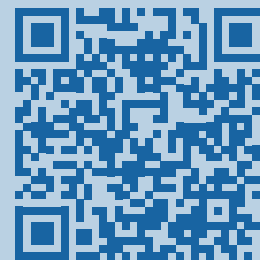


The 2026 UK Wellbeing Report

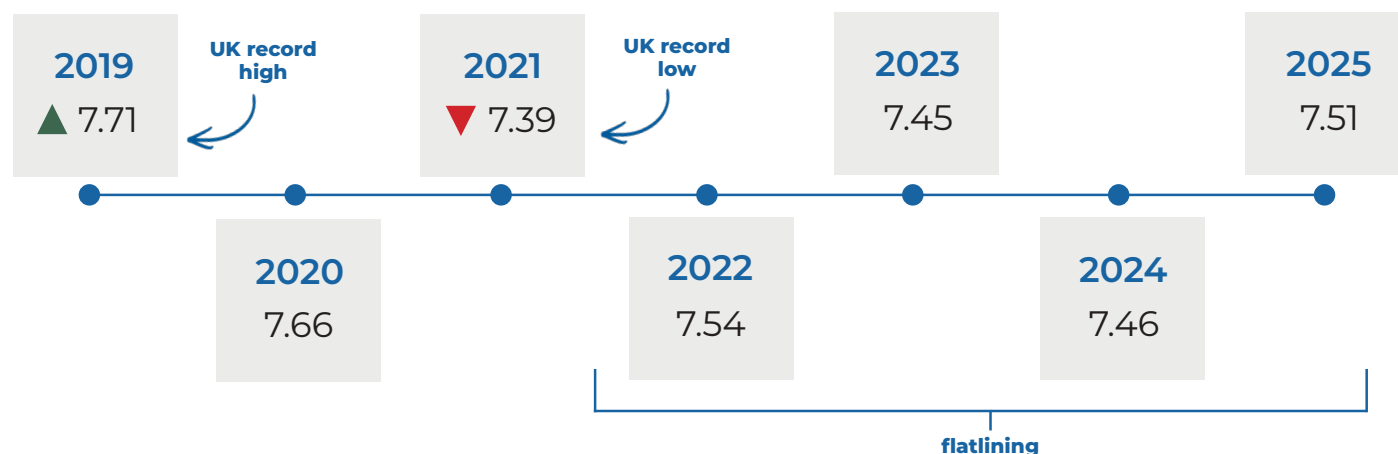
Happiness and Voting



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Happiness in the UK - a lost decade?

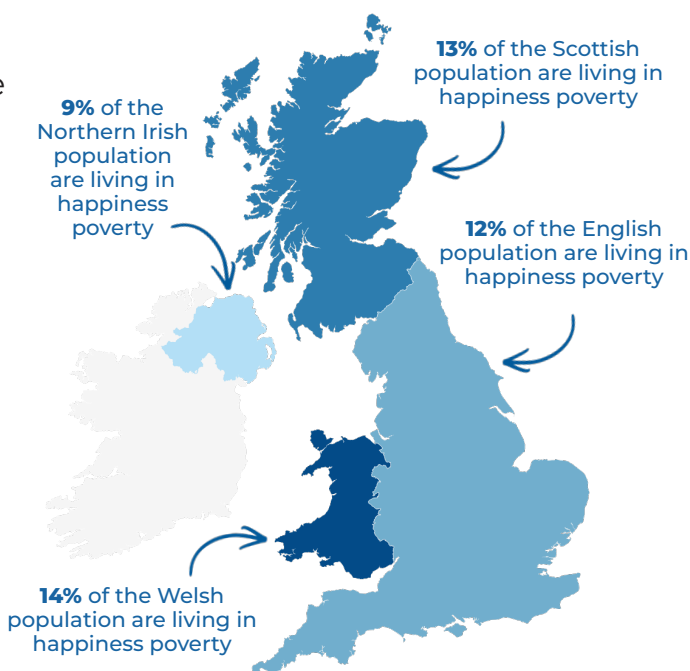
The 2020s risk becoming a “lost decade” for wellbeing in the UK, according to new analysis by the World Wellbeing Movement based on figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Analysis of the latest annual life satisfaction data describes **flatlining national levels of wellbeing** so far in this decade, and a **failure to recover to pre-pandemic levels**.



The fall in average wellbeing since 2019 of 0.2 points is quite substantial. To put this into context, becoming widowed or unemployed is associated with an average drop of 0.7 points on a life satisfaction scale of 0-10¹.

