

Measuring National Well-being, Where we Live, 2012

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Abstract

This article is published as part of the Office for National Statistics (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. This article on 'Where we Live' is part of a series which aims to explore in more detail the different domains that have been considered as important for the measurement of National Well-being. Where we live can have a significant impact on our sense of well-being. Homes which meet our individual needs and provide us with shelter and security are made all the better by having easy access to local shops and services, and green spaces to walk or play in, which in turn can help people to live healthier and happier lives.

Key points

Satisfaction with living accommodation

- In October 2011 and February 2012, 84 per cent of adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain reported a medium/high satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) with their living accommodation.

Importance of services and amenities

- In 2008, adults aged 18 and over in England reported levels of crime (61 per cent), clean streets (45 per cent) and health services (44 per cent) as the most important factors in making somewhere a good place to live.

Tenure and housing stock

- A higher proportion of adults aged 16 and over who owned their property, either outright or with a mortgage, reported a medium/high level of life satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) than those with other tenures in the UK in 2011/12.

Housing conditions

- In 2010 5.7 per cent of the EU-27 population lived in households that experienced severe housing deprivation, compared with 2.8 per cent in the UK.

Housing market

- In the 12 months to May 2012, UK house prices increased by 2.3 per cent. The average UK mix-adjusted house price was £228,000 (not seasonally adjusted).

Satisfaction with local area

- Of adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain in 2011-12 who reported a medium/high satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) with their local area, 19 per cent reported a low satisfaction (0 to 6 out of 10) with their life. Of those who reported a low satisfaction with their local area, 42 per cent reported a low satisfaction with their life.
- In 2010/11 just under 6 in 10 (59.9 per cent) adults aged 16 and over reported that there was a little more or a lot more crime in England and Wales as a whole than two years ago, compared with under 3 in 10 (27.9 per cent) who reported more crime in their local area.

Access to the local environment

- In 2010/11, a third (33 per cent) of adults aged 16 and over in England reported that they visited the outdoors, away from home, several times a week or more often in the 12 months prior to interview.

Access to local services

- In 2011, 5 per cent of adults aged 18 and over in Great Britain reported feeling a sense of isolation due to difficulties accessing local shops and services, while 22 per cent reported that they knew someone who felt a sense of isolation due to difficulties accessing local shops and services.

Introduction

An individual's dwelling, access to local services and the local environment in which they live can contribute to a person's well-being. This was highlighted in the ONS National Debate on Measuring National Well-being. When people were asked what mattered most for the measurement of National Well-being, 'where we live' was one aspect that people considered as most important.

The quality and affordability of housing were identified as gaps in the headline measures of national well-being during the recent consultation. There is no single measure across the UK which can assess the number of dwellings which are not of suitable standard for their occupants. Information is collected to different criteria in the constituent nations of the UK. A different issue arises with affordability of housing.

There are three main types of tenure: owner occupation, social renters and those rented from the private sector. While we can make some assessment of affordability, or at least the costs of each of these types of tenure these cannot be aggregated to a single measure. It is therefore more appropriate that these issues be addressed in this background analysis of the 'Where we Live' domain. Previous research has also shown that where we live is vitally important to an individual's well-being and should be considered when making any assessment of National Well-being.

'We spend much of our lives in the home, our primary emotional connections are shaped in the domestic arena of the home; where we live and how we live are important determinants of our social position, physical health and individual well-being' (Rennie Short, 1999)

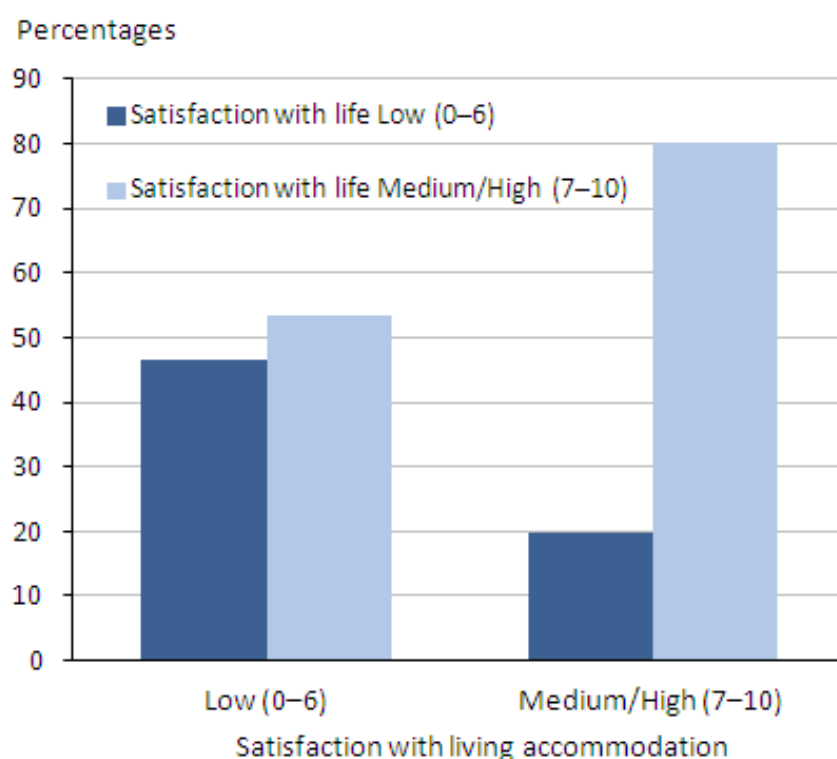
'...neighbourhood features do affect life satisfaction, but through the mediating effects of community satisfaction, housing satisfaction and home satisfaction...' (Sirgy and Cornwell, 2002).

Satisfaction with living accommodation

There is an old maxim that an 'Englishman's home is his castle', but how satisfied are we with our living accommodation and does this relate to our overall life satisfaction? Adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain were asked on the ONS Opinions Survey how satisfied they were overall with their living accommodation, where 0 was not satisfied at all and 10 was completely satisfied. In October 2011 and February 2012, 84 per cent people reported a medium/high satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) with their living accommodation, while the remaining 16 per cent reported a low satisfaction (0 to 6 out of 10).

Figure 1: Satisfaction with living accommodation compared with life satisfaction (1), 2011–12 (2)

Great Britain



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' and 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your living accommodation (that is the property that you live in)?' where nought is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied' .
2. Data are for October 2011 and February 2012.

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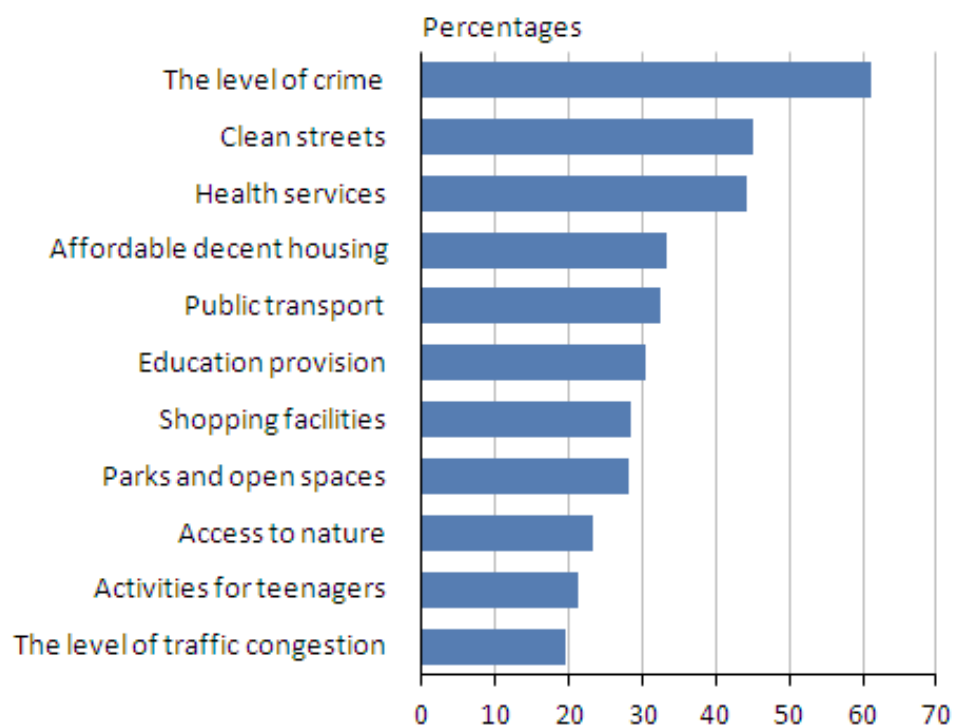
Satisfaction with living accommodation and life satisfaction are related. Of adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain who reported a medium/high satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) with their accommodation, a fifth (20 per cent) reported a low satisfaction (0 to 6 out of 10) with their life (**Figure 1**). However, of those reporting a low satisfaction with their accommodation, nearly half (47 per cent) reported a low satisfaction with their life. However, it must be noted that 53 per cent reported a medium/high satisfaction with their life, despite a low satisfaction with their accommodation, which indicates that there are factors other than living accommodation that impact on overall individual well-being.

Importance of services and amenities

The area in which we live in and the availability of local services and amenities can also contribute to our sense of life satisfaction and well-being.

Figure 2: Selected services and amenities regarded as important in making somewhere a good place to live (1), 2008 (2)

England



Source: Place Survey, Department for Communities and Local Government

Notes:

1. Adults aged 18 and over were asked 'Which of these things would you say are the most important in making somewhere a good place to live?'
2. Data are for September to December 2008.

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The 2008 Place Survey (the latest data available), run by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), asked adults aged 18 and over in England to select up to five priorities that would be important in making somewhere a good place to live. Among the most important factors were the level of crime (61 per cent), clean streets (45 per cent), health services (44 per cent), affordable decent housing (33 per cent) and public transport (32 per cent) (**Figure 2**) (DCLG, 2008).

Tenure and housing stock

Housing tenure describes the legal status under which people have the right to occupy their accommodation. The most common forms of tenure are home-ownership and renting.

Home ownership, either outright or through a mortgage, is the most common form of tenure in the UK. According to the 2010 General Lifestyle Survey just over two-thirds (68 per cent) of households in Great Britain owned their own homes: with just under a third (32 per cent) owning outright and 36 per cent owning with a mortgage. Social renting describes those who rent from a local authority or housing association. In 2010, 10 per cent of households rented from a council and 8 per cent from a housing association. The remaining 13 per cent of households rented from the private sector (ONS, 2010).

According to the 2010/11 Continuous Household Survey just over two-thirds (68 per cent) of households in Northern Ireland owned their own homes: with just over a third (35 per cent) owning outright and 33 per cent owning with a mortgage. Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) rented accommodation accounted for 12 per cent of households and the remaining 19 per cent consisted of housing association and privately rented dwellings. Rent free, which includes squatting, accounted for the final 1 per cent of housing.

Table 1: Life satisfaction (1) and by selected housing tenure (2), 2011/12

United Kingdom (Percentages)

	Satisfaction with life	
	Low (0–6)	Medium/High (7–10)
Owned outright	19.0	81.0
Bought with mortgage or loan	20.1	79.9
Rented	32.2	67.8

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:

- Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'.
- Those who stated they were 'part renting/part mortgage', 'rent free' and 'squatting' are not included in the table due to small sample sizes.

