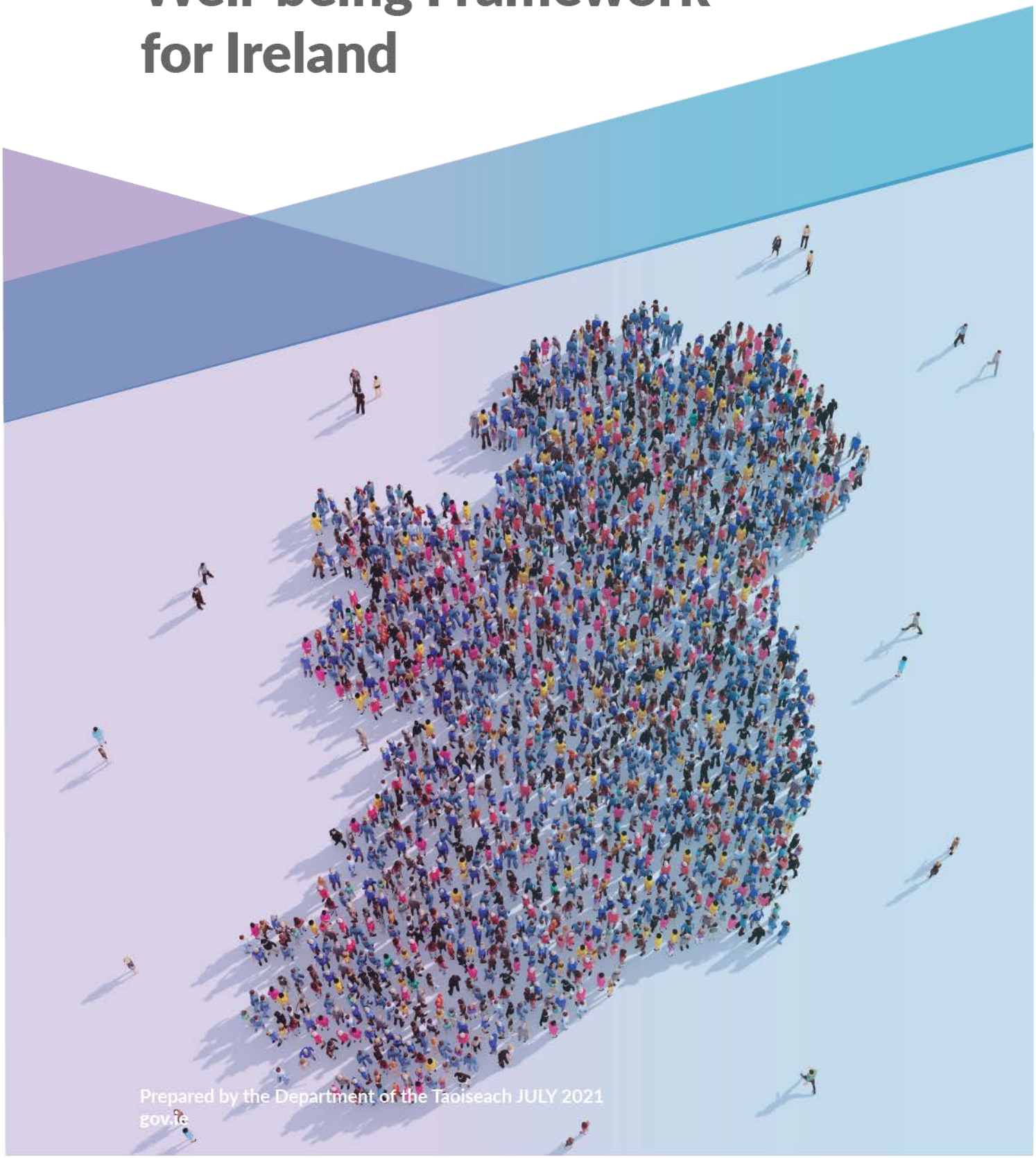
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

First Report on a Well-being Framework for Ireland



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Executive Summary

There is growing international consensus that traditional macroeconomic indicators do not provide a comprehensive picture of overall societal progress, as they don't capture broader living standards, distributional outcomes, or people's lived experiences. As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic the importance of ensuring we take a holistic approach to measuring our well-being and progress as a country has never been clearer, as reflected in the Programme for Government.

The development of a new overarching Well-being Framework for Ireland is an important and necessary first step in this process. It is a cross-government initiative that, driven by a desire to do better by people, seeks to develop a multi-dimensional approach to understanding the impact of public policy. Much of the value of developing an overarching Well-being Framework is that it will provide a means to draw together the many cross departmental policy efforts and provide a more holistic view of whether, taken as a whole, things are getting better or worse, our relative performance and whether it is sustainable into the future. Through ongoing consultation and engagement, it also contributes to a shared understanding of what makes for better lives.

Over time, it is intended that the Well-being Framework will be utilised in a systematic way across government policymaking, for example, in reporting progress, setting policy priorities, and as a complementary tool for evaluating policies and programmes. It will therefore work in tandem with other Government initiatives that enhance using limited public resources efficiently to deliver effective public services (e.g., performance budgeting and spending review process) and focus attention on questions around differences in people's experiences (e.g., equality budgeting).

The development of the Framework was based on a number of core principles: to build on extensive work already undertaken; be cohesive, understandable and impactful over time; pursue an iterative approach to allow for its evolution as its uses in the Irish context become clearer and more bespoke data becomes available; and generate buy-in from policymakers and stakeholders.

A collaborative approach was pursued with lead Departments (Department of the Taoiseach, and Departments of Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform), a wider Inter-departmental Working Group, the CSO and NESC working closely together. The CSO has a central role in the design of the first iteration of an interactive dashboard and in informing future data requirements to improve the dashboard over time. The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) provided a valuable vehicle for consultation on the framework throughout its development, through a Subgroup of Stakeholders and Experts and wider consultation. It has provided a corresponding Consultation Report.

Vision

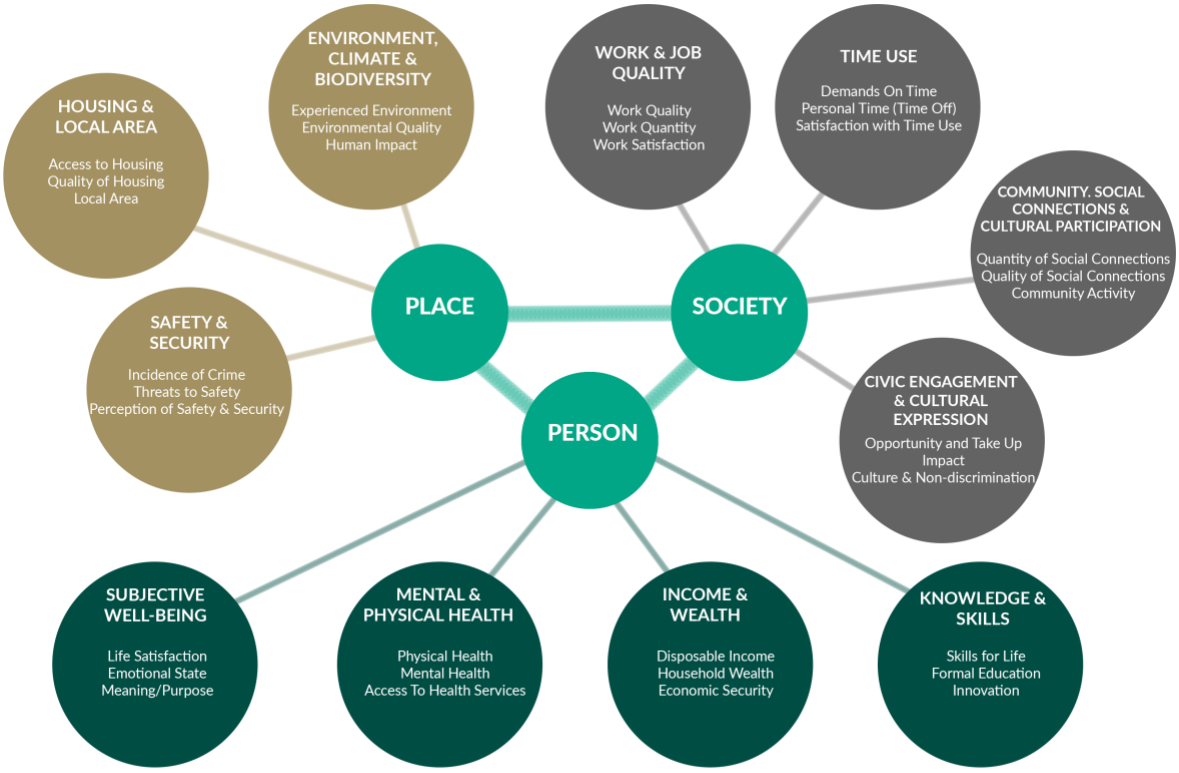
The overarching vision for this framework, which will guide its development over time, is **enabling all our people to live fulfilled lives now and into the future.** The approach is fundamentally about making people's lives better by better understanding peoples lived experience. The vision for Ireland's Well-being Framework is guided by an outcomes-based approach, rooted in well-being across person, place and society.

The Framework seeks to measure our progress as a society in a more holistic, multidimensional, interconnected and intergenerational manner, and therefore has sustainability at its core. Equality of opportunity is rooted in the framework. Inequalities are drawn out through examining distributions, differences between groups of people, and deprivations.

Conceptual Framework and Dashboard

As other countries have done, Ireland's conceptual framework and dashboard has been designed so that it is reflective of the OECD *How's Life* model, to allow for meaningful international comparison, whilst also ensuring that it includes aspects and indicators specific to the Irish context. The overarching Framework sets out the concepts and parameters, and a dashboard of indicators is a supporting measurement tool within the framework.

As illustrated below, each of the eleven dimensions of the Framework include an overarching definition and several 'aspects' that illustrate how the high-level definition relates to specific areas of people's lives. ***Together the dimensions of the Framework capture a holistic picture of the key elements that make up well-being for Ireland, across person, place and society.***



The well-being dashboard measures life and progress in Ireland through a cohesive set of indicators. High-level criteria for indicator selection was developed and centres around: a balanced and holistic view; added value and policy relevance; aggregation and disaggregation (inequalities); availability and quality; and international comparability.

Headline Indicators

Subjective Well-being	Mental & Physical Health	Income & Wealth	Knowledge & Skills
Population rating their overall life satisfaction as high	Healthy life years	Households making ends meet with great difficulty	Performance in reading/maths of 15year olds
Children aged 10-17 who report being happy with their lives at present	People with mild moderate, moderately severe or severe levels of depression in previous two weeks	Median real household disposable income	Lifelong learning rate
Population who did not feel depressed or downhearted in the last 4 weeks	Unmet need for medical attention due to financial, geographic or waiting time reasons	Median household net wealth	Headcount of R&D personnel in business sector, higher education sector and public service

Housing & Local Area	Environment, Climate & Biodiversity	Safety & Security
Population spending 40% of disposable income on housing	Pollution, grime or other environmental problems	Number of homicide victims
New dwelling completions	Proportion of water bodies assessed as 'high' or 'good'	Number of persons injured on roads
A or B domestic building energy rating	Greenhouse gas emissions	Population who worry they could be a victim of a crime causing physical injury
Average distance to everyday services	Waste to landfill (% of managed waste)	

Work & Job Quality	Time Use	Community, Social Connections & Cultural Participation	Civic Engagement & Cultural Expression
Employment rate (20-64 years)	People working long hours in main job	Population who feel loney at least some of the time	Population satisfied with the way democracy works in Ireland
Labour market underutilisation rate	Carers providing at least 20 hours of care per week	Population with more than two people they are close enough to count on if they had a serious problem	Perceived social inclusion
Mean weekly earnings	Population satisfied with time use (amount of leisure time)		Population who experienced discrimination in the past two years

Measure, trend, international comparison and disaggregation choice by cohort provided in detailed table (pages 31-34)

Building on work already undertaken in the well-being space, in particular in Ireland, this work seeks to join the dots, leverage and complement a wide range of related initiatives, such as the UN SDG's; a new overarching Health System Performance Assessment framework; and Better Outcomes, Brighter Future, an overarching framework for children and young people. It also seeks to draw out the considerable pertinent policies, strategies and initiatives

that align with key dimensions and elements of the Well-being Framework; and points to opportunities for greater all-island collaboration.

Internationally governments are incorporating well-being frameworks into policy decision making at different stages of the policy cycle, from strategic analysis and prioritisation to policy evaluation.

Ireland's Well-being Framework seeks to provide a common frame of reference, and has the potential to support efforts to address complex policy challenges by providing a clear structure to understand the different interlinkages and trade-offs, and therefore a less siloed approach to policy making. By drawing out the relationship between public policy and well-being, it can influence policy direction, helping inform priorities and agenda setting. Complementing this will be the utilisation of the Well-being Framework to locate well-being within the management and evaluation of public resources.

This first report incorporates the initial iteration of the Well-being Framework. Feedback on the framework will inform and improve future iterations. Over time greater linkages with international, national and local efforts in the well-being space is envisaged, as well as greater integration with related sub-frameworks.

The next steps for progressing this initial stage of work, include:

- **Further Consultation and engagement** with policy makers, stakeholders, regional communities and citizens, to create awareness, generate buy-in, and to test the framework, in particular the vision, and to get a sense of people's priorities and related trade-offs.
- **Integration with policy making**, in particular for informing agenda setting and policy direction, with a separate dedicated workstream to inform integration of the Well-being Framework into expenditure policy, in particular with performance and equality budgeting.
- **Research promotion,** in particular through NESC, the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform and the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES).
- **Closing data gaps** through CSO work programme centred around governance structures for incorporating official data not currently held by the CSO for future iterations of the dashboard, and additional well-being related data to be collected.

The work as set out above will be conducted with a view to reporting back to Government in due course, to inform future direction, workstreams, and permanent institutional structures.

This First Report has put many building blocks in place for this future work, including identifying specific areas for further research, a phased approach to addressing data gaps, and a pathway for integrating the framework with policy making over time. It is deeply reflective of the parallel NESC Consultation Report, and the next phase of consultation will build further on their findings. A 'Public Conversation' will be kick-started by the launch of the CSO's dashboard in Autumn, which will be an interactive version based on the static dashboard contained in this Report.

Chapter 1 – Introduction & Context

Introduction

The development of new measures of well-being and progress is a commitment in the *Programme for Government – Our Shared Future*, in recognition that in order to achieve a well-rounded policy-making system there is a need to move beyond uniquely economic measures. It places a focus on outcomes and how policies impact Ireland's citizens and communities. The ambition is that over time it will be utilised in a systematic way in reporting progress, settling priorities, including for budgeting, and as a complementary tool for evaluating policies and programmes.

The Well-being Framework is an important and ambitious cross-government initiative that seeks to develop a multi-dimensional approach to understanding the impact of public policy, driven by a desire to understand and do better by people. This valuable and extensive work will be progressed over time in clear stages, building on this first Well-being Report.

This Framework provides an important frame of reference and aids the re-orientation of Ireland's policy approach in the direction of well-being. The iterative and consultative approach to developing the framework also helps foster public debate and build a greater understanding on what makes for a good quality of life.

An overarching framework, in bringing together a broad range of areas, is at its essence a different lens to think through different aspects of policy. The Framework does not replace other analytical frameworks or approaches, but rather by having a broader perspective helps provide more comprehensive policy analysis. It therefore has the potential to enable synergies across Government to make policy trade-offs more explicit. It will operate in tandem with and serve as an important complement to existing economic, sustainable development and performance measurement tools.

Context

Over the last decade or so there has been an increasing focus on the issue of well-being. This has been particularly evident in the work of the OECD as well as in individual countries, most notably New Zealand, who have developed multi-dimensional well-being frameworks.

