

Statistical bulletin

Individual and community well-being, Great Britain: October 2022

What matters most for the well-being of individuals and communities in Great Britain. Based on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from 12 to 23 October 2022.

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Release date:
6 December 2022

Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Main points

- Adults in Great Britain mentioned family members and their welfare (45.5%) and physical or mental health (45.0%) most often as factors important for their individual well-being.
- The percentage of adults mentioning physical or mental health increased with age, while the percentage mentioning friends or a community and relationships or social interactions lowered.
- Those reporting low personal well-being were, on average, less likely to view health as important for their individual well-being (39.5%, compared with 48.9% of those not reporting low personal well-being); this may be as those aged 16 to 29 years and 30 to 49 years, who are less likely to prioritise health, made the majority of those reporting low well-being.
- Among the factors important for the well-being of communities, feeling safe was selected most often (82.3%); other important factors included trust between people (63.5%), the quality of the environment and how it is cared for (63.3%) and having the facilities you need (62.2%).
- Females were more likely to select feeling safe (85.6%, compared with 79.0% of males) and trust between people (67.8%, compared with 59.0% of males) as factors important for the well-being of their communities.
- Those reporting low levels of personal well-being were, on average, less likely to view trust between people as important for community well-being (60.0%, compared with 68.3% of those not reporting low personal well-being); this may be as males with low well-being rated trust lower than others.

2 . Individual well-being

We asked adults in Great Britain to think about what is important in their life and answer the question “What things matter most to your own well-being?”. The free-text responses were grouped into themes that were developed based on the content of the answers (see [Measuring the data](#)). Mentions of individual themes were then analysed quantitatively.

Family members and their welfare was reported as a factor important for individual well-being by 45.5% of adults, and physical or mental health was mentioned by 45.0% of respondents. Other commonly reported factors were personal financial situation (19.7%), friends or a community (13.2%), and work or factors related to work (11.2%).

Figure 1: Family, health and personal financial situations were identified most often as being important for the well-being of individuals

Things that matter for individual well-being, Great Britain, 12 to 23 October 2022

Notes:

1. Responses were collected using a free-text question and coded into themes (categories).
2. Empty and invalid answers were excluded from the analysis.
3. The “Other specific factors mentioned” category includes mentions of things that could not be classified into any of the other themes and were mentioned too infrequently to make a unique theme.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

The factors mentioned most frequently as important to individual well-being in October 2022 mirror the themes identified during the [National Well-being Debate in 2011 \(PDF, 407 KB\)](#). This suggests that family, friends, health, financial welfare and employment make up a foundation of the well-being of individuals. Similar matters were also important to the British public during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the current cost of living increases, as shown by our [Public opinions and social trends bulletins](#).

Individual well-being by sex

There were no statistically significant differences between what females and males found important for their well-being as individuals.

Figure 2: Females and males reported the same factors as important for their individual well-being

Things that matter for individual well-being by sex, Great Britain, 12 to 23 October 2022

Notes:

1. Responses were collected using a free-text question and coded into themes (categories).
2. Empty and invalid answers were excluded from the analysis.
3. The “Other specific factors mentioned” category includes mentions of things that could not be classified into any of the other themes and were mentioned too infrequently to make a unique theme.

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Individual well-being by age

More of those in the older age groups mentioned physical or mental health as important for their individual well-being (reported by 27.8% of those aged 16 to 29 years, and 60.8% of those aged 70 years and over). This likely reflects people’s age-related life circumstances.

Conversely, among those aged 16 to 29 years, 23.8% mentioned friends or a community as important for their individual well-being and 16.7% mentioned good relationships or social interactions. This is compared with 9.1% and 6.6%, respectively, for those aged 70 years and over. This may reflect a change in priorities or availability of friends and opportunities for social interactions as people become older.

Family members and their welfare were of similar importance across all age groups.

Figure 3: The percentage of people reporting health as being important for their individual well-being increased with age, while the percentage mentioning friends and relationships or social interactions lowered

Things that matter for individual well-being by age, Great Britain, 12 to 23 October 2022

Notes:

1. Responses were collected using a free-text question and coded into themes (categories).
2. Empty and invalid answers were excluded from the analysis.

Download the data

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Individual well-being by low personal well-being

We compared the factors important for the individual well-being of those reporting low personal well-being in at least one question with those not reporting low personal well-being in any of the questions. The factors used to measure personal well-being were:

- life satisfaction
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile
- happiness
- anxiety

In October 2022, 44.1% of adults in Great Britain reported low personal well-being in at least one question.

Note that the associations between personal well-being levels and the preference for specific factors as important for individual well-being may not signify a causal relationship.