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An individual's housing tenure and the level of their overall satisfaction with life are linked. According to the 2011/12 Subjective Well-being Annual Population Survey dataset (which are experimental data), a higher proportion of those who owned their property, either outright or with a mortgage, reported a medium/high level of life satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) than those with other tenures in

the UK in 2011/12 (**Table 1**). Conversely, nearly a third (32 per cent) of those who rented reported a low satisfaction with life (0 to 6 out of 10) compared with just under a fifth (19 per cent) of those who owned their accommodation outright and a fifth (20 per cent) of those who owned their accommodation with a mortgage.

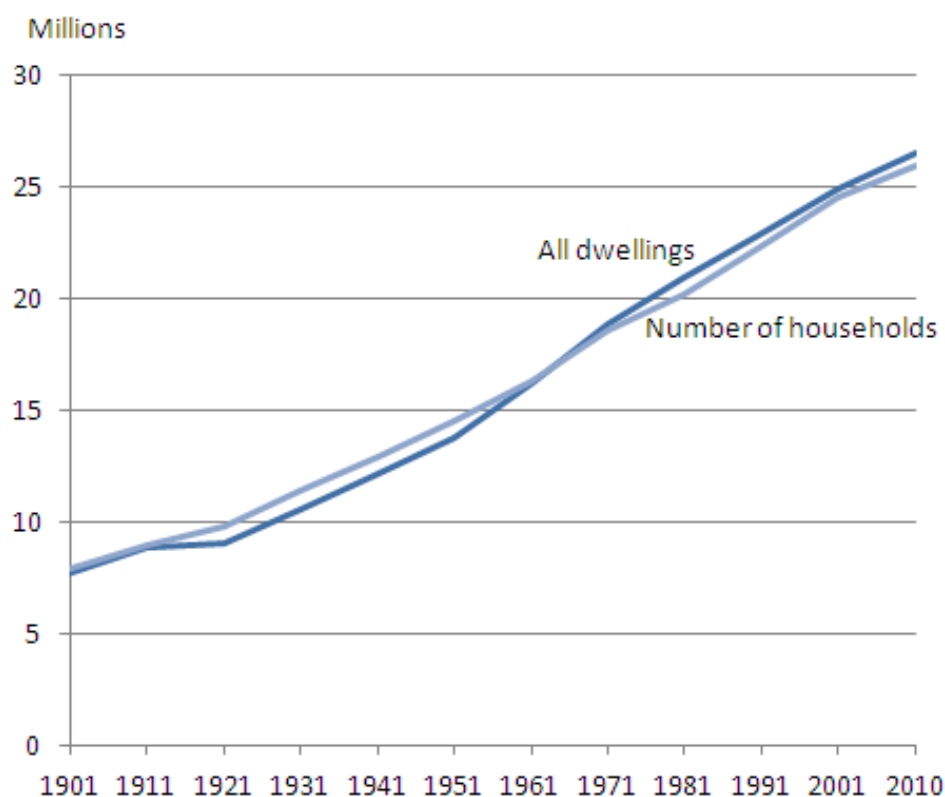
The availability of different tenures and types of accommodation in a local area may contribute to a person's overall satisfaction with the area in which they live. In 2010, adults aged 18 and over in Great Britain were asked in the British Social Attitudes Survey which type of tenure they thought was most needed if new homes were to be built in their local area. Nearly 4 in 10 (39 per cent) considered that social housing for rent was the priority, while 27 per cent thought the housing tenure most needed locally was homes to buy, with a similar level of support for part-own/part-rent homes (25 per cent). Private rental housing was considered a priority by less than 1 in 10 (8 per cent). Two-thirds (66 per cent) of those who were already tenants in social housing considered social housing as a priority compared with just under a third (32 per cent) of home owners (BSAS, 2010).

Respondents to this survey were also asked what types of dwelling were needed in their local area: 35 per cent stated 1 to 2 bedroom houses and 37 per cent stated 3 to 4 bedroom houses. However there was relatively little support for more flats or maisonettes (14 per cent), even though the proportion of flats built in some areas has risen rapidly in recent years (BSAS, 2010).

In England in 2010/11, 35 per cent of all permanent dwellings that were completed were flats, while 13 per cent were 1 to 2 bedroom houses, 30 per cent were 3 bedroom houses and 22 per cent were 4 or more bedroom houses (DCLG 2010-11). In Wales in 2010/11, 24 per cent of all permanent dwellings that were completed were flats, while 16 per cent were 1 to 2 bedroom houses, 38 per cent were 3 bedroom houses and 22 per cent were 4 or more bedroom houses.

Figure 3: Dwelling stock (1) and households (2,3)

Great Britain



Source: Labour Force Survey, Census - Communities and Local Government, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. See note 1.
2. Data for number of households for 2001 and 2010 are Q2 (April to June) Labour Force Survey data and are not seasonally adjusted.
3. No census was undertaken in 1941, so data for this year is plotted as the mid-point between 1931 and 1951.

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The increase in population over the past century has increased demand for accommodation.

Dwelling stock¹ in Great Britain has increased substantially from 7.7 million at the start of the 20th century to 26.5 million in 2010 (**Figure 3**). In 1901, and all subsequent censuses up to and including 1961, there were fewer dwellings than households, therefore some dwellings accommodated more than one household. Between 1971 and 2010 there was a 40.8 per cent increase in the number of dwellings which exceeded the 39.8 per cent increase in the number of households. More recently, between 2008 and 2010, the increase in the number of dwellings was 1.3 per cent. It must be noted

that the dwelling count includes empty dwellings and second homes so does not equate directly to households.

As of March 2008 there were around 22.4 million dwellings in England, of which more than four-fifths (82 per cent) were houses or bungalows. This was based on a three-year average (2006-07 and 2007-08 from the English House Condition Survey, and 2008-09 from the dwelling sample of the English Housing Survey). The remaining 18 per cent were either converted or purpose-built flats. Just under 3 in 10 (29 per cent) were terraced housing and 27 per cent were semi-detached (DCLG, 2008a).

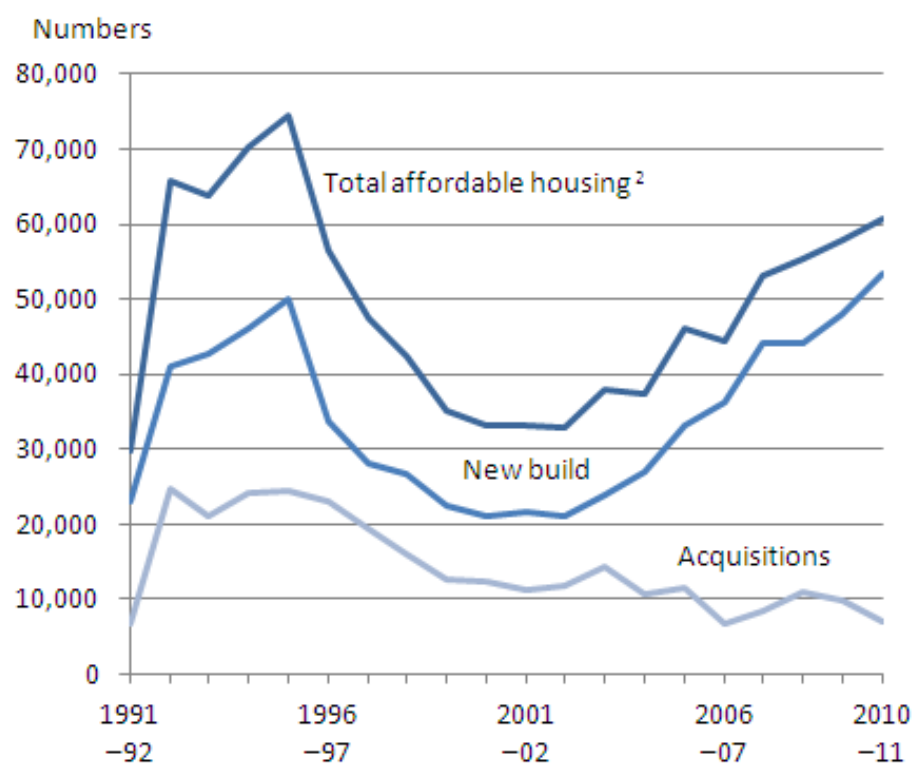
Across the regions of England there are variations in the types of dwellings. For example, 92 per cent of homes in the East Midlands were houses or bungalows, compared with 52 per cent in London. Semi-detached homes were the most common type of accommodation in all regions, with the exception of London where flats were the most common (47 per cent), and the South West where detached homes were as common (22 per cent) (DCLG 2008a).

According to the 2010 Scottish House Condition Survey, semi-detached and detached houses made up 42 per cent of dwelling stock, while terraced housing made up 21 per cent. The remainder (37 per cent) were tenement flats and other flats. According to the 2008 Living in Wales survey (the latest data available), nearly a third (32 per cent) of the dwelling stock consisted of terraced housing. Semi-detached and detached houses or bungalows made up 30 per cent and 27 per cent of the dwelling stock respectively. In 2010–11 in Northern Ireland around 92 per cent of homes were either houses or bungalows: of which 39 per cent were detached, 25 per cent were semi-detached and 28 per cent were terraced. The remaining 7 per cent were either flats or maisonettes (purpose-built or other) (SG, 2010a, WG, 2008).

Access to affordable housing² can be an important factor in improving some people's life satisfaction and well-being.

Figure 4: Gross supply of affordable housing (1)

England



Source: Homes and Communities Agency; Local Authorities

Notes:

1. Affordable housing is the sum of social rent, intermediate rent and low cost home ownership.
2. Also includes Recycled Capital Grant Fund, Disposal Proceeds Fund, and remodelled units

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A total of 60,640 additional affordable homes were supplied for rent or low-cost ownership in England in 2010–11, the highest number since 1995–96. Just under 9 in 10 (88 per cent) of all affordable homes provided in England in 2010–11 were newly built homes: about 53,340 homes (**Figure 4**). This was a 10.9 per cent increase from the 48,090 newly built homes in 2009–10, and more than one and a half times more than were built in 2000–01. See note 2 for definition of affordable housing (DCLG, 2011).

A proportion of the affordable homes provided are by acquisition. This is an existing private sector property that has been purchased for use as an affordable home. After remaining broadly level over the previous three years, acquisitions decreased slightly in 2010–11 at 7,050, equivalent to 12 per cent of all affordable homes. This was half the amount of affordable housing acquisitions in 2003–04 (14,180) (DCLG, 2011).

According to the Affordable Housing Securing Planning Consent Survey 2010/11, in Scotland (not including the Highlands) an estimated 5,624 affordable housing units were granted planning consent during 2010/11. This was a 16 per cent reduction from 2009/10. Additionally in 2010/11 there were 7,231 units completed which were funded by the Affordable Housing Investment Programme (AHIP) - this figure is 11 per cent down on the previous year, however it is the second highest figure in the series.

In Wales during 2010–11, 2,486 additional affordable housing units were delivered, representing just over 1 per cent of all socially rented dwellings as at 31 March 2010. Over 9 in 10 additional affordable housing units in Wales during 2010-11 were delivered by Registered Social Landlords. For more information on affordable housing in Scotland and Wales see note 2. (SG, 2010/11a & WG, 2010/11).

Notes

1. The definition of a dwelling follows the census definition applicable at that time. Currently the 2001 Census definition is used, which defines a dwelling as 'structurally separate accommodation'. This was determined primarily by considering the type of accommodation, as well as separate and shared access to multi-occupied properties. In all dwelling stock figures, vacant dwellings are included but non-permanent dwellings are generally excluded. For house building statistics, only data on permanent dwellings are collected.

Estimates of the total dwelling stock, stock changes and the tenure distribution in the UK are made by the Department for Communities and Local Government for England, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, and the Northern Ireland Department for Social Development. These are primarily based on census output data for the number of dwellings (or households converted to dwellings) from the censuses of population for the UK. Adjustments are carried out if there are specific reasons to do so. Census year figures are based on outputs from the censuses.

