Statement of Levelling Up Missions

25 January 2024

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 1 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023

Table of Contents

Introduction

In February 2022, the Government published the Levelling Up White Paper which set out a plan to work towards ending geographical disparity within the United Kingdom. As part of the White Paper, the Government set out 12 clear, medium-term missions to provide consistency and clarity over levelling up policy objectives. These serve as an anchor for policy across government, as well as a catalyst for innovation and action by the private and civil society sectors. Under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, the Government committed to laying a Statement of the Levelling Up Missions before Parliament, the first of which is this document. The Statement includes the Government's objectives to reduce geographical disparities within a period of time set out in the Statement, and details of how the Government proposes to measure progress against these objectives. The Government will be required to report annually against its missions and metrics and lay the report before Parliament.

As set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, these missions are ambitions that the UK Government has for all parts of the UK. The Government is committed to delivering on them while being fully respectful of the devolution settlements and working closely and collaboratively with the Devolved Administrations. Metrics have been chosen to allow the missions to show as comprehensive a picture across the UK as possible, using metrics that are publicly available and routinely updated. We are committed to improving on this data picture including through our engagement with devolved administrations. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act committed to consult as appropriate the Devolved Administrations on any future changes to mission progress methodology and metrics or target dates.

Missions and Metrics

The following section lays out the 12 Levelling Up missions and the metrics the Government will use to measure progress against these missions. As part of the White Paper, the Government set out two exploratory missions concerning Well-being and Pride in Place. These have now been scoped and the metrics for these missions are detailed in the relevant sections below.

As explained in the introduction, for UK-wide missions metrics have been chosen with a preference for those that are reported UK-wide. In some cases, metrics listed are England only or England and Wales only. We are committed to improving on this data picture including through our engagement with the devolved administrations, but this does not create new data or reporting duties for the devolved administrations. The following notation has been used throughout the statement to indicate the geographic coverage of metrics:

* Metric is reported UK-wide.

† Metric is reported for England and Wales only.

‡ Metric is reported for England only.

Mission 1: Living Standards

By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

Metrics

To monitor living standards, this mission will use the metrics GVA per hour*, gross median weekly pay* and employment rates (16-64)*. These metrics will be measured over ITL1 areas. To measure globally competitive cities, we will use a globally comparable headline productivity metric: Gross Value Added (GVA) per worker*.

Mission 2: Research and Development

By 2030, domestic public investment in R&D outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40%, and over the Spending Review period by at least one third. This additional government funding will seek to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.

Metrics

The headline metrics for this mission are UK Government domestic R&D spending* and Business Enterprise Research and Development (BERD)* by region, measured on an annual basis. UK Government Departments are working with ONS to collect and publish data breakdowns of their domestic R&D spending by ITL1 region. This will be used to calculate UK Government domestic R&D spending outside the Greater South East, which comprises the ITL1 regions of London, the South East and East of England. Experimental data on the regional breakdown of UK net public expenditure on R&D for financial year 2020-21 was published by the ONS in April 2023.

Mission 3: Transport

By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.

Metrics

Two headline metrics are being used to assess progress towards this mission. These have been chosen to cover comprehensively a range of transport modes, potential journey types and destinations. They are derived from data held by the Department of Transport, which means they can be de-aggregated for further analysis where necessary. In particular they can be used to provide meaningful comparisons between London and the rest of the country. Both metrics cover England; connectivity also covers Wales. Figures will be available on an annual basis.

The first headline metric is public transport trips as a proportion of total trips per year‡. The data behind this is derived from the National Travel Survey and is already published by the DfT as accredited official statistics (formally known as 'National Statistics'). This metric measures behavioural change; it thus establishes how far improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing have impacted on the public.

The second headline metric is public transport connectivity†. DfT has developed a new model to assess connectivity between regions and places. Public transport connectivity measures how easy it is for people to get to where they need to go using buses, trains and other forms of public transport. It takes account of different types of destination (offices, schools etc.) and how long it takes to reach them based on public transport timetable information. The connectivity score enables of different areas to be easily compared on a consistent basis. Inner-city areas tend to have higher connectivity scores than rural areas as shops, offices etc. tend to be closer by, and public transport services tend to be more frequent.

Mission 4: Digital Connectivity

By 2030, the UK will have nationwide coverage of gigabit-capable broadband and 4G mobile networks, and our ambition is that higher quality, standalone 5G will extend to all populated areas.[1]

Metrics

The headline metrics for this mission are geographical 4G and 5G coverage* and premises coverage of gigabit broadband*. The metrics for this mission will be tracked at lower tier local authority level in England, local authorities in Wales, council areas in Scotland and local government areas in Northern Ireland. using Office of Communications (Ofcom) and Think Broadband data.

Mission 5: Education

By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.

