and the percentage of residents who moved in the last year. A lower score on this index is deemed as positive. The score in England for this indicator on the TPI was negative 0.73, compared with a score of 4.32 for Manchester. The score in Wigan would suggest a more cohesive community at negative 2.23.

## Notes for: Greater Manchester

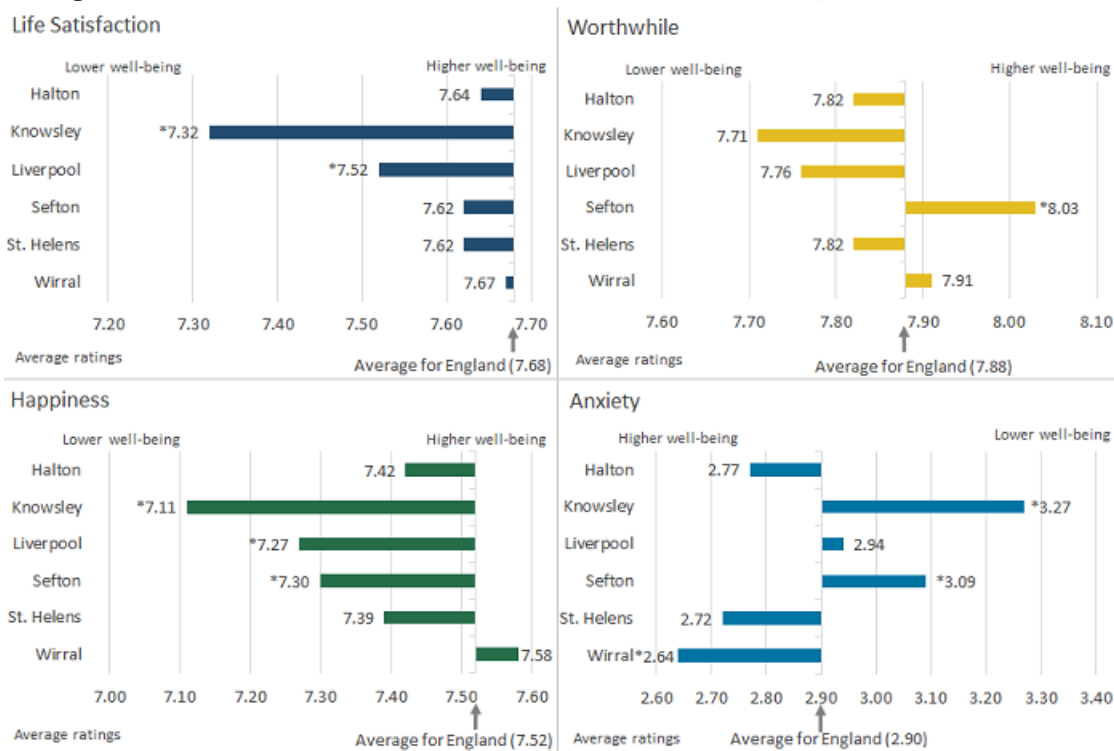
1. The good jobs indicator takes into account a number of factors including being employed on a permanent contract or a temporary contract but not seeking permanent employment, earning at least two-thirds of the UK median hourly wage, and working less than 49 hours a week and not unwillingly working part-time (for example, because they could not find a full-time job).

## 10 . Liverpool City Region

As shown in Figure 6, of the six local authorities (LAs) within the Liverpool City Region combined authority (CA), three reported no significant differences between their personal well-being scores and the England average for any measure. For the other LAs, compared with the England average:

- Knowsley reported lower life satisfaction and happiness scores and also higher anxiety levels
- Liverpool reported lower life satisfaction and happiness scores
- Sefton reported higher scores for worthwhile but higher average anxiety levels as well
- Wirral had lower average anxiety ratings

**Figure 6: Personal well-being ratings in Liverpool City Region compared with the England average, year ending March 2018**



Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. Estimates that are significantly different statistically to the England average are denoted with an asterisk (\*).
2. Statistically significant differences have been determined on the basis of non-overlapping confidence intervals.

Ratings for personal well-being in Liverpool City Region CA have been compared to see how they relate to variation in local circumstances. The areas of life that seem to provide context around the differences highlighted previously in personal well-being ratings across the LAs in the CA are education, employment and crime.

## Education

In 2016 to 2017, Liverpool reported lower levels of [school readiness](#) at 62.1%, compared with both the England average (70.7%) and all other areas in the Liverpool City Region CA. Knowsley also reported a school readiness score lower than the England average (67.1%). In terms of the percentage of students attaining [at least five GCSEs grade A\\* to C](#) including English and Mathematics in 2014 to 2015, Liverpool and Knowsley reported lower percentages at 48.6% and 37.4% respectively compared with the England average (53.8%) and compared with the other areas in the Liverpool City Region CA.

## Employment

Liverpool (1.5%) and Knowsley (1.3%) reported higher levels of [job seekers](#) in 2016 than the England average (1.1%) and higher levels than the other areas of the Liverpool City Region CA. Additionally, using data from 2016, the percentages of those in Liverpool (50.2%) and Knowsley (49.5%) who reported being in a [good job](#)<sup>1</sup> were lower than both the England average (53.2%) and the other areas in the Liverpool City Region CA.