For years between censuses, the total figures are obtained by applying gains and losses for each successive year. The increment is based on the annual total number of completions plus the annual total net gain from other housing statistics, that is, conversions, demolitions and changes of use. More information on dwelling stock is available here: [DCLG - Dwelling stock](#).

2. **England:** Affordable housing in England includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

Affordable housing should:

- meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices,
- include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

More information on affordable housing is available [on the DCLG website](#).

Scotland: Affordable housing In Scotland is defined in Scottish Planning Policy as housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes. Local authorities, registered social landlords (RSLs) and developers need to consider the full range of tenure types that can contribute to affordable housing and apply them as appropriate. The range of tenures that contribute to affordable housing are social rented housing, subsidised low cost sale, subsidised and unsubsidised shared ownership, shared equity, entry level housing for sale, and mid-market (or intermediate) rent. The requirements for affordable housing will be set out in local authority development plans, based on Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). More information is available [on the Scottish Government website](#).

Wales: Affordable housing in Wales applies to housing where there are secure mechanisms in place to ensure that it is accessible to those who cannot afford market housing, both on first occupation and for subsequent occupiers as defined in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 2. The figures published in this release cover all additional affordable housing units (including general needs, supported housing, sheltered accommodation and extra care units), whether through new build, purchase, acquisition, leasing or conversion of existing dwellings. They do not take account of any loss of affordable housing stock through demolitions or sales during the year. In the case of conversions only the net gain will be included. More information is available [on the Welsh Government website](#).

Northern Ireland: Affordable Housing in Northern Ireland comprises the social rented sector, housing benefit funded private rented and that part of the low cost owner occupation market which can be purchased utilising 30 per cent or less of gross household income (Department for Regional Development, 2012, Regional Development Strategy: RDS 2035, p.105).

Housing conditions

Living in poor quality or badly maintained accommodation can put people's well-being at risk. Each of the devolved administrations across the UK has a national housing quality standard in place - the Decent Homes Standard in England and Northern Ireland, the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). Each standard differs in a number of ways, reflecting the choices and priorities of each devolved administration¹.

In 2010 around 5.9 million dwellings (26.5 per cent) failed to meet the decent homes standard in England (DCLG, 2010).

Table 2: Homes failing and decent homes criteria (1) - by tenure, 2010

England (Percentages)

	Minimum standard (HHSRS) ²	Thermal comfort	Repair	Modern facilities	All non- decent
Owner occupied	17.6	9.1	5.1	2.0	25.4
Private rented	23.1	16.4	8.7	3.3	37.4
Private sector	18.7	10.6	5.8	2.2	27.8
Local authority	10.9	6.2	5.7	4.0	22.0
Housing association	7.8	7.5	3.1	*	18.2
Social sector	9.3	6.9	4.3	3.0	20.0
All tenures	17.1	9.9	5.6	2.3	26.5

Source: English Housing Survey 2010, dwelling sample, Department for Communities and Local Government

Table notes:

1. Using SAP 05, see note 2.
2. The 'minimum standard' is based on 15 HHSRS hazards to maintain consistency with previous years' decent homes reporting. Minimum standard (HHSRS) is calculated using SAP09 methodology.

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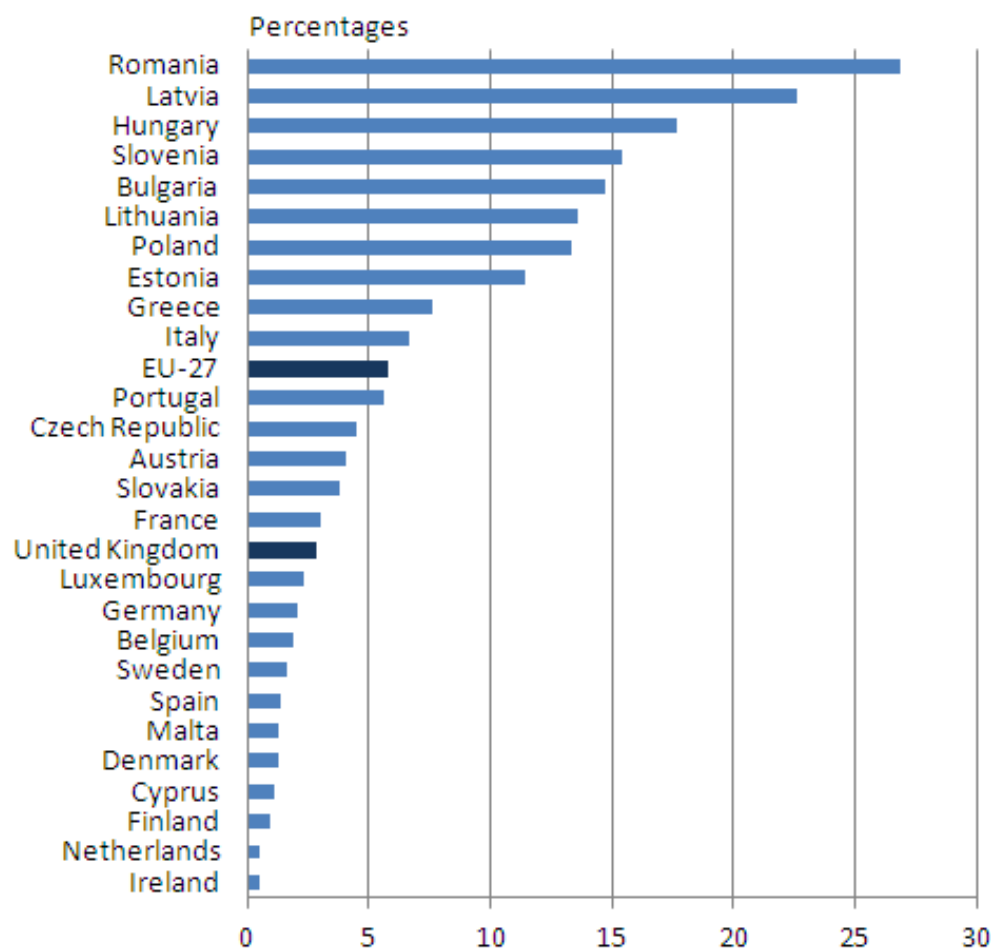
Privately rented homes were the most likely of all tenure types to fail at least one of the four decent homes criteria, with 37.4 per cent rated as non-decent compared with 22.0 per cent and 18.2 per cent for those rented from local authorities and housing associations respectively (**Table 2**). Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of privately rented homes failed the HHSRS compared with under a fifth (18 per cent) of owner-occupied homes. Failure to meet the HHSRS was also the most common reason for failing the decent home standard among local authority homes, with 10.9 per cent not meeting the criteria. (DCLG, 2010)

According to the 2010 Scottish Housing Condition Survey (which is based on occupied dwellings only), just over 6 in 10 (61 per cent of all housing) failed the SHQS; about 1.4 million dwellings. Just under half (48 per cent) of dwellings that failed the SHQS failed on the energy efficiency criterion. In Wales, just over a quarter of all social housing (26 per cent) met the WHQS in full, as at 31 March 2010, according to a pilot study. However, a larger proportion of homes met some elements of the WHQS, with the greatest shortfall being in standards of bathrooms and kitchens. In Northern Ireland

in 2009 (the latest data available), 15 per cent of all dwellings failed to meet the Decent Home Standard, this was equivalent to 111,800 homes.

Figure 5: Housing deprivation (1) rate (2), 2010

EU-27 comparison



Source: Eurostat

Notes:

1. The housing deprivation is defined as the percentage of the population living in a dwelling which is considered to be overcrowded, and with at least one of the following three housing situations: 1) a leaking roof, or damp walls, floors, foundations, or rot in window frames or floor (referred afterwards as 'leaking roof'), 2) neither a bath, nor a shower, nor an indoor flushing toilet, or 3) too dark.
2. Percentage of population.

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In 2010, 5.7 per cent of the EU-27 population (around 30 million) lived in households that experienced severe housing deprivation³. This compares with just 2.8 per cent in the UK (**Figure 5**).

Over a quarter (26.9 per cent) of the population of Romania and 22.6 per cent of the population of Latvia were living in severe housing deprivation. The Republic of Ireland and the Netherlands had the lowest proportion of their population living in severe housing deprivation (both at 0.5 per cent).

Notes

1. The definition of a decent home in England is one that meets all of the following criteria:
 - meets the statutory minimum standard for housing. This was the Fitness Standard up to April 2006 when it was replaced by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). More information is available [on the DCLG website - Housing Health and Safety Rating System](#),
 - it is in reasonable state of repair,
 - has reasonably modern facilities and services,
 - provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (adequate heating and effective thermal insulation).

In Scotland housing quality is defined by the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). The five higher-level criteria are that the dwelling must be above the statutory Tolerable standard; free from serious disrepair; energy efficient; have modern facilities and services; and be healthy, safe and secure. More information is available on [the Scottish Government website - Scottish Housing Quality Standard](#).

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) was published in 2002. The Assembly Government expected all social landlords in Wales to adopt the standard, to devise realistic programmes for bringing all their homes up to it by the end of 2012 and to maintain into the future. The WHQS means homes must:

- be in a good condition and structurally stable,
- be safe and secure,
- have proper heating and be fuel efficient and well insulated,
- contain up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms,
- be well managed,
- be in attractive and safe environments,
- meet the needs of the people living in them as far as possible.

In Northern Ireland the Fitness Standard is used as a component to the Decent Homes standard. The Northern Ireland House Condition Survey measures:

- decent homes,
- Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP),
- fuel poverty,
- HHSRS,
- repair costs,
- fitness.

More information is available on [the Northern Ireland Housing Executive website - Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#).

2. The Government's Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is an index based on calculated costs per m² of floor area for space and water heating, ventilation and lighting, less cost savings from energy generation technologies based on a standard heating regime for a dwelling. It is expressed on a scale of 1 (highly energy inefficient) to 100 (highly energy efficient, with 100 representing zero energy cost). The detailed methodology for calculating the SAP to monitor the energy efficiency is periodically updated to reflect developments in the energy efficiency technologies and knowledge of dwelling performance. The rating scale underpinning figures reported here are based on the SAP 2005 methodology.

More information on SAP is available [on the DCLG website - Standard Assessment Procedure](#).

3. Severe housing deprivation rate is defined as the percentage of population living in the dwelling which is considered as overcrowded, while also exhibiting at least one of the housing deprivation measures.

Housing deprivation is a measure of poor amenities and is calculated by referring to those households with a leaking roof, no bath/shower and no indoor toilet, or a dwelling considered too dark.

More information on the severe housing deprivation rate and overcrowding is available [on the Eurostat website - Severe housing deprivation rate and overcrowding](#).

Housing market

The state of the housing market affects an individual's housing mobility, and is closely linked to conditions in the wider economy. This, in addition to falling house prices which raise the possibility of homeowners falling into negative equity, may have an effect on some people's sense of well-being.

As already stated in this article most people in the UK are owner-occupiers. However, Table 3 shows that they acknowledge that renting can also have practical advantages.

