



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Mental well-being (National Survey for Wales): April 2022 to March 2023

The report looks at mental well-being and the characteristics of those with higher or lower mental well-being for April 2022 to March 2023.

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Introduction

In 2022-23, the National Survey included questions to assess people's mental wellbeing. These were 14 statements designed to measure mental well-being known as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale. Scores range from 14 to 70, with a higher score representing better mental well-being.

Main findings

- The average mental wellbeing score was 48.2.
- Better mental wellbeing was found to be associated with each of the following factors:
 - being older
 - not being in material deprivation
 - being religious
 - having better general health
 - not having a long-term health condition or illness
 - being a Welsh speaker
 - participating in sport 3 or more times a week

Mental wellbeing

Controlling for other factors (explained in our [Regression technical report](#)), the following characteristics were significantly associated with higher mental wellbeing scores. Each factor listed below has an independent link with wellbeing scores – so (for example) it's not just that older people are more likely to be in poorer health: both age and health have their own separate link with wellbeing.

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Age

People aged 65 or older had higher mental wellbeing scores than those in younger age groups. The average wellbeing score across age groups ranged from 46.5 (aged 25 to 44) to 51.3 (aged 75+).

Material deprivation

Those not in material deprivation had better mental wellbeing than those in material deprivation. The average mental wellbeing score was 49.4 for people not living in material deprivation, compared with 40.8 for those in material deprivation.

Religion

Those with a religion had better mental wellbeing than those without. The average mental wellbeing score for those with a religion was 49.5, compared with 47 for those without.

General health

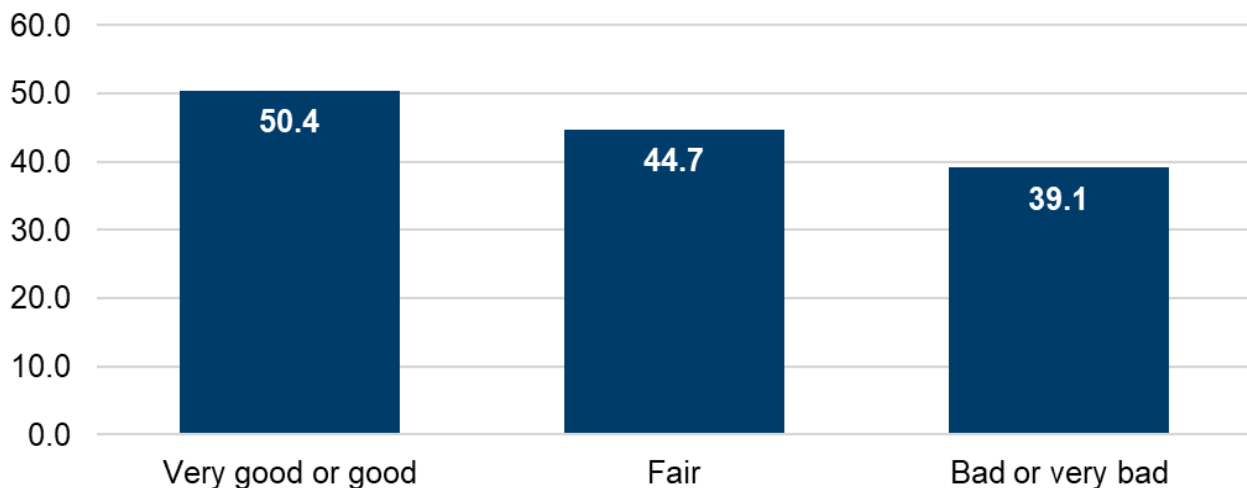
People in better general health also had better mental wellbeing. As general health declined, so did the average mental wellbeing score. Those with good general health had an average mental wellbeing score of 50.4, whilst those with bad general health had an average score of 39.1.

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Figure 1: Average mental wellbeing score by general health



Description of Figure 1: Vertical bar chart showing average mental wellbeing scores by general health in 2022-23. People with very good or good general health had an average mental wellbeing score of 50.4, compared with 39.1 for those with bad or very bad general health.

