



HAPPINESS PULSE

2016 REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

This executive summary outlines the Happy City Pulse purpose and framework, and the headline findings from the 2016 Bristol Pilot. It aims to show how such data can inform local policy¹ and cities now and in the future.

CONTENTS

page

Background to the project 3-6

Happiness pulse framework 7-8

2016 Pilot results 9

Part 1: Overall picture of wellbeing 10-13

Part 2: Wellbeing resilient wards 14-18

Next steps 19



¹ We also have a range of case studies available demonstrating the role it can play for organisations



WHY THIS AND WHY NOW?

Increasingly, economists, politicians, academics and environmentalists are recognising that we need to improve what and how we measure and define progress. Wellbeing is emerging as the front-runner as it encompasses elements of so much of our lives – including health, education, economy, environment and justice.

Whilst much work is emerging at an international or national level on this, there is a significant gap when it comes to local scale change, despite the major pressures of urbanisation globally.

Happy City is leading the field in providing innovative yet practical solutions to delivering real wellbeing improvement at a city-scale.

81% of Britons believe that the Government should prioritise creating the greatest happiness, not the greatest wealth.





A NEW MEASURE OF CITY WELLBEING

Policymakers and citizens in cities around the world are beginning to see the power of measuring wellbeing for public policy. Measures of wellbeing have the potential to act as a common currency between policy silos - improving people's wellbeing leads to long-term improvements in health, productivity, education, and social and environmental behaviours.

WELLBEING POLICY IS NOT A LUXURY, IT IS A NECESSITY.

Yet cities do not have a rigorous and accessible means to measure this broad picture of wellbeing. Happy City has developed an innovative solution - the Happiness Pulse - designed in collaboration with the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and validated by the University of Bristol. The Happiness Pulse is unique in its ability to measure city wellbeing in a rigorous and informative way, while remaining accessible to businesses and community groups and engaging to individuals.

Within ten years wellbeing will be the economy's headline indicator and our wellbeing will be the fundamental thing we are measuring.



Sir Gus O'Donnell
Ex-head of Treasury



WHO'S IT FOR?

- Policy Makers and Leaders – practical and rigorous tools to guide policy and resources to the things that are proven to improve lives.
- Businesses – to support wellbeing and resilience in the workforce – leading to lower absenteeism and staff turnover and greater productivity, creativity and team work.
- Communities and Community Groups – the capacity to map wellbeing needs and strengths and evaluate and demonstrate the impact and social value of their work.
- Individuals – measure, explore and learn more about routes to lasting wellbeing, strengthening their capacity to build their own resilience.

Happy City is a bold, ambitious initiative that represents a truly innovative, approach to creating a city oriented towards the happiness of its residents.



Charles Seaford
World Futures Council



WHY THIS MATTERS

Our tools...

1 Make the invisible visible:

Our current means of measuring and understanding what makes cities thrive are largely based on very simplistic economic outcomes which miss many vital elements of personal, environmental and social capital. Measures of wellbeing take these seemingly intangible factors into account and provide a much more complete picture of the determinants and drivers of sustainable prosperity.

2 Provide multiple benefits:

Research shows that improvements in wellbeing support long-term improvements in many policy areas including health, productivity, security, social behaviours and education (the list is growing), demonstrating that wellbeing policy, investment and action are not a luxury, but a necessity.

3 Create a common currency:

Due to the impact that wellbeing has on so many policy areas, wellbeing data can be used to value the effectiveness of policies and interventions across policy silos.

Happy City would be a great thing for other cities around the world to emulate.



