First Annual ONS Experimental Subjective Well-being Results

Abstract

This report presents experimental estimates from the first annual Subjective Well-being Annual Population Survey (APS) dataset, April 2011 to March 2012. Overall estimates of people’s views about their own well-being are provided as well as estimates for: key demographic characteristics (such as age, sex, ethnic group), different geographic areas and countries within the UK, aspects which are considered important for measuring national well-being (such as personal relationships, health and work situation) These first annual estimates of subjective well-being are considered experimental statistics, published at an early stage to involve users in their development. ONS is collecting subjective well-being estimates to complement existing socio-economic indicators to allow a fuller statistical picture of the nation's well-being.

Key points

Between April 2011 and March 2012, four subjective well-being questions were included in the constituent surveys of the Integrated Household Survey (IHS):

- 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?

All were answered on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'

- Three-quarters (75.9 per cent) of people aged 16 and over rated their overall 'life satisfaction' as 7 or more. This compares with 80.0 per cent of people who gave a rating of 7 or more when asked whether they felt the things they did in their lives were 'worthwhile'.
- The proportion of people giving a rating of less than 5 was 6.6 per cent for 'life satisfaction', compared with 4.9 per cent for the 'worthwhile' question.
- When asked about day-to-day emotions, 10.9 per cent of people in the UK rated their 'happiness yesterday' as less than 5 out of 10 (indicating lower happiness). For the 'anxious yesterday' question, 21.8 per cent reported a rating of more than 5 (indicating higher anxiety).
- The average (mean) rating in the UK for the 'worthwhile' question (7.7 out of 10) was higher than average ratings for 'life satisfaction' (7.4 out of 10) and 'happy yesterday' (7.3 out of 10)
questions. For 'anxious yesterday', the UK average was much lower at 3.1 out of 10, as 0 corresponds to 'not at all' anxious, and 10 corresponds to 'completely' anxious.

• Women were more likely to report higher levels of subjective well-being for the positive questions asked (indicating higher subjective well-being), but also more likely than men to give higher ratings for the 'anxious yesterday' question (indicating higher anxiety).

• 'Life satisfaction' and 'worthwhile' ratings differed by age, with people aged 16 to 19 and 65 to 79 reporting, on average, the highest ratings. Ratings were lower for those aged 80 and over than for those just over state pension age for both questions.

• The ethnic group with the lowest average 'life satisfaction' rating was the 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British' group (6.7 out of 10). The group reporting the highest average rating for the 'anxious yesterday' question was the 'Arab' group (3.7 out of 10).

• Having a partner appears to be related with improved subjective well-being. On average, higher proportions of adults who were married, in a civil partnership or cohabitating reported high ratings of 9 or 10 out of 10 for the 'life satisfaction', 'worthwhile' and 'happy yesterday' questions than people who were single, widowed or divorced.

• Half (49.9 per cent) of people who described their health as 'very bad' reported 'anxiety yesterday' as 7 or more out of 10 (indicating higher anxiety). This compared with only 16.5 per cent of people who reported 'very good' health.

• Almost two-fifths (38.5 per cent) of people who described themselves as having a 'work-limiting disability', 'DDA disability' or both, gave a rating of less than 7 out of 10 for the 'life satisfaction' question (indicating lower life satisfaction). This is almost twice the proportion of non-disabled people (19.4 per cent).

• Forty-five per cent of unemployed people rated their 'life satisfaction' as below 7 (indicating lower life satisfaction). This is over twice the proportion reported by employed people (20.0 per cent).

• The countries of the UK had similar average levels of 'life satisfaction' at 7.5 for both Northern Ireland and Scotland, and 7.4 for both England and Wales. Average ratings were also similar across the four countries for the 'worthwhile', 'happy yesterday' and 'anxious yesterday' questions.

Background

It is increasingly understood that traditional economic measures are necessary, but not sufficient, to reflect a nation's overall progress or well-being. There has been increasing interest in the UK and around the world in using wider measures to monitor well-being and evaluate policy, this includes measures of society and the environment, alongside economic measures.

An important component of national well-being is the subjective well-being of individuals, which is measured by finding out how people think and feel about their own lives. While subjective well-being is important, it is just one component of national well-being. ONS believes that capturing both subjective and objective measures across a range of domains is essential when making any assessment of national well-being.

One of the main benefits to National Statistics Offices of collecting information on subjective well-being is that it is based on people's views of their own individual well-being. In the past assumptions were made about how objective conditions, such as people's health and income, might influence their individual well-being. Subjective well-being measures, on the other hand, are grounded in
individuals' preferences and take account of what matters to people by allowing them to decide what is important.

In April 2011, ONS included subjective well-being questions for the first time in the constituent household surveys of the Integrated Household Survey (IHS) and the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). These questions were developed with expert academic advice (Dolan et al., 2011) as well as benefiting from discussions between members of the National Statistician's Measuring National Well-being Advisory Forum.

They represent a balanced approach to the measurement of subjective well-being drawing on the three main theoretical approaches identified, the 'evaluative', 'eudemonic' and 'experience' approach, see section 8 for more details (Dolan et al., 2011 and ONS 2011) and were designed to collect information on different aspects of people's subjective well-being.

The data analysed in this report was collected from the Annual Population Survey (APS) which is the largest constituent survey of the Integrated Household Survey. The sample size of the 12 month APS dataset is 165,000 adults aged 16 and over and covers the UK. This large sample size has allowed detailed investigation of sub-groups of the population such as gender, age, ethnic group, relationship status, health, disability, employment status and occupation. As well as within countries of the UK, within English regions and at the unitary authority/county level.

The four overall monitoring questions that were included in the IHS and OPN were:

- 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?

All answered using a 0 to 10 scale where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'.

In this report the abbreviations 'life satisfaction', 'worthwhile', 'happy yesterday' and 'anxious yesterday' are used to refer to the four overall monitoring questions outlined above.

ONS has not, and has no plans to combine the different measures into a single index. Instead the different measures have been used to look at a range of aspects of people's well-being. It is possible to do this by:

- Comparing the mean averages,
- Comparing the percentage of people who give different ratings on the 11 point 0-10 scale.

The average can be a useful way to compare sub-groups of the population and geographic areas. However, as a single summary measure, it does not give any indication of how responses are spread across the 11 point scale from 0 to 10. For example, it will not indicate if the responses are concentrated at the higher or lower points on the scale which is also of interest to users. A useful way to explore the distribution is to look at the percentage of responses at different points on this scale. In this report both approaches have been used.
This report compares subjective well-being ratings between different groups and is largely descriptive. In the latter half of 2012, ONS will undertake more complex regression analysis where various different characteristics are taken together and controlled for, to look at how they are associated with overall levels of subjective well-being.

At this stage the estimates in this report are considered 'experimental statistics', published at an early stage to involve users in their development and to allow feedback. As part of this process ONS also need to take account of international initiatives to harmonise subjective well-being data collection, and take into consideration the testing and development work that ONS is continuing to carry out.

It is possible that the subjective well-being questions will be refined or revised as a result of this process. The UK Statistics Authority has responsibility to assess the statistics for 'National Statistics' status as part of the outputs from the Measuring National Well-being programme.

Section 1: Overall results

The differences between the four overall subjective well-being questions introduced on ONS social surveys in April 2011 can be examined, as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Average (mean) rating and percentage of adults reporting very low, low, medium, high and very high ratings for each subjective well-being question (1), 2011-12 (2, 3, 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very low (0-4)</th>
<th>Low (5-6)</th>
<th>Medium (7-8)</th>
<th>High (9-10)</th>
<th>Average (mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthwhile</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy yesterday</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very high (6-10)</th>
<th>High (4-5)</th>
<th>Medium (2-3)</th>
<th>Low (0-1)</th>
<th>Average (mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxious yesterday</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked '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?' and 'Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?' where nought is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'.
2. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
3. All data weighted.
4. Non-respondents not included.
When asked, ‘Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?’ a slightly larger proportion (80.0 per cent) of adults reported 7 or more out of 10 than for the ‘life satisfaction’ question (75.9 per cent). Additionally a higher proportion of people also gave a high rating (9 or 10 out of 10) for ‘worthwhile’ (31.4 per cent) compared with ‘life satisfaction’ (26.1 per cent). This shows that the distribution of responses along the 0 to 10 scale is different for the ‘worthwhile’ question than it is for the ‘life satisfaction’ question.