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2022-23

Limiting long-term illness

Those who reported they did not have a limiting long-term illness had better mental wellbeing than those who did. The average mental wellbeing score for those without a limiting long-term illness was 50, compared with an average score of 44.9 for those with.

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Welsh speaking

Welsh speakers had better mental wellbeing than those who do not speak Welsh. Welsh speakers had an average mental wellbeing score of 50.1 whilst non-Welsh speakers had an average score of 48.

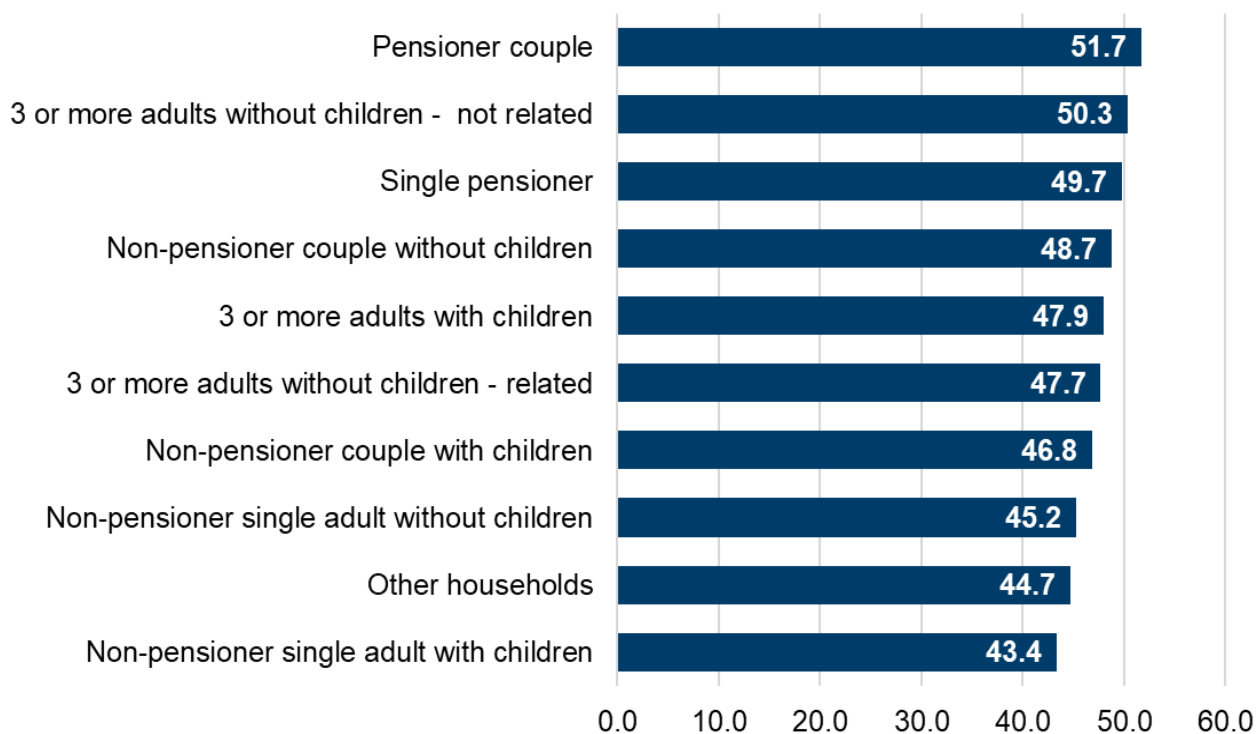
Sport participation

Those who participate in sport at least 3 times a week had better mental wellbeing scores than those who do not. The average mental wellbeing score for those who participate in sport at least 3 times a week was 49.4, whilst those who did not participate so often had an average score of 47.4.

Household type

Those living in a household containing only pensioners had a higher average mental wellbeing score than most other household types. Pensioner couple households had an average mental wellbeing score of 51.7. The lowest average mental wellbeing scores were found in households containing non-pensioner single adults. Non-pensioner single adults with children had an average mental wellbeing score of 45.2, whilst non-pensioner single adults without children had an average score of 43.4.