Arianna Huffington

Founder of the Huffington Post

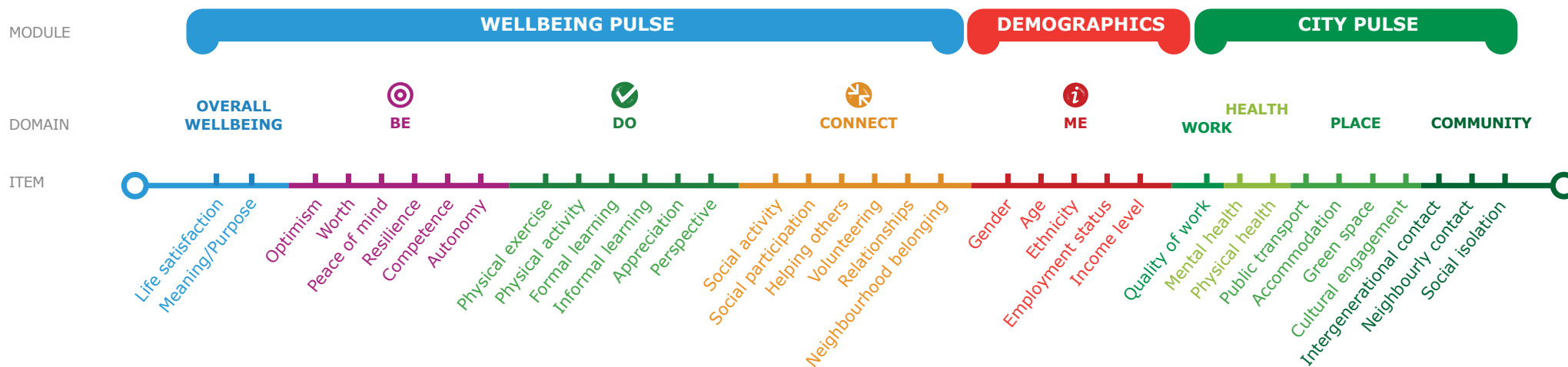


FRAMEWORK

The Happy City Pulse is an online survey that measures three key areas of personal wellbeing: how people feel (BE), how they act (DO) and how they relate to others (CONNECT), as well as exploring how citizens engage with life in their city. It is designed to be engaging and informative for individuals whilst giving vital data to business, community and city leaders on how they can better support improvements in wellbeing.

Together these elements help paint a detailed picture of how people are feeling and functioning in their lives and communities. This information can then be used to drive better decision making at an individual, community and city scale.

Within each element there are validated indicators to assess the key elements that together make up our overall wellbeing.





THE HAPPY CITY PULSE DATA CAN INFORM LOCAL POLICY IN DIFFERENT WAYS...

INCLUDING:

Highlight the broad determinants of overall wellbeing – helping focus strategies, priorities and resources towards what really matters for people’s wellbeing.

Highlight needs and strengths within different communities.

Uncover the detail of what works to improve lives in local communities and target resources where it is needed most.

Demonstrate geographical areas of the city where people’s wellbeing is resilient to hard-to-change demographics, such as levels of income, and spread best practice.





2016 CITY PILOT

The Happiness Pulse tool was piloted across the UK city of Bristol between April and June 2016. A combination of a broad communications campaign to reach the general public and partnerships with city organisations² large and small resulted in 7000+ participants taking their Happiness Pulse.

Whilst the academic work underpinning the Pulse establish the validity of the survey, the sample sizes achieved in this pilot do not allow us to make definite statements about wellbeing at a ward level. What the pilot has shown is what might be possible in terms of learning for communities and cities if this were done at a truly city-scale. In this report we have given merely a taste of the hundreds of ways that a larger sample size of the pulse data could be used to really understand how people are feeling and functioning within city communities. We have also learned a lot about what works (and what doesn't) to achieve a truly representative city sample, to share with other cities and organisations about how to engage and include communities in the measurement of their success.

Of the Bristol respondents nearly half were students taking part in the parallel pilot which included a bespoke module, the 'university pulse' in place of the 'life in the city' questions. Future plans included the development of many more such adaptations, where the core wellbeing domains remain constant and comparable across sectors, but organisations and groups can get detailed information about how wellbeing relates to health, environment, older people, youth, housing, work environment etc.

The Results shared here are just a few examples of the insights available and just the **tip of the iceberg** in terms of the learning that can be extracted from the data gathered. Both a bigger data set and further academic analysis of the data would reap **unprecedented learning** for organisations, communities and city leaders.