## Crime

In 2018, Liverpool reported a higher proportion of [first-time entrants to the youth justice system](#) (464.4 entrants per 100,000 population), higher than the England average (292.5) and second only to Halton (481.5) in the Liverpool City Region CA. All other LAs within the CA reported roughly similar or lower rates of first-time entrants compared with the England average.

[The Crime Severity Score](#)<sup>2</sup> and offence rates per 1,000 population also seem to reflect a particular well-being challenge in Liverpool. The crime severity score for England in the year ending March 2018 was 13.3, whereas the score in Liverpool was 20.3. Also, there were 115 offences in Liverpool per 1,000 population in the year ending March 2018, compared with 83 in England.

Crime levels do not seem to be having such an effect in other areas in the CA, apart from Halton. There were 107 offences per 1,000 population in Halton in the year ending March 2018. The other LAs showed offence rates below the England average, ranging from 72 to 81 per 1,000 population. It should also be noted that a number of studies have found [fear or worry about crime happening to someone can have a real impact on personal well-being](#). Therefore, if Liverpool and Halton are viewed as high-crime areas, this may have a spill-over effect on well-being not just in that area, but in surrounding areas too.

### Notes for: Liverpool City Region

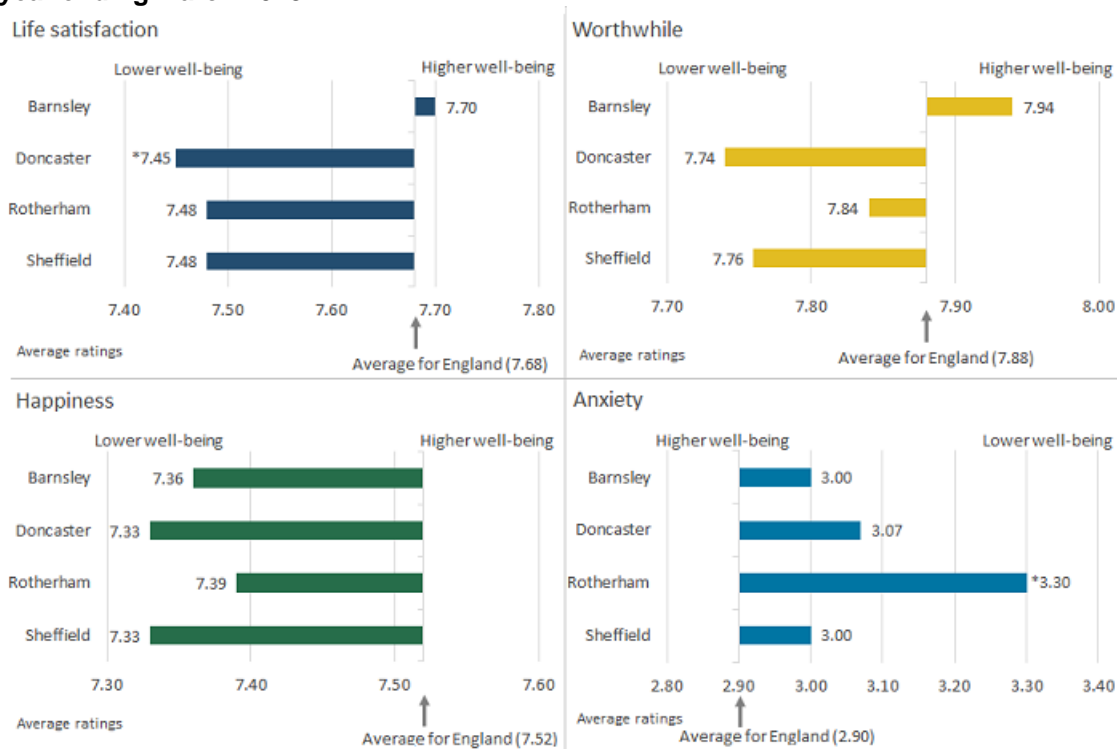
1. The good jobs indicator takes into account a number of factors including being employed on a permanent contract or a temporary contract but not seeking permanent employment, earning at least two-thirds of the UK median hourly wage, and working less than 49 hours a week and not unwillingly working part-time (for example, because they could not find a full-time job).
2. The Crime Severity Score has been designated as Experimental Statistics and developed as an additional measure to supplement existing Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics on crime. This new measure weights different types of crime according to severity, with more serious crimes carrying a higher weight to better reflect the level of harm to society and demand on the police caused by crime.

## 11 . Sheffield City Region

As shown in Figure 7, Doncaster and Rotherham were the only areas in the Sheffield City Region where average ratings of personal well-being differed significantly from the England averages in the year ending March 2018:

- Doncaster reported lower levels of life satisfaction
- Rotherham reported higher levels of anxiety

**Figure 7: Personal well-being ratings in the Sheffield City Region compared with the England average, year ending March 2018**



Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. Estimates that are significantly different statistically to the England average are denoted with an asterisk (\*).
2. Statistically significant differences have been determined on the basis of non-overlapping confidence intervals.