Table 3: Main advantages of renting a home (1) - by tenure, 2010

Great Britain (Percentages)

	Owners	Social renters	Private renters	All
Flexibility to move at short notice	28	14	28	25
Someone else is responsible for repairs and maintenance	23	37	22	25
Greater choice where to live	9	9	12	10
Don't have to worry about taking on a mortgage	8	13	11	10
Less risky than owning a home	7	11	9	8
Less responsibility than owning a home	9	6	6	8
Less upfront costs	3	4	4	4
No advantage	11	4	7	9

Source: British Social Attitudes Survey, NatCen Social Research

Table notes:

1. Adults aged 18 and over were asked ' what is the main advantage of renting a home rather than owning it?'

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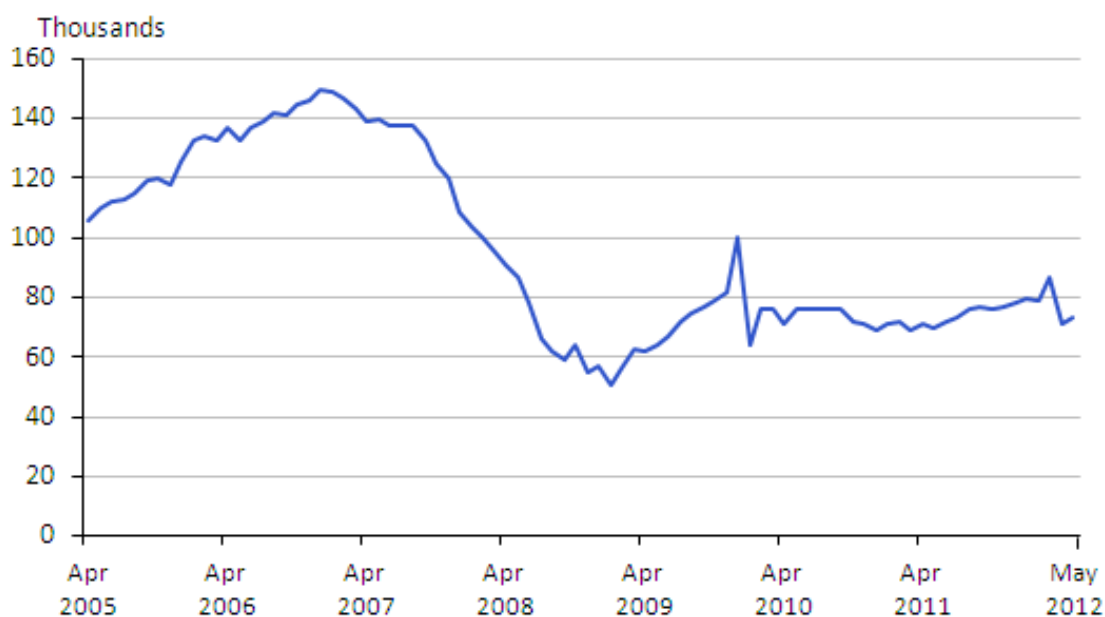
Just over 1 in 10 (11 per cent) owner-occupiers in Great Britain in 2010 reported that there was no advantage to renting (**Table 3**). Conversely nearly 3 in 10 (28 per cent) stated that renting gave more flexibility to move at short notice, while 23 per cent reported the advantage of lack of personal responsibility for repairs and maintenance. While less than 1 in 10 (9 per cent) owner-occupiers reported having greater choice over where to live, private renters were slightly more likely to choose this as an advantage (12 per cent). Social renters were more likely than the other two groups to

state that it is less risky than owning a home, while owners were slightly more likely to suggest that renting carries a lower level of responsibility than owning a home (BSAS, 2010).

From the same survey, respondents were also asked about the main advantages of owning a home rather than renting it. The main advantage cited by just over a quarter (26 per cent) of all adults was that owning a home represented a good investment, with current home owners more likely than those who were renting to share this opinion. The next most popular advantages were that home ownership was more secure in the long-term than renting (23 per cent) and that it gave people the freedom to do what they wanted with a property (21 per cent) (BSAS, 2010).

Figure 6: Residential property transactions (1)

United Kingdom



Source: HM Revenue and Customs

Notes:

1. Data are seasonally adjusted. Number of residential property transactions with a value of £40,000 or more. Transactions are allocated to the month in which the transaction was completed. Data for April and May 2012 are provisional.

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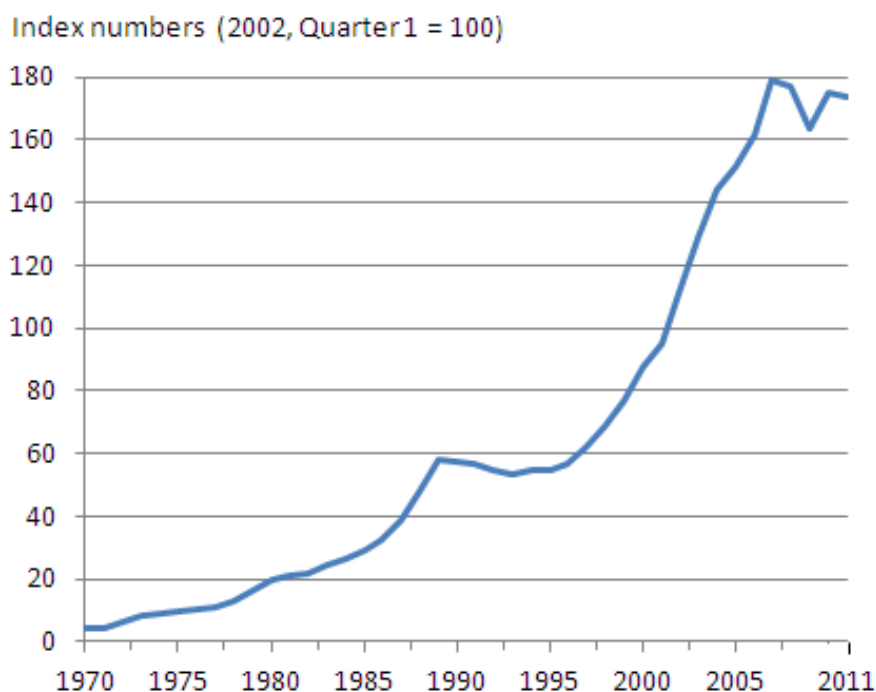
There were 1.7 million residential property transactions in the UK in 2006. Although the number of transactions remained high in 2007, at 1.6 million, the count in December 2007 was 27 per cent lower than in December 2006 (**Figure 6**). A sharp decline in the number of property transactions continued throughout most of 2008 with the overall number of transactions for that year around 0.9 million. The number of transactions in early 2009 dropped to a low of 51,000 in January, but then there were monthly increases to a total of 100,000 in December.

This was due to December being the final month before the end of the Stamp Duty 'holiday', which exempted residential properties worth less than £175,000 from Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT). Overall in 2009 there were 0.8 million transactions. Since the start of 2010 the numbers of transactions have been relatively stable each month. However, the number of transactions rose to 87,000 in March 2012 but decreased to 71,000 in April and 73,000 in May 2012. This was probably due to the First Time Buyers relief coming to an end in March 2012, where homebuyers rushed to get their transactions through while they were still free of SDLT (HMRC, 2012).

House prices may have an effect on some people's confidence in the economy and their own financial circumstances, which in turn may have an effect on their overall well-being. The average UK mix-adjusted house price is a weighted average of prices for a standard mix of dwellings¹. The latest data available shows that in the 12 months to May 2012, UK house prices increased by 2.3 per cent. The average UK mix-adjusted house price was £228,000 (not seasonally adjusted). The year on year increase reflected 2.6 per cent growth in England and 3.5 per cent growth in Wales, which was offset by declines in Scotland and Northern Ireland of 1.0 per cent and 10.3 per cent respectively (ONS, 2012a).

Figure 7: Mix-adjusted house prices index (1 and 2)

United Kingdom



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Based on mortgages completed and adjusted for the mix of dwellings sold.
2. Data up to and including 2002 is from 5 per cent sample. Data from 2003 is based on a significantly enhanced sample size. Data from September 2005 is collected via the Regulated Mortgage Survey. Data from 2005 is based on combined data from the Survey of Mortgage Lenders and the Regulated Mortgage Survey. The data are not seasonally adjusted.

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Large decreases in house prices were not seen until 2009. Between 2008 and 2009, the annual house price in the UK had dropped by 7.6 per cent, the largest annual decline since the series began in 1969 (**Figure 7**). This followed a 0.8 per cent decrease between 2007 and 2008. This decrease was the first time house prices had experienced annual negative growth since the recession of the early 1990s, during which annual house prices declined in each year between 1990 and 1993 (ONS, 2012a).

Table 4: Average weekly rents - by region

United Kingdom (£ per week)

	Local authority ¹		Private registered provider ²			
	1998–99	2011–12	Per cent change	1997	2011	Per cent change
England	42.25	72.30	71.1	46.81	78.28	67.2
North East	35.28	59.38	68.3	39.56	65.78	66.3
North West	39.49	62.63	58.6	38.61	68.65	77.8
Yorkshire and The Humber	33.64	60.55	80.0	41.69	66.20	58.8
East Midlands	36.67	62.94	71.6	45.43	72.08	58.7
West Midlands	38.83	67.40	73.6	43.57	72.47	66.3
East of England	44.20	75.26	70.3	46.81	81.87	74.9
London	55.25	89.17	61.4	53.12	97.46	83.5
South East	48.36	78.70	62.7	51.64	89.94	74.2
South West	42.48	67.06	57.9	48.52	76.04	56.7
Wales	39.13	66.32	69.5	..	..	..
Scotland	35.36	56.94	60.6	..	..	..
Northern Ireland	35.93	54.73	52.3	..	..	..
United Kingdom	40.64	69.13	70.1	..	..	..

Table source: Communities and Local Government**Table notes:**

1. Figures for 2011-12 are provisional. Average rents for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are calculated by the respective departments and methodologies may differ. Not all figures are audited.
2. Data is collected by the Tenant Services Authority via the annual Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR) based on general needs stock only. Figures are based on only the larger Private Registered Provider (PRPs) completing the long form. Up until 2006 the threshold for completing the long form was that the PRP owned/ managed at least 250 units/bedspaces. From 2007 this increased to 1,000 units/bedspaces. Averages are calculated for self-contained units only. As at 31 March each year.

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Local authority average weekly rents in the UK increased between 1998-99 and 2011-12 by 70.1 per cent (**Table 4**). The highest proportional rate rise was in Yorkshire and The Humber (80.0 per cent), while the lowest proportional rise was in Northern Ireland (52.3 per cent). However, in monetary terms the largest average weekly rate was in London (£89.17). In England the largest proportional average weekly rate rise for accommodation provided by private registered providers was in London (83.5 per cent), while the lowest was in the South West (56.7 per cent). London had the largest weekly rate at £97.46 (DCLG, 2011-12).

Notes

1. The mix-adjusted house price index is a weighted average of prices for a standard mix of dwellings.

More information on the mix-adjusted house price index is available [on the DCLG website - Mix-adjusted house price index](#).