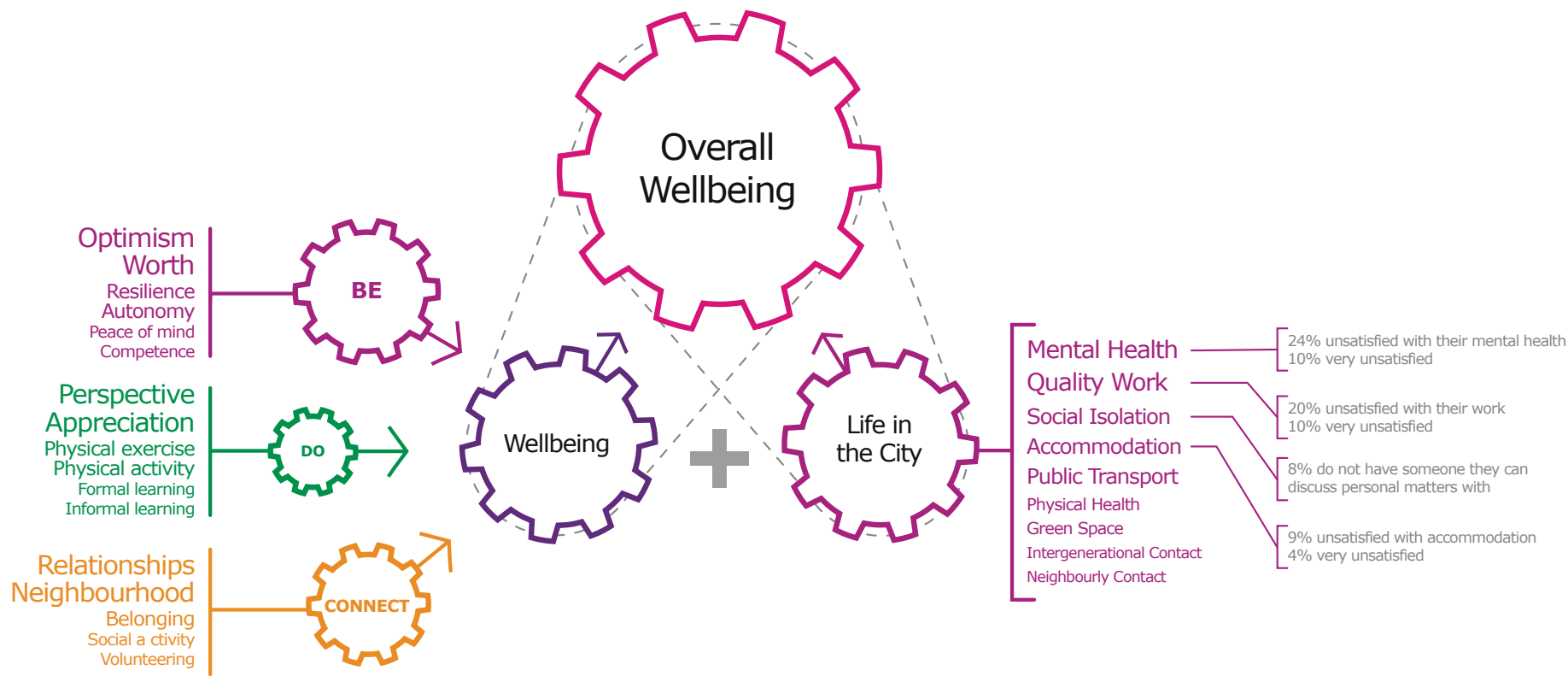
² Example Case studies of the pulse results at an organisational scale are available on request.



PILOT RESULTS: PART 1

OVERALL PICTURE OF WELLBEING

From April to June 2016 Happy City conducted a wide ranging pilot of the Happy City Pulse across the UK city of Bristol. The diagram below summarises the main determinants of overall wellbeing in Bristol from the analysis of the data collected.





SOME HEADLINES

People's overall wellbeing can be almost equally predicted by their level of Be, Do and Connect and by indicators of Life in the City, such as work, health, place and community. Efforts to improve Bristol's wellbeing need to take both kinds of factors into account.

This shows how important it is to measure both aspects of wellbeing. Typically, wellbeing surveys measure overall wellbeing and a number of circumstances that impact on it, such as employment, physical and mental health, accommodation, and so on. The Happiness Pulse includes additional measures of emotional wellbeing (Be), behavioural wellbeing (Do) and social wellbeing (Connect).

