**A briefing on What Works Centre for Wellbeing progress and activities against VCSE Review action plan recommendation 1: “Define and measure wellbeing, building on existing work to embed it as a core outcome for both health and social care systems”**

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**Definitions and measures**

Our [Measuring Wellbeing](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/our-work/measuring-evaluating/) series of discussion papers bring together academics, policy experts and practitioners to explore approaches to wellbeing measurement and give guidance on the value of different measures for different contexts, populations, interventions, or uses. Topics have covered:

* A [proposed measure for wellbeing](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/measuring-wellbeing-and-cost-effectiveness-analysis-using-subjective-wellbeing/), specifically recommending the subjective self assessment measure “Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”, converting between different wellbeing measures and considerations for equity weighting and cost effectiveness analysis (December 2016)
* Recognition of the [multi dimensional aspects of subjective wellbeing](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/measurement-really-matters-discussion-paper-2/) and the range of measures required to capture this multi dimensionality, particularly ‘in the moment’ [experiential measures](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/definitions-and-measures-of-subjective-wellbeing-discussion-paper-3/) and those measuring purpose. Explicitly measuring the constituent parts of wellbeing can help us understand the complexity of wellbeing and enable policies and interventions be better targeted. (September 2017)

With respect to identifying and promoting wellbeing measures at the community and local level, the WWCW has:

* Published a [conceptual review of Community Wellbeing](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/what-is-community-wellbeing-conceptual-review/) and a [Community Wellbeing Theory of Change](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/community-wellbeing-theory-of-change-diagram/) to inform new research and engagement with practitioners and funders. We are working on an animation to explain concepts and findings in an accessible way.
* Published a [Scoping Review on Indicators of Community Wellbeing](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/community-wellbeing-indicators-scoping-review/) to bring together all the indicators, frameworks and models used in the UK to measure community wellbeing.
* Carried out a scoping project: [Understanding Local Needs for Wellbeing Data](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/what-wellbeing-data-do-local-authorities-need-to-make-better-decisions/) (with ONS, PHE and Happy City), resulting in a set of recommended indicators for local authorities to understand wellbeing in their areas.
* Currently working on a joint project with other What Works Centres (Educational Endowment Foundation, Early Intervention Foundation and Ageing Better) to understand how local authorities use evidence of wellbeing across the life course.

**Guidance and tools for measuring wellbeing**

The WWCW has published [guidance on how to analyse the cost effectivenes](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/a-guide-to-wellbeing-economic-evaluation/)s of interventions, using standardised measures of wellbeing appropriate to the situation being assessed (September 2017). This is complemented by a dedicated [page on our website](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/appraisal/) to support government policy analysts to include wellbeing in their analysis. These resources will continue to be updated, particularly featuring examples of economic evaluation of wellbeing interventions in practice.

We have published a guide to [measuring wellbeing inequalities](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/measuring-wellbeing-inequalities-a-how-to-guide/), which outlines the ONS’s preferred headline indicator of the percentage of people scoring below a wellbeing threshold, as well as alternative measures of the distribution between and within groups (updated: May 2018)

The centre has also published guidance for employers seeking to include questions on [workplace wellbeing in staff surveys](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/workplace-wellbeing-questionnaire-methodology/), as well making available more general guidance for including standardised [wellbeing questions in surveys](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/how-to-implement-personal-wellbeing-questions-in-your-survey/).

For the VCSE sector in particular:

* We launched an online guide for charities and social enterprises to help them measure their wellbeing impact (January 2018). This includes wellbeing definitions, recommended measures, things to bear in mind when evaluating wellbeing, and a ‘survey builder’ tool. The site has had 24,700 visits in the first six months, with 137 people having created their own surveys. We’re currently evaluating the usefulness and content of the site to make improvements in November and develop the concept further.
* In the next six months we will develop our ‘Evidence Journey’ model to help small and medium sized charities understand the value of wellbeing evidence in project design, and how they can carry out proportional evaluations of their activities, with best-practice examples and tools to help build capacity in the sector.

**Sharing findings and data**

The WWCW carries out a translation function, whereby academic findings on what works to improve wellbeing is translated to accessible plain language briefings, so that they can be used by a wider audience. All our briefing are freely available to download.

* We will be making all the evidence statements that have been generated over the three years of the evidence programme into a single searchable database, to further ease access to relevant findings for users (End 2018).
* We will be publishing a report which brings together local authority level data on wellbeing (end 2018).
* We have secured funding for a project to scope the potential of a wellbeing datalab and we will develop this scoping project further in the next six months.