



Cabinet Office

UK government approach to wellbeing

ESRC Seminar Series – The Research Agenda – January 2014

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- Background
- Policy uses of wellbeing and examples
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- Our work

Commitment to measure National Wellbeing

- Recognition of need for complementary measures of social progress
- Aim to better reflect 'What Matters' to people in our decision making



...economic growth is a means to an end. If your goal in politics is to help make a better life for people – which mine is – and if you know, both in your gut and from a huge body of evidence that prosperity alone can't deliver a better life, then you've got to take practical steps to make sure government is properly focused on our quality of life as well as economic growth, and that is what we are trying to do.

25th November 2010

National Wellbeing Wheel of Indicators

- Informed by a national debate
- 41 measures/ 10 domains
- Mix of Objective and subjective
- “Personal wellbeing” Domain
 - How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
 - To what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile
 - How happy did you feel yesterday?
 - How anxious did you feel yesterday?
- Subjective wellbeing questions are particularly interesting



Subjective wellbeing (SWB)

- **Longevity**; high levels of SWB can increase life by 4 to 10 yrs. For older people, survival of >9 yrs associated with greater enjoyment of life
- **Immunity**; positive SWB associated with increased immunity
- **Physiology**; evidence of physiological impacts of negative SWB
- SWB **predictive of lower general health**, disability, and heart disease.
- **Employment**; SWB associated with interview confidence among job seekers
- **Job Effectiveness**; SWB among nurses associated with patient experience
- **Productivity**; wellbeing associated with reduced absenteeism/ presenteeism

Improving wellbeing is a worthy goal in itself for governments
Also instrumental to delivering other outcomes we value

Our policies and services impact SWB

- **Inflation/ Unemployment;** unemployment effect on SWB 3.5 times inflation
- **Decision Making;** SWB is influenced by involvement in local decisions
- **Greenspace;** living near is associated with 5% increase in SWB
- **Pollution;** air quality and noise pollution have significant impacts on SWB
- **Housing Quality;** low quality associated with lower SWB and higher stress
- **Public Services;** satisfaction ratings with local services
- **Community Learning;** clear SWB outcomes from community learning
- **National Events;** Royal Wedding & Olympics impacted wellbeing

Whether we value SWB or not – our decisions will impact it
Strong case for proactive consideration



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Policy Uses and a few Examples

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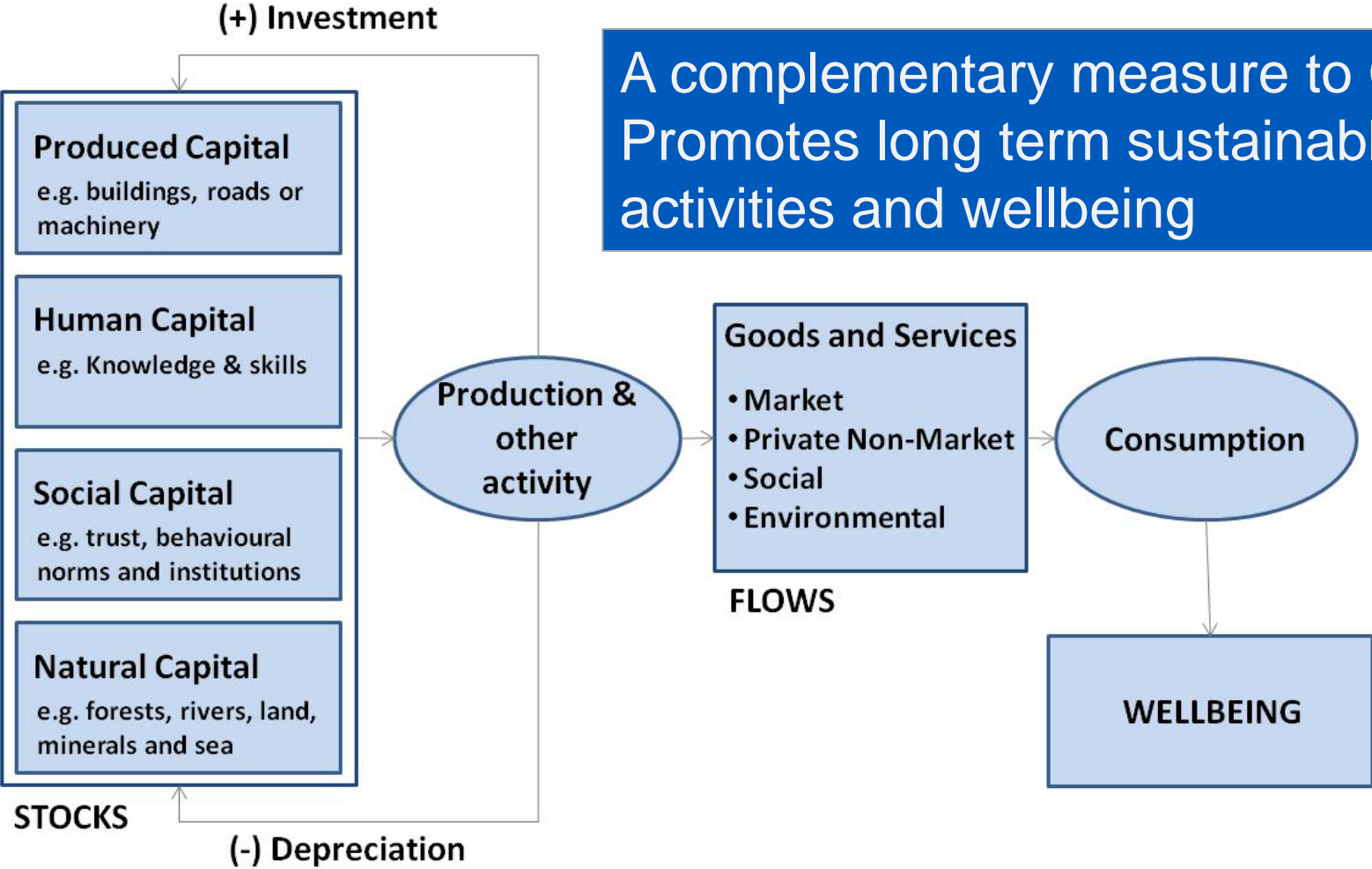
At a National / Macro Level