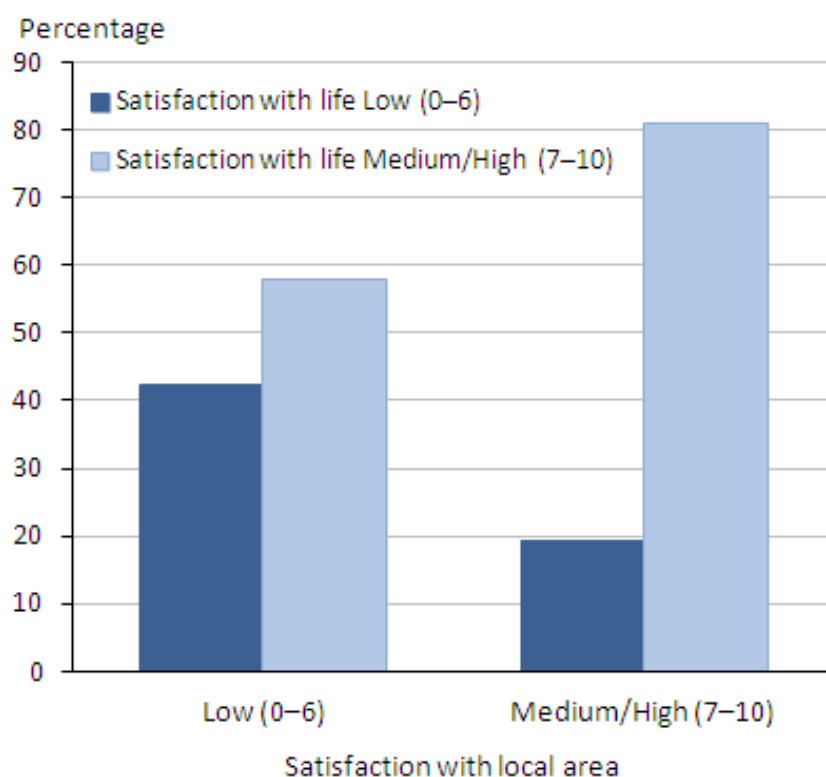
Satisfaction with the local area

'Those who are satisfied with life are more likely to feel satisfied with their local area and feel strongly about it compared with those who are not' (What influences wellbeing? NHS North West, 2011).

Adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain were asked on the ONS Opinions Survey how satisfied they were overall with their local area (15 to 20 minutes walking distance from home), where 0 was not satisfied at all and 10 was completely satisfied. In October 2011 and February 2012, nearly 8 in 10 (79 per cent) people reported a medium/high satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) with their local area, while the remaining 21 per cent reported a low satisfaction (0 to 6 out of 10).

Figure 8: Satisfaction with local area compared with life satisfaction (1), 2011–12 (2)

Great Britain



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' and 'Overall, how satisfied are you with the local area where you live? (When answering, please consider the area to be within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance from your home)' where nought is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'.
- Data are for October 2011 and February 2012.

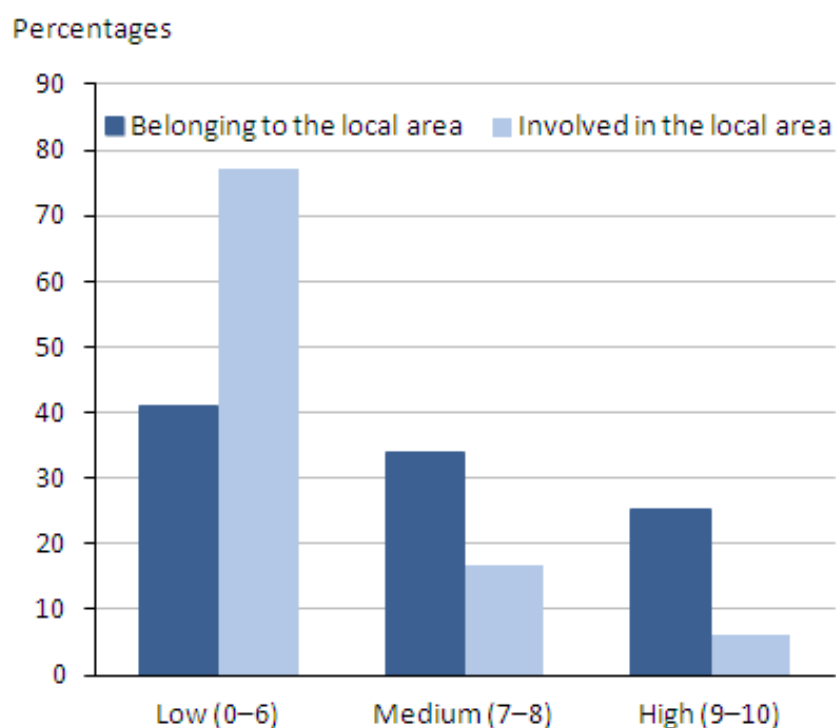
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Figure 8 shows that there is some relationship with local area satisfaction and life satisfaction. Of those who reported a medium/high satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) with their local area, 19 per cent reported a low satisfaction (0 to 6 out of 10) with their life. However, of those who reported a low satisfaction with their local area, 42 per cent reported a low satisfaction with their life. However it must be noted that 58 per cent who reported a low satisfaction with their local area also reported a medium/high satisfaction with life.

Figure 9: Belonging and involvement with the local area (1), 2011–12 (2)

Great Britain



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'To what extent do you feel you belong in the local area where you live?', 'To what extent do you feel you belong in the local area where you live?'
2. Data are September 2011 and January 2012.

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Adults in Great Britain were also asked on the ONS Opinions Survey to what extent they felt involved with or belonged to the local area. Over three-quarters (77.2 per cent) of people reported that the extent of their involvement in the local area as low (0 to 6 out of 10) (**Figure 9**). Just under three-quarters reported the extent of their sense of belonging in the local area was either low (0 to 6 out of 10) or medium (7 to 8 out of 10) at 41.1 per cent and 33.8 per cent respectively.

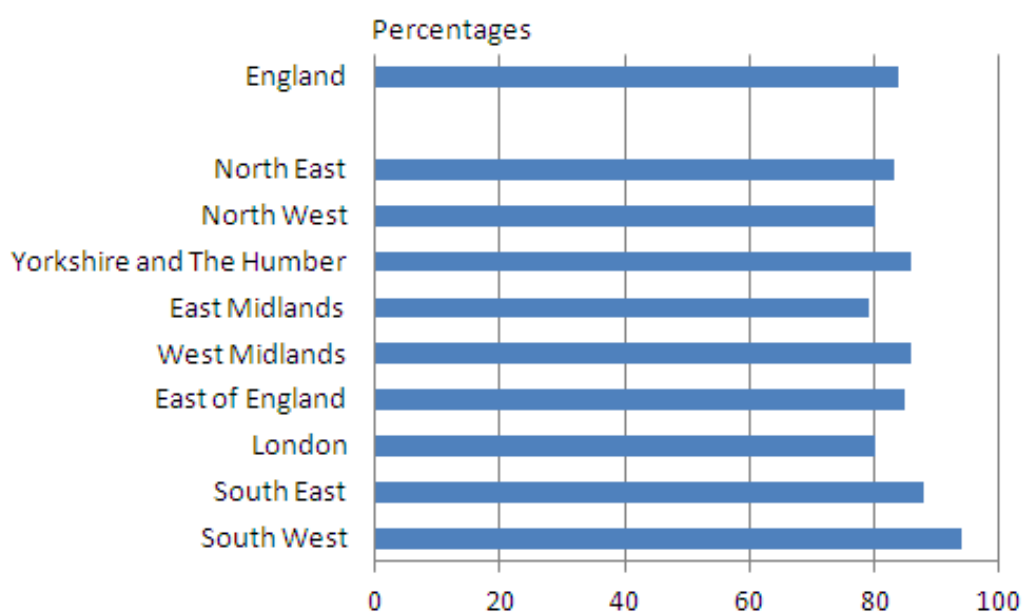
Trusting the people that live locally may have an impact on a person's satisfaction with the area around them and in turn their well-being. According to the 2009–10 Citizenship Survey (the latest data available) run by the Department for Communities and Local Government around half (49.5 per

cent) of adults aged 16 and over in England reported that many of the people in their neighbourhood could be trusted. Around a third (33.9 per cent) reported that some people could be trusted and 14.2 per cent reported a few could be trusted. Just 2.4 per cent stated that no-one in their neighbourhood could be trusted (DCLG, 2009-10)

Living in an area which is continually exposed to unacceptable levels of noise can be associated with a wide range of adverse impacts on health, quality of life and well-being. Conversely, a quiet area with an absence of unnecessary or inappropriate sounds can benefit well-being and may improve creativity, problem solving, mental health, concentration and undisturbed sleep.

Figure 10: Satisfaction that the area lived in is a quiet environment (1) - by region, 2011

England



Source: Survey of public attitudes and behaviours towards the environment, Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs

Notes:

1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'How satisfied are you that where you live is a quiet environment?'

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The 2011 Survey of public attitudes and behaviours towards the environment, run by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), shows that over 8 in 10 (84 per cent) of adults

aged 16 and over in England were satisfied that the place where they live was a quiet environment (**Figure 10**). However there was some regional variations; a lower proportion of people in the East Midlands (79 per cent) and the North West and London (both 80 per cent) reported being satisfied that the place where they live was a quiet environment, compared with the South West (94 per cent) (DEFRA, 2011).

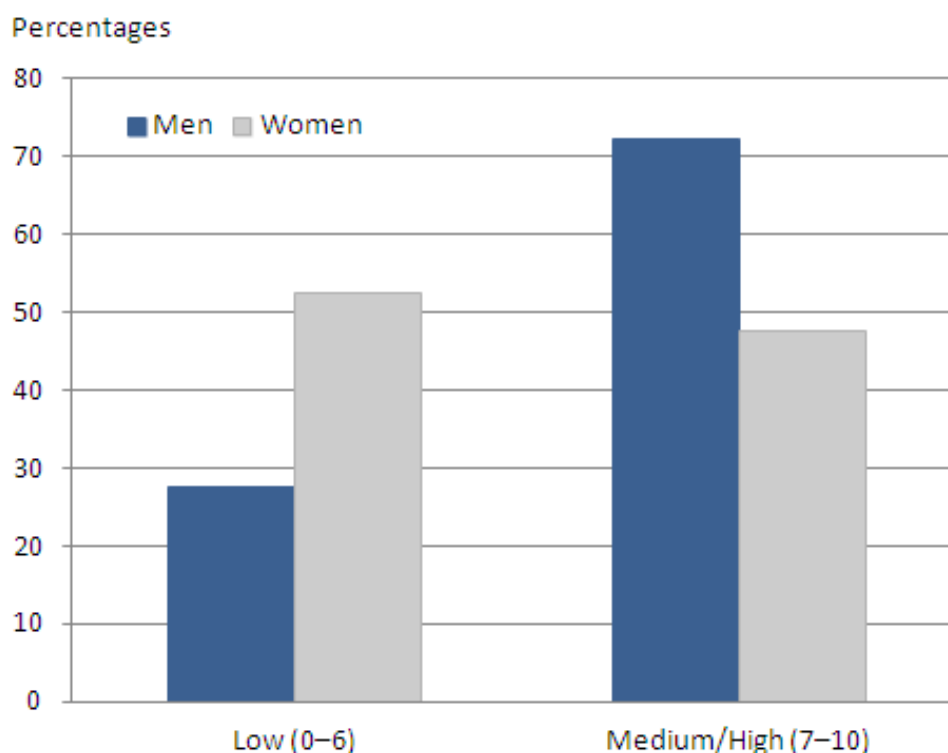
Noise nuisance complaints for England and Wales are compiled by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. In 2010/11 there were 137,977 noise complaints across the 152 local authorities who responded to the survey. The vast majority of complaints were recorded in the domestic sector (95,245) followed by the commercial and leisure sector (17,110) (CIEH, 2010/11).

According to the 1999/2000 National Survey of Attitudes to Environmental Noise (the latest data available), 40 per cent of adults in the UK reported being bothered, annoyed or disturbed to some extent by road traffic noise, while 37 per cent of respondents reported being bothered, annoyed or disturbed to some extent by noise from neighbours and/or other people nearby (BRE 2002).

Feeling safe in a local area can be an important factor for a person's sense of satisfaction in the area around them. A good indicator of this is to find out whether a person feels safe walking in their local area after dark.