Those who reported having low personal well-being were less likely to report physical or mental health as important to their individual well-being, compared with those who did not report having low personal well-being (39.5% and 48.9%, respectively). This could be related to demographic differences as those aged 16 to 29 years and those aged 30 to 49 years, who are less likely to prioritise health for their well-being, make up the majority of those reporting low well-being.

No other statistically significant differences were seen in the factors important to individual well-being between those who reported low personal well-being and those who did not.

Figure 4: Health was mentioned as important for individual well-being by a lower share of those reporting low personal well-being, compared with others

Things that matter for individual well-being by reported levels of personal well-being, Great Britain, 12 to 23 October 2022

Notes:

1. Responses were collected using a free-text question and coded into themes (categories).
2. Empty and invalid answers were excluded from the analysis.
3. The "Other specific factors mentioned" category includes mentions of things that could not be classified into any of the other themes and were mentioned too infrequently to make a unique theme.

Download the data

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3 . Community well-being

We asked the adults in Great Britain to select what they thought was most important for the well-being of their community. Community was defined as a group the respondent felt a part of. The answer options presented to the respondents were developed based on expert knowledge of well-being and social capital. Feeling safe was selected by 82.3% of respondents and was the most reported factor important for community well-being. It was followed by trust between people (63.5%), the quality of the environment and how it is cared for (63.3%) and having the facilities you need (62.2%).

Figure 5: Feeling safe was selected most often as being important for community well-being

Things that matter for community well-being, Great Britain, 12 to 23 October 2022

Notes:

1. Responses were collected using a multiple-choice question.
2. Respondents had an opportunity to provide further comments and alternative responses under the “Other” answer option. For more information, see [Measuring the data](#).

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Community well-being by sex

Higher percentages of females than males selected feeling safe (85.6%, compared with 79.0% of males) and trust between people (67.8%, compared with 59.0% of males) as factors important for the well-being of communities. These findings are consistent with our research, which shows that females are more likely to feel unsafe being alone in public spaces than males (see our [Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain: 16 February to 13 March 2022](#) bulletin).

There were no further statistically significant differences between females and males in factors selected as important for community well-being.

Figure 6: Feeling safe and trust between people were prioritised by more females than males for community well-being

Things that matter for community well-being by sex, Great Britain, 12 to 23 October 2022

Notes:

1. Responses were collected using a multiple-choice question.
2. Respondents had an opportunity to provide further comments and alternative responses under the “Other” answer option. For more information, see [Measuring the data](#).

Download the data

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Community well-being by age

Feeling safe was the top priority for community well-being, irrespective of age, and was selected by at least 80.0% of respondents in each age group. However, some generational differences also appeared between the youngest and the oldest age groups.

Those aged 16 to 29 years selected everyone feeling they can be included (60.7%) and having their voice heard (52.2%) as important for community well-being at higher rates than those aged 70 years and over (45.5% and 37.7%, respectively).

Conversely, those aged 70 years and over were more likely to select caring for future generations (53.1%, compared with 40.5% of those aged 16 to 29 years). This may reflect a subjective interpretation of the answer as referring to caring for children in the community. The younger respondents would be less likely to have children, and so may have not prioritised this factor.

Those aged 16 to 29 years also selected the quality of the environment and how it is cared for at lower rates than all other age groups (50.4%, compared with 65.4% of those 30 to 49 years old, 66.0% of those 50 to 69 years old, and 68.9% of those aged 70 years and over). As community was defined as a group that a person feels part of, those aged 16 to 29 years may have been more likely to think about communities that do not occupy a specific local area or a physical space (for example, a sports team or an online community), and therefore did not prioritise environment in the context of community well-being.

Figure 7: Generational differences existed in what those aged 16 to 29 years and those 70 years and over found important for community well-being

Things that matter for community well-being by age, Great Britain, 12 to 23 October 2022

Notes:

1. Responses were collected using a multiple-choice question.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Community well-being by low personal well-being

We also compared the factors important for community well-being selected by those who reported low personal well-being levels and those who did not.

In October 2022, 44.1% of adults in Great Britain reported low level of personal well-being in at least one question. The factors used to measure personal well-being were:

- life satisfaction
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile
- happiness
- anxiety

Note that the associations between personal well-being levels and the preference for specific factors as important for community well-being may not signify a causal relationship.

Among those reporting low personal well-being, 60.0% selected trust between people as a factor important for community well-being, compared with 68.3% of those who did not report low personal well-being. This may be because males with low well-being prioritise trust between people at a lower rate.

All other community well-being factors were selected by similar percentages of those reporting low personal well-being and those who did not report low personal well-being.

Figure 8: Individuals reporting low personal well-being prioritised trust between people at lower rates than others

Things that matter for community well-being by reported levels of personal well-being, Great Britain, 12 to 23 October 2022

Notes:

1. Responses were collected using a multiple-choice question.
2. Respondents had an opportunity to provide further comments and alternative responses under the "Other" answer option. For more information, see [Measuring the data](#).