Figure 2: Average mental wellbeing score by household type



Description of Figure 2: Horizontal bar chart showing average mental wellbeing scores by household type in 2022-23. Households consisting of a pensioner couple had the highest average mental wellbeing score of 51.7, whilst households containing non-pensioner single adults without children had the lowest average mental wellbeing score of 43.4.

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2022-23

The following factors were found to have significant differences when comparing 95% confidence intervals. They were not, however, found to be significant factors in the regression. These differences are most likely explained by their links to other factors, such as household material deprivation.

Marital status

Married people had better mental wellbeing than those who were single. Married people had an average mental wellbeing score of 49.6, compared with 46.8 for single people.

Area deprivation

People living in less deprived areas had better mental wellbeing. Those living in the least deprived areas had an average mental wellbeing score of 49.4, whilst those living in the most deprived areas had an average score of 45.4.

There was no significant difference in mental wellbeing score by sex, different sexual orientations, or different ethnic groups.

Loneliness and general wellbeing

Loneliness and general wellbeing have a very strong relationship with mental well-being. There is an overlap between the constructs of mental well-being, loneliness, and some other aspects of general well-being (satisfaction with life, feeling that things in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiousness). Because of this, the analysis presented here does not control for loneliness and general well-being. These factors would have dominated the analysis, making it more difficult to identify the other characteristics that were associated with mental well-being.

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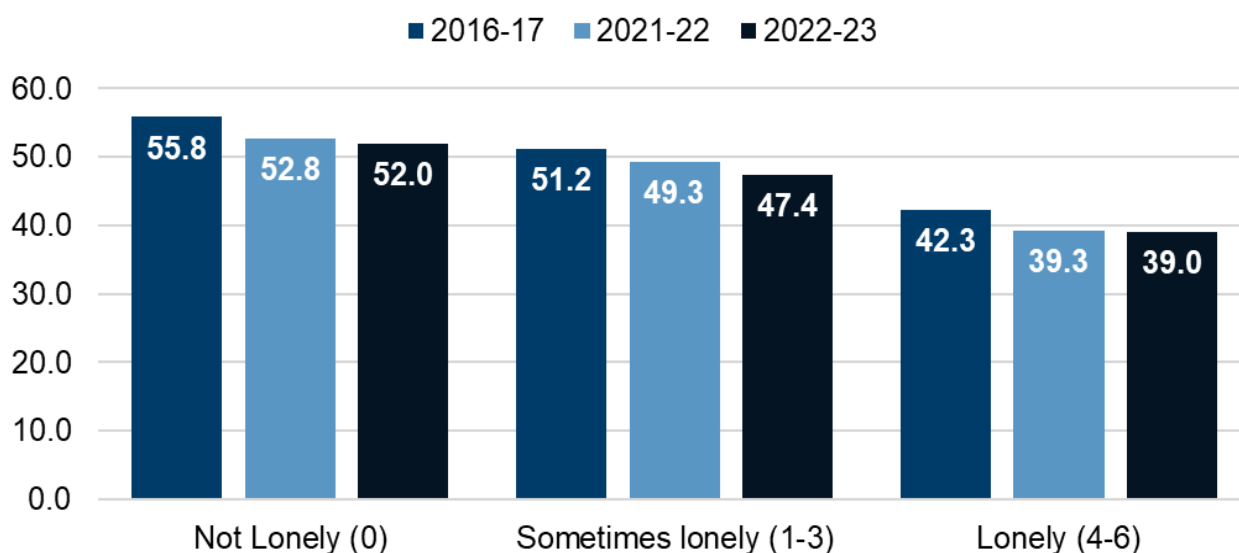
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Loneliness

Those who reported feeling lonely had worse mental wellbeing than those who reported that they were sometimes or not lonely. Those who reported feeling lonely had an average mental wellbeing score of 39 compared with 47.4 for those who were sometimes lonely and 52 for those who were not lonely.