---

[1]We also want to extend 5G coverage well beyond cities and towns to all populated areas of the UK, including rural villages and communities.

The two headline metrics for this mission are the percentage of primary school children who reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in England‡, and the percentage of children reaching the expected standard in the areas in England where education attainment is weakest (Education Investment Areas)‡. Educational attainment at an early stage has lifelong implications, including the likelihood of entering higher education. Attainment in reading, writing and maths is a good indicator of whether children are gaining the critical skills they need to succeed at secondary school and later participate in society and the workforce.

Mission 6: Skills

By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.

Metrics

The headline metric for this mission is the number of adults who are successfully completing high-quality skills training. Achieving or completing skills training is closely associated with positive outcomes, such as further training, employment and higher wages, and is therefore a good measure of whether people are acquiring the skills they need to make them more productive and succeed in a modern and changing economy.

The baseline calculations for this metric include qualification-focused 19+ Further Education and skills training achievement (including apprenticeships), but not Higher Education‡. Training within the scope of this mission needs to be high-quality training that matches the needs of local employers and builds capabilities, to ensure it improves economic and social outcomes. This mission focuses on the third of upper tier local authorities where skill levels, defined as the share of the population with level 3+ qualifications, are lowest.

Training and retraining in skills is central to the success of the local economy, particularly as Further Education learners and adults tend to be less geographically mobile. A combined measure of achievements in level 4 and 5 across the FE and HE sectors has been published at a national level in the latest Higher Level Learners in England report‡. Local authority level data is in development and, as this work progresses, we will work on incorporating this data into the headline metric when it is developed.

Mission 7: Health

By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.

Metrics

The mission will be measured using the 'HLE at birth' statistic published by ONS*. This is an estimate of the average number of years a person born today can expect to live in a state of "very good" or "good" health. The statistic is produced for females and males separately, and is based on (i) how individuals self-assess their general health and (ii) each local area's mortality rates throughout the lifespan based on the current health of the population. This metric will be measured over upper tier local authorities in England, local authorities in Wales, council areas in Scotland and local government areas in Northern Ireland. The gap referenced in the mission will be measured as the

difference between the median HLE values in the top and bottom deciles of local areas, when ranked by HLE from the highest to the lowest. The health mission will be assessed against the baseline of HLE data for the reporting period 2017-2019.

Mission 8: Well-being

By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

<u>Definition</u>

Well-being is about how people feel they are doing. It captures the extent to which people across the UK lead happy and fulfilling lives. Well-being is affected by a range of different factors that matter to people, such as physical and mental health, good quality employment and social connections, as well as factors that apply to communities such as feelings of safety and environmental quality.

There is no single definition of well-being that is used across organisations. To focus our policy efforts and analysis, we have defined well-being as: self-reported assessments and emotions (from the ONS' four measures of personal well-being), what individuals say matters to them, and what individuals say matters to their community. The Mission will be targeted especially at people with low well-being.

We recognise that this approach is different from using 'well-being' as part of a broader framework for aligning policy programmes (as used, for example, by the Scottish Government in its National Performance Framework and the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act) and we are working with the Devolved Administrations to share best practice across our different approaches.

<u>Metrics</u>

The mission will be measured using the ONS' four measures of personal well-being: life satisfaction, whether the things done in life are worthwhile, happiness, and anxiety. To measure personal well-being, the ONS uses four survey questions, often referred to as the ONS4, and people are asked to respond to the questions using an 11--point scale (0-10). These measures of personal well-being are subjective assessments. To avoid making assumptions about how objective factors such as income or health impact well-being, using the ONS4 takes account of what individuals feel is important to them when assessing their own well-being. In this way, the well-being mission enables us to capture how people feel they are doing.

Since the mission is focussed on improving outcomes for people with the lowest well-being, rather than the general population, the headline metrics will track the share of individuals who have low well-being according to each of the ONS4 questions. In line with the ONS' guidance, we consider low well-being to be a score of 0-4 in the positively worded survey questions (those relating to life satisfaction, feeling worthwhile and happiness) and a score of 6-10 for the negatively worded question (relating to anxiety). We also acknowledge that some of the people with the lowest well-being will not be captured in the ONS survey data. These are likely to be people experiencing multiple disadvantage. To address this, we will embed consideration of how to improve the well-being of these groups throughout the mission. This includes working with relevant departments and organisations to ensure these groups are considered in policy work and to identify opportunities to improve the data on the well-being of these vulnerable groups.

The headline metrics for the mission are:

- Proportion of individuals aged 16+ with low ratings of life satisfaction*;
- Proportion of individuals aged 16+ with low ratings of feelings that things done in life are worthwhile*;
- Proportion of individuals aged 16+ with low ratings of feeling happy*;
- Proportion of individuals aged 16+ with high ratings of feeling anxious*.