Ratings for personal well-being in Sheffield City Region have been compared to see how local circumstances vary. The areas of life that seem to provide context around the differences in personal well-being ratings across the local authorities (LAs) in the combined authority (CA) are health, physical activity, education, employment and crime.

## Health

In terms of both [life expectancy and healthy life expectancy](#), in 2014 to 2016 males in all areas in the Sheffield City Region had lower scores compared with the England averages (79.5 for life expectancy and 63.3 for healthy life expectancy). All LAs in the Sheffield City Region had a higher rate of [preventable mortalities](#) per 100,000 population in 2014 to 2016 compared with the England average of 182.8. The rate in Doncaster (222.7) and Rotherham (207.5) was also higher than Barnsley (203.2) and Sheffield (195.1).

## Physical activity

Figures from [Public Health England](#) (for 2016 to 2017) show that Rotherham reported lower levels of physical activity compared with the England average and compared with the levels in all other areas in the Sheffield City Region. For example, the average in England was 66%; in comparison, Rotherham reported 58%.

## Education

In the year ending December 2017, in all LAs within the Sheffield City Region a higher percentage of people reported having [no qualifications](#) compared with England (7.6%). Doncaster had the highest rate at 9.6%.

## Employment

In the year ending December 2016, all areas in the Sheffield City Region had lower percentages of people who reported being in a [good job](#)<sup>1</sup> than the England average (53.2%), with Doncaster reporting the lowest at 46.5%.

## Crime

Data from the [Crime Severity Scores](#)<sup>2</sup> shows that all areas within the Sheffield City Region reported higher scores than the average in England (13.3), with Doncaster having the highest crime severity score in the City Region at 18.3 in March 2018. It should be noted that a number of studies have found [fear or worry about crime happening to someone can have a real impact on personal well-being](#). Therefore, if Doncaster is viewed as a high-crime area, this may have a spill-over effect on well-being not just in that area, but in surrounding areas too.

### Notes for: Sheffield City Region

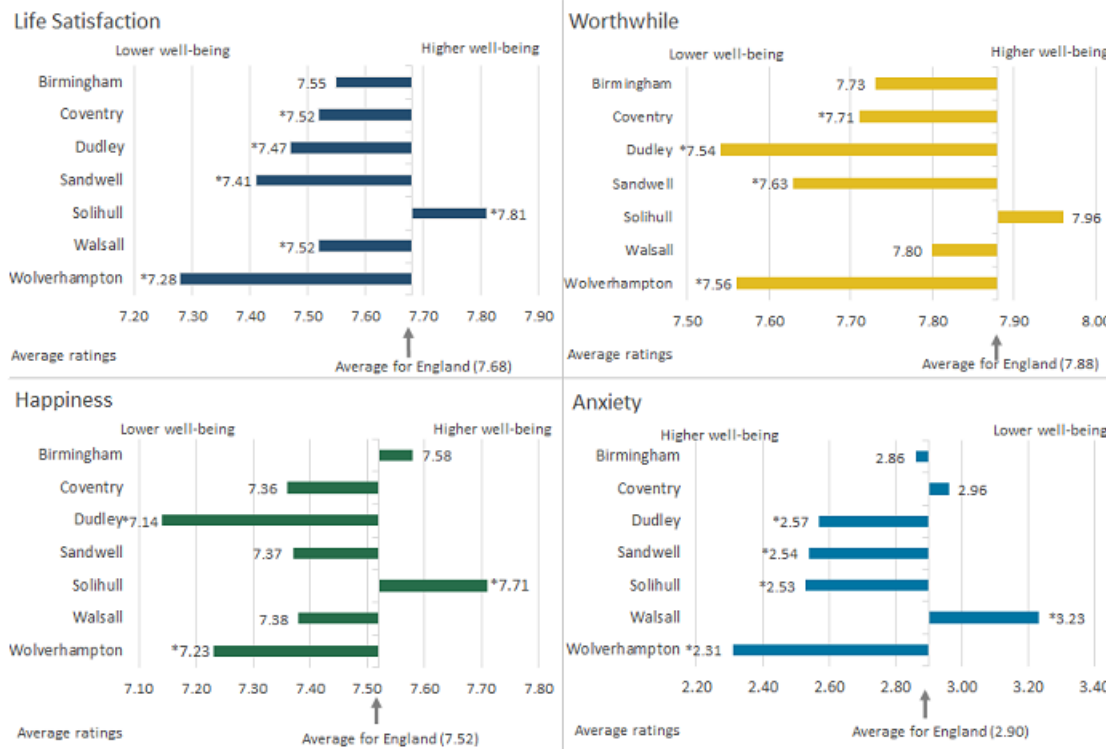
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2. The Crime Severity Score has been designated as Experimental Statistics and developed as an additional measure to supplement existing Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics on crime. This new measure weights different types of crime according to severity, with more serious crimes carrying a higher weight to better reflect the level of harm to society and demand on the police caused by crime.