There is a growing international consensus that traditional macroeconomic indicators don't provide a comprehensive picture of quality of life and overall societal progress as they don't capture broader aspects, including environmental considerations, distributional outcomes, or people's lived experiences.

Traditionally GDP or similar aggregate measures have been used to measure the progress of a country. The limitations of purely economic measures of progress have long been acknowledged, with two of these limitations being particularly relevant to the measurement of well-being.

Firstly, they are disconnected from living conditions and in particular distributional outcomes and inequalities. [1] Secondly, they do not reflect the enormous value of the environment or give any indication of the sustainability of current output or income - current patterns of resource use and economic activity generally is putting huge pressure on the planet in a way that threatens the ability to meet future needs. Policy-making that ignores these weaknesses and focuses solely on GDP and equivalent aggregate economic measures could, 'drive activities which may have a negative impact on well-being in the long-term' (Department of Finance, 2021)[2].

As Ireland recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of ensuring we take a holistic approach to measuring our progress as a country has never been clearer, given the unequal impacts of the pandemic across sectors and individuals.

Those working in labour-intensive customer-facing sectors, who tend to be lower paid, younger, less skilled and cannot as easily work remotely, had their jobs impacted most heavily, and require the greatest support in moving to new areas of opportunity.

The pandemic also highlighted our resilience as a people, our innovation, creativity and community spirit, and our willingness to contribute towards the collective good. The pandemic presents an opportunity to build back better, reflecting where our renewed priorities as a nation now rest.

Challenges and disruptive trends which pre-dated COVID-19 – including increasing automation and digitalisation, our ageing population and related implications, and the decarbonisation of the economy – continue to accelerate. These trends, if not managed appropriately, can increase the risk of rising inequality. As we adapt to increased automation and changed behaviour to decarbonise, this shift can lead to worker displacement and an additional cost burden at the individual and household level if a transition is not pursued in a fair and just way.

Much of the value of developing an overarching well-being framework is that it will provide a means to draw together the many cross departmental policy efforts and provide a more holistic view of whether, taken as a whole, things are getting better or worse.

There are many aspects of our society and economy including the built environment, energy, industry, transport, waste, and agriculture where we need to embrace system and individual change to enable the transformation to a low-carbon, digital economy. It the responsibility of everyone in society, including the state, industry, the voluntary sector, and communities of citizens across the country, to play our part and deliver for all the people of Ireland in a fair and equitable manner.

Addressing the climate and biodiversity crises, for example, necessitate a radical shift in the way we live, work, travel, produce and consume goods and every aspect of our lives. Recognising that this may be more challenging for some members of our community, Just Transition is being placed at the centre of the work of the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) and the Climate Action Plan. In this regard, the Well-being Framework will be

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[1] The limitations of GDP or similar headline metrics as measures of economic welfare are particularly significant in an Irish context due to a number of globalisation-related statistical distortions such as the depreciation on foreign-owned intellectual property assets located in Ireland.

[2] Department of Finance (2021), Budget 2021: Well-being and the Measurement of Broader Living Standards in Ireland

very useful in communicating the broader societal good and benefits for health and broader well-being from the pursuit of environmental actions.

Against this backdrop, the value of maintaining a focus on quality of life and living standards, in addition to traditional macroeconomic measures, in capturing what makes for a good life and in designing effective public policies is clear. The development of an overarching national Well-being Framework, as a tool to measure our overall progress as a country and to support more holistic policymaking, is therefore timely.

While few would disagree with the idea of enhancing well-being, perhaps the real challenge is in setting out what is meant by well-being in the context of public policy.

Purpose of an overarching Well-being Framework

Firstly, this framework will contribute to the development of a shared understanding of what makes for better lives. Indeed, this framework will seek to reflect the emerging needs and requirements of our society and its people to live healthy and fulfilled lives, where they can contribute and participate in their communities and have true equality of opportunity.

Secondly, the Well-being Framework will provide an overarching structure for public policy across different Government departments. This will serve to enhance strategic alignment in the identification of policy priorities, opportunities, and challenges and in the development of public policy, as well as promote more effective coordination and co-operation between departments and agencies.

It will work in tandem with other Government initiatives that enhance the focus on using limited public resources efficiently to deliver effective public services (e.g., performance budgeting and spending review process) and focus attention on questions around differences in people's experiences (e.g., equality budgeting).

The development of the framework provides an opportunity to examine and reflect on the progress of Irish society as well as identify key challenges and trade-offs to better inform decision making - how a decision that promotes well-being in the immediate future may have consequences in the longer-term (for example, green budgeting).

In an Irish context, it is important that the dimensions of Well-being chosen for the Framework (and accompanying dashboard of indicators) reflect a range of outcomes that matter most to people in Ireland and give a sense of people's lived experience over time, including to inform whole-of-government priorities. The Framework should describe how people are experiencing their lives currently and into the future, and to the greatest extent possible how this varies across different population groups, capturing distribution and drawing out inequalities.

As other countries have done before us, Ireland's conceptual framework and dashboard has been designed so that it draws from the OECD model, to allow for meaningful international comparison, whilst also ensuring that it includes aspects and indicators specific to the Irish context to facilitate greatest impact in domestic policy-making.

This work can provide a foundation structure for the development of more bespoke well-being sub-frameworks (e.g., children and young people, older people, local Government and communities, and specific sectors, for example, arts and culture).

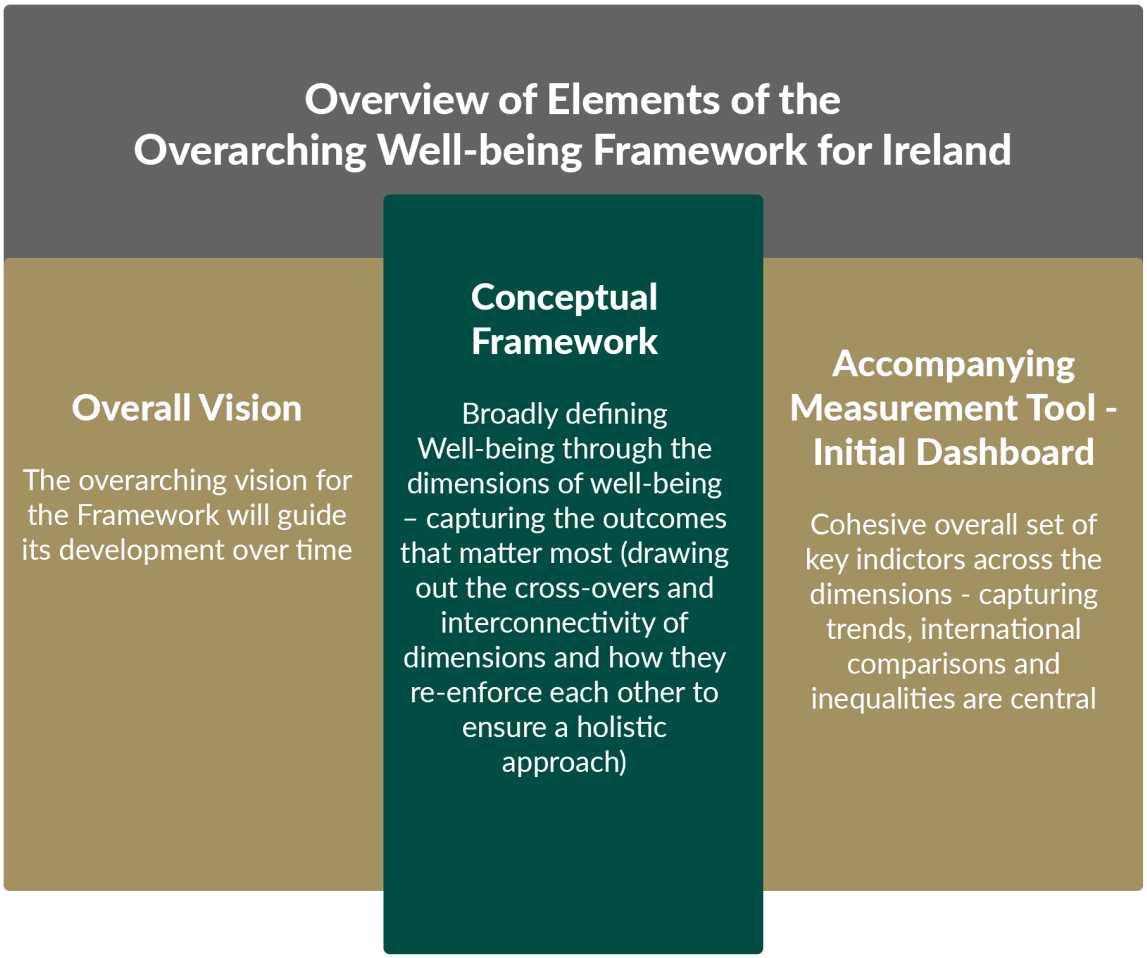
Purpose of this Report

Full development and integration of the Well-being Framework will be an **iterative process** over a number of years. Given this, it is particularly important that the initial output is not overly complex and focuses on high-level priority areas to maximise usability.

This first report captures the output on the initial work carried out in the first stage of this process and gives:

- insight into the context and purpose of the framework;
- an overriding vision to guide this work;
- a conceptual framework of key dimensions and aspects;
- a dashboard of indicators with a specific focus on priority areas;
- a sense of direction for integrating this work with policy making; and
- a roadmap for progressing the framework and signposting further stages, in particular further consultation, addressing data gaps and further integration with policy making.

This report is complemented by the NESC Consultation Report - Ireland's Well-Being Framework: Consultation Report - which has been an important input into this process.



Chapter 2 – Approach to Progressing this Work

In early February, the Government agreed to an approach to the development of an overarching Well-being Framework for Ireland, utilising the OECD Framework for Measuring Well-being and Progress as a starting point and building on extensive work already undertaken in this area.

Versions of the OECD Framework have been used by many leading countries, most notably New Zealand. This template has been moulded and adapted to best suit Irish priorities, while maintaining a level of international comparison. As in other countries, this overarching Framework sets out the concepts and parameters, and a dashboard of indicators is a supporting measurement tool within the framework.

The Framework has two core purposes, informing holistic policy making and improving the impact of public policy on people's lived experience. It provides an overarching umbrella framework - it is not intended to provide the depth of quantitative and qualitative micro evidence needed for detailed department or agency, sectoral, local or regional policy analysis.

The development of the Framework was based on a number of core principles:

- To build on the extensive work already undertaken in this area, both in Ireland and internationally;
- be cohesive and useful to policymakers, easily accessible and not overly complex for societal stakeholders and for the public in general;
- have real meaning and impact over time;
- given considerable time and resources required to fully develop the Framework, an iterative approach be taken to allow for its evolution over time as its uses in the Irish context become clearer and more bespoke data becomes available;
- getting as much buy-in as possible both internally (policymakers) and externally (stakeholders and experts); and
- be integrated with policymaking including through the links to the ongoing work by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in the area of performance and equality budgeting - incorporating Equality Budgeting, Green Budgeting, Well-being Budgeting and Programme Evaluation.

Overview of Process

Work on the development of the Well-being Framework is jointly sponsored by the Departments of the Taoiseach, Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform; and a wider Inter-departmental Working Group, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach, has supported the work.

The CSO is represented on the Working Group and is playing a central role in the design of the first iteration of an interactive dashboard. It has aided the work by identifying data to help shape the framework and in designing a tool that is useful for both the public and policy making system alike. In addition, the CSO has helped inform future data requirements to improve the dashboard over time.

Co-operative and Consultative Approach

In developing this Framework, the process has sought to the greatest extent possible to respond adequately to the needs and priorities of the policy making system, wider stakeholders and the Irish people. While this will be an ongoing process, for the initial stages of this work, engagement was central to the work and required different approaches for internal and external stakeholders.

The interdepartmental Working Group provided a forum for representatives from across the policy system to have an input into the design of the Framework – including through an online survey of members of the Working Group seeking views on the vision, potential dimensions and areas of interest for the Framework. This was further supplemented through bilateral meetings with key departments and agencies.

The Secretariat also arranged an online seminar with the OECD's Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE) for members of both the Inter-departmental Working Group and the NESC Stakeholder & Expert Consultation Sub-Group. This forum explored the ways in which other OECD countries have approached the measurement of well-being and policy applications of well-being frameworks. Wider promotion of this work included a Department of Finance presentation at a Foundation for Fiscal Studies session on their input research paper[3].

The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) has provided a valuable vehicle for consultation on the framework throughout its development. It established a subgroup drawing on members of the Council, representing different social partnership pillars, and external experts. It also consulted more widely with external parties, through in-depth exploratory meetings and a wide-reaching survey of c.450 stakeholders.

The overriding objective of the Subgroups work was to inform the development of a framework that is rooted in best practice and responds to the needs and priorities of stakeholders.

A collaborative approach was pursued where the Inter-departmental Working Group and the NESC Subgroup of Stakeholders and Experts worked together throughout the process through their respective secretariats so the work of both was cognisant and reflective of the other. The NESC subgroup have developed a complementary report – Ireland's Well-being Framework: Consultation Report – which is being published in tandem with this Report. The vision, conceptual framework, accompanying dashboard and future progression of this work, have all been significantly influenced by input from the NESC Subgroup (See pages 38-39 for further details).

Stages of Progressing this Work

This well-being initiative is being approached in a phased way, and as such there are a number of stages or levels to this work:

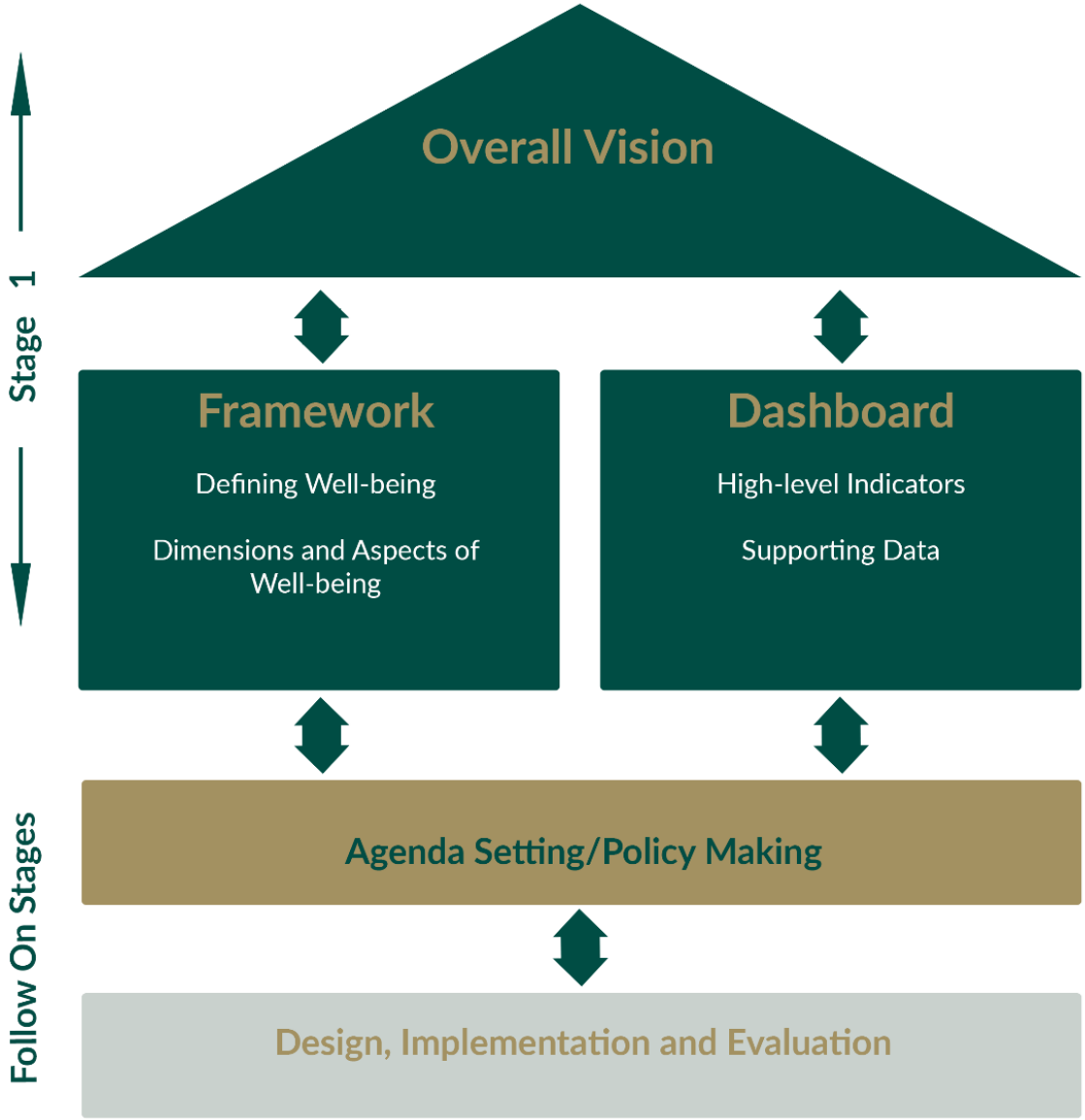
(1) The development of an Overarching Well-being Framework

[3] https://fiscal.ie/app/uploads/2021/05/070521FFS-Well-being-Presentations.pdf

(2) Utilising the framework to report progress

(3) Help set agenda and high-level priorities in order to inform efforts to improve the overall impact of public policy on people's lives

(4) Utilising the framework over time to better understand complex policy challenges, including as part of the budgetary process, in order to inform, consider and examine the design, implementation and evaluation of more effective public policies and programmes.