- Within the Be domain, Optimism was the most important determinant, followed by Feeling useful.
- Within the Do domain, Perspective and Appreciation were the most important determinants. Seeing the funny side of things and noticing beauty is good for you!
- Within the Connect domain, relationships were the most important determinant, followed by Neighbourhood belonging. Good relationships with those closest to us and feeling part of the community we live in is central to how much we connect with others.
-



45% OF THE VARIATION IN SENSE OF WORTH IS EXPLAINED BY CITY CONDITIONS.



LIFE IN THE CITY

Of the 'Life in the City' indicators, mental health is the most important determinant of overall wellbeing, with quality work the second most important determinant. Other important factors include social isolation, accommodation and public transport. The following figures can be used to benchmark city progress in these policy areas:

- **24%** of people are unsatisfied with their mental health, with **10%** of those people being very unsatisfied. **63%** of people are satisfied with their mental health, with **39%** of those being very satisfied.
- **20%** of people unsatisfied with their work, with **10%** of those people being very unsatisfied. **70%** of people are satisfied with their work, with **28%** of those being very satisfied.
- **8%** of people do not have anyone they can discuss personal matters with.
- **9%** of people are unsatisfied with their accommodation, with **4%** of those being very unsatisfied.

5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

The 5 Ways to Wellbeing have been growing in popularity as a framework for action at a local level. There have been few measurement frameworks that support the evaluation of such interventions. The Happiness Pulse pilot demonstrates that the Five Ways to Wellbeing are all significant predictors of wellbeing.

Within the Do domain were items on three of the Five Ways to Wellbeing, namely Be Active (Physical exercise and Physical activity), Keep Learning (Formal learning and Informal learning) and Take Notice (Perspective and Appreciation). Within the Connect domain were items on the remaining two of the Five Ways to Wellbeing, namely Connect (Social activity and Social participation) and Give (Volunteering and Helping others).

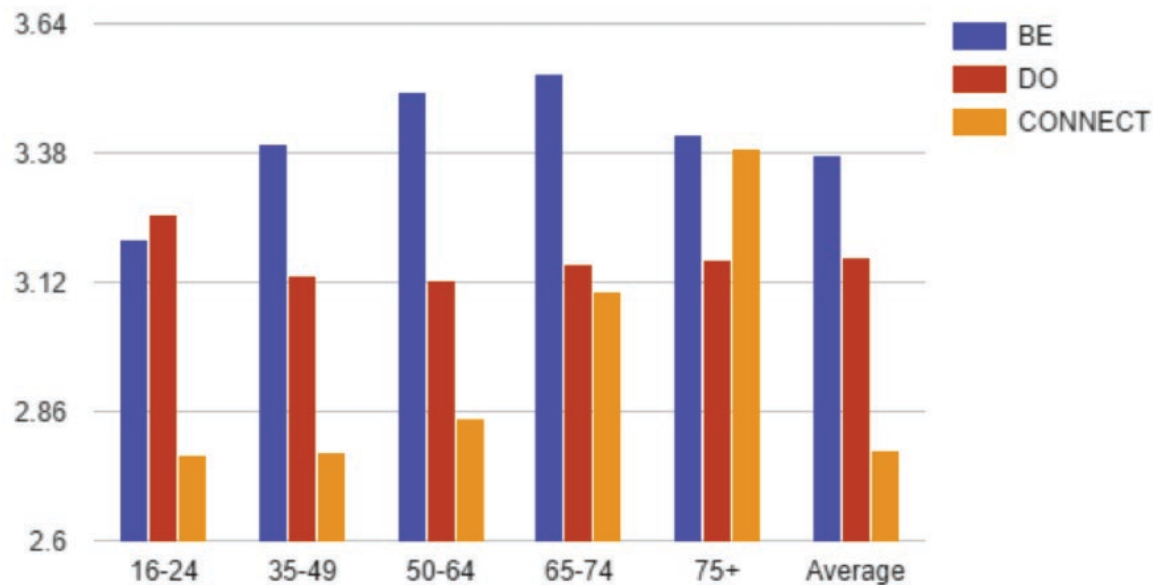
This increases the evidence-base in favour of using the Five Ways to Wellbeing construct as the basis of an effective wellbeing intervention.