## 12 . West Midlands

As shown in Figure 8, several areas in the West Midlands combined authority (CA) scored lower than the England average in the year ending March 2018 for aspects of personal well-being, while Solihull fared a bit better:

- Dudley and Wolverhampton both fell below the England average for all three positive measures of well-being (life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness)
- Coventry and Sandwell fell below the England average for ratings of life satisfaction and feeling the things done in life are worthwhile
- conversely, Solihull reported life satisfaction and happiness ratings above the England average in the year ending March 2018
- Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull and Wolverhampton reported lower anxiety levels compared with the England average; Walsall, however, reported anxiety levels above the England average

**Figure 8: Personal well-being ratings in the West Midlands combined authority compared with the England average, year ending March 2018**



Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. Estimates that are significantly different statistically to the England average are denoted with an asterisk (\*).
2. Statistically significant differences have been determined on the basis of non-overlapping confidence intervals.

Ratings for personal well-being in the West Midlands CA have been compared to see how local circumstances vary. The areas of life that seem to provide context around the differences in personal well-being ratings across the local authorities (LAs) in the CA are health, physical activity, education and employment.

## Health

Between 2014 and 2016, all areas in the West Midlands CA reported a lower [healthy life expectancy](#) (HLE) for males compared with the England average (63.3), apart from Solihull (64.6). As for females, Solihull (66) was again the only area in the West Midlands to show a higher HLE than the England average (63.9).



Additionally, looking at general health data from the [2011 Census](#), Solihull was the only area in the West Midlands where a higher percentage of people reported either very good or good health (81.7%) compared with the England average (81.4%). Sandwell was the area with the lowest percentage reporting good or very good health at 76.7%. Previous research including the report [Understanding well-being inequalities: Who has the poorest personal well-being?](#) has found self-reported health to be very strongly related to personal well-being.

## Physical activity

[Physical activity](#) has been shown to have a range of positive effects on subjective well-being. For example, engagement in physical activity is associated with improved life satisfaction and happiness, as well as reduced anxiety levels. Figures from [Public Health England](#) (for 2016 to 2017) show that, apart from Solihull, all areas within the West Midlands reported lower levels of physical activity; for example, the average in England was 66%, while Wolverhampton reported 55.9%. Solihull was the only area in the CA that was not significantly below the England average, at 64%.

## Education

Low educational attainment represents another challenge across the West Midlands CA. In the year ending December 2017, all LAs within the West Midlands CA had a higher percentage of people reporting having [no qualifications](#). Solihull was the only exception to this. The proportions of people with no qualifications ranged from 9.7% in Coventry to 21% in Sandwell, while Solihull reported a percentage closer to the England average (7.6%) at 8.4%. Considering the percentage of students in 2014 to 2015 attaining [at least five GCSEs grade A\\* to C](#) including English and Mathematics, Solihull (60.8%) and Dudley (53%) were the only areas to report above the average in England (53.8%). Sandwell reported the lowest percentage at 46.9%.

## Employment

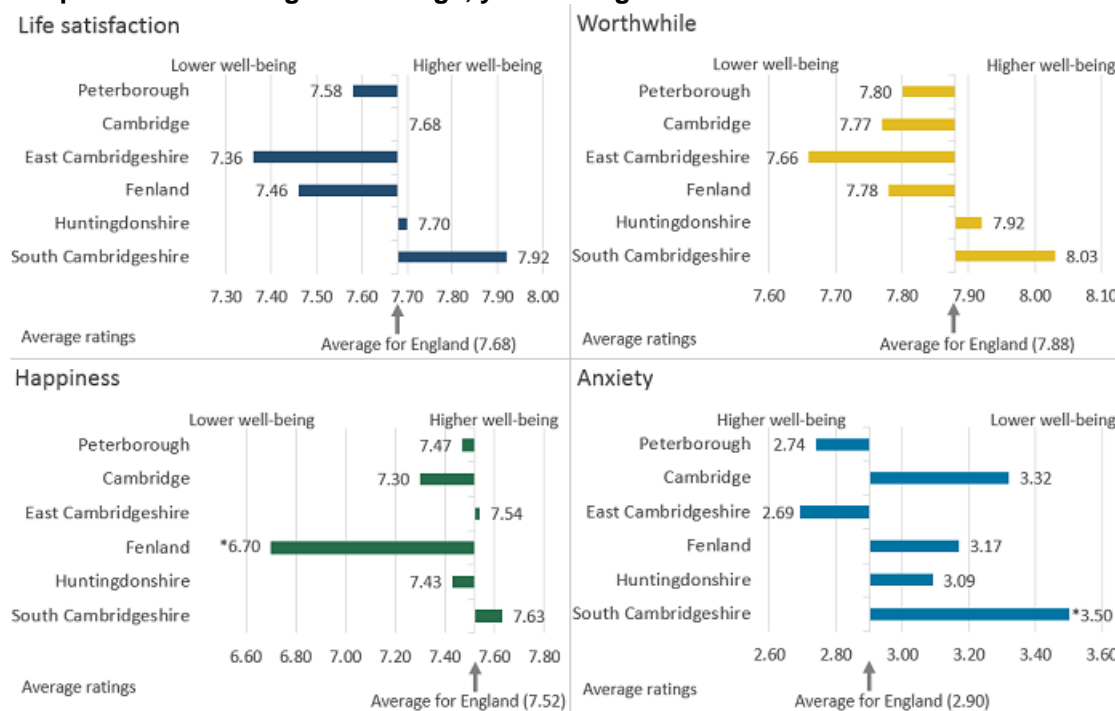
In the year ending March 2018, Solihull had the same [unemployment rate](#) as the England average at 4.3%, while unemployment was higher in Birmingham (7.8%), Sandwell (7.6%) and Wolverhampton (7.5%).