The first phase of this work, completed in the first half of 2021, focused on the development of the Overarching Well-being Framework. This initial work provides signposting for further stages, in particular road-testing initial output through further consultation, further improvements, and its integration with policy making over time.

The primary objectives of the first phase of this work were to:

- Create a supporting structure - a whole-of-Government high-level simple framework, building on various strands of national work and giving a sense of ownership by moulding an international framework into a bespoke framework for Ireland.
- Identify data sources and assess suitability and timeliness of the data, as well as identifying any significant data gaps that may need to be addressed.
- Gain a sense of prioritisation in terms of the issues that matter most to the people of Ireland, through an initial consultation stage.
- Increase awareness, build buy-in, and help shift mindsets of policy makers, to broaden the framing of policy.
- Inform a future roadmap for taking the work forward.

Chapter 3 - Vision

The overarching vision for this framework is **enabling all our people to live fulfilled lives now and into the future.** It is ingrained in well-being across person, place and society.

The approach is fundamentally about **making people's lives better by understanding peoples lived experience**. The Framework seeks to **measure our progress as a society** in a more holistic, multidimensional, interconnected and intergenerational manner, and therefore has **sustainability** at its core. Equality of opportunity is rooted in the framework. Inequalities are drawn out through examining distributions, differences between groups of people and deprivations.

The guiding vision of this framework has two elements rooted **in better policy decisions for better outcomes**. Firstly, the Well-being Framework will provide an overarching structure to public policy and will serve to ensure that policy makers across all Government Departments and public bodies are strategically aligned in the identification of policy priorities, opportunities, and challenges. It will promote more effective coordination and co-operation between departments and agencies in the development of public policy and ensure a focus on various elements of peoples lived experience. By design this framework seeks to cross over traditional delineations of responsibility across Government and examine whether holistically things are getting better or worse for the people of Ireland, related trade-offs, and identify if certain groups within society are being systematically left behind.

Secondly, this framework will seek to improve the impact or outcomes of public policy on people's lives and to measure that improvement over time and compare it internationally. It is crucial that there is a shared understanding of what makes for a better life within policy communities and society more generally. This framework will seek to progress an Ireland where **citizens live fulfilled lives; where they are empowered to contribute and participate in their communities; and have equality of opportunity**. It seeks a society that provides better opportunities and a better quality of life to all, with sustainable, innovative and connected communities, both in urban and rural settings. **Inclusion is at the heart of this approach,** facilitating all our people, across all cohorts, to live fulfilling and meaningful lives with dignity.

This outcomes-based approach to measuring the impact of public policy on the well-being of individuals and communities is rooted in the dimensions of this Framework and in line with the Programme for Government commitment. The overarching goals of this framework are to:

- Enable **people** to have meaningful and purposeful lives that are conducive to good mental and physical health, including enabling their educational development and providing a high standard of living;

- Ensure a sense of **place** and environment, including through an appropriate and safe, secure, and sustainable place to live, for a good quality life;

- Enshrine balance, inclusivity and equality of opportunities across **society**, encouraging and empowering families, friends and communities to grow, connect and engage.

This vision has been heavily influenced by stakeholder feedback and also aligns with the spirit of the ambitions and goals set out in the Programme for Government to "*help ensure that policies are driven by a desire to do better by people*", with a vision of "*an Ireland in which people*

can reconnect with nature, spend more time with their families and friends and enjoy full and equal participation in Irish social, political and cultural life…".

This Framework is a living document that will adapt in line with different challenges facing Ireland over time. With its focus on societal change, people and their quality of living and place it has the potential to identify policy priorities and in turn deliver positive outcomes for all our people. Further engagement and consultation will allow this vision to be tested and built upon, as outlined in Chapter 7.

Chapter 4 - Conceptual Framework & Dashboard

Ireland's Well-being Framework covers eleven dimensions, which are conceptualised and explored in this Chapter of the report. It uses the OECD *How's Life? Measuring Well-being* model as a basis[4] for developing the dimensions (which is reviewed in more detail in the Appendix).

Choosing this template builds on the **Department of Finance** published research paper exploring options for well-being measurement in Ireland, which set out various options based on international experience and national work to date and noted the international preference for using the OECD framework of well-being as a base structure. Options considered within this paper were a dashboard of indicators, national survey, and composite indicator, noting that one option or a combination of options could be chosen, with trade-offs between simplicity and breadth to consider. Regarding a composite indicator, the paper while acknowledging the advantage of a single clear figure, noted that this approach loses detail and creates the possibility of positive outcomes in one category obscuring deficiencies in another. It also makes striking a balance across dimensions more difficult as some may have inverse relationships. In addition, it is worth noting that choosing weighting for such a composite indicator would be very problematic. Outlining the pros and cons of these different approaches, ultimately this paper observed that a dashboard of indicators is most in line with international approaches and noted the value of leveraging both OECD and CSO work and tailoring an approach in line with Irish specific areas of interest and priorities.

Importantly, the Framework for Ireland moulds the OECD template, incorporating important elements within an Irish context that have been illustrated through consultation across Government Departments and through the NESC Stakeholder and Experts Subgroup's consultation work.

In defining the dimensions, a broad and holistic conception is best in order to draw out the fundamental aspects of what well-being means. It is important at the outset to highlight the high-level and essential outcomes that support well-being under each dimension for the people of Ireland. The framework also explores specific aspects within each dimension that have been identified as important for well-being in Ireland, either internationally or through the first phase of consultation. Given that the accompanying dashboard is limited by the design principle of non-complexity, and by data availability, it is not possible for it to effectively measure all aspects highlighted in the Framework. However, many of these areas can be further explored through connected sub-frameworks and more detailed analysis.

The NESC consultation provided an important focus on equality. Equality and inclusion are a key underlying element of the Well-being Framework and run right across the dimensions. An important use of a Well-being Framework will be to facilitate a more systematic identification of specific groups within society that experience inequality across a number of dimensions.

[4] OECD, (2020), *How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/statistics/how-s-life-23089679.htm

Drawing out Interconnections between Dimensions

A stated purpose of the Well-being Framework is to provide a holistic view of progress in Ireland. This framework should acknowledge and emphasise the interconnectivity of well-being, and through this the complex impact of specific policy actions on well-being. Good outcomes do not occur in isolation, and providing some examples as to how each dimension combines with others to create a higher goal encourages the holistic thinking necessary for well-being-focused policy making.

To communicate well-being to the public, both domestically and internationally, and to draw out these interconnections, it is useful to categorise the eleven dimensions into a smaller number of higher-level groupings. The below chart provides a categorisation and draws out – through the positioning of the dimensions within the concentric circles – how the dimensions relate to each other. For example, how income and wealth are interconnected with work and job quality and housing.

Policy makers across Departments and Agencies, alongside civil society are generally focused on their specific policy areas. However, this view can sometimes miss the current and future trade-offs and interconnections that exist across policy areas, for example how activity today can impact environmental sustainability which will, in turn, impact future well-being. In explicitly drawing out this interconnectivity it is intended to encourage policy makers (and indeed stakeholders) to look beyond their specific areas of interest, strengthening cross-Departmental and whole of Government policy making.

To further draw out this interconnectivity, there is a short section under each dimension explicitly highlighting connections with other dimensions.

Conceptual Framework

This section outlines the definitions of the dimensions and scope of the dimension that make up Ireland's Framework. The OECD definitions are taken as a starting point, and expanded or adjusted to relate distinctly to the Irish context.

Each of the eleven dimensions are explored in three ways:

1. An overarching definition that reflects the capability approach (which focuses on the "capabilities of persons to lead the kind of lives they value – and have reason to value").[5] This statement highlights the overall elements for individuals and households that are important for well-being.
2. Several 'aspects' that concretely illustrate, *inter alia*, how the high-level definition relates to specific areas of people's lives in Ireland. These aspects illustrate the complex combination of objective, relative and subjective aspects of a person's life within each dimension that contributes to their own individual well-being.
3. A few examples highlighting how each dimension is linked with others. All of the dimensions are interlinked to a certain extent. However, it is useful in this first iteration to promote the interconnected thinking of a well-being framework through explicit examples.

Well-being of Person

Subjective Well-being

An individual's personal perspective of their mental state, how their life is going and their outlook for the future.

Subjective well-being includes an individual's personal view of their well-being. The cognitive and affective responses of individuals to their immediate circumstances as well as to retrospective and prospective reflections of how their life is progressing.

As a dimension of well-being, it may be seen as an overall (or crude) measure of current well-being that considers circumstances experienced across all of the other dimensions of well-being.

The scope of the Subjective Well-being dimension[6] is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. An **overall life assessment** highlights general feelings of life satisfaction – i.e. how satisfied a person is with their life overall;
2. **Emotional state** covers the feelings the person has had recently – this could cover an average of the positive feelings, negative feelings, or the balance of the two;

[5] Sen, Amartya, (1999), "**Commodities and Capabilities**," *OUP Catalogue*, Oxford University Press, number 9780195650389: 18. (Further details also in Chapter 6)
[6] OECD, (2013), *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264191655-en.

3. The **meaning** or purpose a person feels their life has, or the sense that what one does is worthwhile. This aspect tends to be less studied and more difficult to measure.

Although these three areas are often reasonably correlated, the interaction between these three aspects across the lifecycle and between specific cohorts can vary.[7] Therefore, interactions between these aspects of subjective well-being is useful to explore.

Linkages with other dimensions
Subjective well-being is, in some ways, the expression of how the other dimensions culminate in a person's feeling of well-being. Therefore, rather than picking out specific dimensions that interact with subjective well-being, this dimension highlights the complex interconnectivity across the areas of well-being. However, mental and physical health have a particular correlation with subjective well-being. Satisfaction with work and time use, having the skills to participate fully in society, social connections, community activity, civic engagement and cultural expression are also clearly linked with how meaningful one feels their life is.

Mental and Physical Health

The capacity of an individual to be and feel well, with good mental and physical health, living a life unencumbered by illness.

Mental and physical health is a crucial aspect of well-being.[8] It includes the physical and mental factors that shape the ability of the individual to engage in economic, social, cultural, community and family life.

The scope of the Mental and Physical Health dimension is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. **Physical health** enables a person to live a healthier, long-lasting life. This encompasses longevity and healthy life years, alongside prevalence, intensity and chronicity of diseases or conditions that cause poor health, disability or death. It can also include the incidence of unhealthy (or healthy) living – for example, smoking or physical activity. Self-perceived health should also be included here.
2. **Mental wellness** is an essential aspect to health, and has strong linkages with subjective well-being. This aspect should explore good mental health which allows individuals to cope with the normal stresses of life. It also includes incidence of poor mental health such as the incidence of depressive symptoms, mental illnesses, addiction, or adverse outcomes based on mental health.
3. **Access to health services** is important for maintaining a healthy life. For example, the time it takes to be treated for health interventions or the distance to health facilities from a household (including primary and community care centres) are important factors. Access is also related to affordability, for example whether financial considerations prevent health intervention.

[7] OECD, (2013), *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264191655-en.
[8] The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 1948).

Linkages with other dimensions
Examples of how this dimension is linked with other areas include:

- Environmental factors such as interactions with nature and air quality can impact mental and physical health.
- There is two-way feedback between social connections and health. If a person does not feel well, it is difficult to maintain social connections. Furthermore, a lack of social connections can be detrimental to one's mental health.
- If there is a high risk of harm to a person – either from crime, accidents or natural disasters – there is a higher chance of a detrimental impact on health.

Income and Wealth

The financial resources that shape the range of choices an individual has to meet their day-to-day needs and wants, and the ability to mitigate risks.

The income and wealth dimension relates to the financial resources that shape the range of feasible choices available to an individual to meet their day-to-day needs and wants and the opportunity to mitigate personal, economic and societal risks and vulnerabilities.

The scope of the Income and Wealth dimension is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. **Disposable income** indicates what households have to spend after taxes and transfers. Disposable income is explicitly not connected to actual consumption and instead captures the freedom households have (or do not have) to spend.
2. **Household wealth** can provide a buffer for households to counter the impact of changing income or economic security, in particular over the longer term. This includes available assets and outstanding debt. The appetite for risk, including the balance between investment/debt and saving are also captured here.
3. **Economic security** refers to the ability to make ends meet, both in the present and into the future. This aspect brings in the cost of living, the burden of debt repayment, and the stability (or lack thereof) of maintaining an adequate standard of living.

The interplay between income, wealth and economic insecurity is also a factor. Those with higher wealth and lower incomes have higher levels of security than their income alone might suggest.

Linkages with other dimensions
This dimension is connected to many of the other dimensions as income and wealth are fundamental tools that can dictate many different aspects of well-being.

Examples of how this dimension is linked with other areas include:

- Housing is both a contributor to wealth (as an asset or as outstanding debt through a mortgage) and a function of economic security.
- The work and job quality of the individuals within a household contributes directly to household income and economic security.
- Income and wealth are strong predictors of health outcomes, with higher economic security corresponding to longer and healthier lives. The effect of economic insecurity on mental health in particular is often overlooked.

Knowledge and Skills

The skills and knowledge developed over the course of a person's life shapes their self-esteem, self-actualisation and lived experience in society.

The cognitive and motor skills acquired and developed over the course of a person's life that shape their ability to achieve material or economic progress and meet needs relating to esteem (e.g. feeling of accomplishment) and self-actualisation (e.g. fulfilling one's full potential), as well as cope with and address change in their lived experience and in society more generally. As a dimension of well-being, the knowledge and skills dimension seeks to capture cognitive and non-cognitive skills, encompassing knowledge and skills learned across the life cycle.