AGE

- People's level of **overall wellbeing increased with age**, with those over 65 with the highest levels of wellbeing and those 16-24 with the lowest levels of wellbeing.
- On average, individuals aged between 65-74 have higher levels of Be and Connect than individuals aged 16-24, although 16-24 year olds have significantly higher levels of Do. The fact that Be and Connect are better predictors of overall wellbeing than Do could explain why older individuals have higher levels of overall wellbeing than younger individuals.
- **However:** Connect scores for individuals 75+ was at least triple the average for the Pulse sample. (NB. This is quite unusual and may reflect our sample but nevertheless is an interesting stat!)





2016 RESULTS: PART 2

WELLBEING RESILIENT WARDS

There are almost boundless ways that the exceptional level of data gathered using the Happiness Pulse can be used and analysed. We have chosen an unusual one here, 'Wellbeing Resilience' to demonstrate the possibilities.

The Happiness Pulse results confirm existing research that shows that overall wellbeing ceases to increase with income over an earnings threshold of £25-£36k. Yet beyond this headline, there is much to be learned about what promotes wellbeing that is 'income resilient', which can support better focused action to improving current wellbeing **in parallel with plans to tackle poverty and inequality**.

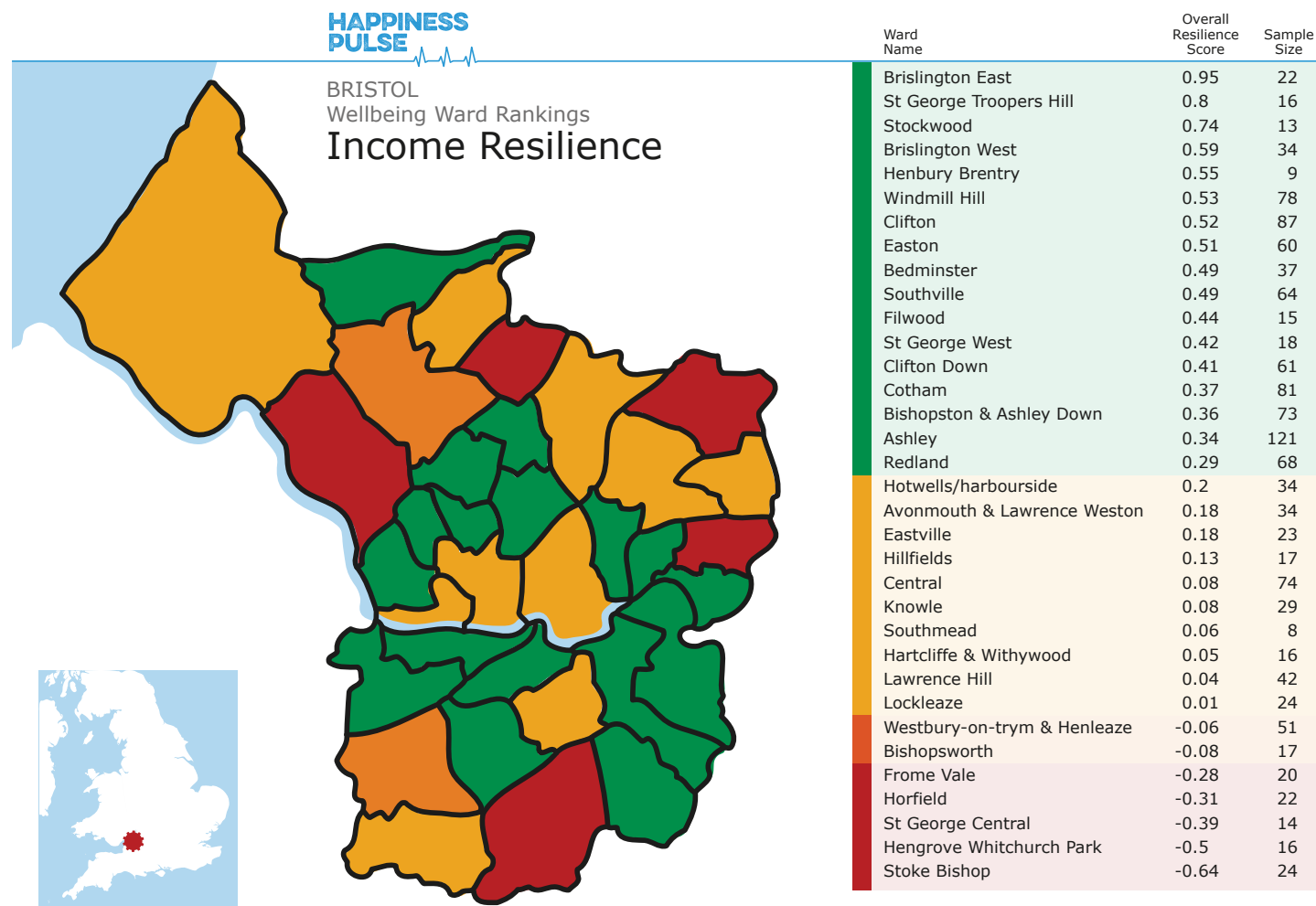
Any basic 'mapping' of wellbeing at a ward level, would broadly 'map' income and other key demographics. Whilst this is of course vital to show the importance of tackling poverty and inequality, it can shroud other aspects of communities that are important for wellbeing. So in this section therefore we are exploring whether some wards are 'bucking the trend' and 'over-performing' or 'under-performing' in the key wellbeing domains, when their income and/or other demographics are accounted for. What can we learn from places that are demonstrating elements of 'wellbeing resilience'?