## 13 . Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

As shown in Figure 9, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire are the only areas in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined authority (CA) where average ratings of personal well-being differ from the average for England for the year ending March 2018:

- Fenland reported lower levels of happiness compared with the England average
- South Cambridgeshire reported higher levels of anxiety compared with the England average

**Figure 9: Personal well-being ratings in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined authority compared with the England average, year ending March 2018**



Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. Estimates that are significantly different statistically to the England average are denoted with an asterisk (\*).
2. Statistically significant differences have been determined on the basis of non-overlapping confidence intervals.

Ratings for personal well-being in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CA have been compared to see how they relate to variations in local circumstances. The areas of life that seem to provide context around the differences in personal well-being ratings across the local authorities (LAs) in the CA are health, education and employment.

## Health

In terms of general [life expectancy](#) of females in 2014 to 2016, Cambridge (84.1%), East Cambridgeshire (84.6), Huntingdonshire (84.8%) and South Cambridgeshire (85.2%) all had a higher life expectancy compared with the England average (83.1%). These areas also reported higher levels of life expectancy for males compared with the England average. By contrast, Fenland and Peterborough both had a lower life expectancy than the England average, for both males (78.4 and 78.6 respectively) and females (82.3 and 82.2 respectively).

## Education

In the year ending December 2017, Cambridge (4.3%), East Cambridgeshire (5.1%), Huntingdonshire (4.0%) and South Cambridgeshire (3.2%) had a lower percentage of people who reported having [no qualifications](#) compared with England (7.6%). Fenland (9.3%) and Peterborough (12.6%), however, both reported a higher percentage of people having no qualifications compared with England.

## Employment

In the year ending December 2016, Fenland and Peterborough had a lower percentage (43.0% and 51.8% respectively) of people who reported being in a [good job](#)<sup>1</sup> than the England average (53.2%). Cambridge (57%), Huntingdonshire (59.2%) and South Cambridgeshire (55.2%) all reported higher percentages than the England average.

### Notes for: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

1. The good jobs indicator takes into account a number of factors including being employed on a permanent contract or a temporary contract but not seeking permanent employment, earning at least two-thirds of the UK median hourly wage, and working less than 49 hours a week and not unwillingly working part-time (for example, because they could not find a full-time job).

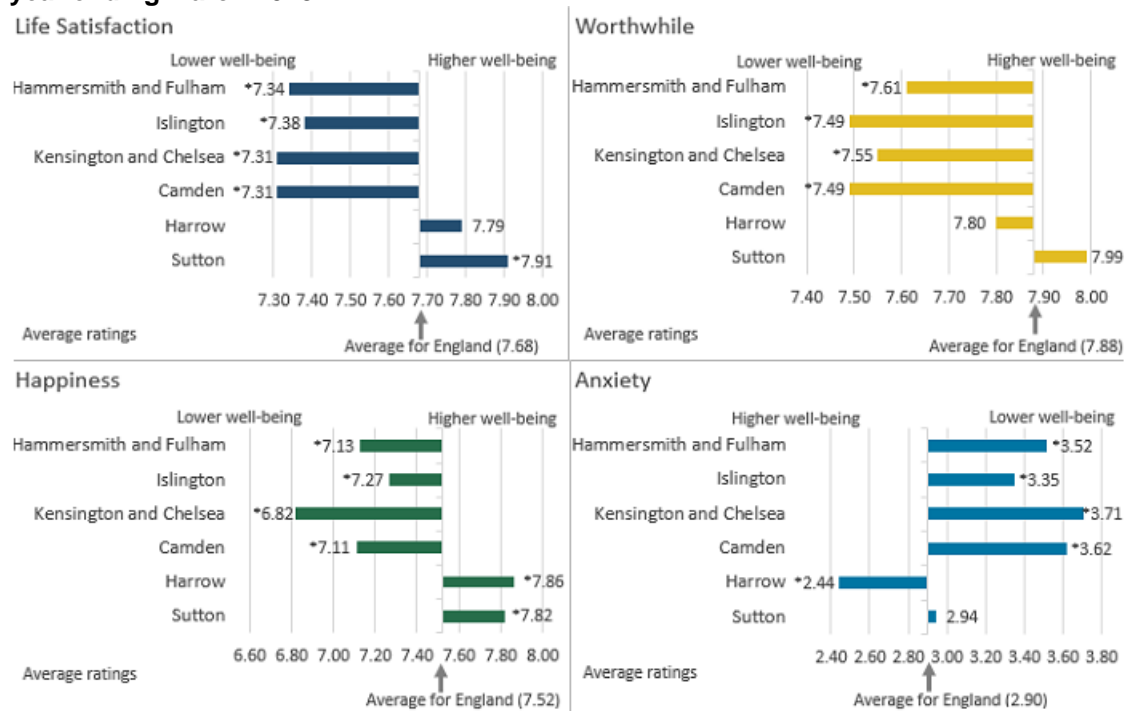
## 14 . Greater London Authority

It is important to note that not all local authorities (LAs) across the Greater London Authority (GLA) have been included in this section. Of the 33 local authorities comprising the GLA, only six had average personal well-being ratings significantly above or below the England averages in the year ending March 2018. We have focused here on these six LAs.