The scope of the Knowledge and Skills dimension is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. **Skills for Life** include those basic skills necessary for a person to function in society. This includes literacy, numeracy and digital skills that enable full participation in daily activities. Soft skills that are developed throughout life – for example resilience or communication skills are also captured here.
2. **Formal education** across the life cycle enables recognition and provides an easier transition into the desired area of productive work. It can also be a mechanism for smooth social mobility. This aspect includes, for example, the school readiness of children at the beginning of school. It also captures transitions across education institutions and into the labour force. It recognises the different choices made by people, including through different types of formal education (for example, apprenticeships) and through the ability of people to learn across the lifecycle (e.g. lifelong learning), responding to changes and new realities and opportunities.
3. **Innovation** is the ability to develop new products and services, processes and approaches. This ability can produce efficiencies or advantages that can produce societal and economic benefits both now and into the future. This aspect includes Research and Development and intellectual property (ideally this would measure the impact of innovation).

Linkages with other dimensions
Examples of how this dimension is linked with other areas include:

- Higher education attainment is correlated with higher earnings and income.
- The level of education of an individual is often connected to the ability to engage politically, with higher engagement associated with higher levels of education.
- The work and job quality dimension interacts with knowledge and skills in terms of inputting into the job or work available and providing skills over the lifetime.
- Flexible upskilling and reskilling are necessary for a just transition in meeting environment, climate and biodiversity goals.
- It can be very difficult for individuals to engage in modern society – including social and community engagement – if they do not have certain basic skills, including literacy, numeracy – and increasingly – digital skills.

Well-being of Place

Housing and Local Area

The physical structures that shape an individual's ability to meet basic needs such as shelter, security and social belonging.

Housing captures the physical infrastructure that shapes the ability of an individual to meet key physiological needs (e.g., shelter), safety needs (e.g. personal security) and social belonging needs (e.g., a space for family, intimacy and a sense of connection). Housing location also determines access to services, for example, the existence (or not) of transport links.

The scope of the Housing and Local Area dimension is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. **Access to housing** here consists of the ability of a person to access and maintain secure housing. For example, a high prevalence of homelessness would indicate a lack of access. Access is also directly related to affordability, for example the burden of housing costs (i.e. how much income is left over after housing is paid for). The availability of accommodation also arises, including the suitability of accommodation for current demographics, supply and demand.
2. **Quality of housing** relates to the availability of space in the home, and the suitability of a house for healthy living. Having personal space allows for the functions that a home should provide for privacy and activities like cooking, studying, spending time with family or entertaining. The impact of housing quality on healthy living is also included here. For example, the presence (or not) of damp or leaks, or the quality of insulation.
3. The **local area** in which a residence is located impacts access to services (e.g. education, transport) and can therefore impact an individual's opportunities. Services include essential utilities such as water, electricity and access to the internet. It also captures access to schools, local healthcare and public transport.

Linkages with other dimensions
Examples of how this dimension is linked with other areas include:

- Where one lives impacts their ability to maintain and develop social and community connections. This is both due to the location that a house is in (e.g. rural, townland, urban) and the space that the home affords for social engagement.
- Safety – the location of a person's home can impact their feelings of security and the likelihood of crime.
- Where a person lives impacts the amount and quality of time they have (their time use). Having the space for or access to leisure activities, and extent of commuting, which impacts personal time, are related to housing location and quality.
- The quality of housing can impact both physical and mental health.
- The environment is closely linked to housing, as the quality of the local environment (both objective and subjective), is dependent on where one lives.

Environment, Climate and Biodiversity

The environment that an individual lives in shapes their access to nature alongside access to basic needs such as clean water and air. The quality of this environment – both now and in the future – is shaped by human influence and actions.

This dimension covers the environmental hazards and amenities that can impact well-being, including the impact of humans on the climate and environment in the long-term. The nature of the place in which an individual lives and works shapes their ability to meet physiological needs (e.g. clean water and air) as well as more transcendental needs (e.g. relating to and interacting with nature). Humans can also hold considerable influence over the environment and can impact it positively (e.g. sustainable living; low carbon lifestyles in food, transport, energy use etc.; conscious consumer, limits waste etc) or negatively (e.g. pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss).

The scope of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity dimension is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. The **environment as experienced** by individuals relates to a person's perception and experience of the beauty and amenities that are available within their local environment - for example, the availability and quality of local natural or green areas or the presence of litter.
2. **Environmental quality** of the local environment enables healthy living, reduces illness and includes air, water, and soil quality (measured at a local, regional or national level). The quality of air, water, and soil impacts human health (ideally this dimension would directly measure this impact). Protecting the quality of the environment is an important aspect of both current and future well-being.
3. **Human impact** measures the preservation of the natural environment, and the impact of humans on the environment, including through climate change. This aspect captures emissions, land use, waste and biodiversity. Reducing the human impact on the environment, climate and biodiversity is essential to protect future well-being, and to promote intergenerational equality.

Trade-offs can exist between these aspects – for example, between how an individual uses their local environment and the related human impact. If society is adapting their local environment to suit their needs, this could impact on biodiversity and ultimately reduce well-being in the long-run.

Linkages with other dimensions

Examples of how this dimension is linked with other areas include:

- Mental and physical health can be directly impacted by the environment, in particular environmental quality and the how one experiences their environment.
- The environment in which one lives provides access to communal space which allows for the opportunity to engage socially, culturally and with one's community
- Environmental factors impact safety – for example increased incidence of extreme weather events due to climate change.
- Increasingly, the environment is a key topic for civic engagement, in particular driving engagement of the younger population through grassroots campaigns.

- Biodiversity is linked with heritage – which is explored in the Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation dimension.

Safety and Security

The factors that shape an individual's ability to live life and engage in activities without fear of harm.

Safety and security cover the social, cultural, natural and institutional factors that shape the ability of an individual to live life and engage in activities without fear of harm from other people and to mitigate the risks and impacts associated with infrastructural, mechanical and natural hazards. Harm can come from crime, conflict, violence, terrorism, accidents or natural disasters, and can occur online as well as offline. As a dimension of well-being, safety tends to be concerned with the risk of victimisation and perceptions of safety.

The scope of the Safety and Security dimension is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. The actual reported **incidence of crime** indicates the freedom from intentional harm from other people (within the home, community or more widely). There are a broad variety of crimes that can be included here, for example crimes against property, assault, homicide, hate crime, domestic violence and coercive control, anti-social behaviour or cybercrime.
2. **Threats to safety** highlight freedom from accidental harm (including infrastructural, institutional, mechanical and natural hazards). This aspect includes, for example, the incidence of road or workplace accidents (including severity of such accidents) and the prevalence and severity of extreme weather events.
3. **Perception of safety and security** is of key concern for well-being, as a high level of subjective safety enables people to exist and move through society more freely. It focuses on how safe a person feels in everyday activities (e.g. on public transport, walking home at night, etc). This aspect also includes trust in the rule of law.

Linkages with other dimensions

Examples of how this dimension is linked with other areas include:

- Housing factors – including the area in which a person lives, the interpersonal relationships within the home and the quality of that housing – can impact a person's feeling of safety and the likelihood of crime.
- The ability to rely on others (through social connections) can impact the feeling of safety. Strong community and volunteering can, indeed, increase safety by reducing crime and the prevalence of other harms relating to the physical environment. Trust in state institutions also plays a role here.
- Civic engagement can promote safety – the response to safety concerns can relate to the ability of the population to communicate concerns and the responsiveness of the Government to such concerns.
- Necessity for crime could also be connected to a lack of access to positive economic opportunities, driven by knowledge and skills, income, wealth and work.

Well-being of Society

Work and Job Quality

The productive activities that shape how an individual progresses throughout their life, alongside building and supporting their self-esteem and contribution to society.

The work and job quality dimension examines the productive activities (both paid and unpaid) that shape how an individual progresses (i.e., develop their skills and abilities, fulfil their ambitions) as well as building and supporting their self-esteem and informing their sense of contributing to society more generally.

The scope of the Work and Job Quality dimension is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. **Quantity** includes the availability of jobs and the size of the labour force, indicating the availability and up-take of work. Some well-known examples of work quantity include levels of employment, underemployment or labour force participation. It also includes the risk of losing a job (be this income or other job-related benefits such as specific working arrangements), and the protections in place that might mitigate the risk. This aspect also covers the ability to start and grow a new business (entrepreneurship).
2. **Quality** includes the material and non-material aspects of work which enables a sense of progress and worth in one's work. These include fair remuneration for employment, and non-material aspects of the work environment. Non-material factors include physical safety and work intensity. The availability of learning opportunities, type of contract, career development, and how well a job matches a person's skills are also included. Other institutional factors such as working times and location arrangements, autonomy, and support between co-workers also affect a person's well-being.
3. Self-perceived **work satisfaction** captures some of the complex interconnections that the material and non-material aspects of work provide to a person's well-being, and the motivations that different people have for their work.

Linkages with other dimensions

Examples of how this dimension is linked with other areas include:

- Knowledge and skills, as the skills that one has generally dictates the job a person can access, and work – both paid and unpaid – also provides opportunities to develop new skills.
- Time use is connected to work and job quality, as access to flexible working and job strain impacts the time available for caring duties and leisure time outside of paid work.
- Income and wealth, as highlighted above, are interlinked closely with work and job quality. Alongside remuneration, job security and hours worked can also impact economic insecurity, such as access to social protection based on the type of job, contract type or PRSI payments.

Time Use

The ability of an individual to manage the demands placed on their time, and their access to time for personal development, leisure or hobbies.

Time use is about combining family commitments, leisure and work (both paid and unpaid). This dimension covers the efforts of an individual to both meet and combine the demands that others place on their time (e.g. work, family and other caring commitments), and meet their own needs (e.g., personal care and development), subject to the constraint of a fixed quantity of time available in any single day.

The scope of the Time use dimension is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. **Demands on time** (time on) is concerned with the external demands on an individual's time – for example job hours, caring, home duties or commuting.
2. The ability of people to have **personal time** – that is time to themselves for their own personal development, hobbies or leisure. This includes the quantity of time available for leisure and recreation (e.g., free time). How a person uses that time – e.g. engaging in sports, culture and arts, socialising etc. – is a personal choice.
3. **Satisfaction with time use** is also important here, as people value what to do with their time differently. Many people find satisfaction in different aspects of caring duties (unpaid work), paid work or leisure activities which may not be illustrated by focusing exclusively on the amount of time spent on each.

Unpaid work is of particular focus here, including the balance between paid and unpaid work, the level of unpaid work performed by individuals, and specific cohort-based inequalities that exist – in particular gender and age.

Linkages with other dimensions
Examples of how this dimension is linked with other areas include:

- Social connections - if a person does not have time (due to paid or unpaid work), it is more challenging to build and maintain social connections.
- As mentioned above, there is also a clear connection between Time use and the work and job quality dimension. This connection can work in both ways – for example, aspects of high job quality (high levels of earning, for example) may be negatively associated with adequate personal time. Alternatively, people might make choices regarding their work or career to ensure they have enough time for caring duties.
- Housing – including available space, access to services and distance from work – can also impact time use, enabling or disabling the ability to disconnect from work or make time for leisure.

Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation

The ability of an individual to meet the basic needs of personal connection and engagement with their community.

This dimension highlights the quantity and quality of time spent with others and how much support individuals feel. This dimension includes the importance of family connections throughout an individual's life, and the centrality of social connection on human development. It highlights the opportunities that an individual has for engaging with other people and sharing activities to meet their basic needs and psychological and self-fulfilment needs. In the modern era, this includes online social connections and interactions. This dimension also covers connection to the community, for example, through volunteering or other community activities.

The scope of the Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation dimension is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. **Quantity** of social connections covers the frequency and amount of time spent with other people – including members of a person's household, family, friends, colleagues, other known people, and also cultural participation which tends to be a communal activity (both online and offline). The balance of time spent in offline versus online social interaction is included here.
2. **Quality** of social connections, by comparison, measures the satisfaction that individuals have with their social interactions, including perceived loneliness and feelings of support provided by connections.
3. **Community activity** measures the overall connectedness of individuals to their community. This can include volunteering, engaging with heritage, membership of community groups such as sporting clubs, artistic or creative groups, local development networks, etc.

Linkages with other dimensions

Examples of how this dimension is linked with other areas include:

- The ability to build and maintain quality social connections has an essential impact on mental health, and participation in activities could support mental and physical health (e.g. cultural or sporting activities). Similarly, if one has a persistent illness or disability, it might be more difficult to maintain social connections or participate in community activities.
- Voluntary and community activity is interlinked with civic engagement as the choices made in engaging in specific activities can reveal individual and community priorities.
- There is a clear link between social connection and time use, as time is needed to build and maintain these interactions.

Civic Engagement and Cultural Expression

The opportunities an individual has to impact the political functioning of their society, and the freedom of expression including of culture, religion or language.

Civic engagement measures the rights and opportunities that an individual has to express their voice and participate and contribute to the functioning of their society. It also captures the extent to which such engagement enables people to shape the community in which they live. This dimension also includes incidences or feelings of discrimination alongside the freedom to express cultural, personal or political views. As a dimension of well-being, the civic engagement dimension tends to be concerned with people's behaviour, subjective evaluations of various institutions including trust, and experiences of unfair behaviour.

The scope of the Civic engagement and cultural expression dimension is broadly captured via three aspects:

1. **Opportunity and take-up** covers the ability of individuals to access, and the utilisation of, opportunities to shape their locality and country through civic engagement. Opportunity covers the limits on access to public office or other forms of civic engagement such as voting or public consultation. This could include frequency of opportunities, and how easy it is to engage (including measures that encourage or discourage engagement). It also includes the take-up of these opportunities, including voter turnout and active membership in political parties or other forms of activism. This should include the presence of grassroots movements that are not associated with political parties.
2. **Impact** is concerned with whether civic involvement makes a difference in practice. This could include if the impact of movements or activities mentioned above result in substantial change. For example, the impact of changes in Government on policy or the direction of public spending. Trust in public institutions is also included here.
3. **Culture and Non-discrimination** explores a person's rights to express their culture/identity, including participation in ethnic, religious or language expression. This includes activity relating to specific groups, for example cultural practices and expression of migrant or 'new Irish', alongside traditional Irish communities (including Gaeltacht communities). It also includes the ability to express one's culture/identity or use one's native language, and places a specific value on the Irish language. It also explores the prevalence of discrimination based on factors such as ethnicity (including membership of minority communities), gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion.

Some of these aspects are very difficult to measure and therefore are often captured through individual perception, including trust in institutions and whether individuals feel they have a say in what the Government does, alongside measures such as voter registration and turnout.

Linkages with other dimensions
Examples of how this dimension is linked with other areas include:

- Knowledge and skills are often associated with differences in civic engagement – this is explicitly noted in the above section as there is an assumption of a certain level of literacy, numeracy or digital skill, and is often a precondition for engagement.

- Similarly, income and wealth can provide resources that allow better public engagement. Redistribution of wealth and income is also a fundamental function of Government, and the use of that redistribution can promote or reduce trust.
- Another critical resource for civic engagement is time, and therefore time use is also an important factor here – do individuals have enough time to make their views known, and what accommodations are made to make it quicker and easier for individuals to participate.

Future Capitals Approach

The OECD well-being framework includes an additional stand-alone aspect of well-being called the Future Capitals (see Appendix). These are Natural capital, Human capital, Social capital and Economic capital and focus on sustaining well-being into the future. Exploring sustainable well-being and promoting intergenerational equality is an important element of a well-being framework. This has also been highlighted in particular through the Stakeholder and Expert Consultation led by NESC. One benefit of a future capital approach is to investigate trade-offs and alignments between current well-being and future well-being. This is important where specific trade-offs exist – for example, an exclusive focus on increasing income in the present impacts sustainability and can clearly undermine future well-being. However, other areas cannot be easily segregated into future and current well-being, and separately defining what impacts future well-being exclusively is difficult and problematic. For example, the human impact on the environment (which is found in the Natural Capital section of the OECD framework) impacts negatively on both future well-being – such as through climate change – and on current well-being such as through reduced air quality. Similarly, activities such as volunteering (found under the future Social Capital section of the OECD framework) clearly supports current subjective well-being.

