

A Framework for Well-being for Ireland

Survey Response to the National Economic and Social Council (NESC)

What kind of Ireland do I want / does my organisation want?

Please describe your vision for the type of Ireland you want by completing the following sentence:

" My organisation wants an Ireland where..... "

.....people (irrespective of ability/disability/ethnicity) feel socially and financially included, have sufficient income to meet the costs of daily living, have affordable and secure housing, have access to robust social services when they need them and have meaningful educational and work opportunities.

What I / my organisation value most in life?

What for you / your organisation makes for a good life? Please list as few or as many as you think are important.

- Access to key services and supports at critical life stages
- Housing that is affordable and that is of a decent standard
- Sufficient income to meet the costs of daily living
- A sense of belonging (in a local community/neighbourhood)
- Healthy (pollution-free) living environments
- Personal work satisfaction and enrichment
- Having a sense of purpose and meaning in life
- Safety in the home (from violence, abuse and exploitation)
- Safety for every citizen in public spaces
- Full accessibility in built environment for people with disabilities

Some areas of well-being are identified in the table below. For each area please rate as one of the following: Very Important, Important, Neutral, Less Important, Not at all Important.

Very Important: Housing, Work and Job quality, Health, Environment quality, Subjective well-being, Social Connections

Important: Income and wealth, Knowledge and Skills, Safety, Work Life Balance, Civil Engagement

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Less Important	Not at all Important
Income and wealth	<input type="radio"/> Very Important	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important
Housing	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important
Work and Job quality	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important
Health	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important
Knowledge and skills	<input type="radio"/> Very Important	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important
Environment quality	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important
Subjective well-being	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important
Safety	<input type="radio"/> Very Important	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important
Work Life Balance	<input type="radio"/> Very Important	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important
Social Connections	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important	<input type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important
Civil Engagement	<input type="radio"/> Very Important	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Important	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Less Important	<input type="radio"/> Not at all Important

Are there any areas of well-being that are not covered here? If so, please give details:

Social inclusion generally is a key aspect of well-being that needs to be considered. Social inclusion is broader than social connections and civil engagement in that it includes people’s basic attachment to society generally and to social institutions, including democratic processes and policy-making forums. Financial inclusion and digital inclusion are also related to well-being. If people cannot participate in society in a meaningful way because of social, cultural, financial, digital or cultural barriers, their well-being will almost certainly be impacted on negatively. Groups likely to experience social exclusion more than others are people with disabilities, people with mental health difficulties, Travellers and other ethnic minorities and older people with complex social and health care needs, including, in particular, those resident in nursing homes.

It is crucially important to distinguish between income and wealth. Adequate income for daily living is essential to well-being while the relationship between wealth and well-being is more subjective. Measuring the well-being of people living in poverty or experiencing deprivation requires a different set of criteria than for people who are not experiencing poverty.

Another important consideration in determining wellbeing is whether or not people are able to assert their human and legal rights -- the right to live independently in the community, the right to self-determination,

the right to be free from exploitation and abuse, the right to personal liberty and the right to equal access to justice.

Do you have any thoughts on indicators that would be useful for measuring any of the areas of well-being identified in the previous questions? If so, please list them below:

- Access to appropriate and affordable housing
- Timely access to quality health and social care services
- Job satisfaction, remuneration and opportunities for progression
- Access to financial services
- Accessible living environment
- Adequate income for daily living

Survey complete: Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

If you have any further comments not captured in the previous questions, please share your comment here:

People who use CIB services (CISs, MABS and the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS)) are typically people on low income with some having a disability or experiencing mental health difficulties and some experiencing over-indebtedness. Many of the users of these services experience difficulties in accessing appropriate housing, health and social care services and sufficient income for daily living. Well-being for many of these people is likely to be determined primarily by the difficulties associated with their life situation – poverty, inadequate housing, inability to access appropriate services in a timely manner. These are factors that must be included in any measurement of well-being.

Access to key services and supports at critical life stages are an integral part of any well-being barometer and there is a corresponding need for independent information and advice and advocacy to support that access and the exercise of rights, along with the need for independent appeal and access to redress mechanisms. Empowering people to articulate their will and preferences, to self-advocate and to negotiate the sometimes complex pathways to supports and services should be regarded as a key component in enhancing well-being.

It is important to ensure that a wellbeing framework fits with other Government public policy strategies that focus on discrete strands of wellbeing, in particular, housing, health care and social inclusion policies. The development of a wellbeing framework requires an all-of-Government approach. However, the 'silo' nature of Irish public services impedes the development of an overarching frameworks and needs to be addressed at a broader Governmental level.

There is a need to adopt the principle of 'weightings' in terms of a wellbeing framework. There needs to be prioritisation of core determinants of wellbeing such as housing, child poverty, social and financial inclusion and equality of access for people with disabilities.

In measuring the dimensions of well-being, there is an obvious need to focus on the inequalities of well-being outcomes between different groups. Some people (based on their social, cultural and financial

capital) have the capacity to create positive well-being on their own – others clearly do not. The latter group require proactive engagement by the institutions of the state to help foster well-being.

Relevant areas are

- fostering social inclusion,
- eradicating poverty,
- ensuring that people have adequate literacy, digital literacy and numeracy skills,
- access to appropriate health and social care supports (e.g. people with mental health difficulties),
- enabling people to deal with indebtedness and
- creating meaningful opportunities for work and social engagement.

In the case of the latter, the situation of people with disabilities is particularly important. As stated in the Government Report, *Budget 2021: Wellbeing and the Measurement of Broader Living Standards in Ireland*, there is a need to develop broader well-being parameters and to consider the distribution of outcomes, including income, the depletion of natural resources and the value of unpaid labour including housework and volunteering. The report makes the crucial point that, at the societal level, the concept of wellbeing encompasses objective and subjective features of current living conditions, including objective accounting of circumstances, such as income or life expectancy.

It is critically important that well-being is viewed as intrinsically linked to a person's living accommodation. People who are homeless, living in inadequate or poor quality housing or inappropriately living in a residential care setting (e.g., younger people with a disability in nursing homes) are cases in point. Clearly, many people in such situations cannot on their own, without public policy intervention, change their housing situation – this impacts significantly on their well-being.

It will be very important in the development of the well-being framework that due cognisance is given to individuals and groups who for reasons of social exclusion, poverty, ethnicity, disability, mental health difficulty, age, homelessness or addiction problems are unable by themselves to either identify or enhance well-being. Difficulties with achieving well-being should not be located in individuals or groups but rather in the societal, institutional and policy processes that contribute to the difficulties in the first instance. An inclusive well-being framework must take this into account.