Figure 10 highlights the areas where ratings of personal well-being were lower or higher than the England average for the year ending March 2018:

- Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, and Camden all fell below the average for England, for all three positive measures of well-being (life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness); they also all reported anxiety levels above the England average
- Harrow and Sutton both reported happiness ratings above the England average, with Sutton also reporting higher life satisfaction ratings; Harrow also reported anxiety levels below the England average

**Figure 10: Personal well-being ratings in Greater London Authority compared with the England average, year ending March 2018**



Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. Estimates that are significantly different statistically to the England average are denoted with an asterisk (\*).
2. Statistically significant differences have been determined on the basis of non-overlapping confidence intervals.

Ratings for personal well-being in each of these areas of the GLA have been compared to see how they relate to variations in local circumstances. The areas of life that seem to provide context around the differences in personal well-being ratings across the LAs listed in Figure 10 are housing, employment and crime.

## Housing

House-purchase costs may be a particular challenge for many people living in these areas of London, as indicated by the [House price to residence-based earnings ratio](#) data. This provides a measure of average house prices relative to average earnings for full-time employees.

Housing was least affordable for residents of Kensington and Chelsea, where a house-buyer could expect to pay around 28.9 times their average annual earnings to own a home here. All LAs shown in Figure 10 had a higher ratio than both England overall (7.9) and London (13.9), apart from Sutton (11.1), which is lower than London. This means that housing was less affordable in these LAs than in the capital overall. Harrow, at 14.6, was also nearer to the ratio for London compared with the other LAs.

Higher house prices in parts of London relative to earnings could negatively affect people’s ability to buy their own home, which can lead to a higher proportion of people living in rented accommodation than in areas where house buying is more affordable. Data from the [2011 Census](#) show that, in general, a higher percentage of people in the areas of the GLA considered here rent rather than buy their homes.

In England, 63.4% owned their home outright or with a mortgage or loan while 34.5% rented their home, either from a social or private landlord. Harrow and Sutton had similar levels of home ownership to England overall. Of all people in Harrow, 65.2% owned their own home in 2011, with 32.4% renting. In Sutton, 68% owned their home, with 30.5% renting. This picture is quite different to the situation in the other areas of the GLA considered; for example, in Islington only 28.4% owned their own home, while 68.9% of people were renting.

As mentioned in Section 9, the article [Understanding well-being inequalities: Who has the poorest personal well-being?](#) has found that those who rent their homes do tend to report lower average ratings of personal well-being. Further research is needed to understand this better, particularly as housing is such an integral part of delivering inclusive growth in the UK.

## Employment

In terms of employment in London, Kensington and Chelsea is the only area from Figure 10 where the [unemployment rate](#) is significantly higher than the England average; 6.1% compared with 4.3% respectively. Therefore, it may not necessarily be unemployment that is adversely affecting people's well-being in these areas of the GLA; instead, it may be linked to the quality of jobs people have. One of the indicators on the Thriving Places Index (TPI) is the [good jobs](#)<sup>1</sup> indicator. The percentage of people on average in England who reported being in a "good job" was 53.2%. Harrow and Sutton reported a higher percentage of people in good jobs at 59.4% and 63% respectively. All other areas listed in Figure 10 reported lower percentages than England, with Kensington and Chelsea reporting the lowest percentage at 44.8%.

## Crime

Similar patterns emerge for the areas of London assessed, in terms of crime levels. Using experimental data from Office for National Statistics (ONS) looking at the severity of crimes, [Crime Severity Scores](#)<sup>2</sup> show that Harrow and Sutton experienced less severe crimes than the other areas covered, with Camden having the most severe crime. Specifically, the crime severity score for England was 13.3, with Harrow and Sutton scoring 10.2 and 10.1 respectively. All other areas had a higher score, with Camden scoring highest among the areas considered at 25.3.

The ONS data also looked at offence rates per 1,000 population in the year ending March 2018. The rate in England was 83, whereas Harrow and Sutton had lower offending rates of 56 and 59 respectively. Camden had the highest offence rate at 153 per 1,000 population. It should be noted that a number of studies have found [fear or worry about crime happening to someone can have a real impact on personal well-being](#). Therefore, if Camden is viewed as a high-crime area, this may have a spill-over effect on well-being not just in that area, but in surrounding areas too.