The NESC Consultation Report has recommended further investigation of these complex policy issues that are intergenerational in nature. This can inform potential trade-offs between current and future orientated elements, for example current economic well-being and sustainability. It is important to acknowledge the impact that macro issues and indicators (for example, climate change, the ageing population or public debt) have on intergenerational well-being. The eleven dimensions, focused on the individual well-being, do not capture these outcomes comprehensively.

Therefore, in order to ensure that the trade-offs are investigated thoroughly, but that the dashboard is not overly complex and can be easily communicated and used, the first iteration of the Well-being Framework has incorporated some of the most pertinent aspects of the OECD Future Capitals approach into the existing well-being dimensions, drawing out in particular those relating to sustainability. These include:

- Aspects of economic capital (e.g. debt, investment and innovation) have been included in the Income and Wealth and Knowledge and Skills dimensions;
- The human impact on the environment, including biodiversity – a key measure of natural capital – and also climate change and emissions have been included in the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity dimension;
- Aspects of human capital, including healthy living, school readiness of children and transitions across education and work are included in the Mental and Physical Health and the Knowledge and Skills dimensions respectively.

- Volunteering, trust in Government and community activity – all aspects of Social Capital – have been included in the Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation and the Civic Engagement and Cultural Expression dimensions.

This ensures that the first iteration of the Well-being Framework acknowledges the importance of balancing future and current resources, without making premature assumptions on where such trade-offs lie. This is in keeping with the principles of design agreed at the outset of not having an overly complex framework and building on it over times as its uses in the Irish context become clearer.

As outlined in Chapter 7, climate change and sustainability, including economic sustainability such as around high levels of debt and an ageing population, may make current levels of well-being unsustainable, and will need adequate reflection in this work as it is taken forward. The next iteration of the framework will consider presenting the future capitals separately to current well-being.

Dashboard

The well-being dashboard provides a complementary tool to the conceptual framework. In order for the dashboard to be user-friendly and not overly complex it cannot cover every aspect of well-being captured in the conceptual framework. Instead, the chosen indicators should be seen collectively as a high-level holistic indication of the progress towards well-being overall in Ireland. At all stages of development, data included in the dashboard must be of the highest standard, as highlighted in the criteria for indicator selection below.

To encourage this holistic view, it is important that the balance between indicators across the eleven dimensions is broadly even (i.e. that each dimension has approximately the same number of indicators) regardless of current data availability.

The dashboard will serve to complement more detailed sets of micro indicators used by Departments, agencies or local Government, to drill down to sufficient depth to support comprehensive analysis of specific policies and programmes.

<u>Role of the CSO</u>
The below table provides a static version of the Well-being Dashboard. The CSO will host an interactive version based on this dashboard, which they will launch in Autumn 2021, based on existing data held by the CSO and, where possible, external data as laid out in the table below. This dashboard will be integrated into their system and will update automatically as up-to-date data corresponding to individual indicators becomes available. In addition, the CSO will annually publish a 'How we are doing' section which will provide accessible infographics as well as a graph highlighting where indicator trends are improving or dis-improving.

As part of the development of the Well-being Framework, in the medium term, the CSO will work towards filling the data gaps that have emerged as part of this Report and additional gaps that may emerge through further consultation (see Chapter 7 for more information). In general, in terms of data availability access to 'hard' data is more readily available than 'soft' data, which will impact in particular on certain dimensions in particular Subjective Well-being, Time Use, Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation, and Civic Engagement and Cultural Expression (for further detail, see *Emerging Data Gaps* section below).

Static Dashboard

The table below incorporates all indicators for the first iteration of the Well-being Dashboard. This dashboard is based on existing data and cannot capture all of the aspects covered in the dimensions. However, as noted above, work is ongoing to explore how to improve the data offering (for further information see page 56). The indicators were chosen in consultation with the CSO, based on clear criteria (as outlined directly below the dashboard). The outputs (e.g. trends and international comparisons) were not examined until after the indicators were chosen and therefore had no influence on selection. The cohorts chosen for disaggregation are based on existing research[9] and consultation across Government and with experts (further details on inequalities on page 36). The colour of the symbols in the table indicates whether the trend or international comparison is favourable or not (based on a traffic light system). The purpose of this first Report is the compilation of the dashboard, more detailed analysis of the dashboard will be provided as part of the next phase of this work (more details on future work in Chapter 7).

Static Well-being Dashboard

Indicator[1]	Measure	5 Year Change	EU average[2]	Disaggregation[3]
Subjective Well-being				
Population rating their overall life satisfaction as high (%) *(SILC, 2018)*	45%	↑ +14.4 pp	▬ 25.5%	Age group Self-perceived health status
Children aged 10-17 who report being happy with their lives at present (%) *(HBSC, 2018)*	48.8%	↓ -40.9 pp[4]		Age group Population group
Population who did not feel depressed or downhearted in the last 4 weeks (%) *(SILC, 2018)*	63.4%	↑ +10.4 pp		Poverty status Age group
Mental and Physical Health				
Healthy life years *(Eurostat, 2018)*	69.4	↑ +2.5	▬ 63.6	Sex
People with mild, moderate, moderately severe or severe levels of depression in previous two weeks (%) *(IHS, 2019)*	14%	↓ -12 pp		Deprivation quintile Age Principal Economic Status (PES)
Unmet need for medical examination due to financial, geographic or waiting time reasons (%) *(EHIS, 2014)*[5]	41%		▬ 26.5%	Sex Reason

[9] E.g. cohorts identified in Mcginnity, F., Russell, H., Privalko, I. & Enright, E., (2021) *Monitoring Decent Work in Ireland* and Russell, H., Privalko, I., McGinnity, F. & Enright, E., (Forthcoming) *Monitoring Adequate Housing in Ireland.*

Knowledge and Skills				
Performance in reading/maths of 15-year olds *(PISA, OECD, 2018)*	500	501[6]		Gender Country of birth
Lifelong Learning Rate *(LFS, 2019)*	12.6%	+6.1 pp	11.3%	Age group PES
Headcount of R&D personnel in Business Sector, Higher Education Sector and Public Service *(CSO & DFHERIS, 2019)*	87,666	+5,294[8]		Sex Sector
Income & Wealth				
Households making ends meet with great difficulty (%) *(SILC, 2019)*	7.5%	-10.3 pp	6.6%	Household composition Distribution
Median real household disposable income *(SILC, 2019)*[9]	€45,524	+€7,671		Household composition PES of head of household 80/20 distribution
Median household net wealth *(HFCS, 2018)*	€178,400	+€75,800		Tenure status Household composition
Housing and Local Area				
Population spending 40% of disposable income on housing (%) *(SILC, 2019)*[9]	4.2%	-2.2 pp	10.1%	Tenure Status Region
New dwelling completions *(CSO, 2020)*[10]	20,584	+13,365		Urban/Rural
A or B Domestic Building Energy Ratings (%) *(BER, 2021)*[11]	37.8%	+21.3 pp		Dwelling type County
Average distance to everyday services *(CSO, 2019)*[12]				*Distance from several services (urban/rural) - hyperlink to graphical breakdown.*
Environment, Climate and Biodiversity				
Pollution, grime or other environmental problems (%) *(SILC, 2019)*	6.5%	+2 pp	14.9%	Poverty status Tenure status
Proportion of water bodies assessed as 'high' or 'good' (%) *(EPA, 2017-2019)*	57%	-2.3 pp[13]		
Greenhouse Gas Emissions (CO2, N2O, CH4, HFC, PFC, SF6) ('000 Tonnes CO2 Equivalents) *(EPA, 2018)*	60,934	+3,344		Sector

Waste sent to landfill (% of managed waste) *(Eurostat/EPA, 2016)*	31%	↓ -10 pp[14]	— 23%	
Safety and security				
Number of homicide victims *(CSO Crime Statistics, 2020)*[15]	72	↓ -12[16]		Sex of victim Age of victim
Number of persons injured on roads (by road type user) *(Transport Omnibus, 2018)*	8,011	↑ +1,121		Type of road user (victim) Region
Population who worry they could be a victim of a crime causing physical injury often or all the time (%) *(Crime and Victimisation, 2019)*	15%			Sex Age group Region
Work and job quality				
Employment rate (20-64 years) (%) *(LFS, 2020)*	73%	↑ +3.5 pp	= 72.4%	Age group Sex
Labour market underutilisation rate (share of underemployed, unemployed or potential additional labour force) (%) *(LFS, Q1 2021)*[17]	18.4%	↑ +3.9 pp		Age group Sex
Mean weekly earnings *(Earning Analysis using Administrative Data, 2018)*	€740.72	↑ +€63.55		Sex Nationality Age group
Time Use				
Long working hours in main job (% employed persons) *(LFS, 2020)*[18]	9.4%	↑ +1.2 pp	— 7.4%	Sex Sector Age group
Carers providing at least 20 hours of care per week *(IHS, 2019)*	31%			Sex Age group Poverty status
Population satisfied with time use (amount of leisure time) (rating 0 -10) *(SILC, 2018)*	7.5	↑ +0.5	— 6.8	Parental status Sex
Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation				
Population who feel lonely at least some of the time (%) *(SILC, 2018)*	16.6%			Sex Age group Household composition
Population with more than two people they are close enough to that they could count on, if they had a serious problem (%) *(IHS, 2019)*	77%			Age group Household composition

Civic Engagement and Cultural Expression				
Population satisfied with the way democracy works in Ireland (%) *(Eurobarometer, Spring 2021)*	76%		▬ 55%	Age group Sex
Perceived social inclusion (rating 0 - 10) *(SILC, 2018)*	7.6			Sex Age group PES
Population who experienced discrimination in the past two years (%) *(Equality and Discrimination Module, Q1 2019)*	17.7%			Ethnicity LGBTI+ Disability

1 Statistics relate to population aged over 15 years, unless stated otherwise.
2 For reference years up to 2019, compared with EU-28. For reference years 2020 and afterwards, compared with EU-27.
3 Preferred disaggregation based on data availability.
4 Trend 2014 to 2018.
5 CSO interactive dashboard will use more recent data from SILC.
6 Trend 2012 to 2018.
7 OECD average.
8 Trend 2015 to 2019.
9 Please note that in 2020 there will be a break in the time series which will mean that 2020 SILC results will not be fully comparable with results from previous years.
10 Construction of housing is particularly affected by economic cycles, and therefore a five-year trend here might be misleading. For context, in 2010, 14,602 new dwellings were completed and in 2005, 85,957 new dwellings were completed. This indicator does not consider changes in population, and resulting changes in demand.
11 Percentage of houses with BER ratings.
12 This indicator shows the average distance from a variety of everyday services. Rather than choosing one particular service to highlight here, this text links to the CSO release.
13 Trend from 2013-2015
14 Trend 2012-2016
15 Homicide incidents include Dangerous Driving leading to Death. In the CSO interactive dashboard, this will be disaggregated to highlight murder.
16 Trend from 2016-2020
17 As a proportion of total labour force plus Potential Additional Labour Force (PALF). Based on OECD definition, however due to the data availability this indicator includes the total PALF: people not immediately available for work, but actively seeking work alongside people immediately available but not actively seeking work. The OECD only includes the latter.
18 As defined by Eurostat: percentage of employed persons usually working 49 hours or more per week.

Choosing Indicators

Given the principle of accessibility, prioritisation, and low complexity, approximately 30 indicators are included in the Well-being Dashboard (in general, 3 per dimension). It is important to ensure that decisions on which indicators to choose are transparent and based on a clear set of criteria, as emphasised in the NESC Stakeholder and Expert Consultation. The NESC report suggested several high-level criteria for indicator selection,[10] which have been further developed as detailed below.

In general, indicators should be outcome (rather than input) based, and at an individual or household level (instead of a macro level). There are several areas that have multiple indicators available with trade-offs between criteria (often frequency versus disaggregation). In general, for this iteration, indicators that allow more thorough disaggregation have been

[10] NESC (2021), *Ireland's Well-Being Framework: Consultation Report*, Chapter 2 under *Selecting and Enhancing the Indicators* section

chosen (in keeping with the consultation findings of the importance of equality, and the uses of the dashboard for this purpose).

1. Balanced/Holistic
   It is important that each indicator is not considered alone, but rather as an overall set which provides the right mix to ensure a multi-dimensional understanding of well-being. Indicators should measure different things. Insofar as possible indicators should measure the different aspects of each dimensions, and there should be a good balance of indicators across each of the eleven dimensions. The first iteration will be not be able to fully measure all aspects of each dimension due to gaps in the data. Chosen indicators should include a mix between objective and subjective measures, high-level indicators and good proxies.

2. Added value/policy relevance
   Although the OECD well-being framework is taken as a starting point, this framework should add value for the Irish context. It is important that the chosen indicators can inform public policy and be linked to policy frameworks. It has also been agreed that this framework should complement rather than replace the existing analytical tools used by Departments for detailed policy design and analysis. Indicators that highlight an area of well-being that is particularly important for current Irish policy should have priority. These may change over time - flexibility in indicators to reflect shifting policy priorities is an important benefit of a well-defined framework.

3. Aggregation and Disaggregation (Inequalities)
   The Well-being Framework should provide a tool for exploration of inequalities within and between dimensions. This is enabled through indicators that can be disaggregated to sub-populations such as age group, sex or location (as discussed in more detail in the *Inequalities and Disaggregation* section below). Indicators where such disaggregation is possible should be given priority.

   Equally, being able to aggregate up to the broad population is important. High-level indicators should cover as much of the population as possible, with specific cohorts investigated through disaggregation.

4. Availability and Quality
   Chosen indicators should be consistent and of high quality, with internationally recognised methodologies. In order to measure progress, it is essential to be able to show trends with up to date information. Given the breadth of dimensions – some of which are not consistently measured – this will not be possible in some cases in the first iteration. However, where possible, consistent measurement of the chosen indicator should have priority.

5. International Comparability
   As far as possible, the indicators should have the ability to make country comparisons over time. Trends alone are not enough to show progress – if every comparator country is improving then an upward trend may not actually indicate strong progress. The ability to compare with other countries – in particular EU countries – is an important consideration.

Inequalities and Disaggregation

An important use for Ireland's Well-being Framework – emphasised by the results of the NESC consultation – will be to identify well-being inequalities across particular segments of society. Exploring inequalities has been a particular use of other national frameworks for agenda-setting in policy-making.[11] The last column in the table above highlights how each indicator will be broken down to explore and highlight where inequalities exist within these dimensions. These include vertical inequalities (the distribution or difference between the highest and lowest scores within a particular indicator), horizontal inequalities (differences according to specific population cohorts) and deprivation (the share of the population falling below a given threshold of achievement).

The cohorts chosen for disaggregation in the dashboard were based on data availability, existing research, policy priorities and consultation with experts – including the CSO.

The ability to examine by age group is increasingly important, and emphasised in this report by the focus on intergenerational inequality. Recent research showing that younger people are not experiencing the same advantages as previous generations across areas such as poverty, employment and housing.[12] Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of social connections, and emphasised how older people can be more vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation.[13] For these reasons, breakdown by age is provided frequently across the dimensions.

Many aspects of well-being vary by gender or sex. The gender pay gap[14] is highlighted in the dashboard through average earnings, broken down by sex. Time use is also gendered, with men working longer hours in paid work,[15] while women are more likely to spend time caring.[16]

Ethnicity is an important, but underexplored, area of inequality in Ireland. Data availability is a consistent problem in identifying and monitoring differences across ethnicity groups.[17] Travellers, black and other minority ethnic groups experience inequalities in accessing housing.[18] Similarly, there are very low employment rates relative to other groups among Muslim, Black and (especially) Irish Traveller respondents to the census (generally not used in the well-being dashboard due to frequency).[19] The dashboard has disaggregated by ethnicity and, as a proxy, by nationality or country of birth where possible.

