

Personal well-being outputs: Summary of user feedback

Feedback from an online survey conducted to help us enhance the quality of the personal well-being outputs and consider different analysis to better meet user needs.

Contact:
Rhian Jones
QualityOfLife@ons.gov.uk

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1 . Introduction

In November 2010, Office for National Statistics (ONS) established the [Measuring National Well-being \(MNW\) programme](#) to provide accepted and trusted measures of the well-being of the nation. The MNW work is part of an initiative, both in the UK and internationally, to look beyond traditional headline economic growth figures to establish a fuller picture of UK progress. The goal is to support better decision-making among policymakers, individuals, communities, businesses and civil society. The measures include both objective data (for example, crimes against the person) and subjective data (for example, feeling safe walking alone after dark).

We assess personal well-being as part the of wider MNW programme and use four measures (often referred to as the ONS4) that capture three types of well-being: evaluative, eudemonic and affective experience. People are asked to respond to the questions on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”:

- “Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”
- “Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?”
- “Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?”
- “Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?”

The personal well-being questions represent the [harmonised standard for measuring personal well-being](#) and are used in [many surveys](#) across the UK.

Data for personal well-being estimates are sourced from the [Annual Population Survey \(APS\)](#), which is the UK’s largest household survey containing our personal well-being questions. [Personal well-being](#) estimates and accompanying datasets are published quarterly, based on the most recent years’ worth of data from the APS. Monitoring personal well-being across the nation helps to show how people feel their quality of life changes and this can be related to changes in circumstance, policies and wider events in society.

2 . Feedback survey

An important aspect of our work is to shed some light on inequalities in the UK, comparing people who are thriving with those struggling and, over the last months, we have reported some initial work on how best to measure well-being inequalities. We are planning more work in this area and are in the process of reviewing our publications and planning to provide in-depth analysis of our well-being data from an inequality perspective.

At the end of February 2018, we conducted an online survey to help us enhance the quality of the personal well-being outputs and consider different analysis that could be produced to better meet user needs. The online survey was advertised as follows:

- alongside our [personal well-being release in February 2018](#)
- a blog on the [Government Statistical Service website](#)
- a blog on the [What Works Wellbeing Centre website](#)
- social media via posts on the ONS [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts
- [GovDelivery](#) email alerts
- newsletter to our known users and stakeholders across other government departments, devolved administrations, local authorities, businesses, charities, think tanks, and universities.

Our questionnaire for the online survey mainly consisted of closed questions, asking respondents about their use of personal well-being outputs and dashboard, feedback on the bulletins, and priorities for future releases. Some open-ended questions were included for respondents to provide reasons behind some of their preferences, for example, what analysis they would be interested in and other ways to present findings in the personal well-being releases. None of the survey questions were compulsory, so analysis is based on the responses received for each question.

From the end of April 2018, we conducted another online survey; the [summary report of the main findings for the MNW outputs](#) is also available separately.

3 . Responses

From February 2018, a total of 163 responses were received from the various channels through which the online survey was advertised. Out of the 163 respondents, 128 provided information on the organisation they worked at or what role they were in:

- government or public sector (34%)
- academia (19%)
- members of the public, for example, retirees (15%)
- third sector, charity or non-government organisation (10%)
- private sector (9%)
- other users, for example, communications or digital officers, consultants (13%)