Table 1.1 also shows that some people in the UK gave very low scores (less than 5 on the 0 to 10 scale) for the ‘life satisfaction’ (6.6 per cent), ‘worthwhile’ (4.9 per cent) and ‘happy yesterday’ (10.9 per cent) questions.

For day-to-day emotions, 71.1 per cent of people responded with 7 or above out of 10 when asked, ‘Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?’ However, the spread of ratings was wider than for the ‘life satisfaction’ and ‘worthwhile’ questions and a higher proportion of people gave ratings of less than 5 out of 10 (10.9 per cent) for the ‘happy yesterday’ question.

When asked, ‘Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?’ the ratings were even more spread out. Although the majority of people, (60.1 per cent) reported a medium or low level of anxiety for this question (between 0 to 3), 21.8 per cent reported an anxiety rating of over 5 out of 10, this is closer to ‘completely anxious’ than ‘not at all anxious’ on the 11 point scale.

Table 1.1 also shows that the average rating for ‘worthwhile’ (7.7 out of 10) was higher than ‘life satisfaction’ (7.4 out of 10) and the ‘happy yesterday’ question (7.3 out of 10). For ‘anxious yesterday’ the overall average was 3.1 out of 10, much lower than the positive questions as 0, ‘not at all anxious’ is the best possible outcome for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question.

Section 2: Key demographics

Sex

The differences in average levels of subjective well-being between men and women were fairly small. Figure 2.1 shows that on average, women reported higher ratings than men for the ‘life satisfaction’ and ‘worthwhile’ questions, and the same average rating as men for the ‘happy yesterday’ question. However, women reported higher average ratings for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question, 3.3 out of 10 compared with 3.0 out of 10 for men.
Figure 2.1 Average (mean) subjective well-being ratings (1): by sex, 2011–12 (2, 3, 4)

United Kingdom

![Chart showing subjective well-being ratings for life satisfaction, worthwhile, happy yesterday, and anxious yesterday by sex.]

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) - Office for National Statistics

Notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked ‘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?’ and ‘Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?’ where nought is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘completely’.
2. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
3. All data weighted.
4. Non-respondents not included.

Age

Previous research has shown a U-shaped relationship between ‘life satisfaction’ ratings and age group. This means that overall higher ratings of subjective well-being are reported by younger and older people, and lower ratings are reported by those in the middle years (Dolan et al., 2008 and ONS 2011). This trend can also be seen for the ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ questions.

Analysis from the ‘anxious yesterday’ question shows a similar U-shaped relationship with age group but inversed, as expected where people in the middle years reported the highest ratings (indicating higher anxiety levels) for this question compared with both the younger and older age groups.
Figure 2.2a Average (mean) life satisfaction and worthwhile ratings (1): by age group, 2011–12 (2, 3, 4)

United Kingdom

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) - Office for National Statistics

Notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' and 'Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?' where nought is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'.
2. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
3. All data weighted.
4. Non-respondents not included.

Download chart

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The U-shaped relationship can be observed in Figure 2.2 for the ‘life satisfaction’ and ‘worthwhile’ questions. For example, for the ‘life satisfaction’ question the age groups with the highest average rating (on a 0 to 10 scale) were the youngest age group of 16 to 19, along with the 65 to 69 and 75 to 79 age groups (all 7.8 out of 10).

The lowest average rating for the ‘life satisfaction’ rating (7.1 out of 10) was found for the 45 to 49 and 50 to 54 age groups. Additionally, Figure 2.3 shows that the 45 to 49, 50 to 54 and 55 to 56 age groups all had between 9.1 and 9.3 per cent of people reporting a very low life satisfaction rating of between 0 to 4 out of 10.
The U-shape was less prominent for the ‘worthwhile’ question, suggesting that people’s views on the extent to which the things they do in life are worthwhile remain more stable throughout life compared with their ‘life satisfaction’. The highest average ratings, however, were still provided by the older age groups. Those aged 65 to 69, 70 to 74, and 75 to 79 provided an average rating of 8.0 out of 10, (see Figure 2.2) with around two-fifths reporting a ‘high’ rating of 9 out of 10 for the ‘worthwhile’ question.

For the ‘happy yesterday’ question over two-fifths of people in the 65 to 69, 70 to 74 and 75 to 79 age groups gave a high score of 9 or 10 out of 10 for this question (41.8, 41.9, and 42.6 per cent respectively). These compare with 36.1 per cent for the 16 to 19 age group. The smallest proportion of people giving a high score of 9 or 10 out of 10 was the 45 to 49 age group where only 26.1 per cent of people reported a high score of 9 or 10 out of 10.

The highest average rating for the ‘happy yesterday’ question was 7.8 out of 10 for the 75 to 79 age group (see Figure 2.2) followed by 7.7 out of 10 for both the 65 to 69 and 70 to 74 age groups. The lowest average rating of 7.0 out of 10 was provided by the 45 to 49 and 50 to 54 age groups.

**Figure 2.3a Proportion of respondents with very low (0-4) life satisfaction and worthwhile ratings (1): by age group, 2011–12 (2, 3, 4)**

United Kingdom

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) - Office for National Statistics

Notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked ‘Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?’ and ‘Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?’ where nought is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘completely’.
2. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
3. All data weighted.
4. Non-respondents not included.
Figure 2.3b Proportion of respondents with very low (0–4) happy yesterday and very high (6–10) anxious yesterday ratings (1): by age group, 2011–12 (2, 3, 4)

United Kingdom

For the ‘anxious yesterday’ question an inverse U-shape can be observed, with higher than average levels of anxiety reported in the middle years. The highest average rating for this question was given by the 50 to 54 age group (3.5 out of 10). The lowest average rating (indicating lower anxiety) of 2.8 out of 10 was provided by the 16 to 19, 70 to 74 and 75 to 79 age groups (see Figure 2.2). Almost
a quarter of people aged 45 to 49, 50 to 54 and 55 to 59 reported having a high rating of 6 or above out of 10 for this question (24.8, 24.9 and 24.6 per cent respectively) (see Figure 2.3).

**Ethnic group**

Table 2.1 shows the average ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’, ‘happy yesterday’ and ‘anxious yesterday’ ratings between different ethnic groups. ‘White’ respondents reported the same average ratings as the UK as a whole. This is to be expected as the majority of the UK population report being ‘White’ and as such, make up the largest proportion of survey respondents.

**Table 2.1 Average subjective well-being ratings (1): by ethnic group (2), 2011-12 (3, 4, 5)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
<th>Worthwhile</th>
<th>Happy yesterday</th>
<th>Anxious yesterday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsy, Traveller/ Irish Traveller</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other Asian background</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/ African/ Caribbean/Black British</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic group</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table source:** Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked ‘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?’ and ‘Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?’ where nought is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘completely’.

2. There are some differences in the way ethnic group data is collected and the terminology used across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
3. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
4. All data weighted.
5. Non-respondents not included.
6. Sample size too small for reliable estimates.
7. There are differences in data collection across the UK, however responses from GB and Northern Ireland have been combined to produce a UK estimate. Note that 'Roma' responses are not included within this group.
8. In Scotland, the ‘African’ category is collected and presented separately to ‘Caribbean’ or ‘Black’, however under the harmonised UK output, these two categories are output as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British. The African categories used in Scotland could potentially capture 'White/Asian/Other African' in addition to 'Black' identities.

Download table

The groups who reported the lowest average rating out of 10 for ‘life satisfaction’ were the ‘Black/African/Caribbean/Black British’ group (6.7), the ‘Bangladeshi’ group (7.0), the ‘Arab’ group (7.1), and the 'Mixed/Multiple ethnic' groups (7.1). These ratings were all significantly lower than for the ‘White’ group who reported an average of 7.4 out of 10.

The highest average rating for the ‘life satisfaction’ question was the ‘Indian’ group who reported an average of 7.5 out of 10. Along with the ‘White’ group, ‘Chinese’, and ‘Other Asian background’ respondents also reported an average rating of 7.4 out of 10 for the ‘life satisfaction’ question.