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[11] A strong example of how this has been done in practice is the New Zealand Well-being Budget 2019 which identified priority areas linked to their well-being framework, which highlighted children and the Maori and Pacific peoples as cohorts that required a particular focus.
[12] Roantree, B., Maître, B., McTague, A. & Privalko, I., (2021), *Intergenerational inequality: Chapter 4 in Poverty, Income Inequality and Living Standards in Ireland*.
[13] TILDA and ALONE, (2020), *Loneliness and social isolation in the COVID-19 Pandemic among the over 70s: Data from The Irish Longitudinal Study on ageing (TILDA) and ALONE.*
[14] Nevin Economic Research Institute, (2021), *The Gender Pay Gap in the Republic of Ireland.*
[15] CSO, (2020), *Women and Men in Ireland 2019.*
[16] Russell, H., Grotti, R., McGinnity, F. & Privalko, I., (2019), *Caring and unpaid work in Ireland.*
[17] Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, (2021), *Interim Report to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.*
[18] Grotti, R., Russell, H., Fahey, E., Maître, B. (2018), Discrimination and Inequality in Housing in Ireland.
[19] Mcginnity *et al*, (2021) *Monitoring Decent Work in Ireland*

Work status (or principal employment status) and poverty status are important determinants of many well-being indicators. The risk of poverty and poor living standards are clearly impacted by not being in paid employment.[20] However, being out of work (either unemployed or discouraged) [21] is also strongly correlated with subjective well-being[22] and mental health.[23] For these reasons, disaggregation by principal employment status and by poverty (depending on the type of indicator) where possible has been chosen.

Many of the indicators chosen are household indicators (e.g. disposable income and wealth), and based on how these data are collected, it is misleading to examine these by individual characteristics such as those highlighted above. Household composition examines the makeup of the household (e.g. presence of children, people of retirement age), and also aspects of the household as a whole (e.g. single-parent households, jobless households or single-person households). Lone parent families are identified through household composition, a group that are disproportionately disadvantaged across several dimensions.[24] Examining households with the presence of children in general is also important, as disadvantages experienced as children can have a lasting impact on their lives.[25] For these reasons, where appropriate, disaggregation by household composition has been chosen – in particular in the Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation and Income and Wealth dimensions.

Many aspects of well-being can vary depending on location. These differences can be based on whether an individual is based in more urban or rural locations – for example, housing costs, household income, self-perceived health status and levels of employment.[26] Several environmental aspects – for example air and water quality – are dependent on the specific location.[27] These differences will be drawn out, depending on data availability, through disaggregation by region, county or urban/rural.

A Consultative Approach

The development of the Irish Well-being Framework was supported through several groups, data reviews and surveys to provide a basis of what well-being for Ireland comprised. This section highlights how these contributions were incorporated into the development of the conceptual framework and dashboard.

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[20] Roantree *et al*, (2021), *Poverty, income inequality and living standards in Ireland.*
[21] Those who want a job but are not in paid employment. This does not include those who do not want paid employment (e.g. due to caring duties) or those in full-time education.
[22] CSO, (2020), *SILC Module on Well-being, 2018.*
[23] CSO, (2020), *Irish Health Survey, 2019.*
[24] Joint Committee on Social Protection, Houses of the Oireachtas, (2017) *Report on the Position of Lone Parents in Ireland.*
[25] Maître, B., Russell, H. & Smyth, E., (2021), *The dynamics of child poverty in Ireland: Evidence from the Growing Up in Ireland survey.*
[26] CSO, (2019), *Urban and Rural Life in Ireland 2019.*
[27] EPA, (2020), *Ireland's environment: An integrated assessment 2020.*

Primary Inputs for Framework Development
NESC Stakeholder and Expert Group, including a survey completed by 450 organisations and individuals.
Interdepartmental Group, including a survey of all Departments, and bilateral engagements with specific Departmental statistical units and agencies including Department of Health; Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Department of Further and Higher Education, and; the Environmental Protection Agency.
Department of Finance (2020), *Budget 2021: Well-being and the Measurement of Broader Living Standards in Ireland*
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform supporting documents regarding utilising the OECD well-being framework to illustrate well-being in Ireland
CSO review of existing data and emerging data gaps based on the OECD framework
OECD, (2020), *How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris
New Zealand Government *Living Standards Framework*

Reflecting NESC and Working Group Input

Responding to NESC findings

There was continuous feedback between the NESC Expert and Stakeholder group and the Interdepartmental Group, primarily through the secretariats, to ensure that the two simultaneous processes were integrated.

This integrated approach meant that the Expert and Stakeholder Group contributed throughout the process of the development of the framework including informing approach, moulding the OECD framework to the Irish context, the development of the dashboard, and proposed future work.

In summary the Council argues that the case for developing well-being frameworks rests on five inter-connected points:

- a shared vision which mobilises action;
- views progress through the lived experience of citizens;
- focuses on cross-departmental outcomes;
- embeds external collaboration into policy; and,
- builds upon and amplifies existing work.

NESC carried out a wide-ranging consultation including a survey of organisations that covered 450 responses with a good spread across Social, Economic, Environment and

Democratic pillars (SEED) and population group representative organisations.[28] The results of this consultation highlighted certain specific topics that were seen as particularly important to well-being.

The most important issue raised was equality. This is an essential aspect of the framework and dashboard as one of its primary uses is to explore where inequality exists across the different dimensions. In particular, intergenerational equality and the concept of 'positive aging' for older people arose. This highlighted the need to include age as a key disaggregate option across indicators where possible.

The importance of certain areas that were already covered in the OECD well-being framework were emphasised through the survey. These included the environment, housing, job quality, time use, education, health, adequate income for a reasonable standard of living, and the importance of social connections with family and friends.

There were other areas that were highlighted in the survey that were not included, or did not have a strong enough emphasis, in the OECD framework:

- The environment was seen as critically important for well-being, in particular emissions targets and access to nature and green spaces. To reflect these views, the name of the relevant dimension was expanded to include climate and biodiversity (Environment, Climate and Biodiversity) and these areas are all included explicitly in the conceptual framework and, where available, in the dashboard. To highlight the importance of this dimension, in particular the intergenerational impact, a fourth indicator was included (waste).
- Health was another strong area deemed to impact well-being, with mental health emphasised in particular. Access to health services – in particular barriers to health interventions – were also highlighted. To respond to the emphasis on mental health, the dimension title was expanded (Mental and Physical Health). Furthermore, mental health and access to health services (alongside physical health) were included explicitly in the definition of the dimension with associated indicators included in the dashboard.
- The survey highlighted community as an important aspect of well-being. For this reason, Social Engagement was renamed to Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation, and community engagement is included as a specific aspect of this dimension.
- The importance of inclusion and migrant rights was emphasised, and this area was included explicitly in the Civic Engagement and Cultural Expression dimension.
- A specific value on Irish culture was highlighted. The right to express culture, including language, has been included in the Civic Engagement and Cultural Expression dimension. It also highlights the specific value on the Irish language.
- Given their emphasis in the consultation, the ability to engage with one's heritage, engaging in cultural activities, and membership of sporting, artistic or creative groups has been included in the Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation dimension, and opportunities for engagement in sports, arts and culture are explicitly noted under personal time in the Time use dimension.
- The consultation emphasised the value and importance of unpaid work in Ireland. For this reason, the Work and Job Quality dimension was expanded to include unpaid work.

[28] For further detail on this survey, see Box 1.2, p. 8 National Economic & Social Council, 2021, *Well-being Framework in Ireland: Consultation Report.*

- A particular emphasis on basic life skills and the importance of lifelong learning was underscored, which has been included explicitly in the Knowledge and Skills dimension and as an indicator in the dashboard.
- The importance of children and young people's experiences – in particular in terms of intergenerational inequality – was emphasised. Notwithstanding issues with data availability (see below for further information), a measure of whether children (aged 10 to 17) are happy with their lives at present has been included in the dashboard under the Subjective Well-being dimension.
- The importance of social connections was emphasised through the consultation, with loneliness signalled as an important underlying indicator for well-being. This has been included in the Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation dimension.

Responding to Working Group Input:

The Working Group provided input through constructive meetings, and through a survey that Departments completed. There was significant overlap between the views captured in this Departmental survey and the results from the NESC consultation which provides a reassuring convergence in views on what is important for well-being in Ireland.

There was consistency across the Departments on what elements were important in defining well-being which have been reflected in the dimensions. These include existing dimensions in the original OECD framework (for example, income, job quality, housing, environment, education, safety and subjective well-being) while also highlighting aspects that are important for the Irish context (including an emphasis on mental health, tenure of housing, empowered communities, addressing inequalities and a sense of purpose). These additional areas have been incorporated into the framework in the Mental and Physical Health, Housing and Local Area, Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation, Subjective Well-being and Civic engagement and Cultural Expression dimensions.

Emerging Data Gaps

In consultation with the CSO, across Government Departments, and NESC Expert and Stakeholder Group findings, a number of data gaps have emerged.

There are several stages to progressing the availability, access and usability of relevant data for the Framework. The first stage is identifying data gaps, with an intention to reduce these gaps progressively across future iterations of the Framework.

There are three types of data gaps:

1. Data that exists, but the CSO does not have ownership of the data for the purpose of the dashboard;
2. Data that exists, but is collected infrequently or on an ad-hoc basis and prevents thorough analysis of trends and changes over time, or that does not provide sufficient disaggregation to explore certain inequalities;
3. Data that does not exist, or is not collected in an appropriate way, or to a sufficient standard.

One overarching theme is that access to 'hard' data is more readily available than 'soft' data. In particular, broader and more frequent subjective well-being measurement are important.

Measuring **social connections** (in terms of frequency of social engagement) and **community activity** (in particular an aggregate measure of community engagement) are significant gaps. Many of the **subjective well-being** indicators that are used in the dashboard come from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). A Quality of Life SILC module, which will run in 2022, will collect information on life satisfaction, emotional well-being, and time use satisfaction. This module is currently only collected every 6 years (under current Regulation)[29] and more regular collection of these indicators would be very beneficial. Other subjective measures – such as experience of local natural areas, meaning or perceived safety – are not sufficiently readily available. Such indicators are of critical importance to highlight how objective measures interact with an individual's experienced well-being, and to compare different aspects of well-being across cohorts in a rigorous way. New Zealand, who is seen as the global leader in measuring progress through well-being , developed a bespoke set of well-being survey questions to feed into their well-being framework.[30] The Department of Finance paper has also highlighted that a survey would serve as a good complement to other statistical indicators, and would also allow data gathering on social group memberships (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, etc.), which would facilitate very comprehensive analysis of well-being by such groups.[31]

Other broader areas that have emerged that could be developed further include:

- Environmental indicators – including access to green space or aggregate biodiversity measurement – could be factored into future iterations if appropriate data becomes available.
- Objective measures of civic engagement that allow trend analysis are not readily available. Differences in voter turnout can be based on the type of election (e.g. national, second-order elections or referenda on a very specific issue) rather than continual individual engagement.
- Outcome-based indicators that measure access to housing beyond cost were not readily available (for example, indicators that explore ability to maintain housing, or an outcomes focused indicator linking to the availability of housing). Available data on housing also does not sufficiently take into account the increasing population or the stage of the economic cycle.
- An aggregate indicator for cultural activity in the Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation dimension would be useful to include. This will be explored via the Quality of Life SILC module as discussed above.
- Some areas of clear importance – for example domestic violence or some job quality indicators – are difficult to interpret (e.g., in the case of domestic violence, higher levels of disclosure of domestic violence can be a product of reduced stigma, which results in higher levels of reporting, conviction etc., which can be misinterpreted to mean increased prevalence of such crimes). Furthermore, there are underlying quality issues with Domestic Violence data.
- A measure of time use that can identify people with high levels of aggregate demands on time (rather than those with high levels of specific demands – e.g. long working hours or caring duties) is not readily available.
- Access to data for people under 15 years of age from mainstream surveys is limited for ethical reasons. However, the dashboard has incorporated a headline well-being

[29] EU Regulation governs certain data collection to ensure a consistent timeframe across the EU for international comparability.

[30] For latest release, see here: https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/well-being-statistics-march-2021-quarter

[31] Department of Finance (2020), *Budget 2021: Well-being and the Measurement of Broader Living Standards in Ireland*, https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/62f05-budget-publications/

measure for children from the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children survey to ensure representation of this age group.

- Finally, some specific areas of disaggregation are not sufficiently explored in existing data across the dimensions, which prevents analysis of differences across these groups – in particular ethnicity (which is generally only explored via a proxy of nationality) and sexual orientation/gender identity.[32]

As mentioned earlier, some indicators were chosen based on the ability to disaggregate over frequency. Several indicators have only limited reference periods available (e.g. hours spent caring, those who worry they could be a victim of a crime), and further iterations of these data to allow the exploration of trends would be welcome.

Some of the areas for future work, in particular around data improvements, for example greater disaggregation of indicators, are considerable pieces of work. It is important to highlight the scale of work and the substantial resources involved in fully developing the Framework.

[32] Analysis of these groups are mentioned as gaps in existing data in recent and forthcoming ESRI research on measuring decent work and housing: E.g. cohorts identified in McGinnity *et al.,* (2021) *Monitoring Decent Work in Ireland* and Russell *et al.,* (Forthcoming) *Monitoring Adequate Housing in Ireland.*

Chapter 5 - Capturing and Building on Considerable Work

A core principle for the development of this Framework has been to build on work already undertaken in the well-being space and in particular to build on and link with related work undertaken in Ireland.

This overarching Well-Being Framework can provide a beneficial umbrella structure for more bespoke well-being sub-frameworks, such as those focussed on specific cohorts (e.g., children and young people, older people) specific regions (local Government and local communities), specific sectors (e.g. arts and culture) or specific Departments or agencies.

Right across the spectrum of departments and agencies there are a wide range of well-being related initiatives, which link in and complement a national Well-being Framework. These include:

- A new Health System Performance Assessment, an overarching framework for the Department of Health encompassing the Healthy Ireland strategy;
- Better Outcomes, Brighter Future, the first overarching national policy framework for children and young people (aged 0-24 years) with the purpose of coordinating policy across Government to achieve better outcomes for those of that age; and
- Environmental Protection Agency's co-ordination of sustainability research, connecting activities across Departments and agencies.

CASE STUDY: Health System Performance Assessment Framework (HSPA)

Building on previous work in this area the Department of Health in conjunction with key stakeholders including the HSE and technical experts from the University of Amsterdam has developed a Health System Performance Assessment (HSPA) Framework which will provide a single coherent view across multiple domains and will replace existing disjointed reporting and analysis, including a view of outcomes and reform implementation.

The framework will report on 260 indicators, including the suggested scope of life expectancy, healthy life years, perceived health, mental health, obesity, smoking, alcohol, suicide rates, and physical activity.

Mental and Physical Health features as a key dimension within the Well-Being Framework for Ireland. Therefore, this HSPA is a prime example of a complementary framework with very clear related micro indicators. The Well-being Framework and the associated high-level indicators provides a holistic view of overall well-being, while the HSPA will provide greater detail to policy makers on outcomes in the health area through its comprehensive indicators and data.

The **Healthy Ireland Framework** and associated **Strategic Action Plan**, and the **Sláintecare Strategy and Action Plan** are also central strategies relating to the Physical and Mental Health Dimension. **Sharing the Vision** and **Connecting for Life** are also important related initiatives.