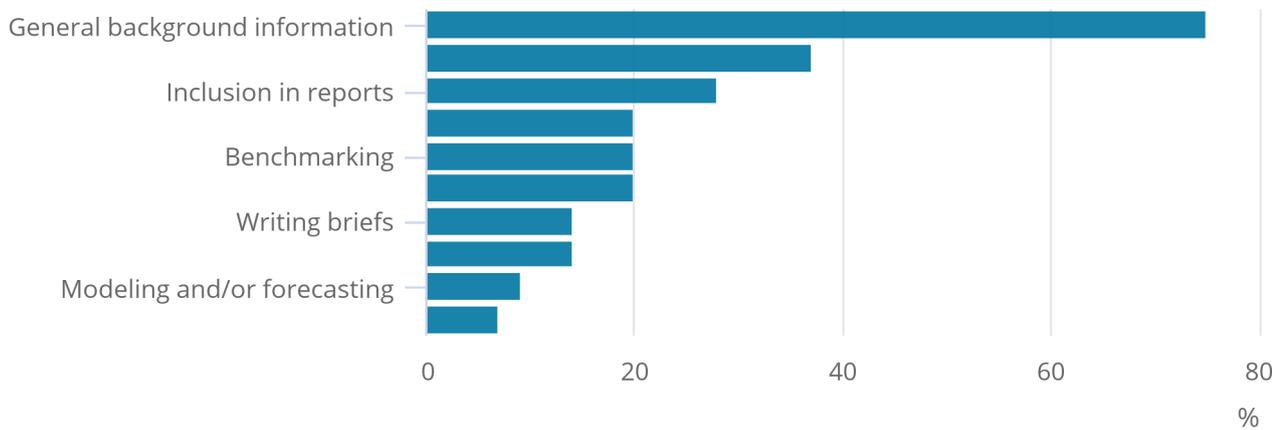
4 . Feedback received

Main uses of personal well-being outputs

Respondents were asked about their uses for the personal well-being outputs, such as what they use them for and how important they are to their work. Figure 1 shows how the outputs are used.

Figure 1: Use of personal well-being outputs

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Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

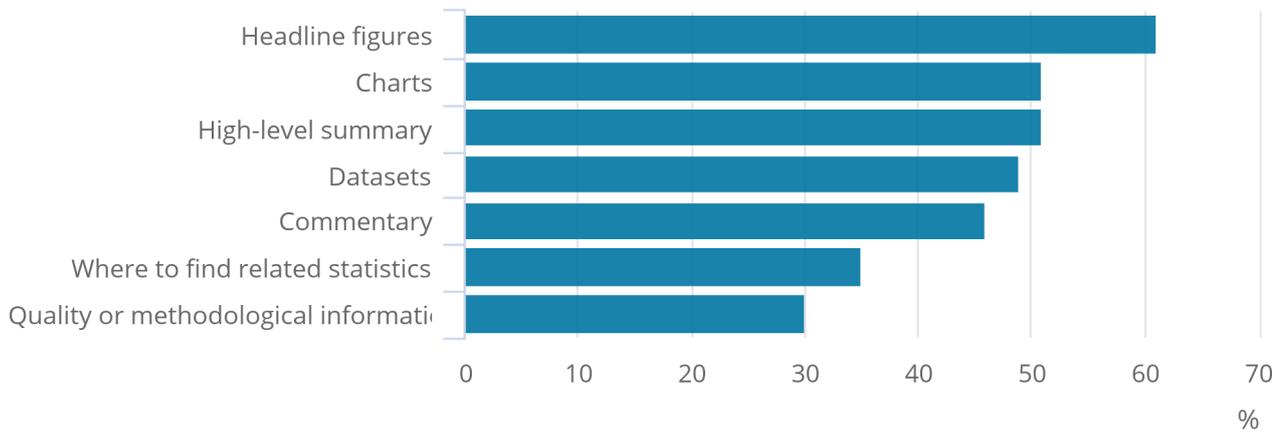
1. 163 respondents answered this question.
2. This was a "tick all that apply" question so respondents could provide more than one response.
3. "Other" includes education, political conversations and meetings.

The most common use for the personal well-being outputs is for general background information (75%), with research and inclusion in reports as the next common uses (37% and 28% respectively).

Figure 2 shows that respondents mostly use our outputs for headline figures (61%), followed by high-level summary and charts (51%), datasets and commentary (almost 50%). The least-used content is the quality or methodological information (30%) and the "where to find related statistics" content (35%).

Figure 2: Content used from personal well-being outputs

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Source: Office for National Statistics

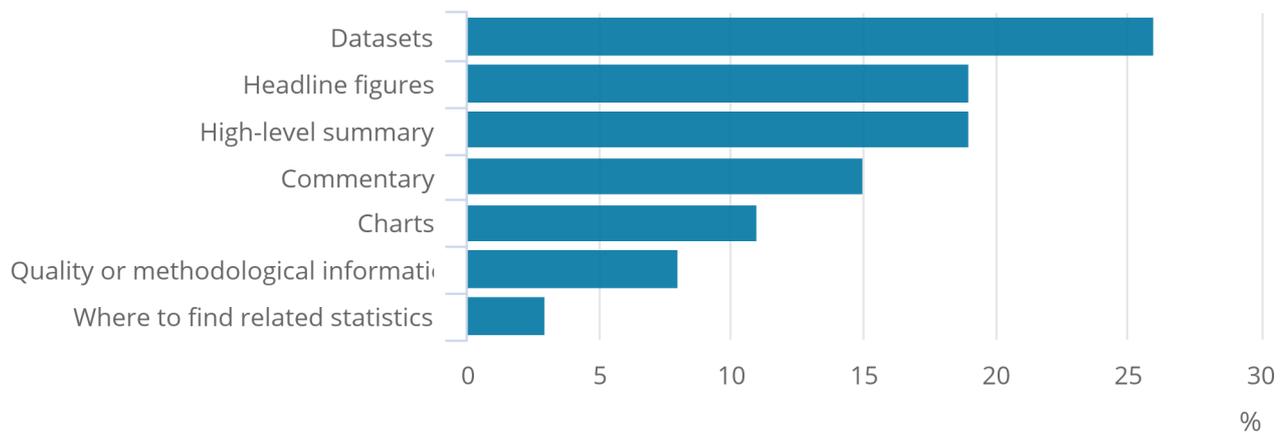
Notes:

1. 158 respondents answered this question.
2. This was a "tick all that apply" question so respondents could provide more than one response.