Figure 3: Average mental wellbeing score by loneliness and year



Description of Figure 3: Vertical bar chart compares average mental wellbeing scores by level of loneliness in 2016-17, 2021-22 and 2022-23. Average mental wellbeing has declined for all levels of loneliness since 2016-17. People who were not lonely had the highest average mental wellbeing scores and people who were lonely had the lowest. The average mental wellbeing score for those who were not lonely in 2022-23 was 52 compared with 39 for those who were lonely.

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2016-17, 2021-22, 2022-23

Life satisfaction

People that felt they were more satisfied with their life had better mental wellbeing than those who were less satisfied, with the average mental wellbeing score increasing with the level of life satisfaction. People that were very highly satisfied with their life had an average mental wellbeing score of 54.3, whilst those who had a low life satisfaction had an average mental wellbeing score of 34.1.

Feeling that things done in life are worthwhile

The average mental wellbeing score increased with the feeling that life is worthwhile. People that felt that things done in life were very highly worthwhile had an average mental wellbeing score of 52.7, compared with an average score of 33.2 for those who had a low feeling that things done in life were worthwhile.

Happiness yesterday

Those who reported they felt happier yesterday had better mental wellbeing than those who reported they felt less happy yesterday. The average mental wellbeing score for those who very highly agreed that they felt happy yesterday was 53, compared with an average score of 37.8 for those who had a low agreement that they felt happy yesterday.

Anxious yesterday

People who felt less anxious yesterday had better mental wellbeing than those who felt more anxious. Those who highly agreed that they felt anxious yesterday

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had an average mental wellbeing score of 42.5 compared with an average score of 52 for those who had a low agreement that they felt anxious yesterday.

Figure 4: Average mental wellbeing score by life satisfaction, feeling things done in life are worthwhile, level of happiness yesterday and level of anxiousness yesterday



Description of Figure 4: Vertical bar chart comparing the average mental wellbeing score by level of general wellbeing for life satisfaction, feeling things done in life are worthwhile, level of happiness yesterday and level of anxiousness yesterday in 2022-23. The average mental wellbeing score decreased as the level of general wellbeing decreased for all four factors. Out of these four factors, the average mental wellbeing score decreased the least for the level of anxiousness yesterday measure with the score ranging from 52 for those who had high general wellbeing and 42.5 for those who had low general wellbeing. The largest average mental wellbeing score decrease was for the life satisfaction measure with a score of 54.3 for those who had high general wellbeing and 34.1 for those with lower general wellbeing.

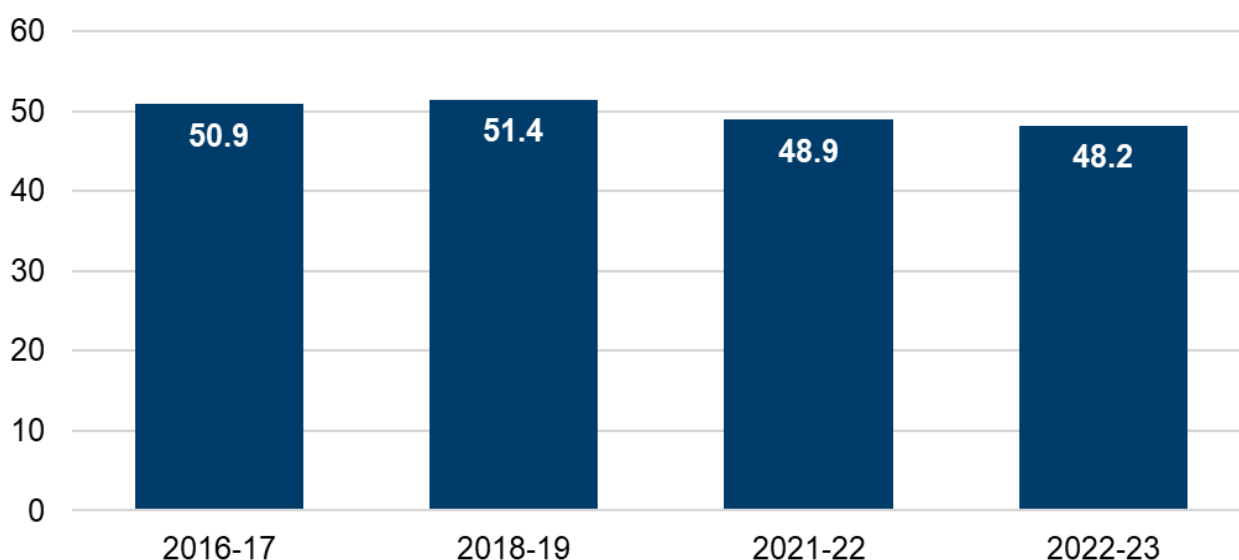
Source: National Survey for Wales, 2022-23