For the ‘worthwhile’ question, lower than UK average ratings were reported by all groups with the exception of the ‘White’ group. The lowest average rating for this question was provided by ‘Bangladeshi’ respondents who reported an average of 7.3 out of 10, significantly lower than the average for the ‘White’ group (7.7 out of 10). ‘Pakistani’, ‘Chinese’, ‘Black/African/Caribbean/Black British’, ‘Arab’, and the ‘Other ethnic group’ all reported a rating of 7.4 out of 10, this compares with the UK average rating of 7.7 out of 10.

The group that provided the lowest average rating for the ‘happy yesterday’ question was the ‘Black/African/Caribbean/Black British’ group (6.9 out of 10), significantly lower than the average for the ‘White’ group (7.3 out of 10). The ‘Indian’ and ‘Other Asian background’ groups both reported the highest ratings of 7.4 out of 10.

The group who reported the highest ‘anxious yesterday’ average rating (which corresponds to the most anxiety) was the ‘Arab’ group (3.7 out of 10), the ‘Bangladeshi’ and ‘Pakistani’ groups also reported higher than UK average ratings for this question (3.6 and 3.5 out of 10 respectively). This was significantly higher than the average rating reported by the ‘White’ group (3.1 out of 10). Indian respondents reported an average rating of 3.4 out of 10; this is in contrast to the higher than average rating for 'life satisfaction' reported by the 'Indian' group.

This shows that there are distinct differences in the ratings given between different ethnic groups. The differences may exist in part due to what can be described as ‘cultural bias’, for example people in different ethnic groups may interpret either the subjective well-being questions or the ratings from 0 to 10 in different ways. Another reason for the differences between groups could be due to certain
Section 3: Relationships, health and disability

Relationships

Previous research into subjective well-being has found that being in a partnership improves people's subjective well-being (Dolan et. al., 2008). ONS's ‘Initial investigation into Subjective Well-being data from the Opinions Survey’ and ‘Analysis of experimental subjective well-being data from the Annual Population Survey’ reports showed that people who are not in a partnership report lower average ratings for the 'life satisfaction', 'worthwhile' and 'happy yesterday' questions, and higher average ratings for the ‘anxious yesterday' question.

This relationship can be observed in Figure 3.1 which highlights the variations in proportions of respondents reporting high (9 to 10 out of 10), medium (7 to 8 out of 10), low (5 to 6 out of 10) and very low (0 to 4 out of 10) ratings for the ‘life satisfaction’ question by relationship status.

Figure 3.1 Life satisfaction thresholds (1): by relationship status (2), 2011–12 (3, 4, 5)

United Kingdom

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) - Office for National Statistics

Notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' where nought is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'.
2. ‘Married’ includes people in Civil Partnerships, ‘Cohabiting’ includes same sex couples (but not in a Civil Partnership), ‘Widowed’ includes surviving civil partners and ‘Divorced’ includes people who are separated and separated/dissolved Civil Partnerships.

3. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.

4. All data weighted.

5. Non-respondents not included.

Download chart

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(29 Kb)

People who were married or in civil partnerships had the largest proportion of ‘high’ and ‘medium’ responses to the ‘life satisfaction’ question, (82.0 per cent), followed by cohabiting couples (79.4 per cent). This compares with 71.2 per cent of single people, 70.0 per cent of widowed people, and 60.7 per cent of divorced people reporting high or medium ‘life satisfaction’.

A similar pattern was found for the ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ questions. For the ‘worthwhile’ question people who were married or in civil partnerships had the largest proportion of ‘high’ and ‘medium’ responses to the ‘worthwhile’ question, (85.9 per cent). Whist only 71.7 per cent of divorced people reported a ‘high’ and ‘medium’ rating for this question.

Almost two-fifths (38.0 per cent) of people who were divorced or in dissolved civil partnerships reported either ‘very low’ or ‘low’ responses (between 0 to 6 out of 10) to the ‘happy yesterday’ question.

It is important to note that other factors in this analysis such as age and sex have not been controlled for. For example, it is likely that a higher proportion of the ‘widowed’ group are in the older age groups than some of the other categories, this may have an effect on ratings for these different groups.

Health

Previous research into subjective well-being has found that good health improves people’s subjective well-being (Dolan et al., 2008). This finding was also observed by ONS in the ‘Initial investigation into Subjective Well-being data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey’.

Figure 3.2 shows the variations in proportions of respondents reporting high (9 to 10), medium (7 to 8), low (5 to 6) and very low (0 to 4) ratings for the ‘worthwhile’ question by self-reported health status.
Figure 3.2 Worthwhile thresholds (1): by self-reported health, 2011–12 (2, 3, 4)

United Kingdom

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) - Office for National Statistics

Notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked ‘Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?’ where nought is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘completely’.
2. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
3. All data weighted.
4. Non-respondents not included.

Download chart

Almost two-fifths of people (38.3 per cent) who described their health as ‘very good’ also provided a high rating for the ‘worthwhile’ question, this compares with just under a third for people who described their health as ‘good’ (29.1 per cent), a quarter (25.9 per cent) of people who described their health as ‘fair’, and just under a fifth (19.7 per cent and 18.5 per cent respectively) for people who described their health as ‘bad’ and ‘very bad’.

Over a third of people who were in ‘very bad’ health (35.2 per cent) gave a very low score of between 0 and 4 for the ‘worthwhile’ question. Almost half (49.9 per cent) of people who described their health as ‘very bad’ reported a very high rating for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question (6 out of 10 or above); this compares with 16.5 per cent of people in ‘very good’ health.
Over two-fifths (43.6 per cent) of people in ‘very bad’ health reported a very low rating of between 0 and 4 for the ‘life satisfaction’ question, and almost half (48.4 per cent) of people in this group reported a very low rating for the ‘happy yesterday’ question.

It should be noted however, that the health measure used here is self-reported health, and like the four subjective well-being questions relies on the person’s own perceptions, this could be a factor in the reason for the strong association between these measures.

Disability

Figure 3.3 shows the variations in proportions of disabled and non-disabled people reporting high (9 to 10), medium (7 to 8), low (5 to 6), and very low (0 to 4) ratings for the ‘life satisfaction’ question.

**Figure 3.3 Life satisfaction thresholds (1): by disability (2), 2011–12 (3, 4, 5)**

United Kingdom

![Bar chart showing life satisfaction thresholds by disability](chart.png)

**Source:** Annual Population Survey (APS) - Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked ‘Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?’ where nought is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘completely’.
2. ‘Disabled’ includes ‘DDA disabled and work-limiting disabled’, ‘DDA disabled only’ and ‘Work-limiting disabled only’.
3. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
4. All data weighted.
5. Non-respondents not included.
Almost two-fifths of people (38.5 per cent) describing themselves as having a disability gave a low (5 to 6 out of 10), or very low (0 to 4 out of 10) rating for the life satisfaction question. This is twice the proportion of non-disabled people (19.4 per cent) who described their life satisfaction as low or very low.

Just under a third (28.0 per cent) of people who are not disabled described their 'life satisfaction' as high, this compares with one-fifth (20.2 per cent) of people with a disability.

Further to this, for the ‘worthwhile’ question, just under a third (30.7 per cent) of disabled people gave a low or very low rating of between 0 and 6 out of 10. This is almost double the proportion for non-disabled people, 16.5 per cent of whom gave a rating of between 0 and 6 for this question. For the ‘anxious yesterday’ question just under a third (30.0 per cent) of disabled people gave a very high rating of between 6 and 10 out of 10, compared with a fifth (19.1 per cent) of non-disabled people.

It is important to remember that people who report having a disability are a very wide ranging group, including those who have a disability which substantially limits their day-to-day activities, as well as those who have a disability which limits the type or amount of work they do, but does not limit their day-to-day activities.

**Section 4: Work situation**

**Labour market status**

Previous research has consistently shown that unemployment has a negative effect on subjective well-being (Dolan et al., 2007), this is supported by analysis of these data. Figure 4.1 shows that 45 per cent of unemployed people rated their 'life satisfaction' as either low (5 to 6 out of 10), or very low (0 to 4 out of 10). This is over twice the proportion as was found for employed people, 20 per cent of whom described their 'life satisfaction' as either low or very low.

Just under a third (27.1 per cent) of economically inactive people rated their 'life satisfaction' as low or very low. Economically inactive people are those who are not in paid work but are not unemployed because they have not been actively seeking work, or are unavailable to start work. Some of the groups that fall under this category include students, retired people, those looking after family/home, as well as people who are sick.
Figure 4.1 Life satisfaction thresholds (1): by Labour Market Status, 2011–12 (2, 3, 4)

United Kingdom

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) - Office for National Statistics

Notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked ‘Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?’ where nought is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘completely’.
2. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
3. All data weighted.
4. Non-respondents not included.

