

Statistical bulletin

# Quality of life in the UK: May 2023

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.

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# 1 . Main points

- The percentage of adults in the UK reporting very high levels of life satisfaction decreased in the latest quarter (Quarter 4, October to December 2022) to 23.3%, compared with 25.2% in the same quarter last year (Quarter 4 2021); while adults reporting very high levels of feeling things they do in life are worthwhile (32.1%), and happiness (29.4%) and very low levels of anxiety (33.8%) remained similar between Quarter 4 2022 and Quarter 4 2021.
- Between 22 March and 16 April 2023, 86.3% of adults in Great Britain reported that they can rely on people in their life if they have a serious problem and 66.8% said that in general, they trust most people.
- Between 22 March and 16 April 2023, 24.5% of adults in Great Britain reported they trust the UK government while 69.3% of adults agreed or strongly agreed that they do not have any say in what the government does.
- When asked between 22 March and 16 April 2023, 34.1% of adults in Great Britain reported giving unpaid help to clubs, groups, charities, or organisations in the last 12 months (of which, 57.4% had volunteered at least once a month) compared with 29.5% between 22 June and 17 July 2022 (this previous period included the ending of the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions in 2021).
- Greenhouse gas emissions in the UK fell to 417.08 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2022 (provisional estimate), compared with 2021 (426.51 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e).
- The UK's public sector net debt reached 99.6% of gross domestic product (GDP) at the end of March 2023, and inflation, as measured by Consumer Price Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH), reached 8.9% in the 12 months to March 2023, down from 9.2% in February 2023.
- We launched a review of the Office for National Statistics' Measures of National Well-being in late 2022. We will be publishing the recommendations from this review at a public event on 5 July 2023. Please contact [qualityoflife@ons.gov.uk](mailto:qualityoflife@ons.gov.uk) for more information about this event.

Estimates are from different data sources and therefore are representative for different geographies and time periods. Therefore, caution is advised when making comparisons between indicators and over time. The impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on data collection and people's opinions should also be considered. For more detail on data sources, see [Section 3: Measuring the data](#).

## 2 . Quality of life in the UK data

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

Data dashboard | Released 12 May 2023

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.

### [Measuring national well-being: domains and measures](#)

Dataset | Released 12 May 2023

Latest data, time series data and detailed information for the measures of national well-being. Includes estimates for all indicators from each domain, sub-national breakdowns (where available) and links to the data sources and associated release.

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

Dataset | Released 12 May 2023

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 12 May 2023

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

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

Dataset | Released 12 May 2023

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

## 3 . Measuring the data

This release provides an update on 22 of the 44 indicators across 10 domains of national well-being, using the latest data available as of 27 April 2023. This bulletin is accompanied by the [Measures of National Well-being Dashboard: Quality of Life in the UK](#).

### National well-being indicators

The 10 domains of national well-being that the UK public told us were the areas of life that mattered most to them are:

- personal well-being
- our relationships
- health
- what we do
- where we live
- personal finance
- economy
- education and skills
- governance
- environment

Within these 10 domains there are 44 indicators of national well-being. The indicators include both objective measures (for example, unemployment rate) and subjective measures (for example, job satisfaction) to provide a comprehensive picture of the nation's well-being and societal progress.

The following indicators have been updated for this release:

- people rating their overall satisfaction with their life as very high
- people rating how worthwhile they feel the things they do in life are as very high
- people rating their happiness yesterday as very high
- people rating their anxiety yesterday as very low
- people who agree or strongly agree that they can rely on people in their lives if they have a serious problem
- people who feel lonely often or always
- people who in general trust most other people
- disabled people (based on the core definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010)
- unemployment rate among adults aged 16 years and over (seasonally adjusted)
- people who gave unpaid help to clubs, groups, charities or organisations in the last 12 months
- people who provided unpaid help to groups, clubs or organisations at least once a month in the last 12 months
- people who engaged with the arts in person in the last 12 months
- people who on average take part in moderate-intensity sport and/or physical activity for at least 150 minutes a week
- people who agree or strongly agree that they feel like they belong to their neighbourhood
- individuals in households with less than 60% of relative median household income (before housing costs)
- public sector net debt as a percentage of gross domestic product (non-seasonally adjusted)
- inflation rate (as measured by CPIH, all items 2015 = 100)
- young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET, seasonally adjusted)
- people who tend to trust the national government
- people who agree or strongly agree that they do not have any say in what the government does
- total greenhouse gas emissions
- renewable energy consumption