Figure 11: Feeling safe walking alone in local area after dark (1) or by sex, 2011–12 (2)

Great Britain



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'How safe would you feel walking alone in this local area after dark?'
2. Data are at September 2011 and January 2012.

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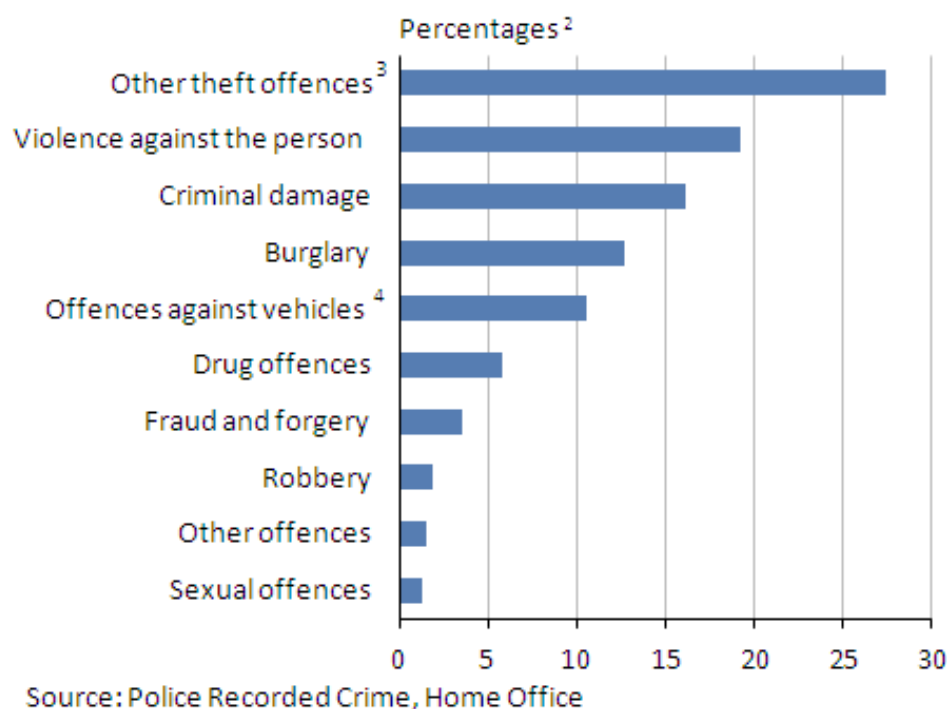
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The Opinions Survey asked adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain in September 2011 and January 2012, how safe they would feel walking alone in their local area after dark, where 0 was not safe at all and 10 was completely safe. There was a marked difference between men and women's sense of security. Over half (52 per cent) of women reported that they had a low feeling of safety (0 to 6 out of 10) when walking alone after dark in their local area compared with 28 per cent of men (**Figure 11**). Conversely, under half (48 per cent) of women had a medium/high feeling of safety compared with 72 per cent of men. According to the 2010/11 Northern Ireland Crime Survey 9 per cent of adults aged 16 and over reported feeling very unsafe walking alone after dark.

Crime and antisocial behaviour also have an impact on local area satisfaction and can have a negative impact on people's lives and their sense of well-being: it can have an adverse impact on relationships and communities.

Figure 12: Police recorded crime - by offence, 2011 (1)

England and Wales

**Notes:**

1. In the 12 months to December 2011.
2. As a percentage of the 4,043,339 crimes recorded.
3. Covers a range of offences, including shoplifting, theft from the person and theft of a bicycle.
4. Includes theft of motor vehicle, theft from a vehicle, aggravated vehicle taking and interfering with a motor vehicle.

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In the 12 months to December 2011 there were 4.04 million police recorded crimes in England and Wales. Almost 3 in 10 (27.4 per cent) of these crimes were for 'other theft offences' which includes theft from the person, shoplifting, bicycle theft, and theft of unattended property (including both offences against individuals and against organisations) (**Figure 12**). Around 2 in 10 crimes (19.2 per cent) were violence against the person and 16.1 per cent of crimes were criminal damage. Burglary accounted for 12.7 per cent of police recorded crime (ONS, 2012b).

In Scotland in 2010-11, the Scottish police recorded 323,247 crimes. Nearly half of all crimes (48.2 per cent) were 'crimes of dishonesty' such as housebreaking and theft, while fire-raising or vandalism accounted for just over a quarter (25.4 per cent) of crime. The total number of crimes

recorded in Northern Ireland in 2010/11 was 105,040, the lowest level since 1998/99. This was equivalent to a crime rate of 58 per 1,000 population. Property crime accounted for 62 per cent of all recorded crime in Northern Ireland (SG, 2010-11b & NI, 2010/11a).

'Residential burglary can be regarded as one of the most important crimes, since as well as being one of the most common forms of criminal behaviour, it also intrudes into the home and damages feelings of personal security, peace of mind and well-being' (Coupe and Griffiths 1998).

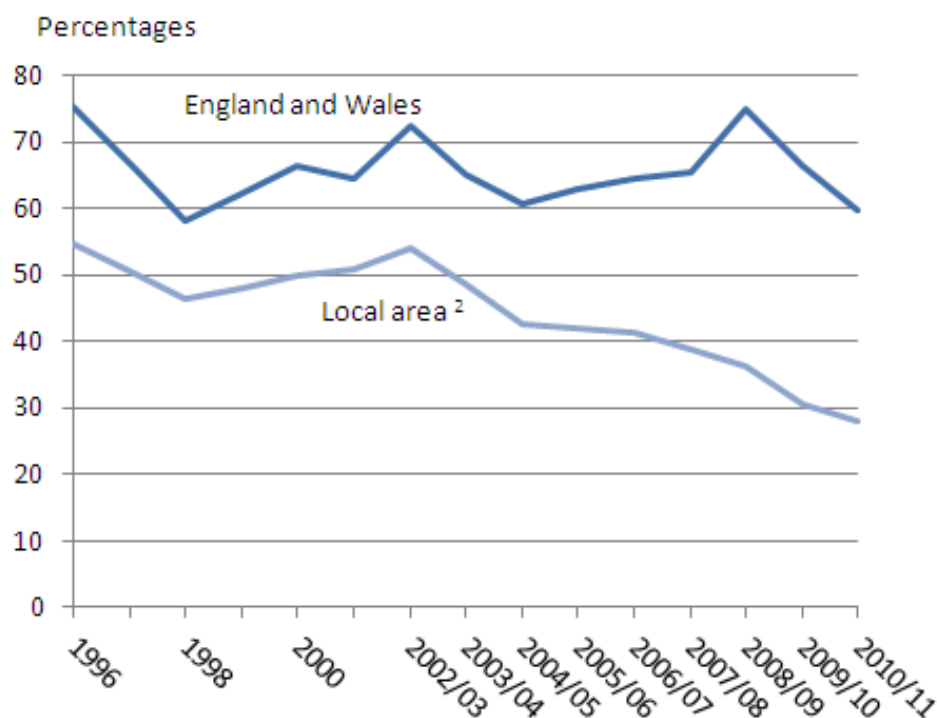
According to the 2010 European Social Survey (ESS), just over 7 in 10 (70.4 per cent) of adults aged 15 and over in the UK agreed that the phrase 'It is important to live in secure and safe surroundings' was 'either very much like them' or 'like them'. Two-thirds (66.0 per cent) of respondents stated that they worried either a lot, sometimes or just occasionally about their house being burgled. Of these respondents who did worry about being burgled, three-quarters (75 per cent) claimed it had no real effect on their quality of life (ESS, 2010).

Many people may be victims of some form of property or other crime, or anti-social behaviour, at some point in their lives and a lot of people may know someone who has been a victim. People could also be indirectly exposed to crime and anti-social behaviour through other things such as the media. This could mean that individuals perceive crime rates as higher than they are and this can have a negative impact on an individual's well-being and their quality of life.

Since 1996, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) (previously known as the British Crime Survey), has asked adults aged 16 and over how much they think the level of crime has changed in their local area and in the country as a whole in the two years prior to interview.

Figure 13: Perceptions of changing crime levels (1)

England and Wales



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Respondents were asked if they thought there was more or less crime than two years ago and given the following options: 'A lot more'; 'A little more'; 'About the same'; 'A little less'; 'A lot less'. Data are the proportion of people who answered 'A lot more' or 'A little more'.
2. Questions were asked of respondents who had lived in their area for three years or more.

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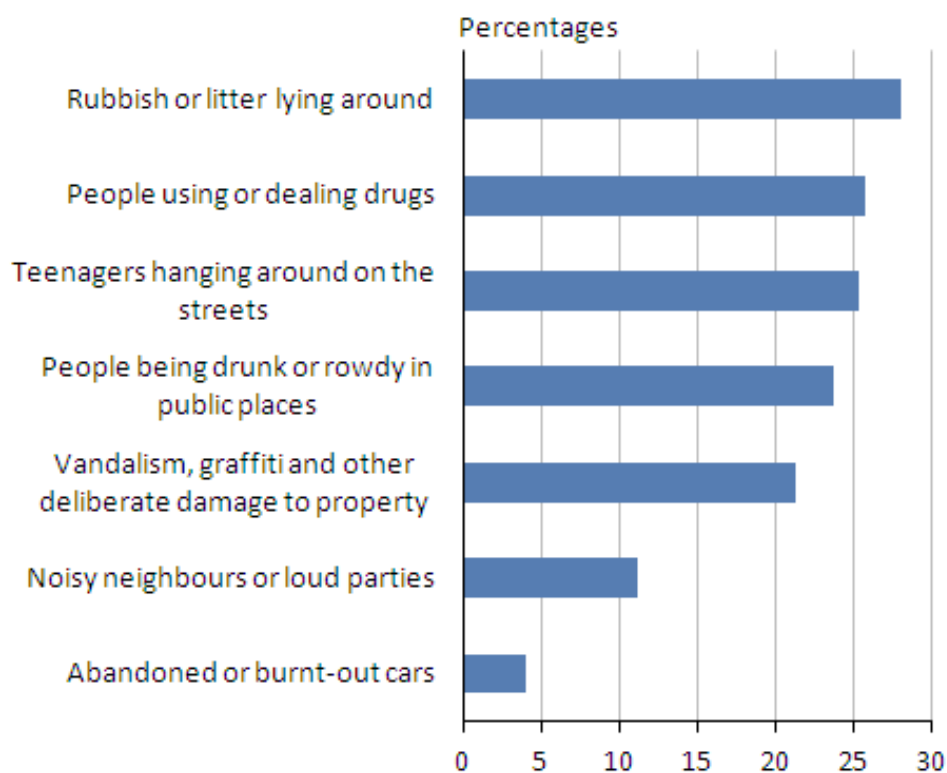
For all iterations of the survey, the proportion of adults in England and Wales who thought that crime had increased nationally is higher than the proportion who thought that crime had increased in their local area. In 2010/11 just under 6 in 10 (59.9 per cent) people reported that there was a little more or a lot more crime in England and Wales as a whole than two years ago, compared to under 3 in 10 (27.9 per cent) who reported more crime in their local area (**Figure 13**). The gap between perceptions of change in national and local crime levels widened between 2003/04 and 2008/09. It then narrowed slightly in 2009/10 and 2010/11, following a sharp increase in the proportion of adults

who thought that crime had gone up nationally in 2008/09 and a decrease in the proportion who thought it had gone up locally (ONS, 2012b).