Bristol is made up of 34 wards. There is considerable inequality between these wards, with life expectancy being 8.2 years lower for men and 6.1 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of the city than in the least deprived areas. Not surprisingly, when we look at the average levels of overall wellbeing of each ward, the most affluent wards have the highest average levels of wellbeing and the most deprived wards have the lowest average levels.

However, this finding masks important differences between the 34 wards. In particular, how people's wellbeing is resilient to deprivation and other demographics. The following maps rank Bristol wards by their Wellbeing Resilience.

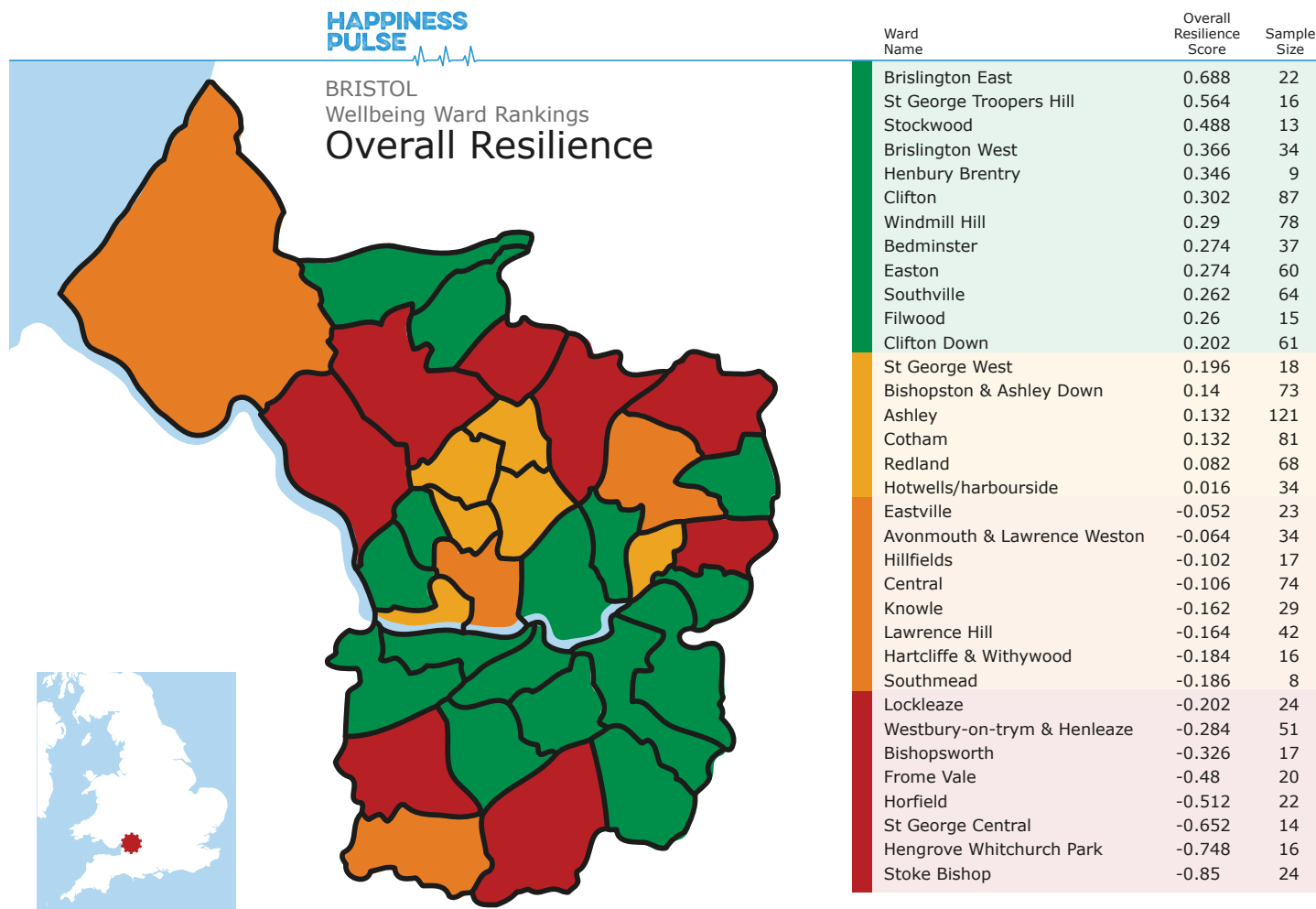


This first map ranks Bristol wards in terms of how people’s wellbeing is resilient to their income level. Each ward’s Income Resilience is calculated by the extent to which the ward’s average level of wellbeing is better-than-expected from its average level of income.





