

Investing in Wellbeing



Wellbeing is central to creating resilient, thriving and sustainable communities and economies. This quick reference guide aims to support investing in population wellbeing.

What does wellbeing mean?

Wellbeing is often simply defined as **“feeling good and functioning well”**.

This includes having a fair share of material resources, influence and control, a sense of meaning, belonging and connection with people and place and the capability to manage problems and change.

Why improve wellbeing?

Improving wellbeing will help **save lives and money** and lead to better outcomes in:

- Employment and productivity
- Educational attainment
- Health, healthy behaviours and life expectancy
- Stronger and safer communities
- Individual and family quality of life

Good wellbeing is a specific outcome and focuses on the capabilities, assets, experiences and potential of individuals and communities.

Can wellbeing be measured?

Wellbeing can be measured and there are a number of tools available to support this.

There is a baseline score for wellbeing for each locality in Cheshire and Merseyside using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Score (WEMWBS). Interventions can measure improvement and comparison using WEMWBS.

What can be done to improve wellbeing?

Getting the basics right for all citizens

The wellbeing of individuals and communities is eroded by material disadvantage. Public services can therefore make a significant contribution to improving wellbeing by tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. Priorities include:

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| - Maximising household income | - Affordable, quality & warm housing |
| - Secure & meaningful employment | - Education, training & learning |
| - Sports, leisure, culture and arts | - Access to services |
| - Access to green space and nature | - Safe & pleasant built environment |

Wellbeing Interventions

Evidence suggests that the following interventions are cost effective and can improve wellbeing outcomes:

- Health Visiting and reducing post-natal depression

For parental and child mental wellbeing, quality of life and productivity

- Parenting skills and support

For maternal and child mental wellbeing; £8 saved per £1 invested over 25 years; 3:1 public sector*

- Healthy schools including social & emotional learning programmes and reducing bullying

For young people's education, wellbeing and reduced crime and service costs; SEL savings £10,000 per child after 10 years; bullying prevention saves £1000 per pupil*

- Debt advice

To increase financial security, reduce mental illness and worklessness; £3.40 savings per £1 invested*

- Promoting wellbeing in the workplace

To improve productivity and reduce worklessness; £9 savings per £1 invested*

- Befriending for older people

To reduce isolation and service costs

- Timebanking

To increase inclusion, independence, social networks and employment; £3 savings per £1 invested**

- Community navigators

To improve service usage and reduce vulnerability; £2 saved per £1 invested**

- Alcohol Brief Interventions

To improve health and reduce costs of services and crime; £12 saved per £1 invested*

Other research

Other research suggests outcomes will be improved through:

- Improving access to green space and the natural environment

- Strengthening social networks and neighbourhoods through community empowerment interventions

- Increasing financial security e.g. through credit unions, benefit uptake

- Reducing isolation and improving psycho-social wellbeing through increasing access to community based support e.g. social prescribing, signposting to exercise, learning, arts, welfare advice

- Increasing opportunities for volunteering

References and further information on the cost-effectiveness evidence and wellbeing measures can be viewed at www.champspublichealth.com

Knapp M, McDaid D & Parsonage M (2011) Mental health promotion and mental illness prevention: An economic case, London: London School of Economics/ Department of Health

** Knapp M et al (2011) Building community capacity: making an economic case, Personal Social Services Research Unit