According to the 2010–11 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 23 per cent of adults aged 16 and over in Scotland perceived that there had been an increase in the crime rate over the previous two years in their local area, while 9 per cent perceived there had been a decrease in the crime rate in their local area. According to the 2010-11 Northern Ireland Crime Survey, over a third of respondents (35 per cent) felt that crime levels in their local area had increased in the preceding two years; just under a quarter (24 per cent) felt there was 'a little more crime', while 11 per cent felt there was 'a lot more crime' (SG, 2010-11b & NI, 2010/11b).

Figure 14: Anti-social behaviour indicators, 2010/11 (1)

England and Wales



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Respondents were asked how much of a problem each of the anti-social behaviour indicators were in their local area and given the following options: 'A very big problem'; 'A fairly big problem'; 'Not a very big problem'; 'Not a problem at all'. Data are the proportion of people who answered 'A very big problem' or 'A fairly big problem'.

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The CSEW also asks about people's perceptions of different types of anti-social behaviour in their local area. In 2010/11, 13.7 per cent of adults in England and Wales perceived there to be a high level of anti-social behaviour in their local area. Around 3 in 10 (28.0 per cent) people reported rubbish or litter lying around was a problem (**Figure 14**). Just over a quarter of respondents reported that people using or dealing drugs and teenagers hanging around on the streets were a problem at 25.7 per cent and 25.4 per cent respectively (ONS, 2012b).

The Local Environmental Quality Survey for England, carried out each year by Keep Britain Tidy, involves physical surveys of 10,000 sites in a rolling sample of 54 English local authorities. In 2010/11, 15 per cent of sites fell below an acceptable standard for litter. Graffiti was considered an issue for 6 per cent of sites, and 7 per cent of sites were affected by dog-fouling (KBT, 2012)

Fly-tipping of waste may also have an impact on the local area and in turn affect a person's satisfaction in their local area. In 2010/11 local authorities in England dealt with nearly 820,000 incidents of fly-tipping. Over 6 in 10 (63 per cent) of fly-tips dealt with by local authorities involved household waste; 8 per cent commercial waste; and a range of categories where waste could be derived from either households or businesses, for example construction, demolition and excavation waste; green waste; white goods; electrical items; tyres; and asbestos. Over 4 in 10 (44 per cent) of all fly-tipping cleared by local authorities occurred on the highway (DEFRA, 2010/11).

According to the 2009–10 Scottish Household Survey, around a quarter of adults aged 16 and over felt that rubbish or litter lying around, or animal nuisance such as noise or dog fouling, was a very or fairly common neighbourhood problem (25 per cent and 24 per cent respectively). The Northern Ireland Crime Survey reported that in 2010/11, 'teenagers hanging around on streets' and 'rubbish or litter lying around' (19 per cent and 18 per cent respectively) were most commonly cited as the biggest problems in the local area (NI 2010/11b).

Access to the local environment

Having access to green space such as public gardens or parks can improve the quality of life for many people. It was mentioned by respondents to the national debate and also by some of those who commented on the discussion paper about proposed domains and measures for measuring national well-being. More information is in [Measuring National Well-being - Discussion paper on domains and measures](#).

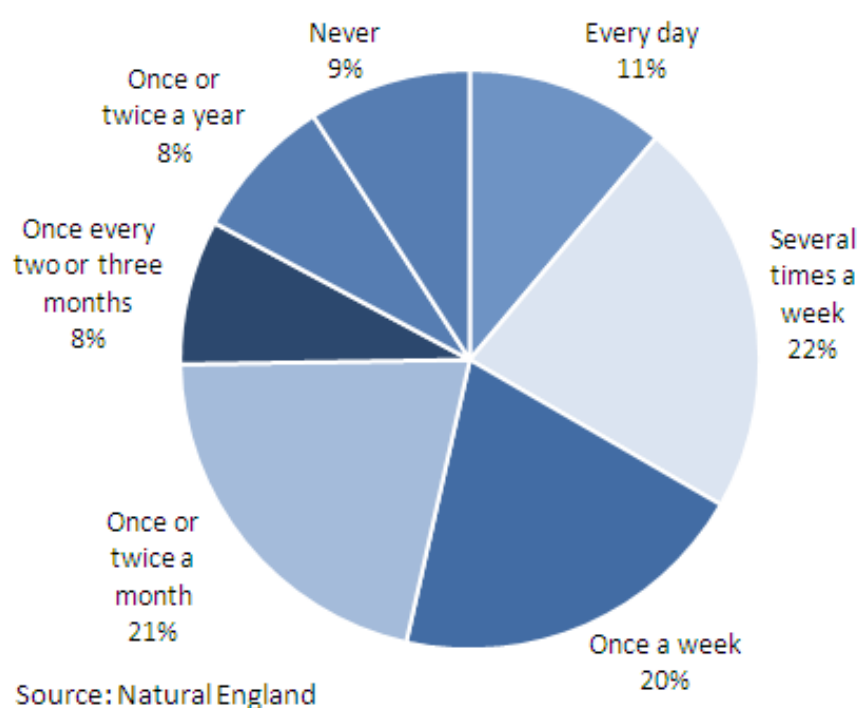
'Access to a park or green space can have wide-ranging benefits for our health and wellbeing. A safe, natural environment can be a break from our busy lives - a place to get some fresh air, to exercise or play – a place to go and relax' (Faculty of Public Health, 2010).

According to the 2011 Survey of public attitudes and behaviour towards the environment, run by the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs, over 9 in 10 (92 per cent) of adults aged 16 and over in England reported that it was very or fairly important to have public gardens, parks,

commons or other green spaces nearby. Those who had visited public gardens, parks, commons or other green spaces were asked what their three most important reasons for visiting were. Just under three-quarters (74 per cent) reported that fresh air was an important reason, followed by open space (46 per cent), scenery (36 per cent) and tranquillity (27 per cent) (DEFRA, 2011).

Figure 15: Frequency of visiting the natural environment (1), 2010/11

England



Notes:

1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'Thinking about the last 12 months, how often on average have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from home?' Percentages do not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

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In 2010/11, a third (33 per cent) of adults aged 16 and over in England reported that they visited the outdoors, away from home, several times a week or more often, in the 12 months prior to interview (**Figure 15**). While 11 per cent reported that they visited on a daily basis, just under 1 in 10 (9 per cent) stated that they had not visited in the previous 12 months. Walking was the most popular activity on visits to the natural environment and was a selected activity on just over three-quarters of all visits (77 per cent). Walking with a dog was undertaken on 51 per cent of all visits and walking without a dog on 26 per cent of all visits (NE, 2011).

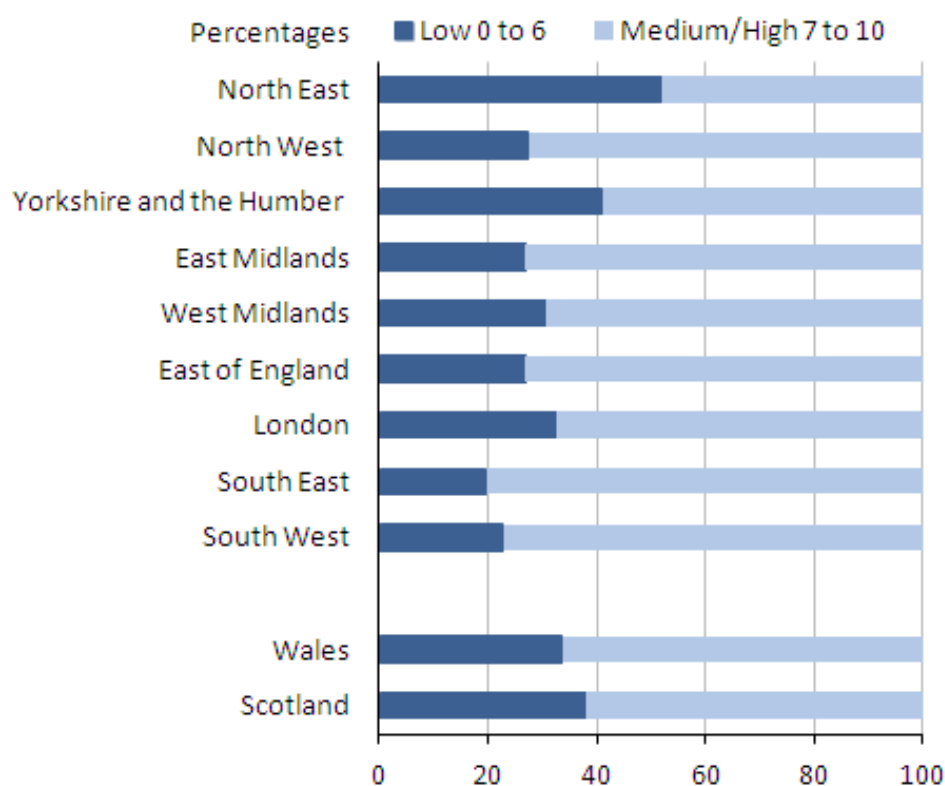
According to the 2011 Scottish Recreational Survey, over 8 in 10 (83 per cent) adults aged 16 and over visited the outdoors for leisure or recreation at least once in the 12 months prior to interview. Just under half (49 per cent) of all outdoor recreation visits were made to the countryside. Walking was reported as the main activity on just under three-quarters (74 per cent) of visits to the outdoors. According to the 2008 Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey (the latest data available), 94 per cent of adults resident in Wales had visited the outdoors at least once in the 12 months prior to interview. The most commonly undertaken activities were walking (86 per cent) and sightseeing (71 per cent) (SRS, 2011 & WORS, 2008).

The 2009 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey asked adults aged 16 and over 'what makes somewhere a good public park or local green space?' The most frequently chosen factor was 'that it is well-maintained' chosen by nearly half (48 per cent) of people as either a first or second choice. The next most popular response was 'having good play facilities for children' (34 per cent as a first or second choice) (SG, 2010b).

In October 2011 and February 2012 the ONS Opinions Survey asked people in Great Britain how satisfied they were with the public gardens, parks, commons or other green spaces in the local area where they lived. The local area is defined as within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance from the respondent's home. Satisfaction was rated from 0 to 10, where 0 represented not at all satisfied and 10 completely satisfied. Just under 7 in 10 (69.7 per cent) adults aged 16 and over in Great Britain reported a medium/high satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) with their local green space, while 3 in 10 (30.3 per cent) reported a low satisfaction (0 to 6 out of 10).

Figure 16: Satisfaction with local green space (1) or by region, 2011–2012 (2)

Great Britain



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'Overall, how satisfied are you with the public gardens, parks, commons or other green spaces in the local area where you live?' When answering please consider the local area to be the area within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance from your home. Satisfaction was rated from 0 to 10 where 0 represented not at all satisfied and 10 completely satisfied.