Focusing on the bulletins in particular, respondents were asked what they mainly use the personal well-being bulletins for: 35% use them to enhance their own understanding of personal well-being, while 23% to understand certain statistics to do their job. Other uses for the bulletin include finding out more about local area (16%), downloading data to carry out own analysis (13%) and policy needs (7%). Figure 3 shows that the content users are most interested in datasets (26%), followed by headline figures (19%) and high-level summary (19%). This is a similar picture across the different sectors.

Figure 3: Content users are most interested in

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Source: Office for National Statistics

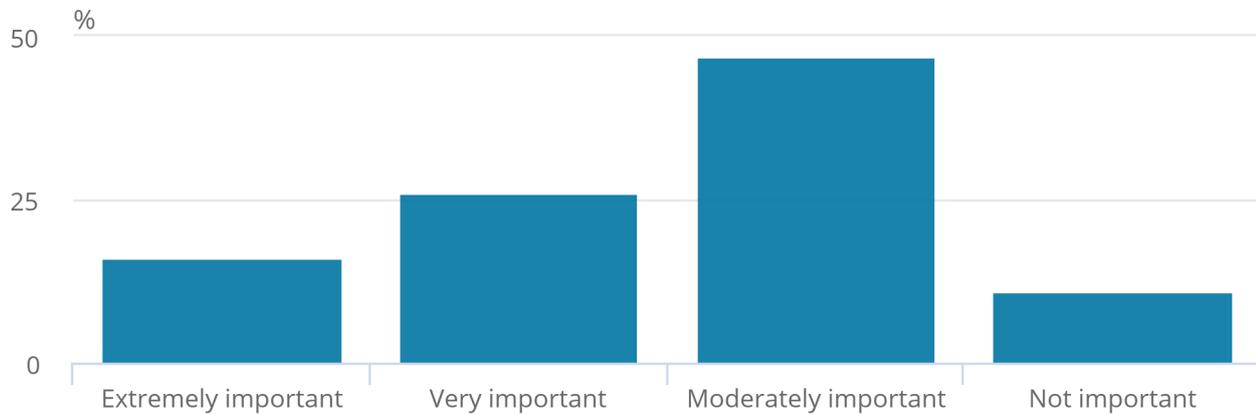
Notes:

1. 160 respondents answered this question.

Respondents were also asked how important personal well-being outputs are to their work. Figure 4 shows that 42% of respondents find them extremely or very important, 47% moderately important and 11% not important to their work.

Figure 4: How important the personal well-being outputs are to respondents' work

Figure 4: How important the personal well-being outputs are to respondents' work



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. 109 respondents answered this question. Does not include responses from people that stated that they were "Members of the public".

Focusing on the bulletins, 83% of respondents found that the language used in our personal well-being bulletins is straightforward and easy to understand. Similarly, most respondents find the length of our bulletins "Just right" (83%). Only 9% find them too short, while 8% find them too long. We also asked respondents to rate the level of detail in the personal well-being bulletins they have used. Again, the majority (79%) rated the level of detail as "Just right", 17% find that there is not enough detail (especially among academics), while 5% find there is too much detail. This feedback shows that for most of our users and stakeholders our personal well-being bulletins are providing the right amount of detail, in a format that is simple to read and understand.

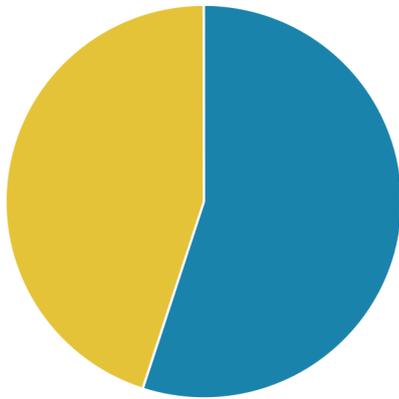
Priority of personal well-being data

Respondents were asked which was their priority for personal well-being data: in-depth/granular analysis or timely/frequent estimates. Figure 5 shows that:

- 55% of respondents felt that having timely/frequent estimates is their priority
- 45% felt that having in-depth/granular analysis is their priority