The need for linkages with regions and local communities has been highlighted in the well-being consultation and is an area where strong linkages between the overarching framework and detailed micro analysis are important to draw out. The Department of Rural and Community Development has a research agreement with the ESRI to inform the monitoring and development of **rural and community policy**. The work under this agreement aims to support the development of performance indicators for rural and community development, measurable over time.

Growing up In Ireland, a national longitudinal study of children and young people, which started in 2006 and follows two cohorts of children, provides a wealth of data facilitating comprehensive analysis and research. This spans across education, mental and physical health, subjective well-being, social connections, and economic circumstances. This data, and *Better Outcome, Brighter Futures* measures, are a particularly important complement to the Well-being Framework, given access to data for people under 15 years of age from mainstream surveys is limited for ethical reasons. At the other end of the scale, the **Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing** (TILDA) is a large-scale, nationally representative, longitudinal study on ageing in Ireland, the overarching aim of which is to make Ireland the best place in the world to grow old.

Case study: Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth have developed Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (BOBF) 2014-2020, the first overarching national policy framework for children and young people (aged 0-24 years) with the purpose of coordinating policy across Government to achieve better outcomes for those of that age. The accompanying indicator set to this Strategy tracks progress for children and young people across a number of defined outcomes.

Through the establishment of the Children and Young People's Policy Consortium, cross-Government commitment and accountability for shared actions are being achieved, including greater collaboration in addressing crucial areas such as child poverty. Government assesses the effectiveness of BOBF's implementation through tracking and reporting on progress over time. Key indicators have been identified, which are used to measure progress on key policy areas.

The overarching Well-being Framework can help to inform the development of detailed indicators for the successor BOBF strategy, providing a more structured cross-sectoral approach to the collection of data on children and young people. An overarching framework can also integrate outcomes for children and young people with broader population outcomes and trends, thereby providing a more cohesive picture as young people transition into adulthood.

Sustainability

Environment, Climate and Biodiversity is a critical dimension of the well-being framework and is the dimension that most clearly brings together intergenerational considerations. Apart from the direct influences of pollution on health, such as from air and water pollution, other elements of our environment also play an important role in supporting our health and well-being.

The decarbonisation transition is a fundamental opportunity and challenge for economies and societies the world over. Ireland is committed to achieving an average 7% annual average reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions from 2021 to 2030 (a 51% reduction over the decade), and to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill enshrines our climate targets in law and provides a framework to guide the development of our climate policies and strategies. Key elements of the legislation include provision for a series of carbon budgets and an annual update to the Climate Action Plan.

Ireland is in the process of updating its climate plans and policies to reflect the new climate targets, and in the process co-designing the actions to be undertaken to realise these targets with stakeholders and citizens through active engagement and Public Consultation to facilitate a just transition. Importantly the new Climate Action Plan will be aligned with the reviewed National Development Plan. Other pertinent forthcoming strategies include a whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy, for which a public consultation recently closed, and the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy (2020-2025).

In *Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment*, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provide an assessment of the overall quality of Ireland's environment, the pressures being placed on it and the societal responses to current and emerging environmental issues. In this 2020 report, the EPA find that health and well-being are inextricably linked to the surrounding environment and that there is an ever-growing body of evidence showing that engagement and contact with the surrounding natural environment is associated with measurable improvements in the health and well-being of the population. The report covers detailed components of the environment including air and water quality; environmental noise; chemicals in the environment; plastic pollution; and ambitions for a toxic free environment. These measures serve as a valuable complement to the overarching focus on these broad areas in the Well-being Framework.

Case Study: EPA Coordination of Climate and Environmental Research

- The EPA is responsible for the coordination of Ireland's environmental research. To-date, this has been enabled by the EPA-led Research Coordination Groups (RCGs), which aim to facilitate, support and promote coordination, synergies and liaison between relevant cross-sectoral funding organisations; and to reduce the fragmentation and/or duplication of environmental research in Ireland.

- Under its 2014-2020 Research Strategy, three groups were set up based on the thematic structure of the EPA Research Programme, i.e. aligned to its Research Pillars, namely: Climate, Sustainability and Water.

- Under EPA Research 2030, acknowledging the interconnectedness of environmental issues, the EPA's research coordination activities will be streamlined by merging the existing RCGs under one main environmental research coordination forum. Therefore, from 2021 onwards, the three existing RCGs will be merged into an umbrella National Environmental Research Coordination Group.

- The EPA is currently undertaking a 5 Year Assessment Report on climate research activities; it is also engaging in ongoing collaboration with the HSE showing cross cut with health and environment.

Complementary Cross-Governmental Policies and Plans

Across the dimensions the overarching Well-being Framework is complemented by more detailed work at the Department level with considerable live policies and strategies aligning with key elements of the Well-being Framework.

Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025, presents a whole-of-government vision for a thriving, sustainable and inclusive rural Ireland, which is integral to our national wellbeing, built on the interdependence of urban and rural areas, and which recognises the centrality of people and the importance of their wellbeing. It was developed after an extensive consultation process, and aims to adopt an inclusive, participative, bottom-up approach to rural development, to address the challenges and opportunities facing rural Ireland. Furthermore, it seeks to advance Ireland's sustainable development agenda by ensuring sustainability of the economy, society and environment.

Social enterprises contribute to a wide range of policy areas including health, environment, job creation and rural development. The **National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022**, is supporting the development of social enterprise to enable them to maximise their social and environmental impact. One of its main objectives is achieving better policy alignment which includes a measure to develop mechanisms to measure the social and economic impact of Social Enterprises across the full spectrum of Social Enterprise.

The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education seeks to ensure that the student body entering into, participating in and completing higher education at all levels reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population. The Plan identifies the target groups that are currently under-represented in higher education. These include entrants from socio-economic groups that have low participation in higher education, lone parents, Irish Travellers, students with disabilities, first time mature student entrants, part-time/flexible learners and further education award holders. The provision of education provides people with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills that over the course of their lives can shape, for instance, their employment prospects and income. Educational attainment and equality are key elements of the Well-being Framework and as such the new National Access Plan 2022-2026 and associated progress reviews link directly into the framework.

The **National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework,** Ireland's first ever national approach to address student mental health and suicide prevention, aims to help to address gaps which might exist in the prevention of suicide in higher education, recognises the many challenges students face, and sets out ways in which institutions can support and respond through working proactively to maximise mental health. Again, this links in with the overarching dimension of Mental and Physical Health and Subjective well-being within the Well-being Framework.

The **National Remote Work Strategy** reflects the economic, social and environmental benefits and aims to support remote work as a permanent feature in our economy. It is intended to develop national data on the incidence and frequency of remote work to guide future policy and is particularly pertinent for the Time Use dimension.

Strategies such as new **Pathways to Work 2021-2025** and the forthcoming **10 Year Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy**, strongly link with the Work and Job Quality and Knowledge and Skills dimensions. The 7 high level objectives in the **Roadmap for Social Inclusion** have societal well-being as their aim. The new **Housing for All strategy** aligns

directly with the Housing and Local area dimension, as does Project Ireland 2040 and the forthcoming reviewed **National Development Plan.**

The **Creative Ireland Programme** has links with subjective well-being, mental health, time use, community, social connections, cultural participation, civic engagement and cultural expression. A sectoral focus on arts and culture, through a sub-framework for cultural life, could add value, linking in with Subjective Well-being and Community, Social Connections and Cultural Participation dimensions in particular. Such a sub-framework could explore the well-being benefits at the individual level from participation in cultural, artistic and creative or sporting activities.

Finally, the five-year Strategy for the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland, **Sustainable, Inclusive, and Empowered Communities (2019 – 2024)**, recognises the importance of the Community and Voluntary Sector to the well-being of society. It sets out a long-term vision for communities in Ireland, setting a direction of travel for Government policy in relation to community development, local development and the community and voluntary sector for the coming years. In addition, the **National Volunteering Strategy (2021 – 2025)** sets out a long-term vision for volunteering and volunteers in Ireland. The purpose of the Strategy is to recognise, support and promote the unique value and contribution of volunteers to Irish society. Volunteering can play an important role in individual and community wellbeing, both for the volunteers and beneficiaries. This policy will help ensure these benefits are maintained and strengthened over the coming years.

Broader Engagement

Important social dialogue and broader vehicles for consultation align with well-being and an approach rooted in engagement and co-operation. This includes the Government's ongoing work to enhance and strengthen social dialogue mechanisms and engagement with partners, building on current practices and fora, such as the Labour Employer Economic Forum and the National Economic Dialogue, with the aim of achieving greater consensus as we manage economic, labour market and societal changes. Citizens' Assemblies have brought together citizens to discuss and consider important legal and policy issues facing Ireland, most recently on Gender Equality, with future areas of focus including biodiversity; while enhancements to Oireachtas Scrutiny practices have also provided further space for discussion and engagement.

Creating our Future – a National Conversation on Research in Ireland, a 12-month national campaign to engage the people of Ireland in a dialogue on what is important to them and the role they want research to play in their future is due to commence shortly.

The **National Economic Dialogue** (NED) is an important part of the budgetary process and is an opportunity to consider citizens perspectives through stakeholders across community, voluntary and environmental groups as well and business, unions, research institutes and the academic community. It is therefore a suitable vehicle for discussing well-being, in particular as this work advances, and well-being becomes embedded in the budgetary process.

National Dialogue on Climate Action

A Public Consultation, in March 2021, showed 92% of respondents reported a high level of awareness of the risk posed by climate change and the need for change. It showed a public who are active across a range of activities, are eager to work with the government to deliver on more ambitious projects, and identified areas where individuals and communities feel they lack information and knowledge, resources, or the capacity to pursue these changes.

What is required is a means of actively engaging stakeholders and citizens across sectors and regions promoting the systematic mobilisation of every element of Irish society and realising our collective responsibility towards climate action.

The vision of the National Dialogue for Climate Action (NDCD) is to support the transition to a climate neutral economy and resilient Ireland by 2050. The purpose of the NDCA is to create an enduring process of widespread engagement and activation on climate change across all of society in support of the national transition objectives and the Climate Action Plan.

The NDCA adopts a person-centred model which aligns with the Well-being Framework. The NDCA has three key objectives:

- Create awareness, understanding and engagement on climate change.
- Motivate and enable climate action and improve climate literacy at the communities and citizens.
- Promote self-efficacy and empower citizens to take climate action and to inform policy responses.

The NDCA will be the key mechanism through which climate actions related to public engagement, participation, community action, networking and capacity building activities are delivered in Ireland, giving everyone in society the opportunity to fully engage constructively in climate action.

The work of the NDCA will be delivered in parallel to and will complement delivery on Ireland's commitments to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Well-being Framework will serve as an important complement to work on progressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). Other countries have found that while there are conceptual differences between the two – the SDGs are a set of policy goals, while well-being approaches involve a framework for thinking about well-being/quality of life – there is a significant degree of overlap, and these connections are important and serve to bolster both as complementary initiatives.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals have the aim of achieving a more holistic approach and global outlook to policy development. Each goal and target relate to the economy,

society and environment. The UN SDGs call on countries to work together to achieve sustainable development globally, with governments working with all stakeholders to achieve sustainable development domestically, while also working together at international levels. SDGs are built on this partnership-based approach.

The Department for the Environment, Climate and Communications has lead responsibility for promoting and overseeing coherent implementation of the SDGs, which cut across policy areas within the responsibility of many Government Departments and agencies, and touch on both domestic and international policy approaches. Ireland's Hub for Sustainable Development Goals (geohive.ie) illustrates the goals and targets being addressed by Government, and a Progress Report on the National Implementation Plan 2018-2020 is due for completion in 2021, along with the next National Implementation Plan.

While having different purposes, the Well-being Framework and dashboard of indicators is complementary to Ireland's work on the implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goals, as highlighted by the OECD[33]. Across the Well-being Framework for Ireland, there are clear linkages with the SDGs across the Income and Wealth, Mental and Physical Health, Knowledge and Skills, Housing and Local Area, Environment, Climate and Biodiversity, Work and Job Quality, Time Use, and Civic Engagement and Cultural Expression dimensions. An explicit mapping of linkages between the Well-being Framework dimensions and further developed indicators and the SDGs would be a useful output as part of the next phase of work.

Public Participation Networks (PPNs)

Moving from the international perspective, to the local perspective, an opportunity also exist to draw on the experience of PPNs, in particular for enhancing the Frameworks vision. PPNs are engaging in developing 'Visons for Community Well-being' designed to capture the aspirations of communities. They outline the key goals that member groups in a PPN area consider important in making their local communities more supportive in attaining positive well-being for all who live and work there. A valuable opportunity exists in connecting the vision of the National Well-being Framework with these local well-being statements.

A Shared Island Approach

The Government and the Northern Ireland Executive are both committed to developing and implementing well-being frameworks. Consideration of well-being frameworks and indicators, North and South, will form part of the Shared Island (Research) Report being conducted by NESC this year. This will inform thinking on how greater all-island collaboration could be developed in the well-being space, given the broad commonality of what is important in well-being terms for people on the island, and of environmental, economic and social contexts.

[33]OECD, (2017), *Measuring distance to the SDG targets: An assessment of where OECD countries stand*, https://www.oecd.org/sdd/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDG-Targets.pdf: Table 1: Comparison of the OECD Well-being framework and the 2030 Agenda

Chapter 6 - Integration with Policy Making

High-level well-being frameworks are important for developing a shared understanding of what makes for better lives and influencing public debate on strategic priorities. Such frameworks, however, do not in-and-of-themselves fulfil the ambition of improving policy and decision-making. This requires developing a knowledge base around well-being as a policy objective and integrating well-being into the various stages of the policy making process.

International Experience

Internationally governments are incorporating well-being metrics and frameworks into policy decision making at different stages of the policy cycle, from strategic analysis and prioritisation to policy evaluation (as noted by the OECD). Institutional support is vital for the durability of these mechanisms over time and through different political cycles.

Several countries have put in place formal structures to integrate the well-being data into policy formation, for example, in some countries frameworks were developed or initially commissioned by either Centre-of-Government or other ministries with the clear intention to apply the resultant well-being metrics in policy settings. In other cases, the initiative has been led by the National Statistical Office or similar agency thereby distancing the measurement work from the ministries in which policy decisions are taken[34].

International approaches in embedding well-being frameworks are explored in further details in the NESC consultation input paper (Chapter 4), this covers different approaches from legislation to ensure accountability, different reporting structures and ongoing publications, creating new institutional structures, Ministerial accountability and parliamentary oversight, and incorporating into different stages of the budgeting process.

As noted by the OECD, while the routine reporting of well-being metrics alone can highlight certain issues and drive policy, to maximise the potential benefits of measuring well-being it is necessary to go beyond publishing indicators to integrate well-being metrics into policy making. They note that there are a number of ways in which indicators and evidence, in broad terms, can shape policy from influencing public debate on strategic priorities and emergent issues, through to use in studies commissioned by government agencies to evaluate the impact of specific policy programmes.

Well-being can therefore be implemented at different stages of the policy cycle:
Priority/Agenda setting; Policy formulation; Implementation; and Monitoring & Evaluation.

An Approach for Ireland

Ireland's Well-being Framework seeks to provide a common frame of reference, over time informing the policy process across all stages of the policy cycle. It can drive policy direction, helping inform priorities and agenda setting, and it can be used to help inform, design, implement, examine and evaluate policies and programmes, as a complementary tool to performance and outcomes measurement approaches.

[34] OECD, (2018), "Policy use of well-being metrics: Describing countries' experiences", *Statistics and Data Directorate Working Paper*, No. 94. Page 20.