Download the data

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4 . Individual and community well-being data

[Individual and community well-being data](#) Dataset | Released 6 December 2022 Personal well-being, individual well-being and community well-being data collected between 12 and 23 October 2022 using the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey. Includes sub-population breakdowns by sex, age and levels of personal well-being, as well as quality information for the estimates.

5 . Glossary

Personal well-being

In the UK, personal well-being has been measured since April 2011 using using questions on:

- life satisfaction (Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?)
- whether we think the things we do in life are worthwhile (Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?)
- happiness (Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?)
- anxiety (On a scale where 0 is "not at all anxious" and 10 is "completely anxious", overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?)

For more information, see our [Personal well-being user guidance](#).

Low personal well-being

The four questions measuring personal well-being are asked on a scale from 0 to 10 and can be reported using means or thresholds (see our [Personal well-being user guidance](#)).

Low personal well-being is defined by ratings of 0 to 4 (out of 10) for life satisfaction, feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile and happiness, and a rating of 6 to 10 for anxiety (higher levels of anxiety are synonymous with lower well-being).

Respondents who reported low well-being in at least one of the personal well-being questions are referred to as those reporting low personal well-being. Those who did not rate their personal well-being as low in any of the questions are referred to as those not reporting low personal well-being.

Individual well-being

Individual well-being refers broadly to the welfare and well-being of a person on an individual level. This is different from personal well-being, which is defined and measured by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) four well-being questions on life satisfaction, whether we think the things we do in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiety.

In this research, we use the phrase individual well-being to refer to the insights from a free-text question “What things matter most to your own well-being?”. The responses are referred to as factors important for individual well-being.

Community well-being

Community well-being refers broadly to welfare of a community understood as a group of people who belong together, for example by sharing a space or doing the same things.

In this research we use the term community well-being to refer to the insights from a multiple-choice question “Thinking about the well-being of your community, what do you think is most important? By community we mean a group that you feel a part of.”. The responses are referred to as factors important for community well-being.

Social capital

Social capital is a term used to describe the extent and nature of our connections with others, and the collective attitudes and behaviours between people that support a well-functioning, close-knit society. It is measured across four domains: personal relationships, social network support, civic engagement and trust and cooperative norms.

The latest estimates of social capital in the United Kingdom can be found in our [Social capital in the UK: April 2020 to March 2021](#) bulletin.

6 . Measuring the data

Data collection

This bulletin is part of a wider portfolio of research undertaken to inform a review of our [Measures of National Well-being](#). As part of the review, we asked the public what matters for their well-being as individuals and for the well-being of their communities. These questions were developed to provide evidence on well-being and validate the relevance of the measures of national well-being, as well as to inform [the Levelling Up well-being mission](#).

The question exploring what matters for individual well-being (“What things matter most to your own wellbeing?”) was asked as a voluntary, free-text question. The community well-being question (“Thinking about the wellbeing of your community, what do you think is most important? By community we mean a group that you feel a part of.”) was a multiple-choice question with a list of suggested factors shown in a randomised order.

The data were collected between 12 and 23 October 2022, using the Opinion and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). The survey sampled 4,982 households, from which 2,173 individuals responded (44% response rate). The sample was randomly selected from adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain. Further information on the survey design can be found in our [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

Analysis and methodology

The individual well-being question was analysed using an approach which allows us to explore and quantify the presence of themes in qualitative data. In line with this approach, answers to the individual well-being question were manually coded into categories (themes). The list of themes was informed by the content of the answers and developed in an iterative process of coding and reviewing the data. Initially 28 themes were developed, which were then merged into 15 themes to improve sample sizes. In this process, a sample size of at least 50 respondents per theme was achieved, which allowed us to analyse the data by sex, age and personal well-being of the respondents.

The open text answers provided against the community well-being question were also reviewed. Out of 47 comments, 22 related to the multiple-choice answer options and so were recoded accordingly. The remaining 25 comments were validated as mentions of true other factors and left in the "Other" category. Among those we have identified repeated mentions of three additional things that matter to community well-being: a stable economy and financial security of individuals, association with a church, and fair, reliable and effective government.

The individual well-being themes and the community well-being answers were analysed quantitatively to produce estimates of the percentages of respondents selecting specific factors as important for well-being. Survey weights were applied to make the estimates representative of the population of Great Britain.

Quality of the data

The presented data come from a cross-sectional survey. This means that survey data were collected for a sample of the population of interest at a point in time, and the estimates are subject to uncertainty. Our [guidance on uncertainty](#) contains more information on how we measure and communicate uncertainty for survey data.