## Notes for: Greater London Authority

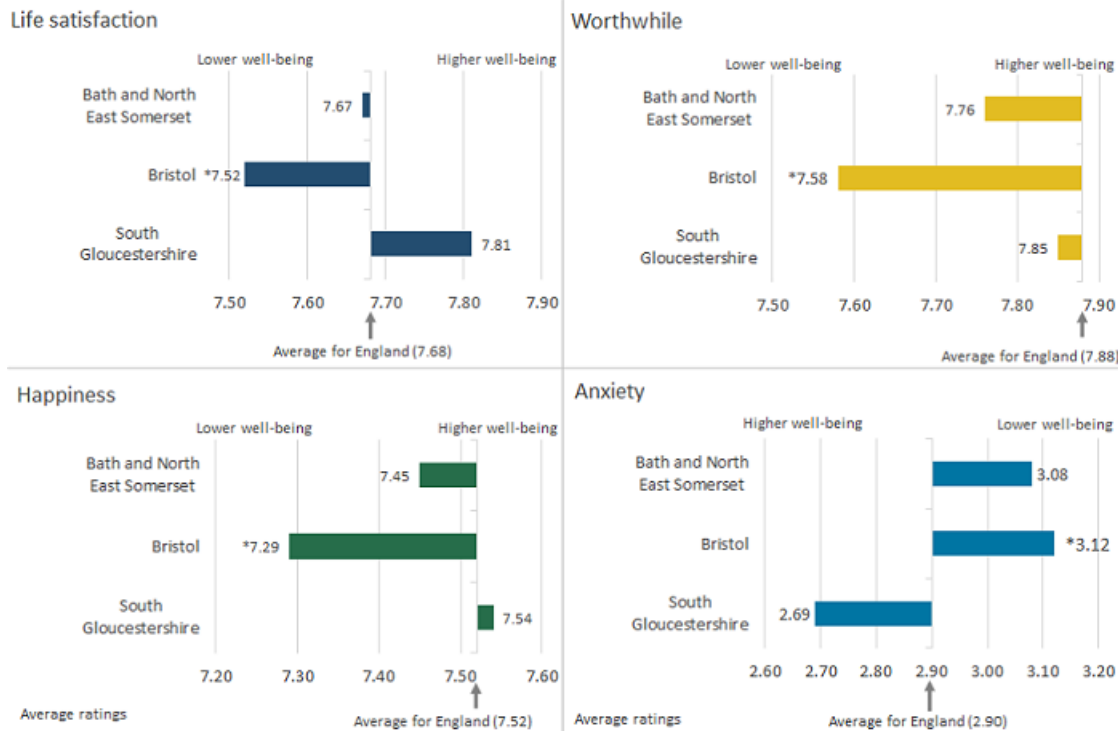
1. The good jobs indicator takes into account a number of factors including being employed on a permanent contract or a temporary contract but not seeking permanent employment, earning at least two-thirds of the UK median hourly wage, and working less than 49 hours a week and not unwillingly working part-time (for example, because they could not find a full-time job).
2. The Crime Severity Score has been designated as Experimental Statistics and developed as an additional measure to supplement existing Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics on crime. This new measure weights different types of crime according to severity, with more serious crimes carrying a higher weight to better reflect the level of harm to society and demand on the police caused by crime.

# 15 . West of England

As shown in Figure 11, Bristol is the only area in the West of England combined authority (CA) where average ratings of personal well-being differed significantly from the England averages in the year ending March 2018.

Bristol reported lower life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness ratings compared with the England average, as well as reporting higher anxiety levels.

**Figure 11: Personal well-being ratings in the West of England combined authority compared with the England average, year ending March 2018**



Source: Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. Estimates that are significantly different statistically to the England average are denoted with an asterisk (\*).
2. Statistically significant differences have been determined on the basis of non-overlapping confidence intervals.

Ratings for personal well-being in the West of England CA have been compared to see how they relate to variations in local circumstances. The main areas of life that seem to provide helpful context for understanding the differences in personal well-being ratings across the CA are health, crime and access to green space.

## Health

In terms of how long we are expected to live in good health, or [healthy life expectancy](#), males in Bristol had a healthy life expectancy rate below the England level (58.9 and 63.3 respectively); while the rate for males in South Gloucestershire (65.5) was significantly above it in 2014 to 2016. Therefore, men in Bristol can expect to live fewer years in good health than men in South Gloucestershire.

Looking at [life expectancy in general](#), Bath and North-East Somerset, and South Gloucestershire (80.7 and 81.3 respectively) had a higher male life expectancy than the England average (79.5); while the other areas of the CA did not differ significantly from the average for England in 2014 to 2016.

Another measure of health is the number of [preventable mortalities](#). From 2014 to 2016, Bristol had a higher rate of preventable mortalities per 100,000 population at 204 deaths, when compared with the England average of 182.8 deaths per 100,000. The rate in Bristol was also higher than in Bath and North-East Somerset (145) and South Gloucestershire (145.6), both of which had a lower rate than the England average.

## Crime

Bristol had a higher rate of [first-time entrants to the youth justice system](#) at 407.2 per 100,000 population (2017), compared with England (292.5) and the other areas in the West of England CA. By contrast, South Gloucestershire had a lower rate than England at 205.4 per 100,000 population. As for the offence rates per 1,000 population in the year ending March 2018, a similar pattern can be seen. The rate for England was 83 offences per 1,000, however, the rate in Bristol was 123 offences per 1,000. Bath and North-East Somerset and South Gloucestershire had lower scores than England, at 65 and 61 offences per 1,000 population, respectively.

The [Crime severity score](#)<sup>1</sup>, which gives more severe offence categories a higher weight than less severe ones, shows marked differences in the nature of crimes across the LAs in the West of England CA. For example, Bath and North-East Somerset, and South Gloucestershire at 9.1 and 7.9 respectively had lower crime severity scores than Bristol (18.9) and England (13.3).