In particular, the Well-being Framework has potential to support efforts to address complex policy challenges by providing a clear structure to understand the different elements and interlinkages of these decisions. It can help determine a relationship between well-being and strategies, policies and programmes and help consider well-being outcomes. It will be possible to identify if policies are enhancing well-being and whether they are being implemented in the context of improving or deteriorating well-being.

The Framework can help describe people's lives and the challenges they face (i.e., define policy opportunities and challenges, set clear policy goals) and acknowledge the complexity of the context in which a policy intervention is being implemented (i.e., by focusing attention on the broad range of interacting factors that need to be considered when trying to design and implement public policy).

One way of bringing some focus to the idea of well-being in a policy context is to think about it in terms of **Sen's capability approach**, which has guided the development of the Well-being Framework.[35] This approach focuses on the capabilities of persons to lead the kind of lives they value – and have reason to value. It presents public policy as a way of creating opportunities for people to change or progress their lives. As such, a well-being approach to public policy is concerned with what it is a person can be and what they want to achieve.

Building knowledge around well-being is an important objective. The Well-being Framework can serve to promote the development of research and analysis that can provide insights into methods and approaches that lend themselves to the field of well-being.[36] *(See Chapter 7 for further details).*

Agenda Setting and Policy Direction

The Well-being Framework can help draw out the relationship between public policy and well-being, and in so doing influence policy priorities and steer agenda setting in the direction of well-being.

The framework seeks to facilitate a more holistic approach with a greater emphasis on interlinkages and trade-offs, and therefore a less siloed approach to policy making.

Strategy statements and policy goals can be influenced by, linked to and classified under the Well-being Framework dimensions. Thus, the framework can support the identification of policy goals that are more specific in terms of the overall direction of travel, and also measurable.

As outlined in Chapter 7 below, the use of the Well-being framework for agenda setting and priority and goal setting will be an important element of the next phase of consultation, awareness raising, and research. This is relevant for the public and stakeholders in terms of the areas they deem to be of greatest priority and to policy makers across department and agencies in informing the direction and ambitions of important strategies and polices.

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[35] Sen, Amartya, (1999), "**Commodities and Capabilities**," *OUP Catalogue*, Oxford University Press, number 9780195650389.

[36] For example see Kennedy, F., Gibney, S. & Dogget, R. (2020), "Prevention and Early Intervention – Policy Design and Implementation", *Prevention & Early Intervention Series,* Working Paper No. 2: https://igees.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PEIU-Working-Paper-2-Design-and-Implementation-of-PEI.pdf

Further research will also help guide how the framework can make a real impact on agenda setting and policy formation.

Management and Evaluation of Public Spending

The Department of Public Expenditure & Reform is developing a number of initiatives that will seek to utilise the Well-being Framework to locate well-being within existing expenditure policy (in order to inform efforts to improve the impact of public policy on people's lives) and to inform the design and implementation of more effective public policies.

The ambition is to centrally position well-being as a policy goal within the framework for the management and evaluation of public resources.

The Framework can leverage various elements of the budgetary framework that are focused on how limited public resources are used efficiently to deliver effective public services:

- *Performance budgeting initiative* broadens the scope of expenditure policy from financial resources to include a focus on the public services provided and the impact these services are having on people's lives;

- *Equality budgeting* provides information on how proposed / ongoing budgetary decisions impact on particular groups in society, thereby integrating equality concerns into the budgetary process and highlighting risk of unintended consequences;

- *Public Spending Code* sets out the rules and procedures whenever public money is being spent / invested; and

- *Spending Review process* seeks to critically assess key policies and expenditure programmes in support of evidence-informed policy making.

Progressing this Public Expenditure and Reform workstream is outlined in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7 - Roadmap for Further Stages of Work

This First Report reflects the initial iteration of the Well-being Framework and focuses on the first stage of the process, namely developing an over-arching conceptual framework and an accompanying dashboard.

As highlighted throughout this report, the Well-being Framework is a living document and will adapt to reflect the ongoing priorities of the Irish people and its uses for the policy making system.
As the development of the framework is an iterative process, feedback on the framework from those using it to inform policy approaches and wider society will help inform and improve future iterations. It is, however, important to highlight the scale of work and the substantial resources involved in fully developing the Framework, in particular in addressing data gaps.

Over time greater linkages with international, national and local efforts in the well-being space is envisaged as well as greater integration with related sub-frameworks.

The next steps for progressing this work centre around a further stage of consultation and awareness raising, initiating integration with policy making, and developing plans and structures to improve and expand well-being data.

Further Consultation & Engagement and Promoting Awareness

Following publication of this report there will be a second phase of consultation, led by the Department of the Taoiseach, to articulate the approach as set out in this first Report, and communicate the Framework and Dashboard to gain valuable feedback. The purpose of this 'Public Conversation' will be to create awareness, generate buy-in, and to test the framework, in particular the vision, and to get a sense of people's priorities. There will be an emphasis on ensuring that the views collected represent the diversity of Irish society. There will also be a focus on cultural expression (i.e. identity) and cultural participation, in particular exploring to what extent and in what ways each of these supports well-being for the people of Ireland. This will be done with a view to considering the inclusion of an additional dimension (in line with focus on this area in the NESC Report) building on adequate exploration and definition for Ireland. These engagements will be particularly helpful in informing agenda setting and policy direction, and related trade-offs. Engaging internally with policy makers across Departments and agencies will also be an important element of this consultation phase.

Local government and community development structures such as PPNs and the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) are of critical importance to the delivery of public policy and implementation of many of the areas identified in this report. Therefore, it is important that the central role of both local government and community development structures are recognised. Active engagement with these local structures including in the next stage of consultation on the well-being framework will help inform the future developments of this work, provide valuable feedback on its vision and goals, and help draw out linkages at local level.

This consultation phase will be kick-started by the launch of the CSO's dashboard in Autumn, which will be an interactive version based on the static dashboard contained in this Report.

This will be accompanied by communication information around the vision, goals and ambition of the well-being initiative, the conceptual framework, and a sense of Ireland's progress.

It is expected that this process will inform and help shape a greater shared understanding and vision and thereby more aligned and reflective policy making. This period of engagement will be influenced by the NESC Stakeholder and Experts Subgroup Report and members of the NESC Subgroup, collectively or individually, will be an important resource to draw on for this phase of further consultation.

Public Policy

Working with Departments, including through the existing IDG structure, to help gain buy-in, promote usage of the Framework, and to facilitate feedback will be particularly important for the next phase of this work. This will build upon Department and agency work to date, as outlined in Chapter 5, and allow for greater linkages to related work. A particularly important element of the next phase of this work will be to explore how the Framework can be beneficial for agenda setting, and policy and strategic direction.

A separate workstream will be taken forward by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to inform integration of the Well-being Framework into expenditure policy, in particular with performance budgeting and equality budgeting. As part of this workstream, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will be seeking to utilise the framework to locate well-being within existing expenditure policy, in particular, examining the relationship between well-being and public policy. Furthermore, the Department will seek to build knowledge of well-being as a policy objective in order to better inform the design and implementation of more effective public policies. It is anticipated that this initiative will be based on an evidence-for-policy approach that will set out key issues and provide insights into methods and approaches that inform the design and implementation of policies and programmes that are concerned with people's well-being. The work in this area will also support the ongoing development of the Public Spending Code, in particular with regard to the appraisal of current expenditure proposals.[37]

More broadly, research through a well-being lens will be encouraged and promoted, including through the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) and NESC.

Data Capture

The CSO will develop an indicative work programme centred around the governance structures it proposes to implement for incorporating official data not currently held by the CSO for future iterations of the dashboard. The CSO will also examine any potential additional well-being related data to be collected directly by the CSO and related plans (further details below).

[37] For example see Kennedy, F., Gibney, S. & Dogget, R. (2020), "Prevention and Early Intervention – Policy Design and Implementation", *Prevention & Early Intervention Series,* Working Paper No. 2: https://igees.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PEIU-Working-Paper-2-Design-and-Implementation-of-PEI.pdf

Bringing it together

The work as set out above will be conducted with a view to reporting back to Government early in 2022, to inform future direction and workstreams and permanent institutional structures.

As part of the ongoing integration of the framework, annual published analysis relating to the framework is proposed. This is likely to include CSO infographics and a strong well-being focus as part of the annual Public Service Performance Reports and Expenditure Reports. In particular, well-being merits inclusion as a consistent theme in future National Economic Dialogues. This will facilitate communication and engagement, and importantly monitoring and exploration of outcomes.

This First Report and related work has put many building blocks and supporting structures in place to successfully take this work forward. Recommendations relating to further work to improve the framework is set out below.

Further Work

Bespoke research can support maximising the impact of this Framework, for example:

- A comprehensive cohort analysis of the framework to identify population groups who experience deprivation across multiple well-being dimensions would be valuable for the agenda-setting process, to highlight specific cohorts that might need additional supports or interventions to improve the well-being of those most disadvantaged.

- On the conceptual framework, research to develop understanding of the interconnections across dimensions, and how policy priorities can impact well-being in complex ways, would be very beneficial. In particular, a specific exploration of intergenerational well-being would be useful. Furthermore, the interplay between more macro considerations, for example climate change, ageing population or levels of public debt, and current and future individual or societal well-being has not been sufficiently explored.

Vehicles for related research include:

- NESC - Proposed further research is set out in their accompanying Consultation Report;

- IGEES - Valuable resource for tailored exploratory research through a well-being lens; and

- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform – through a range of future initiatives, including contents in the upcoming mid-year Expenditure Report.

Closing the Data Gaps

The CSO will be increasing their offering of well-being data in the coming years. The CSO acknowledges the importance of providing more well-being data and will work with stakeholders across the system to resource these data needs and prioritise their collection. However, such collection remains challenging given the growing demands from the EU and other national users across the broad range of statistical programmes. Important subjective well-being indicators will be asked annually from this year as part of the annual SILC, including overall life satisfaction, social inclusion and emotional well-being.

Furthermore, the CSO will conduct a Health and Quality of Life module next year (2022) as part of SILC, which will include social and cultural participation, providing new data applicable across related dimensions, including participation in cultural and artistic activities, social connections, volunteering and active citizenship.

The CSO will also work collaboratively to incorporate appropriate existing external data, into the dashboard including developing strong governance structures for data sharing as needed. This includes data from the EPA and other national sources, alongside international data from the OECD and European bodies. This will improve the offering of the dashboard over time.

More generally, the identification, development and collection of emerging data gaps across responsible agencies and institutions will continue. In particular, there is a strong awareness that the **initial housing indicators as proposed, do not adequately reflect the experiences of the people of Ireland**, and this is an area that requires further work. Ongoing work by the National Biodiversity Data Centre, the recommendation from the Anti-Racism Committee to address data gaps on ethnicity, and the forthcoming work on performance indicators for rural and community development are also examples of potential areas that could be explored and incorporated in the medium to longer term.

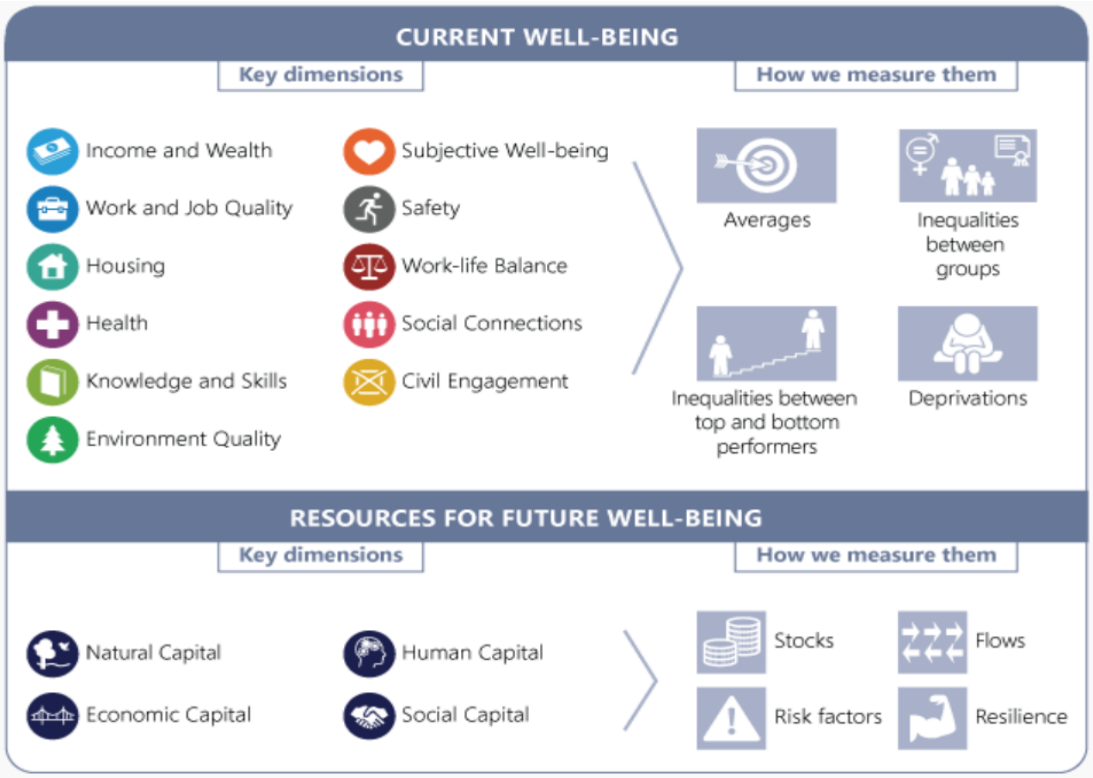
As evidenced internationally, fully developing a Well-being Framework and related data improvements, are considerable pieces of work and will require significant time and substantial resources.

Appendix: Summary of OECD's Well-being Framework

The OECD's well-being framework has set out key dimensions for understanding and measuring people's well-being.[38]

There are 11 Dimensions focusing on current well-being: income and wealth, work and job quality, housing, health, knowledge and skills, environment quality, subjective well-being, safety, work-life balance, social connections, and civil engagement. These dimensions describe how people experience their lives "here and now" at individual, household and community levels.

While assessing the sustainability of well-being over time is challenging, the approach set out by the OECD focuses on stocks of resources or "capitals" seen as persisting over time, are capable of storing value, can be monitored in terms of accumulation or depletion and can generate a stream of benefits to society over time. The four "capitals" that contribute to shaping future well-being are natural capital, human capital, economic capital, and social capital.



[38] OECD, (2020), *How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being*. Paris: OECD Publishing; OECD. 2013. *How's Life? 2013: Measuring Well-being*. Paris: OECD Publishing; OECD. 2011. *Compendium of OECD well-being indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

The approach adopted by the OECD:

- Emphasises households and individuals rather than the aggregate economic conditions because the economic situation may not reflect the diversity of well-being experienced by different groups of people;

- Concentrates on well-being outcomes rather than the drivers of well-being as measured by input or output indicators;

- Looks at the distribution of well-being across individuals as national averages often mask inequalities between different groups in the population. To identify disparities between groups of people, equality is examined in terms of:

    - Horizontal inequalities - gaps between population groups (e.g. between males and females, old and young people)

    - Vertical inequalities - gaps between those at the top and those at the bottom of an achievement scale in each dimension (e.g. the income of the richest 20% of individuals compared to that of the poorest 20%)

    - Deprivations - the share of the population falling below a given threshold of achievement.

- Considers both objective and subjective aspects of well-being. Objective components of well-being assess people's living conditions and quality of life. Subjective takes account of what people think about their current circumstances as well as their reflections on how their life is progressing. In a sense, subjective well-being may act as a (crude) proxy of people's experiences across all of the other dimensions of current well-being; and

- The inclusion of current well-being and the sustainability of well-being brings a focus on questions involving intertemporal trade-offs (i.e., how a decision that enhances well-being today may impact on well-being in the future).