Download chart

XLS XLS format
(27 Kb)

Just under two-fifths of unemployed people gave ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ ratings as either low or very low, (38.0 per cent and 39.6 per cent respectively). For the ‘worthwhile’ question this is over twice the proportion as was found for employed people (16.1 per cent). For the ‘happy yesterday’ question however, just under a third of employed people (27.3 per cent) gave a low or very low rating.

This is perhaps not surprising as the ‘happy yesterday’ question is designed to measure people’s day-to-day emotions rather than measure happiness in people’s overall lives, so is therefore likely to pick up less variation between groups.
Occupation

Of those people who are in employment, the type of occupation people have appears to have an effect on people’s subjective well-being ratings. Figure 4.2 shows the average ‘life satisfaction’ and ‘worthwhile’ ratings out of 10 provided by people in different occupational groups. For life satisfaction, the highest average score of 7.7 out of 10 was reported by people in ‘professional occupations’, and by those who are ‘managers, directors and senior officials’.

This was followed by people who are in the ‘associate professional and technical occupations’ (7.6 out of 10). These higher scores appear to be given by the occupational groups who tend to have more responsibility and control over their work, as well as higher incomes (which were not controlled for in this analysis). The lowest average score (7.3 out of 10) was provided by people in the ‘process, plant and machine operatives’ group. A similar pattern was found for the ‘happy yesterday’ question.

For the ‘worthwhile’ question however, people in the ‘caring, leisure and other service occupations’ gave the highest average ratings, along with people in ‘professional occupations’ (8.0 out of 10). The lowest average ratings were given by people in ‘sales and customer service occupations’, ‘process plant and machine operatives’, and people in ‘elementary occupations’ (7.5 out of 10).

Figure 4.2 Average (mean) life satisfaction and worthwhile ratings (1): by occupational group, 2011–12 (2, 3, 4)

United Kingdom
Notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked ‘Overall, how satisfied with your life are you nowadays?’ and ‘Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?’ where nought is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘completely’.
2. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
3. All data weighted.
4. Non-respondents not included.

Section 5: Countries of the UK and English regions

Countries of the UK

When making an assessment of the economic performance, and social progress of the countries and areas within the UK, a range of different objective sources can be used, (such as demographic profiles of unemployment rates and measures of the quality of health or education).

In order to get a complete picture of well-being in different geographic areas it is important to also consider subjective well-being data alongside these objective data, as a different picture may emerge compared with when objective data alone are looked at.

This section presents subjective well-being estimates for the four questions included on the APS for the countries of the UK, the English regions and unitary authorities / counties in Great Britain for April 2011 to March 2012.

When examining subjective well-being by geographic area, it is possible to compare the average (mean) and also the proportion of adults who gave different ratings to the questions asked. In this section, the focus is placed on estimates of the proportion of people (aged 16 and over) who gave low or very low ratings (0 to 6 out of 10) for the ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ questions.

On that basis a higher percentage of people giving low or very low ratings shows that more people in certain areas report being less satisfied with their life, feel the things in their life are less worthwhile, or feel less happy.

For the ‘anxious yesterday’ question the percentage of people who gave high or very high ratings (4 to 10 out of 10) is focused on. A higher percentage of people reporting high or very high ratings for this question shows that more people in certain areas report to feeling more anxious.
In this section a rating of 0 to 6 for the ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’ or ‘happy yesterday’ questions is reported as ‘low or very low’, and a rating of 7 to 10 is reported as ‘medium or high’. For the ‘anxiety yesterday’ question a rating of 0 to 3 is reported as ‘low or medium’ and a rating of 4 to 10 is reported as ‘high or very high’.

Table 5.1 Proportion of respondents with very low or low (0–6) life satisfaction, worthwhile and happy yesterday ratings and high or very high (4–10) anxious yesterday ratings (1): by countries of the UK, 2011–12 (2, 3, 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Life satisfaction</th>
<th>Worthwhile</th>
<th>Happy yesterday</th>
<th>Anxious yesterday</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked ‘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?’ and ‘Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?’ where nought is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘completely’.
2. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
3. All data weighted.
4. Non-respondents not included.

Download table

Table 5.1 shows that England and Wales had similar proportions of adults (aged 16 and over) giving a low or very low rating for ‘life satisfaction’ (24.3 and 25.3 per cent respectively) ‘worthwhile’ (20.1 and 20.3 per cent respectively), and ‘happy yesterday’ (both 29.0 per cent). Similar proportions of high or very high ratings were also seen for ‘anxious yesterday’, (both countries at 40.1 per cent).

Scotland had a lower proportion of people giving a low rating for the ‘life satisfaction’ question (22.6 per cent) but similar ratings for ‘worthwhile’ (19.4 per cent) and ‘happy yesterday’ (28.8 per cent) compared with England and Wales. For ‘anxious yesterday’, 38.8 per cent of adults reported high or very high ratings.

Northern Ireland also had a smaller proportion of people giving a low or very low rating for ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ (21.9, 18.9 and 26.0 per cent respectively)
compared with England and Wales. Additionally, a smaller proportion of people gave a high or very high rating for the 'anxious yesterday' question compared with the other countries of the UK (35.5 per cent, compared with the UK average of 39.9 per cent).

In terms of average ratings out of 10 the countries of the UK had similar average levels of 'life satisfaction', 'worthwhile', and 'happy yesterday'. Northern Ireland had an average rating for 'life satisfaction' of 7.5 out of 10, 'worthwhile' 7.8 out of 10 and 'happy yesterday' 7.4 out of 10. The average ratings for both England and for Wales were (7.4, 7.7, and 7.3 out of 10) and for Scotland (7.5, 7.7 and 7.3 out of 10).

The average ratings for the 'anxious yesterday' question were the same for all four countries of the UK (3.1 out of 10).

There are different reasons for the variations observed in the subjective well-being levels between regions and countries of the UK. Different objective circumstances that people experience in the different countries can help to explain these variations.

For example, we know that the labour market conditions, the age distribution of the population and proportions of different ethnic groups differ between these countries, and that subjective well-being is affected by these different factors (see previous sections). However, it is outside the scope of this report to examine the factors that may affect variations in subjective well-being between the countries of the UK and English regions.

It is also possible that the subjective well-being questions are picking up information that may not be captured from objective measures alone. This highlights the importance of using subjective well-being data alongside other objective measures when making an assessment of overall well-being of an area or country and the need for further detailed analysis to examine different factors and how they are associated with people's subjective well-being.

It should also be noted that all interviews in Scotland north of the Caledonian Canal were administered by telephone only, and those in Northern Ireland were administered via face-to-face interviews only rather than through than a combination of telephone and face-to-face interviews, as is the case in other areas of the UK.

Slightly higher average ratings are provided by respondents interviewed on the telephone compared with those who are asked subjective well-being questions face to face (see section 8). It is therefore possible that some of the differences observed in subjective well-being estimates between countries of the UK could be due to the mode of interview.

Full estimates of subjective well-being for the countries of the UK for the two threshold groupings can be found in the Geography reference tables.

Estimates for more detailed threshold groupings (0–4, 5–6, 7–8 and 9–10 for positive questions and 6–10, 4–5, 2–3 and 0–1 for ‘anxious yesterday’) are available in the Overall reference tables.

To find out more about subjective well-being for residents in more local areas look at:
The interactive tool for comparing the subjective well-being of residents in specific areas in the UK. These include regions and countries within the UK and information about local authority areas within English regions, Scotland and Wales.

The map which compares information about local authority areas in England, Wales and Scotland.

Section 6: Unitary Authority/County areas

As for section 5, in this section a rating of 0 to 6 for the ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’ or ‘happy yesterday’ questions is reported as ‘low or very low’, and a rating of 7 to 10 is reported as ‘medium or high’.

For the ‘anxious yesterday’ question a rating of 0 to 3 is reported as ‘low or medium’ and a rating of 4 to 10 is reported as ‘high or very high’.

Differences within the countries of Great Britain

The differences within the countries of Great Britain (when making comparisons between English regions and between the different unitary authority and county areas within Great Britain) are larger than the differences between the four UK countries examined above.