In this release, differences between estimates are evaluated using non-overlapping 95% confidence intervals, and only the statistically significant differences are reported and commented on. This is a conservative method of assessing difference, so it is possible that significant differences that have not been identified using this method exist in the data.

All analysis has been done on unrounded data.

Further information on data quality can be found in our [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey QMI](#).

Grouping of the free-text responses

- Family members and their welfare – included mentions of family members (children, siblings, parents, partner, pets), family members' welfare and well-being, and caring for family members.
- Physical or mental health – included mentions of health (either physical or mental) of the respondent or their family members, low stress, and access to healthcare and medication.
- Personal financial situation – included mentions of financial security, having money or earning well, being able to afford the necessities or living comfortably, and being able to provide for the family, as well as having a home and being able to afford accommodation.
- Friends or a community – included mentions of friends, friends' welfare and well-being, having companionship, and being part of a community.
- Good relationships or social interactions – included mentions of having good relationships (romantic and non-romantic), happy or stable family life, spending time with others, and socialising.
- Work or factors related to work – included mentions of working, having a job, job security, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and having spare time.
- Doing things that have purpose – included mentions of having a purpose, doing meaningful things, keeping busy, feeling valued or worthwhile, achieving goals, as well as pursuing personal development activities, education, training, and career progression.
- Being happy – included mentions of happiness, being content, and enjoying life.
- Being active or eating good food – included mentions of exercise, being active, good food, diet, and keeping healthy lifestyle.
- Free time activities – included mentions of hobbies, free time activities, travel, holidays, and cultural activities.
- Safety or security – included mentions of security or safety (of the respondent or their family members) and feeling safe.
- Access to nature or outdoor spaces – included mentions of having access to nature or outdoor spaces, being outdoors, access to or living in the countryside, having a garden or an allotment, and gardening.
- Being free or able to do what I want – included mentions of being independent and maintaining independence (including physical independence or physical mobility), freedom, ability to do what I want, and self-sufficiency.
- Stated "nothing" or "don't know" – included mentions of nothing, not applicable, and don't know.
- Other specific factors – included mentions of things that could not be classified into any of the other themes and were mentioned too infrequently to make a unique theme. Among those, religion and spirituality, capable government and good policymaking, being able to cope with life and manage every day, stability, getting enough sleep, and climate change, the environment and sustainability were mentioned most often.

7 . Strengths and limitations

Strengths

- The data come from a representative sample of adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain and have been collected using a well-established survey with robust sampling and weighting methodology.
- The individual well-being data were collected using an open text question that was positioned at the beginning of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). This limited topical bias and ensured high quality data that are representative of the factors that the British public find important for their well-being.
- The individual well-being question answers underwent a rigorous, iterative coding process, which was guided by the data. Two independent coders developed and evaluated the themes based on the content of the answers. Another independent researcher then assured the quality of coding.

Limitations

- The data that inform this release were collected at a specific point in time associated with a specific socio-economic context. As such, some of the answers may have been biased towards current high-profile topics.
- There was no cognitive testing of the individual and community well-being questions because of time restrictions, which may have led to untested biases in how the respondents answered.
- The data were analysed using quantitative methods, which may have reduced some of the qualitative nuance of the answers to the individual well-being question.

8 . Related links

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain](#)

Bulletin series | New bulletins released quarterly

Social insights on daily life and events, including the cost of living, location of work, health and well-being from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

[Cost of living and depression in adults, Great Britain: 29 September to 23 October 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 6 December 2022

Analysis of the proportion of adults in Great Britain experiencing some form of depression in autumn 2022, exploring the impacts of the rising cost of living, based on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

[Quarterly personal well-being estimates - non-seasonally adjusted](#)

Dataset | Released 11 November 2022

Non-seasonally adjusted quarterly estimates of life satisfaction, feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiety in the UK.

[Quality of information for quarterly personal well-being estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 11 November 2022

Confidence intervals and sample sizes for quarterly estimates of personal well-being in the UK.

[Personal well-being in the UK: April 2021 to March 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 31 October 2022

Estimates of life satisfaction, feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiety at the UK, country, regional, county, local and unitary authority level.

[Measures of National Well-being Dashboard: Quality of Life in the UK](#)

Data dashboard | Released 11 November 2022

Data dashboard providing an overview of the UK's progress against 44 indicators across the 10 domains of national well-being. National level data, trend over time and the assessment of change are presented for each indicator. The data sources and associated insight reports for each indicator can be accessed through the dashboard by following the links in chart subtitles.

[Quality of life in the UK: November 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 11 November 2022

An update on the UK's progress across 10 domains of national well-being: personal well-being, relationships, health, what we do, where we live, personal finance, economy, education and skills, governance, and the environment.

9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 6 December 2022, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Individual and community well-being, Great Britain: October 2022](#)