Figure 5: Main priorities for personal well-being data

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Source: Office for National Statistics

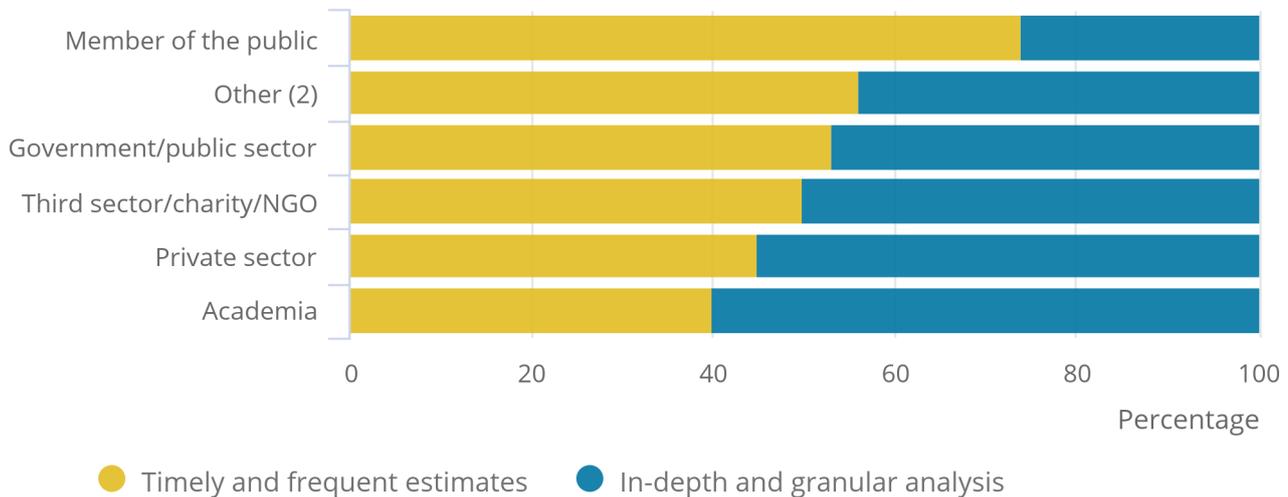
Notes:

1. 139 respondents answered this question.

Figure 6 helps identify users' main priorities based on their background. It shows that timely/frequent estimates are a priority for members of the public (74%), while in-depth/granular analysis is a priority for academics (60%), followed by users from the private sector (55%). A balance between having timely estimates and granular analysis is important for users from the third sector, charity or non-government organisation, or government or public sector, and users from other fields (for example, communication officers).

Figure 6: Priorities for personal well-being data by sector

Figure 6: Priorities for personal well-being data by sector



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. 139 respondents who stated their sector profile.
2. "Other" includes communication officers, digital officers and consultants.

Main uses of well-being dashboard

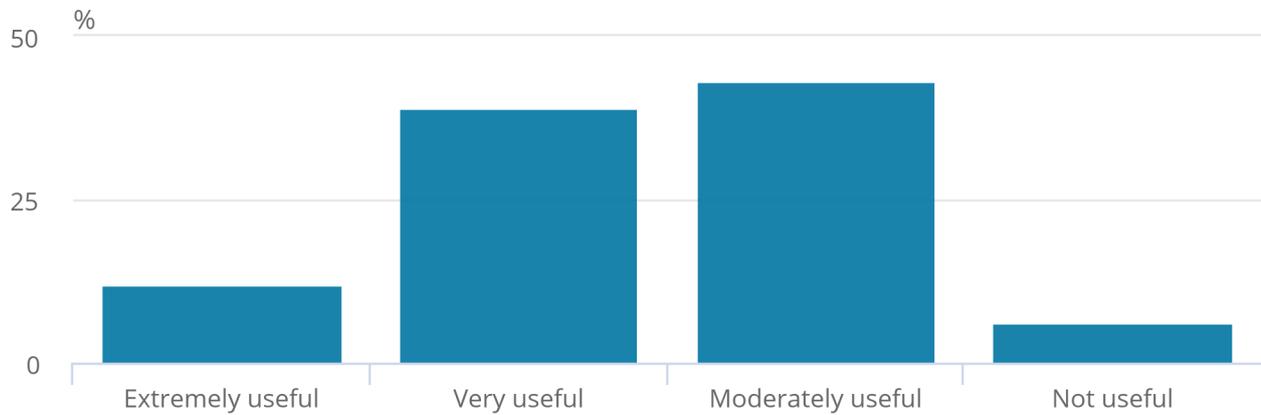
The [National Well-being Dashboard](#) also forms part of the Measuring National Well-being programme. This provides a visual overview of trend data for each indicator and can be explored by the areas of life (domains) or by the direction of change. When this feedback survey was launched in February 2018, the dashboard was available on our Visual.ONS website and only 28% of respondents were aware of it. In April 2018, the dashboard moved to this site.