This section compares estimates of subjective well-being for unitary authorities in Wales and local authorities within Scotland. It also looks at the English regions, and the differences for unitary authorities and counties within those regions.

Estimates for administrative areas within Northern Ireland are not provided as the sample sizes are considered too small for reliable estimates.

English Regions
Table 6.1 Proportion of respondents with low or very low (0–6) life satisfaction, worthwhile and happy yesterday ratings and high or very high (4–10) anxious yesterday ratings (1): by English regions, 2011–12 (2, 3, 4)

United Kingdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and The Humber</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked '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?' and 'Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?' where nought is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'.
2. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
3. All data weighted.
4. Non-respondents not included.

Download table

XLS format

Table 6.1 shows that the English regions with the highest proportion of people giving low or very low ratings for 'life satisfaction' were London (27.2 per cent) and the West Midlands (27.1 per cent). The areas with the lowest proportions of people giving low or very low ratings (corresponding to higher life satisfaction) were the South East and the South West (21.5 and 21.8 per cent respectively).

A similar pattern was found for the 'worthwhile' question, with London and the West Midlands having the highest proportions of adults reporting a low or very low rating (22.6 and 22.7 per cent respectively). London and the West Midlands also had some of the highest percentages of people
with low and very low levels for the ‘happy yesterday’ question (30.6 and 31.2 per cent respectively) along with the North East, North West and Yorkshire and The Humber (30.9, 30.4 and 29.7 per cent respectively).

For ‘anxious yesterday’ the highest proportion of adults reporting high or very high levels were those living in London, with 44.5 per cent reporting a high or very high rating for this question.

A similar story emerges when looking at average ratings out of 10, although the differences are less noticeable when using the average measure. Within England, average ‘life satisfaction’ ratings did not vary that much across the regions from 7.2 out of 10 in London, to 7.5 out of 10 in the South East and South West.

Similar patterns were also seen for the ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ questions as the South East and South West had the highest average ‘worthwhile’ ratings (both 7.8 out of 10) and London and the West Midlands both had the lowest average rating (7.5 out of 10). The East of England, South East, and South West regions had the highest average ‘happy yesterday’ ratings (7.4 out of 10) compared with the North East, North West, Yorkshire and The Humber, West Midlands and London that all had the lowest average ‘happy yesterday’ ratings (7.2 out of 10).

People living in London reported the highest levels of anxiety on the previous day with average ratings of 3.4 out of 10 compared with 3.0 to 3.2 out of 10, for all other English regions.

Full estimates for all English regions for the two threshold groupings can be found in the Geography reference tables:

RFT geography reference tables (2.32 Mb Excel sheet)

Estimates for more detailed threshold groupings (0–4, 5–6, 7–8 and 9–10 for positive questions and 6–10, 4–5, 2–3 and 0–1 for ‘anxious yesterday’) are available in the Overall reference tables:

RFT Overall Reference Tables (218 Kb Excel sheet)

Wales

Within Wales, the unitary authorities with the highest percentages of people giving a low or very low ‘life satisfaction’ rating were Torfaen (32.8 per cent), Blaenau Gwent (31.2 per cent), Merthyr Tydfil (30.3 per cent) and Rhondda Cynon Taf (30.3). The areas also had the lowest average ratings for ‘life satisfaction’ with Torfaen at (7.1 out of 10), Merthyr Tydfil (7.2) and Blaenau Gwent (7.2).

The unitary authorities with the lowest percentages of people with low or very low ‘life satisfaction’ ratings (indicating higher life satisfaction) and the highest average ratings were the Isle of Anglesey (where only 19.8 per cent of people provided a low or very low rating, and an average of 7.8 out of 10 was reported), Flintshire (20.3 per cent, and, 7.7 out of 10 respectively), Ceredigion (20.3 per cent, and, 7.6 out of 10 respectively), Pembrokeshire (20.5 per cent, and, 7.5 out of 10 respectively), Powys (21.3 per cent, and, 7.6 out of 10 respectively) and Monmouthshire (21.1 per cent, and, 7.6 out of 10 respectively).
In terms of the ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ questions, Torfaen, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent and Swansea were also the unitary authorities areas that had the highest percentage of people giving a low or very low ratings.

These unitary authorities also had the lowest average ratings for ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ questions but Neath Port Talbot, Newport and Carmarthenshire also had the same average rating for ‘worthwhile’ of 7.6 out of 10 as Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent.

The unitary authorities with the lowest proportion of people giving low or very low rating for the ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ questions (indicating higher subjective well-being) were Isle of Anglesey, Flintshire, Ceredigion and Powys, and also Pembrokeshire for the ‘worthwhile’ question.

A similar pattern was seen for the highest average rating for the ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ questions, except for Ceredigion which had a lower average rating of 7.7 out of 10 for the ‘worthwhile’ question.

Swansea (45.3 per cent), Merthyr Tydfil (45.3 per cent) and Blaenau Gwent (45.2 per cent) had the highest proportion of people giving a high or very high rating (4 to 10 out of 10) to the ‘anxious yesterday’ question (indicating higher anxiety), but a high proportion of people in Neath Port Talbot also rated ‘anxious yesterday’ as high or very high (44.3 per cent). These four unitary authorities also had the highest average ratings of either 3.6 or 3.4 out of 10.

The unitary authorities with the highest proportion of people giving medium or low ‘anxious yesterday’ rating (indicating lower anxiety) were Ceredigion (66.0 per cent), Denbighshire (65.8 per cent), Isle of Anglesey (65.5 per cent) and Flintshire (65.0 per cent). A similar pattern was seen for the lowest average rating although Monmouthshire, Newport and Gwynedd also had average ratings the same as Ceredigion (2.9 out of 10).

Full data for all unitary authorities in Wales can be found in the Geography reference tables:

[RFT geography reference tables (2.32 Mb Excel sheet)](RFT geography reference tables (2.32 Mb Excel sheet))

**Scotland**

Within Scotland, the local authorities with the highest percentages of people giving a low or very low ‘life satisfaction’ rating were North Ayrshire (31.2 per cent), Glasgow City (27.8 per cent), West Dunbartonshire (26.3 per cent) and North Lanarkshire (26.2 per cent). North Ayrshire, Glasgow City and West Dunbartonshire also had the lowest average ratings (7.1, 7.2, and 7.3 out of 10 respectively).

The local authorities with the lowest percentages of people with low or very low life satisfaction ratings (indicating higher life satisfaction) were Eilean Siar, Orkney and Shetland Islands, 14.8 per of whom reported a low or very low rating for ‘life satisfaction’ and Aberdeenshire, where 16.2 per cent of people reported a low or very low rating. These areas also had the highest average ratings for the ‘life satisfaction’ question (8.1 and 7.9 out of 10 respectively).

A similar pattern was found for the ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ questions. The local authorities with the highest percentages of people giving a low or very low rating for the ‘worthwhile’
question were Glasgow City (26.0 per cent) and North Ayrshire (25.7 per cent). These were also the areas with the lowest average ratings for this question, (7.3 and 7.4 out of 10 respectively).

North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and Glasgow City were the areas where the highest proportions of people reported a low or very low for the ‘happy yesterday’ question (34.0 per cent for North Ayrshire, and 33.4 per cent for North Lanarkshire and Glasgow City). For the ‘happy yesterday’ question the lowest average rating was for Glasgow City and North Ayrshire (7.0 out of 10).

As was found for ‘life satisfaction’, Eilean Siar, Orkney and Shetland Islands had the lowest percentages of people with low ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ ratings (11.3 and 17.1 per cent respectively) and also the highest average rating for both ‘worthwhile’ (8.2) and ‘happy yesterday’ (8.0).

For the ‘anxious yesterday’ question a slightly different pattern emerged. The local authorities with the highest percentages of people reporting a high or very high rating for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question were South Ayrshire and City of Edinburgh, where just under half (45.7 and 45.1 per cent respectively) reported a high or very high rating for this question. These areas also had the highest average ratings for this question (3.6 and 3.5 out of 10 respectively).

Eilean Siar, Orkney and Shetland Islands had the lowest proportion of people reporting high or very high (4 to 10) levels of ‘anxious yesterday’ (29.3 per cent), this area also had the lowest average rating for this question (2.5 out of 10).