- Framework continues important debate about ‘What Matters’
- Draws attention to important factors not always considered e.g.
 - Volunteering
 - Unpaid Care
 - Underemployment
- Direction of travel and changes can inform decisions of:
 - Government, individuals, businesses and civil society
- Complementary to sustainable development policy

Steer priorities and support larger national decisions

Comprehensive National Wealth

A complementary measure to GDP
Promotes long term sustainable
activities and wellbeing



Micro - Practical Steps being taken & Examples

Approach	Example
Direct Wellbeing Policies <i>Improve wellbeing of groups</i>	Cabinet Office: National Citizen Service – improving resilience and wellbeing of 16yr olds.
Measure: <i>Add questions into Policy Surveys</i>	MoJ: added wellbeing questions to Crime Survey of England and Wales to research victim wellbeing
Analyse: <i>Data that is already available</i>	DEFRA: analysed the impact of Green Space on wellbeing of residents
Compare/ Appraise: <i>Policy options</i>	DCMS: using wellbeing valuation approach in Green Book to compare the impact of participation in different sport and cultural activities
Evaluate: <i>Add into policy/ service evaluations</i>	DWP: Evaluated the impact of post-work programme interventions on wellbeing of long term unemployed
Inform: <i>Wellbeing info in hands of individuals</i>	Public Health England: Used wellbeing data to inform messages promoting healthy behaviours to families in the recent ‘Smart Restart’ Campaign
Legislation/ Regulation:	Scotland and Wales: have incorporated wellbeing in legislation. Wellbeing also very much at the heart of the Care Bill.
Staff Wellbeing	DECC/ HMRC/ MOD: among other departments working on staff wellbeing strategies – links to engagement and productivity.
‘Stretch’ Policy or Service	DH: Have run wellbeing ‘innovation’ workshops

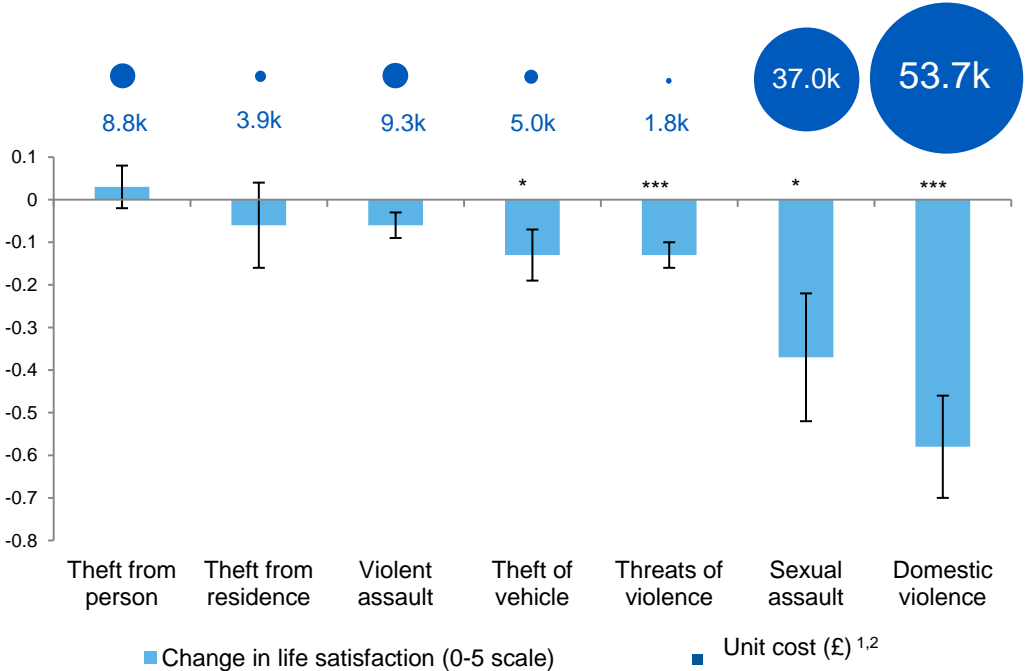
Evaluate: capturing social impact consistently

Wellbeing – Before and After National Citizen Service 2011							
<i>Base: All</i>					NCS		
	Results				Impact		
	Baseline		Follow-up		Change over time		Difference in difference
	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	
	%	%	%	%			
Life Satisfaction	64	61	79	73	15	11	4%
Happiness	66	67	72	69	7	2	5%
Worthwhile	65	64	79	73	14	9	5%
Anxiety	45	56	49	51	4	-5	9%
<i>Bases</i>	1612	1571	1625	1580			

Changing Perspectives: Crime and Wellbeing

Change in life satisfaction score associated with victimisation per crime and the unit costs per crime.

Do we undervalue wellbeing impact of crime in our costs?



Significant predictors, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$



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Governance and Focus of Work

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Approach

- Governance
 - ONS Programme Board – Measurement
 - Social Impacts Task Force – Analysis
 - Steering Group – Policy
- Workstreams
 - Measurement (Surveys, reviews...)
 - Analysis (Analysis – loneliness, volunteering, air quality...)
 - Capacity Building (Training, Tools, Seminars...)
 - Policy (x-Gov, Evaluations, Policy Workshops ...)



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