Comparison to previous years

Whilst comparisons can be made with this data to other years, it is worth noting that the sample sizes vary for each year of comparison. The primary survey method also changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic from face to face to telephone in 2020.

Since the wellbeing questions were first asked in 2016-17, there has been a significant overall decrease in the average mental wellbeing score. In 2016-17 the average score was 50.9, compared with 48.2 in 2022-23. The average mental wellbeing score peaked in 2018-19 with the highest overall score of 51.4.

Figure 5: Average mental wellbeing score by year



Description of Figure 5: Vertical bar chart compares the average mental wellbeing scores by year. There has been an overall decrease since 2016-17 to

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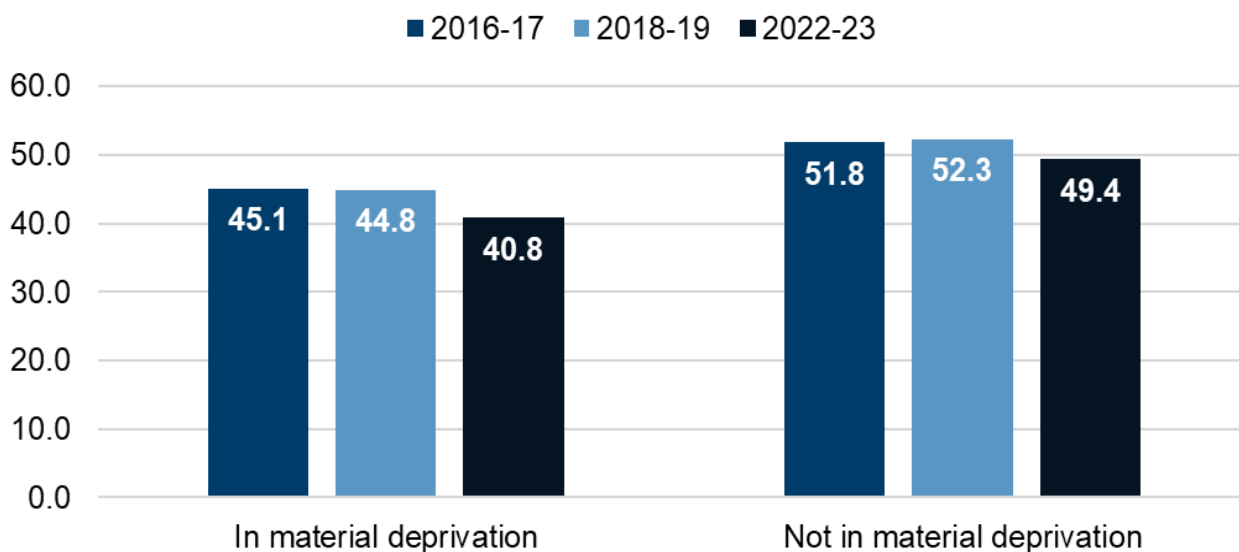
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2022-23. The average score was 50.9 in 2016-17 compared with 48.2 in 2022-23.