Full data for all local authorities for Scotland can be found in the Geography reference tables:

RFT geography reference tables (2.32 Mb Excel sheet)

Within the English Regions

As well as examining the differences between the English regions it is also possible to look at subjective well-being by unitary authority (UA) and counties within the English regions. This section reports on the differences in subjective well-being within each of the regions in England.

For this section unitary authority and council areas with be referred to as ‘areas’ of the English region being reported on.

Again, we have focused on the low or very low ratings (0 to 6 out of 10) for the positive subjective well-being questions asked (life satisfaction, worthwhile, happy yesterday) and the percentage of people who gave high or very high ratings (4 to 10 out of 10) for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question.

Therefore a higher percentage shows that more people in different areas report being less satisfied with their life, felt the things in their life are less worthwhile, or felt less happy the day before interview. For the ‘anxious yesterday’ question, a higher percentage of people giving a high score in a geographic area indicates that overall the adult population report being more anxious.

North East
Around a quarter of people rated their life satisfaction as low or very low (a rating of less than 7 out of 10) in most of the areas within the North East. The only exceptions were Northumberland and Stockton-on-Tees where 20.9 per cent and 21.8 per cent of people respectively rated their life satisfaction as low or very low.

In most of the areas in the North East around a fifth of people provided a rating for the ‘worthwhile’ question of low or very low. The only exceptions were Redcar & Cleveland, and Hartlepool, where 17.9 per and 24.0 per cent of people respectively gave a low or very low rating for the ‘worthwhile’ question.

However, the average ratings for the ‘life satisfaction’ and for the ‘worthwhile’ questions did not vary much between the areas of the North East (ranging between 7.4 and 7.5 for the ‘life satisfaction’ question and between 7.5 and 7.8 for the ‘worthwhile’ question).

For the ‘happy yesterday’, question County Durham had the highest proportion of people reporting a low or very low rating (34.7 per cent). Middlesbrough (45.8 per cent) had the highest proportion of people giving a high or very high rating for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question. Middlesbrough had the highest average rating for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question (3.6 out of 10) within the North East.

North West

The proportion of people rating their life satisfaction as low or very low was 29.1 per cent in Blackpool, 28.9 per cent in Blackburn with Darwen, followed by 27.2 per cent both in Greater Manchester and Merseyside Met County.

This is in contrast with Cheshire East, where only 18.8 per cent of people rated their life satisfaction as low or very low (indicating higher life satisfaction), and Cumbria and Warrington where 20.9 per cent of people rated their life satisfaction as low or very low. The average rating for life satisfaction was 7.1 in Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool, compared with 7.7 in Cumbria and 7.6 in Cheshire East.

A similar pattern was observed for the ‘worthwhile’ question, with 24.4 per cent of people in Blackpool, 24.3 per cent in Blackburn with Darwen, 22.8 per cent in Great Manchester, and 21.0 per cent in Merseyside Met County giving a low or very low rating. By contrast, only 14.2 per cent of people in Warrington, 16.6 per cent in Cheshire East and 17.6 per cent in Cumbria gave a low or very low rating to the ‘worthwhile’ question.

In Blackpool, 36.6 per cent of people gave a low rating to the ‘happy yesterday’ question compared to 24.5 per cent in Cheshire East. The highest proportion of people giving a high or very high rating to the ‘anxious yesterday’ question was in Greater Manchester (43.1 per cent), whilst the lowest proportion was reported in Cheshire East (36.3 per cent).

Yorkshire and The Humber

In West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and North East Lincolnshire, just over a quarter of people reported low or very low life satisfaction. This is in contrast with people in York, East Riding of Yorkshire and North Yorkshire where 17 per cent, 20.4 per cent and 21.0 per cent of people respectively rated their life satisfaction as low or very low.
In Kingston-upon-Hull, 22.4 per cent of people gave a low or very low rating to the 'worthwhile' question, whereas in North Yorkshire and East Riding of Yorkshire, 17.3 per cent and 17.4 per cent of people respectively gave a low rating to the 'worthwhile' question.

**East Midlands**

The percentage of people giving a low or very low rating to the 'life satisfaction' and 'worthwhile' questions was much lower in Rutland (14.9 and 12.8 per cent respectively) than in any other areas of the East Midlands. Nottinghamshire had the highest proportion of people providing a low or very low rating to the 'life satisfaction' and 'worthwhile' questions (26.4 and 23.4 per cent respectively). The same pattern was observed for the ‘happy yesterday’ question, where 19.2 per cent of people in Rutland, 31.8 per cent in Nottinghamshire and 32.1 per cent in Leicester gave a low or very low rating for this question.

As many as 48.3 per cent of people in Leicestershire provided a rating of high or very high for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question compared with only 36.0 per cent in Northamptonshire and 36.2 per cent in Derbyshire.

**West Midlands**

Within the West Midlands the areas with the highest percentages of people giving a low or very low rating for 'life satisfaction' were West Midlands Metropolitan County (30.5 per cent), Stoke-on-Trent (29.0 per cent) and Warwickshire (26.6 per cent). These areas also had the lowest average ratings for ‘life satisfaction’ at (7.1, 7.3 and 7.7 out of 10). In contrast, Shropshire was the area that had the lowest proportion of people giving a low or very low ‘life satisfaction’ (19.6 per cent).

The areas with the highest proportion of people giving low or very low ratings for the 'worthwhile' question were Stoke-on-Trent (25.4 per cent), West Midlands Metropolitan County (25.2 per cent) and Warwickshire (25.0 per cent). The average ratings for these areas were 7.5, 7.4 and 7.4 out of 10 respectively.

Shropshire was again the area that had the lowest proportion of people giving a low or very low ‘worthwhile’ (15.4 per cent) or ‘happy yesterday’ (23.6 per cent) rating and the highest average rating (7.9 out of 10 for ‘worthwhile’ and 7.5 out of 10 for ‘happy yesterday’).

Telford and Wrekin had the highest proportion of people giving a high or very high rating and the highest average rating for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question (41.8 per cent and 3.3 out of 10 respectively).

**East of England**

Within the East of England, Hertfordshire was the county with the lowest proportion of people giving a low or very low rating for the ‘life satisfaction’ question (20.1 per cent) and for the ‘worthwhile’
question (15.6 per cent). By contrast, in Thurrock, Luton and Peterborough, 29.7 per cent, 28.8 per cent and 28.1 per cent of people respectively rated their life satisfaction as low or very low. The highest proportion of people giving a low or very low rating to the worthwhile question was in Bedford (25.1 per cent).

In the East of England, the areas where over 30 per cent of people gave a low or very low rating to the ‘happy yesterday’ question were Bedford (33.2 per cent), Thurrock (33.2 per cent), Peterborough (31.4), and Luton (30.8 per cent). Areas with over 40 per cent of people giving a high or very high rating to the ‘anxious yesterday’ question were Peterborough (45.5 per cent), Thurrock (45.1 per cent), Bedford (43.4 per cent) and Norfolk (42.4 per cent).

London

Inner London had a slightly higher proportion of people reporting a low or very low rating for life satisfaction than Outer London (27.6 and 26.9 per cent respectively). For the ‘worthwhile’ question there was a bigger difference (24.2 and 21.6 per cent respectively). The average rating out of 10 was 7.4 for Inner London and 7.6 for Outer London for the ‘worthwhile’ question.

A similar pattern to the ‘life satisfaction’ question was found for the ‘happy yesterday’ question. Interestingly, like the ‘worthwhile’ question there was a bigger difference in the ratings provided by Inner and Outer London for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question with 46.0 per cent of people in Inner London reporting a high or very high anxiety rating, compared with 43.5 per cent in Outer London. The average rating out of 10 for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question for Inner London was 3.6, compared with 3.3 out of 10 for outer London.

South East

The highest proportions of people in the South East reporting a low or very low ‘life satisfaction’ rating were in Medway (26.9 per cent) and Slough (27.2 per cent). The areas in the South East with the lowest proportions of people giving a low or very low rating (indicating higher life satisfaction) for this question were Wokingham, Brighton & Hove, and Windsor and Maidenhead (all at less than 20 per cent).

This compares with an average for the UK of 24.1 per cent. When the average rating out of 10 for ‘life satisfaction’ is looked at, Medway was the lowest, whereas West Sussex was the highest (7.2 and 7.7 out of 10 respectively).

