

The UK's Measuring National Well-being Programme: Progress and Challenges in Measuring National Well-Being

Alison Spence
Office for National Statistics

The UK Measuring National Well-being Programme, led by the Office of National Statistics (ONS), was launched in November 2010. In his speech at the launch of the programme the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, outlined his ambitions for the UK to “start measuring our progress as a country, not just by how our economy is growing, but by how our lives are improving; not just by our standard of living, but by our quality of life.” This paper will report some of progress that has been made in measuring national well-being in the UK, building on the recommendations of the Commission for the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, other international initiatives and findings from the UK's national debate on well-being, which was conducted between November 2010 and April 2011. The aim of the debate was to find out 'what matters' to individuals and to engage with experts on well-being who would provide insight into what to measure and how to measure it. This paper will cover progress in measuring economic well-being, quality of life, including subjective well-being, and the environment. It will explore how national requirements can be captured and met, alongside working with international partners to develop comparable measures that will paint a fuller picture of our societies.