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2016-17, 2018-19, 2021-22, 2022-23

For all factors found to be significantly linked to mental wellbeing in the 2022-23 survey, there has been a similar decrease in the average mental wellbeing score from 2016-17 to 2022-23. Most notably, the average mental wellbeing score for those living in material deprivation decreased from 45.1 in 2016-17 to 40.8 in 2022-23.

Figure 6: Average mental wellbeing score by material deprivation and year



Description of Figure 6: Vertical bar chart comparing average mental wellbeing scores for people in and not in material deprivation for 2016-17, 2018-19 and 2022-23. People not in material deprivation have better mental wellbeing for all years. The average mental wellbeing score was 40.8 for people in material deprivation in 2022-23 compared with 49.4 for those who were not.

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Source: National Survey for Wales, 2016-17, 2018-19, 2022-23

Sex and ethnicity were not found to be significantly linked to mental wellbeing in the 2022-23 survey. In some previous years, however, they were found to be significantly linked. In the 2016-17 survey, males were found to have better mental wellbeing than females, with an average mental wellbeing score of 51.3 for males compared with 50.4 for females. There was no significant difference between the average mental wellbeing score for males and females in 2022-23.

There was also no significant difference between the average mental wellbeing score for the different ethnic groups in the 2022-23 survey. In 2018-19, mental wellbeing was found to be better for those who were black, Asian or minority ethnic (52.9) or white (Irish, Gypsy, Irish Traveller or another white background) (53.4), compared with those who were white (Welsh, English, Scottish or Northern Irish) (51.2).

Policy context

Together for Mental Health, the Welsh Government's cross governmental strategy to improve mental health and well-being was published in 2012. The strategy set out several high-level outcomes, one of which included 'the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population is improved'. An independent evaluation of Together for Mental Health was published in March 2023 and its findings, alongside a number of reviews, have informed a new 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy' for Wales. This document, alongside a series of impact assessments will be published shortly for formal consultation. The Welsh Government will also be consulting on a Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy. Following the consultation, the Strategies will be published along with more detailed delivery plans. **Review of Together for Mental Health and Talk to Me 2 Strategies**

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Quality information

The **National Survey for Wales** is a continuous, large-scale, random sample survey covering people across Wales. Addresses are randomly selected, and invitations sent by post, requesting that a phone number be provided for the address. The phone number can be provided via an online portal, a telephone enquiry line, or direct to the mobile number of the interviewer for that case. If no phone number is provided, an interviewer may call at the address and ask for a phone number. Once a phone number is obtained, the interviewer uses a random selection method to choose one adult at the address to take part in the survey. The first section of the survey takes place by telephone interview; the second section takes place online (unless the respondent is unwilling or unable to complete it online, in which case these questions are also asked by telephone).

Detailed charts and tables of results are available in our interactive **results viewer**. For information on data collection and methodology please see our **Quality report** and **Technical report**.

National Statistics status

The **United Kingdom Statistics Authority** has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the **Code of Practice for Statistics**.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality, and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether

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the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained and reinstated when standards are restored.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in June 2020 following a compliance check by the Office for Statistics Regulation (**letter of confirmation**). These statistics last underwent a full assessment (**full report**) against the Code of Practice in 2013.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, by for example:

- providing more detailed breakdowns in the **results viewer**
- updated the survey topics regularly to ensure we continue to meet changing policy need
- continued to carry out regression analysis as a standard part of our outputs, to help users understand the contribution of particular factors to outcomes of interest

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the

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Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016 and this release includes one of the national indicators namely Average Mental Well-being Scores for Adults Aged 16 and over.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

As a national indicator under the Act they must be referred to in the analyses of local well-being produced by public services boards when they are analysing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their areas.

The Act states national milestones must be set that “...the Welsh Ministers consider would assist in measuring whether progress is being made towards the achievement of the well-being goals.” In doing so Welsh Ministers must specify how we know that a national milestone has been achieved and the time by which it is to be achieved.

National milestones are not performance targets for any individual organisation, but are collective measures of success for Wales.

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their

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local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

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