For the ‘worthwhile’ question the areas with the highest proportions of people providing a low or very low rating were Slough and Portsmouth (24.7 and 24.2 per cent respectively). Portsmouth, Bracknell Forest and Reading all had the highest proportions of people reporting a low rating (0 to 6) for the ‘happy yesterday’ question (all 30.0 per cent or above), indicating lower levels of well-being in these areas.

When high and very high ratings for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question are looked at (indicating higher anxiety) the highest proportions were in Slough, Oxfordshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Surrey, Medway, and Brighton and Hove with two-fifths or more people in these areas reporting a high or very high score for this question. The highest average score out of 10 for this question was reported by people in Oxfordshire (3.4 out of 10).
South West

The highest proportions of people reporting a low or very low 'life satisfaction' rating were in Torbay (29.4 per cent), and Bristol (26.1 per cent). The area with the lowest proportion of people reporting a low or very low 'life satisfaction' rating for the South West as a whole was Bath and North East Somerset (14.6 per cent). The highest average rating for the life satisfaction for the South West were in Cornwall, and Bath and North East Somerset (both 7.7 out of 10).

For the ‘worthwhile’ question, the area with the highest proportion of people reporting a low or very low rating was Bristol (24.3 per cent) this was almost 10 per cent more than in Bath and North East Somerset (14.4 per cent).

People in Bristol also gave the lowest rating out of 10 for this question (7.5), people in Devon, Dorset, Cornwall, and Wiltshire all reported the highest rating out of 10 (7.9). Further to this, over 30 per cent of people in Bristol and Torbay gave a low or very low rating for the 'happy yesterday' question, the lowest proportions in the South West.

For the ‘anxious yesterday’ question, the areas in the South West with highest proportions of people reporting a high or very high rating (indicating areas with higher anxiety) were Plymouth, Bath and North East Somerset, and North Somerset, in all of these areas 40 per cent or more people reported a high or very high rating.

To find out more about subjective well-being for residents in more local areas look at:

- The interactive tool for comparing the subjective well-being of residents in specific areas in the UK. These include regions and countries within the UK and information about local authority areas within English regions, Scotland and Wales.
- The map which compares information about local authority areas in England, Wales and Scotland.

Section 7: Presentation of subjective well-being estimates

In the report we have used two different techniques to present the data. One technique used in this report is to show the ‘mean’ or ‘average’ of the responses between 0 and 10. For example, the ‘average’ for the ‘life satisfaction’ question is 7.4 out of 10. Throughout the report we have referred to the ‘average’ as the ‘average rating’.

The advantage of using the ‘average rating’ is that it provides one overall summary measure to present the data. However, the ‘average’ does not show the distribution of responses from 0 to 10, for example, it will not indicate if the responses are evenly distributed along the 0 to 10 scale, or if the responses are concentrated at the higher and lower points of the scale.

For this reason we are also presenting the data by showing the proportions for responses falling above or below certain thresholds. For the ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happy yesterday’ questions the thresholds we are using are the proportions of responses that fall between:

- 0 to 4, (very low),
• 5 to 6, (low),
• 7 to 8, (medium),
• 9 to 10, (high).

For the ‘anxious yesterday’ question the thresholds we are using are the proportions of responses that fall between:

• 0 to 1, (low),
• 2 to 3, (medium),
• 4 to 5, (high),
• 6 to 10, (very high).

For the smaller geographic areas (unitary authorities / counties) ONS has combined these four different categories into two so that estimates are based on larger sample sizes. On this basis we have the following thresholds for the positive subjective well-being questions:

• 0 to 6 (very low / low),
• 7 to 10 (very high / high).

For the ‘anxious yesterday’ question we use the following categories:

• 0 to 3 (low / medium),
• 4 to 10 (high / very high).

These thresholds were chosen primarily from the underlying distribution of the data on the 0 to 10 scale. The mean rating for the positive questions is around 7 to 8 and there are similar percentages of respondents rating their positive subjective well-being as 5 or 6, 7 or 8 and 9 or 10.

Equally the lower scores (0 to 4) are below the mid-point (5) of the scale, which could be an important cut-off for respondents when answering the questions. For the ‘anxious yesterday’ question we took equivalent groupings so that we were comparing high levels of positive subjective well-being with low levels of anxiety given that for this negative affect question the best possible outcome is nought, whereas for the other questions it is 10 out of 10.

Further research into the use of scales by respondents is envisaged as part of the testing and development that ONS are undertaking into the measurement of subjective well-being.

User engagement over the last few months has also suggested that looking at the percentages of people who report low levels of subjective well-being is likely to be of most policy interest so ONS has responded by not only placing more emphasis on the distribution, but also on those people reporting low levels of subjective well-being to better meet user needs.

Section 8: Methodological considerations

Choice of questions
The questions developed and included in the surveys that make up the Integrated Household Survey and the The Lifestyle and Opinions Survey were developed with expert academic advice (Dolan et al., 2011) as well as benefiting from discussions between members of the National Statistician’s Measuring National Well-being Advisory Forum and Technical Advisory Group.

They represent a balanced approach to the measurement of subjective well-being drawing on the three main theoretical approaches identified (Dolan et al., 2011 & ONS 2011) and were designed to collect information on different aspects of people’s subjective well-being. The three different approaches to measuring subjective well-being are as follows:

- **The ‘evaluative’ approach** that asks individuals to step back and reflect on their life and make a cognitive assessment of how their life is going overall, or on certain aspects of their life.
- **The ‘eudemonic’ approach**, sometimes referred to as the psychological or functioning/flourishing approach, which draws on self-determination theory and tends to measure such things as people’s sense of meaning and purpose in life, connections with family and friends, a sense of control and whether they feel part of something bigger than themselves.
- **The ‘experience’ approach** which seeks to measure people’s positive and negative experiences (or affect) over a short timeframe to capture people’s subjective well-being on a day-to-day basis.

The questions that ONS has asked on its household surveys include:

- Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? (Evaluative approach),
- Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile? (Eudemonic approach),
- Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? (Experience approach),
- Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? (Experience approach).

All answered using a 0 to 10 scale where 0 is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘completely’

Further information on the ONS approach to measuring subjective well-being can be found in the paper ‘Measuring Subjective Well-being (240.8 Kb Pdf)’ published by ONS in July 2011.

**Survey design**

The Annual Population Survey (APS), first conducted in 2004, combines results from waves one and five of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the English, Welsh and Scottish LFS boosts. The survey asks 155,000 households and 360,000 people per dataset about their own circumstances and experiences regarding a range of subjects including housing, employment and education.

The survey provides enhanced data on key social and socio-economic variables. For the subjective well-being questions responses by proxy are not collected. That is only people who respond directly to the survey are included rather than including responses made on behalf of other people. For this reason the sample size for the subjective well-being data is around 165,000.

One of the benefits of collecting subjective well-being data on a large scale survey such as APS is that large sample sizes, all else being equal, produce smaller standard errors. The standard error is an indication of the accuracy of an estimate and gives users an indication of how close the sample estimator (in this case the mean subjective well-being rating) is to the population value: the larger
the standard error, the less precise the estimator. Large sample sizes also allow for comparisons across population groups and areas.

The APS is a mixed mode survey and uses both face-to-face and telephone interviews. Different collection modes can affect responses and subjective well-being estimates are no exception. For example in the Annual Population Survey it appears from the aggregate estimates that on average people responding face-to-face with an interviewer in their home give different ratings to those responding via the telephone (see table 8.1). Further investigation is required to ascertain why this may be the case.

Higher average ratings for the ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’, ‘happy yesterday’ questions and a slightly lower average for the ‘anxious yesterday’ question were provided by respondents interviewed via the telephone compared with those who are asked subjective well-being questions face-to-face, as can be seen in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Average (mean) subjective well-being ratings (1): by mode of interview, 2011–12 (2, 3, 4)

United Kingdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthwhile</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy yesterday</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious yesterday</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:
1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked ‘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?’ and ‘Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?’ where nought is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘completely’.
2. Data from April 2011 to March 2012.
3. All data weighted.
4. Non-respondents not included.