Around **1 in 8 UK adults** aged 16 and above are estimated to be **living below the Happiness Poverty Line**², but there are significant inequalities between regions and nations.

Northern Ireland enjoys the highest average life satisfaction (7.81) and the lowest share of the population living in happiness poverty (9%), while London reports the lowest average life satisfaction (7.41). Wales and North West England have the highest proportion of people in happiness poverty, with 14% of people estimated to be living below the Happiness Poverty Line.

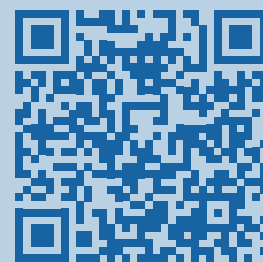


¹Clark, A. E., Flèche, S., Layard, R., Powdthavee, N., & Ward, G. (2018). *The origins of happiness: The science of well-being over the life course*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400889129>

² The World Wellbeing Movement defines the Happiness Poverty Line as those who rate their satisfaction with life at 5 or below on the 0-10 scale reported by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The 2026 UK Wellbeing Report

Happiness and Voting

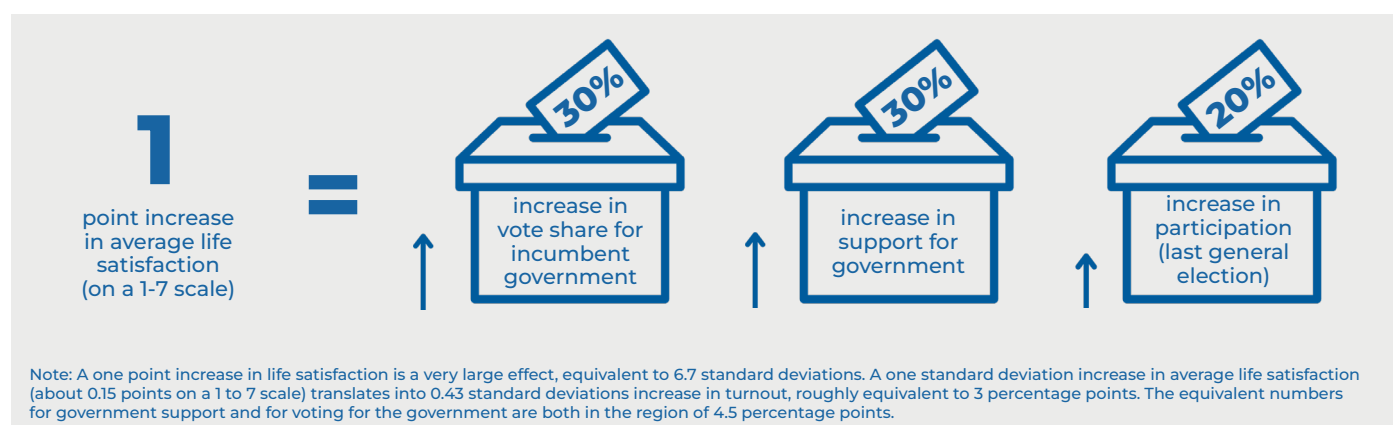


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Wellbeing, Economics, and Politics

Our 2026 analysis uncovers important implications for voting behaviour over and above traditional economic measures.

Using data from 1996 to 2025, researchers found that **higher levels of wellbeing increase the vote share for the government at general elections. They also increase support for the government in between elections, and voter turnout at elections.**



A one point increase in average life satisfaction (on a 1-7 scale) is associated with an increase of roughly 30 percentage points in the voting share for the incumbent.

A one point increase in average life satisfaction (on a 1-7 scale) is associated with an increase of roughly 30 percentage points in support for the government.

A one point increase in average life satisfaction (on a 1-7 scale) is associated with an increase of roughly 20 percentage points in turnout.

Wellbeing matters in and of itself, and independently of income and employment, as an influencing factor in voting intentions.

Wellbeing variables are important predictors of the government vote share. In fact, they are as predictive as – and in many specifications more predictive than – these two key economic indicators.

Our findings demonstrate that wellbeing is more than a public good worth investing in, it is also one of the clearest paths to **boosting the popularity of governments and strengthening our democracy.**

The World Wellbeing Movement is calling on the government to **put wellbeing at the heart of policy by committing to an Annual Wellbeing Statement in Parliament.**