The selection of indicators is based on the national well-being framework established by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in 2011, following a public consultation.

The full set of national well-being estimates, including historical data and assessment of over-time change where possible, and the full list of indicator changes are available in the accompanying datasets. The sub-population breakdowns by country and the International Territorial Level 1 (ITL1) region, age and sex are also provided where possible.

All analysed data were known to be current as of 27 April 2023. Data sources for individual indicators can be accessed by following source links in our [National well-being dashboard](#) and our [Quality of life datasets](#).

## Data coverage

The data come from several data sources that differ in terms of covered geographies, sampled populations and periods of data collection. They are referenced throughout for each indicator and detailed in our [accompanying datasets](#).

In 2020 and 2021, several of the data sources were affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in terms of the mode and timeliness of data collection or sample composition. Therefore, caution should be taken when making comparisons between indicators and over time.

For the indicators where the UK-wide data are not available, alternative data sources may exist for the devolved administrations (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), but differences in methodology affect comparability of the data. For national well-being data collected by the devolved administrations, see the [Scottish Government's National Indicator Performance](#), the [Welsh Government's Wellbeing of Wales: national indicators](#) and [Wellbeing of Wales releases](#), and the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's Wellbeing in Northern Ireland](#).

## Comparability

Short-term change is assessed by comparison with the previous year, or the latest previous figure if a one-year comparison is not available. Long-term change is defined as change over the previous five years or, if not available, the next previous figure.

Where available, [confidence intervals](#) are provided within the datasets alongside this release. Where changes over time are presented in this bulletin, associated confidence intervals are used to assess the [statistical significance](#) of the differences.

For some of the indicators that are not based on survey data, confidence intervals are not available. In those cases, change over time has not been assessed or has been assessed based on guidance from the data owner. When interpreting the latest estimates and the presented assessments of change, the potential impact of the coronavirus pandemic on individual's attitudes and survey responses, as well as the impact on data collection, should be kept in mind, given the major disruption that the coronavirus pandemic caused in people's lives.

As most of the data come from self-completion household surveys, the estimates may not be representative for individuals who do not live in private residential households.

## 4 . Strengths and limitations

Comparisons over time and between indicators must be made with caution as the estimates come from several data sources with different geographical coverage and data collection periods (for more information see our [Quality of life datasets](#)).

The majority of the indicators are based on cross-sectional survey data. Information was collected from a sample of the population of interest at a point in time, and then weighted to adjust the estimates for representativeness of the population. Therefore, the estimates are subject to uncertainty, which is expressed using 95% [confidence intervals](#) (where available). This is a conservative method of assessing change, so it is possible that significant differences exist in the data that have not been identified using this method. Our guidance page, [Uncertainty and how we measure it for our surveys](#) contains more information on how we measure and communicate uncertainty for survey data.

All analysis has been done on unrounded figures. Some figures may not sum because of rounding.

## 5 . Related links

[GDP first quarterly estimate, UK: January to March 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 12 May 2023

First quarterly estimate of gross domestic product (GDP). Contains current and constant price data on the value of goods and services to indicate the economic performance of the UK.

[Climate change insights: economy and transport, UK: May 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 12 May 2023

Latest climate change-related analysis using a range of UK official statistics.

[Measuring Progress: What matters most to most to people in the UK and has that changed over time](#)

Blog post | Released 10 February 2023

Summary of our GDP & beyond work including findings from the measures of national well-being consultation.

## 6 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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