This second map ranks Bristol wards in terms of how people’s wellbeing is resilient to a number of hard-to-change demographics, including income (such as gender, age, ethnicity and employment status). Each ward’s Overall Resilience is calculated by the extent to which the ward’s average level of wellbeing is better-than-expected from its demographic profile.

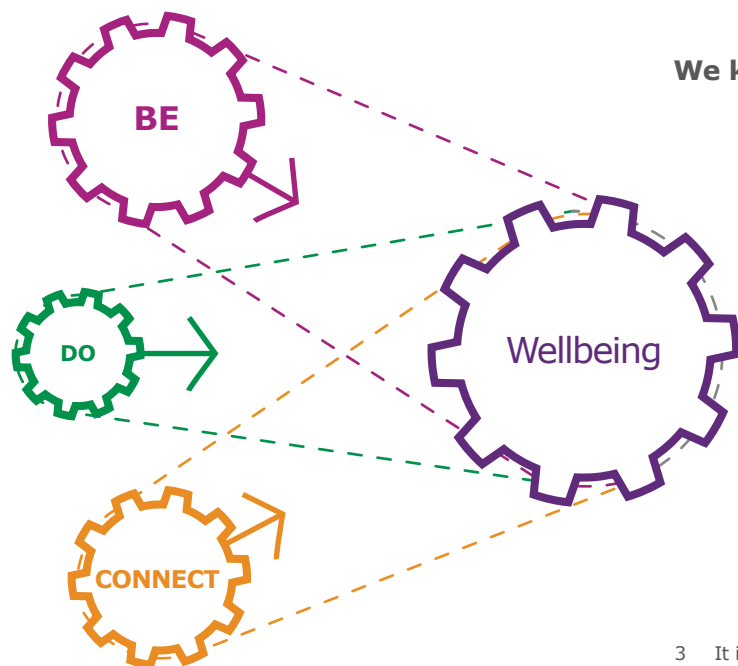




From the above maps, we can see that a large number of Bristol's 34 wards are Wellbeing Resilient³. That is, these wards have higher average levels of overall wellbeing than we would have predicted from their demographic profile, such as their average levels of income. With more detailed local wellbeing data we can uncover important ways in which wellbeing can be improved even within geographical areas with major disadvantages.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT WELLBEING IN 'INCOME RESILIENT' WARDS

We can see that 'Income resilient' wards (Clifton, Windmill Hill and Easton) all have higher levels of Be, Do and Connect than wards with wellbeing equal to or less than we would expect when considering income (Ashley, Central, Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze).