## Access to green space

Research shows that access to the natural environment can have a positive impact on our well-being. A recent [blog](#) by Public Health England summarised the evidence, suggesting that “good quality natural landscape in urban areas can affect how people feel. It reduces stress and sadness, lifts the mood and makes us feel better.”

Looking at data for areas of designated [Green Belt land by local planning authority](#) in England, Bristol has a far smaller area at 610 hectares compared with Bath and North-East Somerset (24,690 hectares) and South Gloucestershire (23,030 hectares). This could mean there are fewer opportunities for people in Bristol to obtain the benefits of access to green space compared with those living in other areas of the CA.

## Notes for: West of England

1. The Crime Severity Score has been designated as Experimental Statistics and developed as an additional measure to supplement existing Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics on crime. This new measure weights different types of crime according to severity, with more serious crimes carrying a higher weight to better reflect the level of harm to society and demand on the police caused by crime.

## 16 . Conclusion

This article has provided an overview of how people assess their own well-being in the countries and local authorities of the UK. We have made the Combined Authority (CA) areas in England a special focus to illustrate how using a well-being lens may help us to look differently at local economic growth strategies and encourage decision-makers to consider what good growth for well-being looks like in their area.

We hope to have provided a more holistic picture of how different aspects of each local area, both in terms of people and place, may combine to produce higher or lower well-being among local residents. Each area is unique in terms of local resources, assets and challenges that decision-makers need to consider as they plan their own strategies for inclusive growth. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to sustaining and improving well-being, there are particular bright spots in some CAs where the well-being of local residents is above the England average. It may be helpful to consider what's happening in these areas and how others could learn from them.

In all areas, there are some important aspects of life that we know have an important impact on well-being. These "well-being fundamentals" include: good health, positive relationships, and not just employment, but good jobs reflecting people's own priorities for job security, wages, and work-life balance. We also know that well-being does not thrive in circumstances of great inequality. Reducing disparities in life expectancy and health, access to skills and education, good jobs and affordable homes should be an important priority for achieving inclusive growth in all areas.

To develop sustainable well-being for the future and prevent the continuation of current problems, it will be important to think about the human side of inclusive growth. This might include strategies for enabling and encouraging people to lead healthier and more active lives, ensuring a high level of "school readiness" among our children, and intervening earlier to avoid young people entering the youth justice system.

In terms of place, growth strategies for well-being should also take into account [evidence](#) that long or stressful commutes reduce well-being, people need access to green space to thrive, and well-being is better in areas where people feel safe and can develop and sustain positive social connections.

We would welcome further discussion with the CAs and other areas as to how the analysis presented here can be refined and made more useful in future.

## 17 . Next steps

An important aspect of our work is to shed light on inequalities in society to better support those who may be struggling as well as to learn from those who are thriving. Over the last few months, we have reported some initial work on how to best measure well-being inequalities. We are planning more work in this area to provide in-depth analysis of personal well-being data from an inequality perspective.

For this publication, we have been working closely with Happy City and with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Centre for Cities and Regions to better understand the needs of local areas across the country. In coming months, we will be reaching out to local and regional users to deliver more information about well-being and inequalities.

## 18 . Quality and methodology

The [Personal well-being in the UK Quality and Methodology Information report](#) contains important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data
- uses and users of the data
- how the output was created
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data



## How we measure personal well-being

Since 2011, we have asked personal well-being questions to adults aged 16 years and over in the UK to better understand how they feel about their lives. This release presents headline results for the year ending March 2018, along with changes over the last five years. It provides data at a national level and country level. The four personal well-being questions are:

- Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
- Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
- Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
- Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

People are asked to respond on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”. We produce estimates of the mean ratings for all four personal well-being questions, as well as their distributions (as shown in Table 1).

**Table 1: Labelling of thresholds**

Life satisfaction, worthwhile and happiness scores		Anxiety scores	
Response on an 11 point scale	Label	Response on an 11 point scale	Label
0 to 4	Low	0 to 1	Very low
5 to 6	Medium	2 to 3	Low
7 to 8	High	4 to 5	Medium
9 to 10	Very high	6 to 10	High

Source: Office for National Statistics

Please note that:

- any changes mentioned in this publication are “statistically significant”
- the statistical significance of differences noted within the release are determined based on non-overlapping confidence intervals
- comparisons have been based on unrounded data

We are able to compare with the same period last year (April 2016 to March 2017) to identify any changes that may have occurred. However, we are not able to reliably compare with the preceding period (January 2017 to December 2017) as they include overlapping time periods that contain the same data.

For more information on personal well-being, please see:

- [Personal well-being user guide](#)
- [Harmonised principles of personal-well-being](#)

## 19 . Acknowledgements

This publication represents the outcome of a collaborative effort. The Quality of Life Team is grateful for the contribution and assistance provided by Liz Zeidler, Ruth Townsley and Saamah Abdallah from Happy City and James Harris from the Office for National Statistics Centre for Cities and Regions to explain possible differences in personal well-being at local level and identify the main indicators for the combined authorities reported in this release as case studies.