To understand whether the dashboard is useful to respondents, they were asked whether it is or could be useful to their work. Figure 7 shows that around 94% of respondents said they did (or would) find the dashboard useful. Of these, 43% find the dashboard moderately useful and 51% find it very or extremely useful. However, 6% of respondents reported that they would not find it useful for their work.

We asked respondents if they thought the dashboard is a suitable way to present well-being data, with almost everyone (96%) agreeing that it is.

Figure 7: How useful the National Well-being Dashboard is or could be for respondents' work

Figure 7: How useful the National Well-being Dashboard is or could be for respondents' work



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. 109 respondents answered this question. Does not include those who reported 'Did not use' and those who stated that they were members of the public.

Suggested views on next publications

The online survey included some open-ended questions to gather user feedback on what analysis they would be interested in and other ways to present results, to help improve our future publications.

Content of future publications

In one of our open-ended questions we asked, "What in depth analysis (if any) would you be interested in/would be relevant to your work?". The most popular topic areas suggested by respondents include:

- employment, financial well-being, income and socio-economic status

"More info on the income of respondents – and potentially a question around economic security and optimism about future economic prospects – either for the individual, or the country."

"If the impact on people struggling financially and having zero hours or reduced work contracts are also impacting on people's well-being."

- mental health

"Mental health statistics – particularly figures for those suffering from depression and dementia."

"Mental health statistics. Physical health data."

- national well-being measures, such as cultural, health, and social indicators

"Social well-being particularly as regards employment, health and education."

"As well as headline results, how well being varies by characteristics e.g. gender, age."

"Being able to cross reference some of the data, to consider different demographics."

"A breakdown of which days the data were collected and, if so, are there any significant results regarding days of the week where people feel the most anxious and happiest?"

Other areas of interest for analysis were:

- lower-level geographical data
- housing
- loneliness and social isolation
- the UK's exit from the EU

Some examples of responses that wanted to see lower-level geographical data and comparisons were:

"Regional data, including regional data split by sub-groups."

"Breaking data down into lower geographies e.g. district council level is always useful."

"Further local authority (lower-tier) information."

"Socio-economic changes in an area."

"Where are the biggest local changes? – this needs to capture the interest of local areas and provoke debate."

Presenting future publications

The aim of the feedback survey was also to find out whether there were any other ways we could present our results to make them more useful for users. Of the respondents, 25% were entirely happy with the way we present our results and did not have any additional comments. Respondents that felt that we could present our results in other ways provided suggestions such as:

- more (or improved) visuals
- more infographics
- more accessible, open datasets

Examples of those that suggested improving the datasets included:

“I ideally like to have the data as raw-form and disaggregated as possible, downloadable in excel, so that I can perform my own analysis.”

“A pivot table in a spreadsheet where you could access raw data and compare different aspects.”

Other suggestions to improve presentation of results were:

- presenting trends by demographics and geography
- improvements to the dashboard, such as increasing the publicity around it and making it more prominent

“I was not aware at all of the dashboard – since when has this been available?”

“Well-being is a wide topic area with many different contributors – therefore there needs to be clear linkages made between the well-being dashboard and other statistics and research.”

5 . Conclusions and next steps

A wide range of users are interested in our personal well-being outputs and the feedback survey has highlighted important areas and priorities for them. A priority is to ensure we have timely or frequent estimates and content. However, 45% of respondents also agreed that more in-depth information is needed to make it useful for decision-making purposes. For example, only 7% of respondents reported that well-being statistics are used for policy purposes.

Regarding the format of our outputs, users reported that the language used, the length and amount of information of our bulletins generally meet their needs. However, the feedback survey has also helped identify where we need to improve our outputs, such as raising the profile of the National Well-being Dashboard. We could also explore how we can provide in-depth analysis in our outputs, as there are clear areas of interest from our users and stakeholders, such as more information on lower geographies and more analysis on factors driving personal well-being.

Over the coming months, we are planning to:

- engage further with our users to better understand how our outputs could be more useful for decision-making and policy purposes
- look for further collaboration opportunities to provide more in-depth information on important well-being drivers and local indicators
- better promote our well-being dashboard and explore opportunities to improve our visuals and interactive tools

If you would like to provide additional feedback about our personal well-being outputs, please contact us at QualityOfLife@ons.gov.uk or complete this [ongoing feedback survey](#).