



Summary of the Measuring National Well-being Event

Organised by
the Centre for Health and Well-being in Public Policy (CWIPP)
University of Sheffield

18 March 2011

Presenters:

- Professor Geoff Green, Sheffield Hallam University
- Mr. Stephen Hicks, Office for National Statistics
- Dr. Tessa Peasgood, University of Sheffield
- Dr. Jeremy Wight, N (h) Tj0.061hSheffield

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The CWiPP and ONS Well-being event took place on 18th March, 2011 in the Interdisciplinary Centre of the Social Sciences (ICOSS). There were 29 participants (excluding presenters, facilitators and event organisers) from various organisations:

- University of Sheffield (16)
- Sheffield Hallam University (3)
- Sheffield City Council (2)
- NHS and PCT Sheffield, Barnsley and Rotherham (5)
- Barnsley MBC (2)
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (1)

For a full list of participants, see the appendix.

The event began with presentations from four representatives from the ONS, the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University and NHS Sheffield.

Stephen Hicks, the assistant deputy director for the ONS unit for Measuring National Wellbeing, set the scene by describing what national well-being (NWB) was and the rationale for measuring it. The ONS are looking to develop “an accepted and trusted set of National Statistics which people turn to first to understand and monitor national well-being”. Given the multidimensional nature of well-being, there are different avenues available to the ONS in considering how to measure NWB. One of the routes that is being tested in forthcoming surveys is that of subjective well-being (SWB). The ONS is taking a balanced approach by asking SWB questions that are related to evaluation, experience and eudemonia. The on-going national debate will inform the development of NWB measures.

Geoff Green, Emeritus professor of urban policy at Sheffield Hallam University, questioned the use of subjective measure especially with regard to their relationship with objective measures. He also raised the issue of developing measures without theoretical frameworks to underpin them. The
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an index that would capture important aspects of objective well-being such as life expectancy and health inequalities as well as subjective aspects such as experience and eudemonia. Weights for eud

- current vs. future wellbeing
 - changes over time (panel data)
- Dealing with potential bias
- single vs. multiple measures of well-being
 - Which measures were most appropriate?
 - Usefulness of a single index capturing important subjective and objective facets of well-being.
 - What subjective and objective questions?
 - How to combine them (weights)?
 - How to derive the weights?
- correlates and determinants of well-being
 - What factors are moderators/mediators of well-being and how should they be dealt with (personality, education, social capital, environment, sustainability, income, health - in particular mental health, marital status, crime, transport etc.)
 - How would these differ for different populations, time frames?
 - Negative life events?
- populations
 - local vs. national vs. international
 - adult vs. children
- presenting results
 - How to present results from multiple measures of WB

Some proposed measures:

- Human development index - developed with intellectual rigour and widely used. However, arguments against it due to lack of sensitivity in developed context
- New Economics Foundation Happy Planet Index

3) Policy issues

The final theme revolved around policy issues.

- How will well-being inform policy decisions
 - resource allocation? What about when there are conflicts between SWB and objective measures?
 - Monitoring?
 - Are we aiming for a norm?

- Local level priorities vs. national level priorities
- Paternalism vs. individualism
Government role in enhancing subjective well-being
Individual choices may not be 'good' choices e.g. current vs. future well-being and environment
- Political agenda related to focus on measures of subjective well-being instead of GDP
- why were previous data sets (National Place) not used /scrapped
- Is there a shift to prioritising health?

The information from these discussions will be forwarded to the ONS to inform the national debate on well-being.

Also see

For details on the ONS National Wellbeing project see
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/well-being>

For details on the CWiPP ONS event see
<http://www.shef.ac.uk/cwipp/wb-environment/ons-wellbeing.html>

About CWiPP

Established in 2002, CWiPP is a network of researchers and academics at the University of Sheffield, with a research interest in how people's health and well-being can be defined, measured and improved in ways that help policy-makers determine the best use of scarce resources, and to investigate the determinants of well-being insofar as these are relevant to policy formulation. Members include staff from a range of disciplinary areas including criminology, economics, geography, health services research, politics, and psychology.

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/cwipp>

Appendix: List of Participants

Chris	Armitage	University of Sheffield
Ian	Bache	University of Sheffield
Jessica	Baxendale	Sheffield Hallam University
Clive	Belgeonne	Sheffield Hallam University
Lindsay	Blank	University of Sheffield
Janice	Connell	University of Sheffield
Holly	Dannhauser	Sheffield City Council
Permjeet	Dhoot	NHS Sheffield
Simon	Dixon	University of Sheffield
Perry	Else	Sheffield Hallam University
Hannah	Fairbrother	University of Sheffield
Liddy	Goyder	University of Sheffield
Elena	Hodgson	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Jason	Horsley	NHS Rotherham
Ellie	Houlston	Sheffield PCT
James	Leach	Barnsley MBC
Sarah	McAuley	University of Sheffield
Louise	Reardon	University of Sheffield
Jo	Rick	University of Sheffield
Jennifer	Roberts	University of Sheffield
Joanna	Shapland	University of Sheffield
Chris	Shaw	Sheffield City Council
Rebecca	Sherry	NHS Barnsley
Sue	Smith	Barnsley MBC
Christine	Sprigg	University of Sheffield
Will	Sullivan	University of Sheffield
Praveen	Thokala	University of Sheffield
Peter	Warr	University of Sheffield
Jessica	Wilson	NHS Rotherham