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.

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:

• Maximising household income
• Affordable, quality and warm housing
• Secure and meaningful employment
• Education, training and learning
• Sports, leisure, culture and arts
• Access to services
• Access to green space and nature
• Safe and 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 and emotional learning (SEL) 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*

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

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


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.