We know that **BE** is most important for overall wellbeing, followed by **CONNECT** and then **DO**.

- Within **BE**: optimism and feeling useful are especially important for wellbeing
- Within **DO**: perspective and appreciation are especially important for wellbeing
- Within **CONNECT**: relationships and neighbourhood belonging are especially important

³ It is worth noting that some of the wards have relatively low sample sizes. We cannot as readily make conclusions about wards with low numbers of participants as we can about wards with high numbers. For instance, out of the wards with high levels of wellbeing resilience, we can be relatively confident that Windmill Hill, Clifton and Easton are Wellbeing Resilient. However, we cannot be as confident for wards with lower sample sizes, such as St George & Troopers Hill, Stockwood and Henbury & Brentry.



HOW ARE THE INCOME RESILIENT WARDS DOING IN THESE AREAS?

Even with limited sample sizes at a ward level, we can observe some trends within and between wards around wellbeing resilience.

Easton has incredibly high levels of neighbourhood belonging and close relationships, with Clifton, Windmill-Hill and Ashley all above average. These are a key feature of income resilient wards.

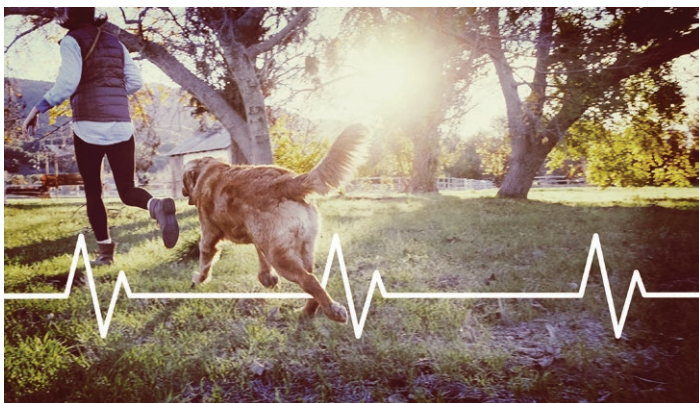
Those in income resilient wards also have higher than average levels of Optimism and Feeling useful, Seeing Beauty and Seeing the Funny side of things.

Less wellbeing resilient wards such as Central Westbury on Trym and Henleaze tend to have low levels of neighbourhood belonging, Optimism and Seeing Beauty

Easton and Windmill Hill appear to be doing consistently better domains of the Happiness Pulse we know to be important for wellbeing. Interestingly, Easton and Ashley are part of the same neighbourhood partnership, along with Lawrence Hill.

Easton is very rich in community buildings, groups and resources, with its subsequent exceptionally high level of belonging. This investment is paying significant wellbeing dividends and could be replicated elsewhere.

The detailed data helps highlight aspects of wellbeing within each neighbourhood where further action and support could provide significant wellbeing dividends.



HAPPINESS PULSE



NEXT STEPS FOR THE HAPPINESS PULSE

The Happiness Pulse is now ready for use in the cities across the UK. Significant learning has emerged from the Bristol Pilot to support the greatest possible uptake by citizens and organisations across a region, which can be shared with groups and leaders in cities elsewhere. Further development of the tool and Happy City's other world-leading measurement and policy work is planned for 2017.

Work is also on-going to develop bespoke modules to support greater insight for those interested in particular demographics or initiatives, including housing, environment, culture, youth, older people, business and health.

To find out more about how the Happiness Pulse can help you, your organisation, your community or your city to measure, understand and improve wellbeing, get in touch:

info@happycity.org.uk

www.happycity.org.uk

FIND OUT MORE AT

Web happycity.org.uk
Twitter [@happybristol](https://twitter.com/happybristol)
Facebook [happycitybristol](https://www.facebook.com/happycitybristol)

Office mobile 07474 408024
HQ 1st Floor, Canningford House
38 Victoria St, Bristol BS1 6BY

Company no. 0788984 Charity no. 1143037



Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe



Innovate UK