Download table

XLS XLS format
(28.5 Kb)

This issue is particularly important for the APS as all interviews in Scotland north of the Caledonian Canal were administered by telephone only, and interviews in Northern Ireland were administered face-to-face interviews only, rather through than a combination of telephone and face-to-face interviews, as is the case in other areas of the UK.
There are a number of other methodological issues which have been or are being tested on the Opinions Survey, for more information see (ONS, 2011 OPN report). These include:

- **Contextual effects** - responses to evaluative questions can be determined in part by the respondent’s current mood and by the immediate context, however, the idiosyncratic effects of recent events are likely to be averaged out in a large, representative population sample.

- **Question order** - responses to subjective well-being questions have been shown to be affected by earlier questions in the survey (for example, questions about health or labour market status). Prior to April 2011, ONS carried out small scale cognitive testing of the placement of the subjective well-being questions. As a result it was decided that the placement of the overall monitoring questions would be fairly early on in the questionnaire after the basic questions on household and individual demographics. This allows time for rapport to be built up between the interviewer without allowing later questions, such as those on employment, to influence response to the subjective well-being questions.

- **Scales** - different response scales for subjective well-being questions have been used on different surveys. Differences in scaling and labelling of scale points require careful consideration as a different scale may affect how people respond. Additionally the use of different scales in different surveys means that it is more difficult to compare across different sources of data. It appears that the way the scales are labelled can also have an impact on these estimates and that is something that needs further investigation. ONS decided that an 11 point scale from 0–10 where 0 is ‘not at all’ and 10 is an absolute value such as ‘completely’ should be used for all the IHS subjective well-being questions. The reason for this decision was to ensure that the scales between the questions are consistent in order to help respondents answer the questions more easily and also to aid analysis across the separate questions. Further to this, 11 point scales of this nature are commonly used across other surveys of interest, particularly internationally, and using the same type of scale will aid comparisons with these estimates.

- **Question wording** - we know that it is not only response scales that differ from survey to survey but also question wording, including the use of time frames. It will be important as we go forward to ascertain the impact these differences have on any estimates, particularly when thinking through the extent to which question wording should be harmonised in order to gain comparable results. Just how sensitive subjective well-being estimates are to question wording is an important methodological consideration.

### Interpreting subjective well-being estimates

When comparing differences between mean ratings for groups or areas it is important to realise that these comparisons are made using aggregate statistics based on samples with those characteristics. Just because the average of the sample has a certain rating of subjective well-being does not necessarily mean that all people with that certain characteristic have that particular outcome.

For example, even though women on average have higher life satisfaction than men, it is important not to infer that all women are more satisfied with their lives than men. Looking at the percentage below or above different thresholds goes some way in addressing this. However, it is also important not to infer that what is true for part of the sample with a certain characteristic is true for all people with that characteristic.
It is also important to note that although subjective well-being estimates in this report have been analysed by people with different characteristics we are not inferring causation, even though some groups are more likely to give higher life satisfaction ratings on average, it may not be the particular characteristic that is causing them to have higher subjective well-being.

There are other factors that could also be influencing their ratings which would need to be controlled for in a regression model, and even then causation is often difficult to infer. For example, although married people on average give higher levels of happiness it is difficult to say with certainty that marriage increases happiness or whether actually people who are happy are more likely to marry.

The size of differences between mean ratings of subjective well-being for groups of people with certain characteristics or in different circumstances can appear fairly small. These differences must be interpreted in light of the fact that subjective well-being is affected by many different life circumstances with a variety of factors having a bearing on a person’s subjective well-being.

For example, if someone is in poor health, that is only one aspect of their lives so when making a cognitive judgment about how satisfied they are with their lives overall, although their poor health may have a bearing, other factors may mitigate against that and mean they do not give such a low score as we may perhaps first expect.

Additionally it should be noted that the health measure used is this report is self-reported health, and like the four subjective well-being questions relies on the person’s own perceptions, this could be a factor in the reason for the strong association between these measures.

Section 9: Uses of the data

One of the main benefits to National Statistics Offices of collecting information on subjective well-being is that it is based on people’s views of their own individual well-being. In the past assumptions were made about how objective conditions, such as people’s health and income, might influence their individual well-being. Subjective well-being measures, on the other hand, are grounded in individuals’ preferences and take account of what matters to people by allowing them to decide what is important when they respond to questions.

The uses of subjective well-being data are varied, but four main uses have been identified:

- Overall monitoring of national well-being.
- Use in the policy making process.
- International comparisons.

Overall monitoring of national well-being

In order to develop a full picture of national well-being it is important to look at different aspects (domains) of well-being. One such domain is individual (subjective) well-being. Other domains include, for example, health, education and skills, and where we live. Subjective well-being data, therefore, needs to be collected to supplement existing socio-economic measures of objective domain in order to fully understand and monitor national well-being.
Use in the policy making process

There is demand for subjective well-being information to inform the policy-making process, both in central government and local government. Subjective well-being data can be used in a number of ways. The large sample size of this new subjective well-being dataset allows for comparison between different sub-groups of the population (for example, different age groups or different ethnic groups) and between different areas within the UK (for example, countries and regions).

This can help policy-makers target policy at the groups or areas with highest need in terms of subjective well-being. Analysis can also be carried out to look at how different objective domains relate to subjective well-being and which have the biggest impact on subjective well-being. This can help in identifying which policy measures could improve subjective well-being.

Another use is in cost-benefit analysis in the policy appraisal process. Subjective well-being estimates can provide an alternative method to value the costs and benefits of different policies. This process could also help inform decisions around which forms of spending will lead to the largest increases in subjective well-being (Dolan et al. 2011).

The Green Book is HM Treasury's guide for government departments on the appraisal of the costs and benefits of projects through social cost-benefit analysis. A Green Book discussion paper (Fujiwara & Campbell 2011), produced jointly by HM Treasury and The Department of Work and Pensions, looks at the potential uses of subjective well-being measures in social cost-benefit analysis. It looks specifically at the life satisfaction approach, which involves estimating the impact of certain outcomes or non-market goods on life satisfaction from surveys such as the APS.

Added to this, looking at policies through a ‘well-being lens’ and using data to inform not only the formulation of policy but also how policy could be better implemented with people's well-being in mind is an important use. Evaluation and monitoring of policy could also potentially benefit from utilising subjective well-being information.

International comparisons

Measuring subjective well-being is not a new approach. Various international surveys have collected this type of information around the world over the last few decades. What is new, is that there is increasing international recognition that this should be included in official data collection and also that the European Statistical System (ESS) would benefit from the inclusion of subjective well-being measures.

The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is developing guidance on the measurement of subjective well-being to improve the harmonisation of data collection for National Statistics Offices around the world. Part of the ONS Measuring National Well-being programme is to respond to this international demand for measuring subjective well-being and enabling international organisations to compare well-being between different countries. International comparisons help people to see how their country is doing compared to other countries.
Background notes

1. These statistics are experimental in nature and published at an early stage to gain feedback from users. Should users have comments on the ONS approach to the measurement of subjective well-being and or the presentation of the subjective well-being questions they can email ONS at national.well-being@ons.gov.uk. It is the role of the UK Statistics Authority to designate these statistics as National Statistics and this is one of the aspirations of the National Well-being programme is to see these statistics gain National Statistics status.

2. The data analysed in this report are derived from a customised weighted 12 month APS microdataset. This dataset is not part of the regularly produced APS datasets and was produced specifically for the analysis of subjective well-being data. ONS is making the experimental APS microdata available to approved researchers to allow them to undertake further analysis of these experimental questions at an early stage and to provide further feedback to ONS.

3. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting the UK Statistics Authority or from the Media Relations Office.

4. This article is published as part of the ONS Measuring National Well-being Programme. The programme aims to produce accepted and trusted measures of the well-being of the nation - how the UK as a whole is doing. It is about looking at 'GDP and beyond' and includes:

   - Greater analysis of the national economic accounts, especially to understand household income, expenditure and wealth.
   - Further accounts linked to the national accounts, including the UK Environmental Accounts and valuing household production and 'human capital'.
   - Quality of life measures, looking at different areas of national well-being such as health, relationships, job satisfaction, economic security, education environmental conditions.
   - Working with others to include the measurement of the well-being of children and young people as part of national well-being.
   - Measures of 'subjective well-being' - individuals' assessment of their own well-being.
   - Headline indicators to summarise national well-being.

The programme is underpinned by links with Cabinet Office and policy departments, international developments, the public and other stakeholders. The programme is working closely with Defra on the measurement of 'sustainable development' to provide a complete picture of national well-being, progress and sustainable development.

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