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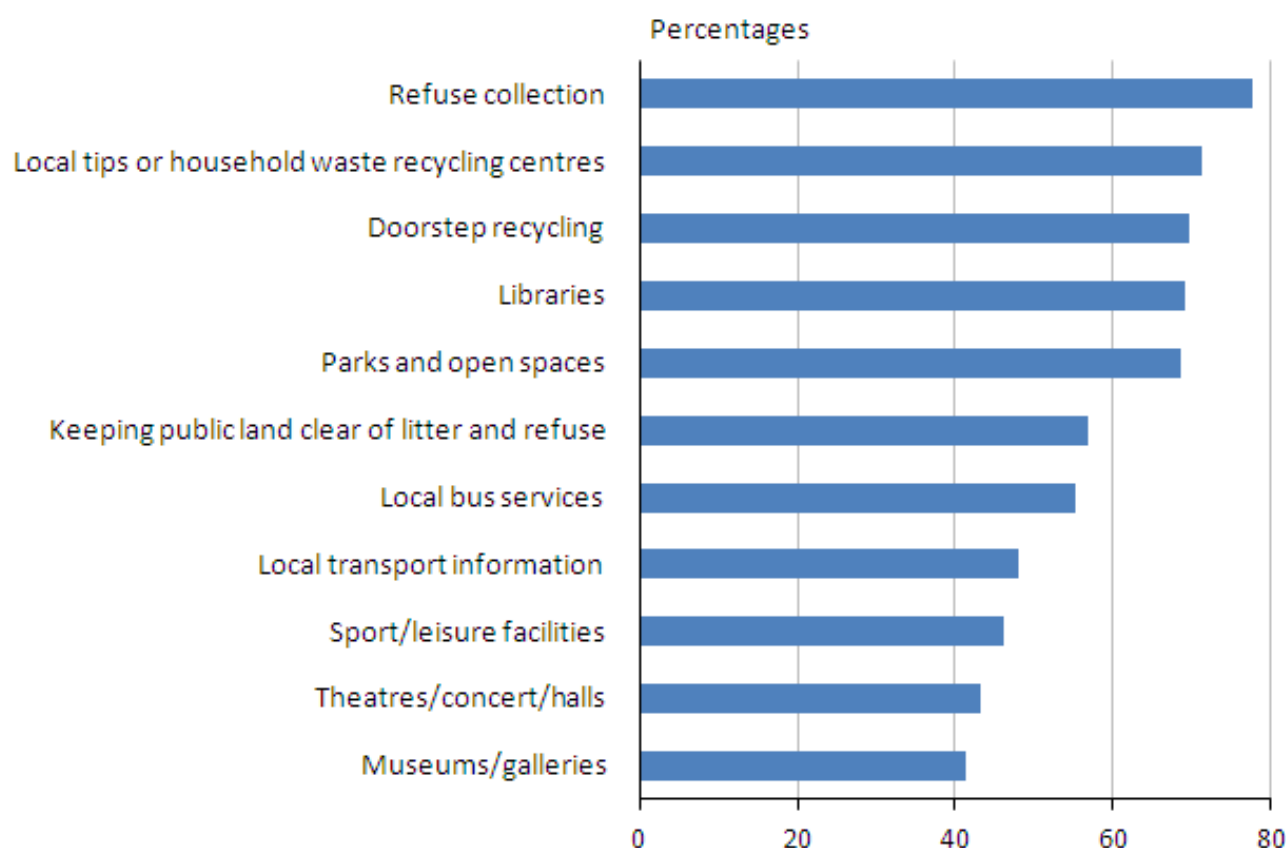
Satisfaction rates varied between English regions and Great Britain countries in 2011-12. Just over 8 in 10 (80 per cent) people in the South East and 77 per cent of people in the South West had a medium/high satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) with public gardens, parks, commons or other green spaces in the local area where they lived (**Figure 16**). This compares with under a half (48 per cent) in the North East.

Access to local services

Ideally the local environment surrounding the area where people live would contain the type of services and amenities that would be needed on a regular basis, and would help towards people's satisfaction with the area and in turn their overall well-being.

Figure 17: Satisfaction with local services, 2008 (1)

England



Source: Place Survey, Department for Communities and Local Government

Notes:

1. Data are at September to December 2008.

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According to the 2008 Place Survey (the latest data available), levels of satisfaction for adults aged 18 and over in England varied between local services. For most services associated with the local environment, satisfaction was above 70 per cent (**Figure 17**). For example, 77.6 per cent of people aged 18 and over were very or fairly satisfied with their refuse collection and 71.2 per cent their

local tips or household recycling centres. However, satisfaction levels for sports, leisure and cultural services apart from libraries were below 50 per cent (DCLG, 2008).

According to the Scottish Household Survey, just under two-thirds (64.0 per cent) of adults aged 16 and over were very or fairly satisfied with a combination of three local services (health services, schools and public transport) in 2010. Looking at the services individually, people were most satisfied with local health services (86.4 per cent), followed by local schools (83.3 per cent) and public transport (74.3 per cent).

Reasonable access to local services is an important consideration in looking at the correlation of local service provision and well-being.

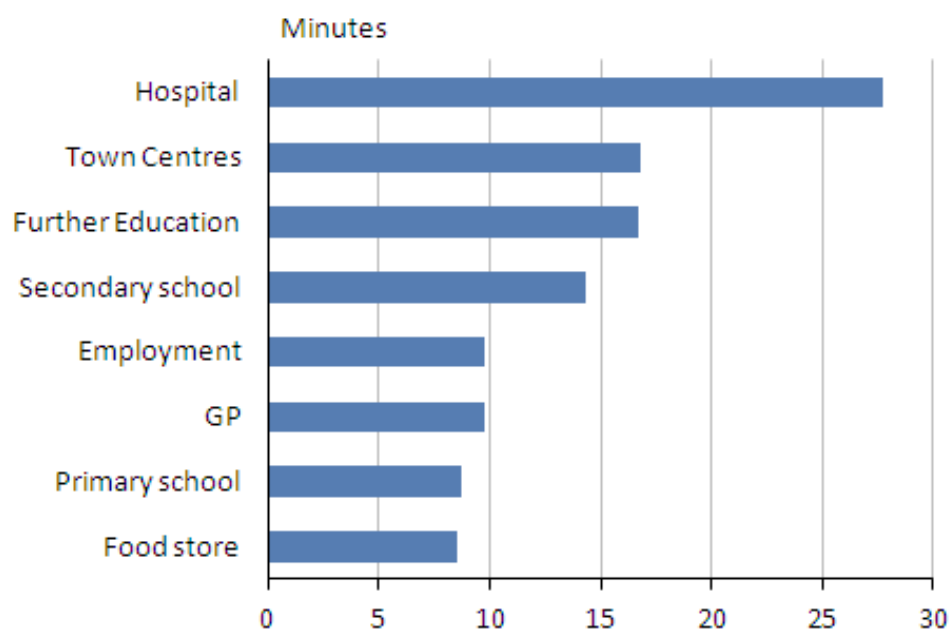
'Location is an important consideration . . . Access to local shops, post offices, places of entertainment and community activity all contribute to well-being' (Harding 1997).

The Department for Transport measures access to eight key services in England (employment centres; primary schools; secondary schools; further education institutions; GPs; hospitals; food stores; and town centres) by public transport and walking. Unsurprisingly a higher proportion of people in urban areas had 'reasonable' access by public transport and/or walking than those who lived in a rural area (see DFT, 2010 for a definition of 'reasonable'). The largest variation between the number of people in urban and rural areas in 2010 was for further education institutes (16 percentage points), while the smallest variation was for primary schools (5 percentage points) (DFT, 2010).

The proximity of housing to a range of employment, services and facilities, as well as the public transport infrastructure determines how far and how long people have to travel. This could have a bearing on the satisfaction level with the area in which they live. According to the Department for Transport, the average minimum travel time to a selection of key services in England (employment centres, primary schools, secondary schools, further education, GPs, hospitals and food stores) in 2010 by public transport or walking was 14 minutes. By cycle the average minimum time was 9 minutes and by car 6 minutes. However, it must be noted that there will be considerable variation in these times between those living in rural areas and those living in urban areas (DFT, 2010).

Figure 18: Average minimum travel time by public transport or walking to reach the nearest key services (by mode of travel), 2010

England



Source: Department for Transport

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Looking at trips by public transport or walking in more detail, a trip to the hospital recorded the longest average minimum time at 28 minutes (**Figure 18**). This was followed by trips to further education establishments and town centres (17 minutes). The shortest average minimum time was to primary schools and local food stores at nine minutes (DFT 2010).

A survey by YouGov in 2011 gives further evidence of the importance of easy access to local services for some people. Adults aged 18 and over in Great Britain were asked how willing they would be to pay more to live somewhere they could easily access shops and services by foot. Just under a quarter (24 per cent) said they were very or fairly willing to do this. However, it must be noted that 42 per cent stated that they already lived somewhere where they could easily walk to local services (YouGov, 2011).

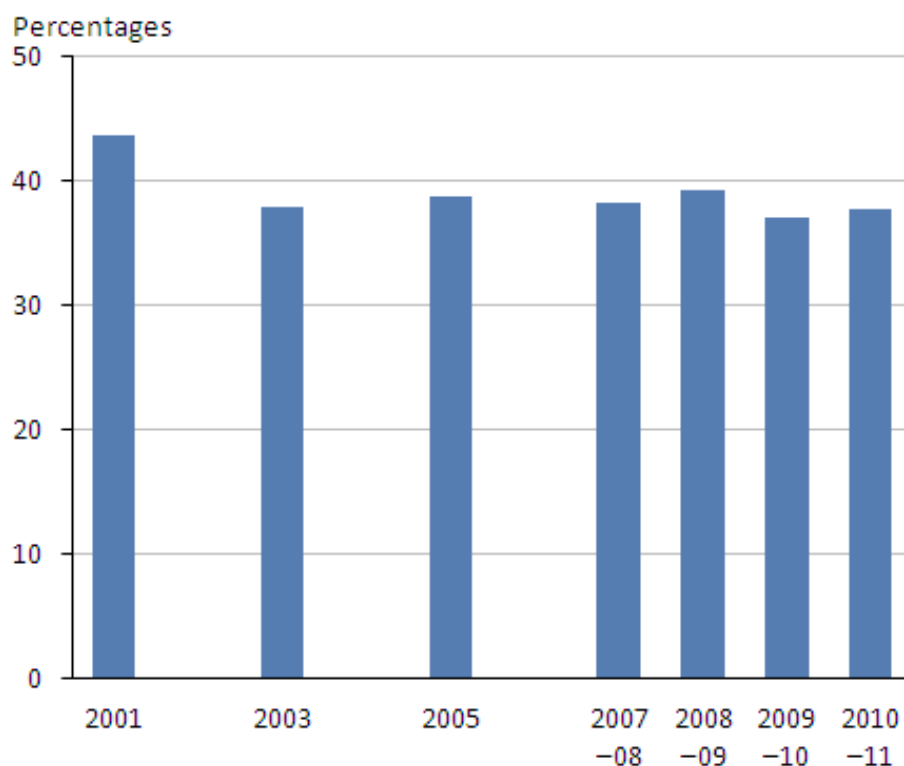
Difficulty accessing local shops and services can also give some people a feeling of isolation. From the same YouGov survey, 5 per cent of people reported feeling a sense of isolation, while 22 per

cent reported that they knew someone who felt a sense of isolation due to difficulty accessing local shops and services (YouGov 2011).

The extent to which people feel that they can influence local decisions can relate to the way people are able to shape the local services they use and influence the way these services are delivered.

Figure 19: Whether people feel able to influence decisions in their local area (1)

England



Source: Citizenship Survey,
Department for Communities and Local Government

Notes:

1. Adults aged 16 and over were asked 'Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area (within a 15-20 minute walk from your home)?' Includes those who 'definitely agree' and 'tend to agree' that they can influence decisions.

Download chart

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(27.5 Kb)

According to the Citizenship Survey, 37.8 per cent of adults aged 16 and over in England in 2010–11 said that they felt able to influence decisions affecting their local area (**Figure 19**). This was slightly up from the 37.0 per cent in 2009–10 which was the lowest percentage recorded for this measure since the Citizenship Survey began in 2001. Nearly three-quarters (73.9 per cent) of people reported

in 2010–11 that it was important for them personally to feel that they could influence decisions in their local area (DCLG, 2010-11).

About the ONS Measuring National Well-being Programme

NWB logo 2



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 and the progress we are making as a society.

The programme is underpinned by a communication and engagement workstream, providing 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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