



# Subjective wellbeing measures across social surveys

## Other sources of subjective wellbeing data

### Background

Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) is one of a broad set of measures that ONS have developed as part of an emerging measurement framework for national wellbeing. In April 2011, ONS introduced four subjective wellbeing (SWB) questions on its largest household survey, the Annual Population Survey (APS). While SWB measures are not new, and have been well studied in recent years, the large sample size of the APS will allow analysts to push the boundaries of our understanding much further and explore wellbeing by smaller segments of the population and geographic areas than has previously been possible, in order to inform policy. In addition to the APS, ONS has also tested a range of wellbeing questions on other surveys, conducted a National Debate on what wellbeing means to people, and run a consultation on proposed domains for measuring wellbeing.

### Other Sources of SWB Data

While the new APS data is being collected it is important to note that there are other sources of SWB data that can be used for policy analysis. These can complement the APS data in a number of ways, but most usefully because questions are asked in surveys that are focused on specific policy areas such as crime, health and the environment. These can therefore support a detailed analysis of associations between wellbeing and impacts of specific policies. Some of this data is longitudinal and therefore supports analysis of changes in wellbeing over time and through life stages and events.

We present below some examples of other surveys that collect SWB data. We have specifically presented these around the 10 broader wellbeing domains of the emerging national wellbeing measurement framework.

Looking at these sources under the proposed wellbeing domains gives a taste of the wide range of subjective wellbeing information that is available. These data can help us gain more insights in to the relative influence of different aspects of our lives such as our health, where we live, our job on our individual, self-reported levels of wellbeing.

An understanding of other data sources also helps us:

- to match policy areas with available sources of wellbeing data where possible
- identify where there are potential evidence and data gaps
- compare and contrast survey modes and methodologies and their impact on results

We provide links to the relevant data sources below.

### Relationships

The [English Longitudinal Study of Ageing](#) gathers information about the caring responsibilities of older people, alongside indicators of depression and loneliness.

### Health

The [Health Survey for England](#) includes questions on self-reported health and mental functioning and on satisfaction with life, job and social life.

### Personal Finance

[Understanding Society](#) provides an insight into satisfaction with household income.

### Where we live

The [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) includes the four ONS wellbeing questions and asks about experiences and perceptions of crime.

### Education / Skills

The [Longitudinal Study of Young People in England](#) asks about life satisfaction, attitudes to post-education paths, and what 'success' depends on.

### What we do

The [Taking Part Survey](#) asks about health and happiness, as well as about participation in sport, leisure and cultural activities.

### Environment

The [Survey of Public Attitudes and Behaviours towards the Environment](#) asks about satisfaction with accommodation, local area and feeling part of the community.

### Economy

The CBI's [Industrial Trends Survey](#) tracks business optimism about output, orders, employment and competitiveness.

### Governance

The [European Social Survey](#) allows cross-national comparisons of wellbeing in relation to trust in the institutions of state.