The headline metrics only include data on individuals over 16 years old due to data availability at local level. However, children's well-being is in scope as part of the mission.

These metrics will be measured at lower tier local authority level in England, local authorities in Wales, council areas in Scotland and local government areas in Northern Ireland. The gap referred to in the mission will be measured as the difference between the worst-performing third of areas and the rest, when ranked according to their worst performing headline (ONS4) metric. Whilst we are interested in understanding a place's performance across all four of the headline metrics, ranking places according to their worst performing metric, as opposed to their average performance across all of the headline metrics, means we will focus on places that have a more acute well-being need in a particular dimension (as opposed to a less acute need across all 4 metrics). The mission ambition is to achieve a achieve a statistically significant improvement (of any size) in the well-being of every part of the UK and a reduction (of any size) in the gap between areas' well-being, taking pre-pandemic levels as the baseline[2].

Mission 9: Pride in Place

By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

Definition

Pride in place is an emotion people feel towards the physical community that they identify with and feel a sense of attachment, belonging and deep-rooted contentedness towards. It is underpinned by their sense of safety and security, their participation and connections within the community, their engagement with local culture, heritage and sport and their satisfaction with local high streets, green and blue spaces, and physical infrastructure.

Metrics

The mission will be measured through four key headline metrics and will be measured at the local authority level in England, local authorities in Wales, council areas in Scotland and local government areas in Northern Ireland:

- Percentage of people who perceive ASB is a problem in their local area†;
- Percentage of people that agree/ disagree that their local area is attractive‡;
- Social Fabric Index (Adapted Relationship thread)*;
- Percentage of the local population engaged with cultural, heritage and sport activities‡.

Survey-based measures for pride in place have been in development since the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper.

The Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) runs the Community Life Survey, which has been expanded to include measures related to Pride in Place and will be delivered at a local authority level. The CLS will provide data for the headline metrics for local area attractiveness and engagement in cultural, heritage and sporting activities.

The headline metric for Anti-Social Behaviour will be sourced from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, which is available at the police force area level.

The Social Fabric Index is published by Onward. For the Pride in Place mission metric, the metric will only consist of the relationship thread and the five different strands which are composed of

---

[2] In light of the data available at regional/ national and local authority levels, this will mean using 2019 data as the baseline for the regional and national improvements and 2017-2019 data as the baseline for the gap reduction.

multiple indicators, each representing a different statistical measure. The relationship thread comprises of the following strands: community assets, membership and participation, and neighbourliness. The adapted metric will also include a strand from the positive norms thread and is referred to as 'democracy'.

Mission 10: Housing

By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.

Metrics

For home ownership, the intention is to use first time buyer numbers per year, by England ITL1 region. This metric best captures the extent to which the UK Government is delivering a viable path to home ownership for existing renters. However, there are currently no official UK Government statistics that provide this data at a regional level. Data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) shows the number of recent (in the last three years) first-time buyers, but due to limited sample sizes this is only broken down by London vs. the rest of England. The UK Government is committed to developing a public metric for annual first-time buyer numbers at the sub-national level within the next year‡. A potential source is undergoing quality considerations and supporting metrics drawn from the EHS will be used to track home ownership trends in the interim.

The headline metric for housing quality is the proportion of rented homes that do not meet the decent homes standard‡. The Decent Homes Standard is being reviewed to ensure it is fit for the present day, and the UK Government's intention is to apply it across all rented tenures. The UK Government will set out our position on the future of the Decent Homes Standard in due course as we develop a DHS for the social and private rented sectors. The measure is limited to renters as it is in the private and social rented sectors where concerted action is needed to improve quality, as tenants have less ability to make improvements for themselves. The UK Government also has greater levers to effectively drive change in these sectors. We primarily measure and report housing quality at the ITL1 region level in England through the English Housing Survey. We have, however, for the first time this year modelled housing quality at a local authority level in England.

Mission 11: Crime

By 2030, homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst affected areas.

Metrics

The headline metrics for this mission are homicides†, serious violence‡ and neighbourhood crime†. Police-recorded data will be used to measure homicide and NHS hospital admissions data for sharp object assaults among under 25s will be used to measure serious violence. Both datasets are available at the police force area level. The worst-affected areas for both homicide and serious violence will be defined as the 20 forces with the largest volumes of hospital admissions over a six-year period (2015–16 to 2021-22). For neighbourhood crime, the worst-affected areas will be identified using police-recorded crime data and neighbourhood crime levels will be tracked for the worst-affected areas in aggregate, using Crime Survey data. An expansion of the Crime Survey is being implemented that will support more accurate estimates of neighbourhood crime levels in these areas.

Mission 12: Local Leadership

By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

<u>Metrics</u>

This mission will be measured by the proportion of the population living in an area with the various levels of local devolution in England‡.