



House of Commons Report Stage Briefing

17th-18th March 2025

The **Our Wellbeing, Our Voice** coalition is a group of organisations with expertise in children and young people's wellbeing, wellbeing measurement, education and wellbeing economics.

During the passage of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill through Parliament we are making the case for an amendment which introduces a national wellbeing measurement programme for children and young people across England.

A national wellbeing measurement programme, delivered in schools, is crucial if we are to improve the wellbeing of young people. Latest [PISA](#) data reveals that 1 in 4 children report low wellbeing, making the UK the lowest-ranked country in Europe. Such a programme would provide the strategic framework and data required to understand the challenges young people face, develop solutions and understand their efficacy through the use of robust wellbeing data.

Progress so far

- ➔ **Submission to the 2025 Comprehensive Spending Review.** The coalition submitted a bid to HM Treasury's multi-year Spending Review, demonstrating how wellbeing measurement would support the Government missions.
- ➔ **National Wellbeing Measurement raised in the House of Commons during the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill Second Reading.** Victoria Collins MP for Harpenden and Berkhamsted raised national children and young people's wellbeing measurement, prompting a [positive response](#) from the Secretary of State.
- ➔ **Written and oral evidence given to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill committee.** The Our Wellbeing, Our Voice coalition [submitted written evidence](#), and several sector leaders made the case to committee:
 - Mark Russell, CEO of The Children's Society
 - Anne Longfield CBE, Executive Chair of Centre for Young Lives
 - Dr Carol Homden CBE, CEO of Coram
- ➔ **Amendment NC42 was tabled by Munira Wilson MP for Twickenham, calling for the establishment of a national children and young people's wellbeing measurement programme.** The amendment was sponsored by MPs Ian Sollom, Freddie Van Mierlo, Danny Chambers, Liz Jarvis, Gideon Amos OBE, Jess Brown-Fuller and Ellie Chowns. Despite it being voted down, we will continue working with Ministers, MPs and Peers to make the case for measurement and anticipate re-laying the amendment in the House of Lords.

Addressing the government's concerns

In response to the amendment, Minister for Early Education Stephen Morgan MP acknowledged the value of understanding wellbeing but raised some important concerns that we are keen to address. These concerns were focused on the implementation of a national wellbeing measurement scheme and included a) the potential burden on schools, b) a reduction in school choice and c) any consequences on school accountability.

a) Potential burden on schools

- We are calling for a voluntary approach to wellbeing measurement, so schools have the option to choose whether conducting the survey would be beneficial.
- Existing surveys such as OxWell, SHRN and #BeeWell require little time and resource from schools.
 - For example, completing the #BeeWell survey takes just 22 minutes on average and can be delivered in a single lesson each year.
 - The proposed costings for a national programme include a budget for supporting schools to deliver the survey, understand the data and act on the insights. These insights enable schools to celebrate the areas in which they are performing well, and take a strong, evidence-based approach to targeting improvements.
- Rather than taking up school capacity, the insights from wellbeing measurement could enable greater capacity and more efficient approaches to interventions for schools, due to acting on robust data.
- Given that the Bill aims to strengthen early-intervention by facilitating better information sharing and joined-up working between services, wellbeing measurement supports this approach, strengthening the role of local partners in responding to the data, alleviating pressure on schools and collaboratively helping children and young people to thrive.

b) Reduction of choice for schools to choose their own tools to suit their pupil cohorts

- As above, we believe any national wellbeing measurement programme should be voluntary, so it should not reduce choice in the tools available to schools.
- A country-wide programme would enable national insights, allowing the identification of best practice through comparisons, whilst also enabling local flexibility to 'add on' to the national programme, ensuring local flexibility, personalisation and ownership in shaping the survey so it meets the needs and interests of each local community.
- To ensure accessibility in participation for all cohorts of children and young people, wellbeing surveys can be adapted to short versions and symbol versions.
- The Bill aims to promote inclusion by strengthening support for young people with special educational needs (SEN), care-experienced young people and children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Data from wellbeing measurement would act as a crucial tool for better adapting school support for these cohorts of pupils.

c) Potential effect of a national measure on school accountability

- Measurement does not necessarily entail school accountability. Many existing measurement schemes keep school-level data private, and we believe a national approach should similarly maintain school anonymity while providing a regional and national picture of young people's wellbeing.
- Whether schools are assessed on elements of wellbeing data is a matter for Ofsted and the Department for Education. However, where wellbeing measurement is already in place, data is supporting school leaders to demonstrate impact and improvement to inspectors. All schools could benefit from granular data on the lives of pupils, and inspectors could equally stand to gain from seeing clearly how schools use the insights to support pupils. After all, children who are thriving are more likely to be happy at school.

Table of existing measures and surveys, and why they're insufficient

During the debate on Amendment NC42 at Committee Stage, the Minister highlighted a range of other studies into children's wellbeing and argued that these studies may negate the need for a national measurement programme. Whilst all the studies referenced by the Minister are important and of high quality, they all have drawbacks in respect to one of their focus, coverage, regularity and/or long term sustainability.

Survey	Current Status	Commentary
Office for National Statistics Data on Children's Wellbeing	Ongoing	<p>The ONS doesn't collect primary data on wellbeing from children and young people themselves.</p> <p>Other than data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the ONS does not collect any primary data from children and young people for their annual statistics pack on children and young people's wellbeing. Instead, they use available data from published surveys. As a result, whilst some indicators are updated annually, many are not because the data is not available. The ONS summary provides a useful strategic resource but is not adequate for operational delivery.</p>

<p>Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) survey of prevalence of mental health disorders</p>	<p>Discontinued</p>	<p>The DHSC’s prevalence of mental health disorders survey has ostensibly been discontinued.</p> <p>The NHS has delivered surveys of the mental health of children and young people in 2004, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. There are currently no further waves of the study scheduled to be delivered. 2,370 young people took part in the fourth wave of the longitudinal study. Due to its longitudinal design this study is particularly useful but is focused on mental health rather than broader wellbeing determinants and, due to its sample size, cannot be used extensively to inform local planning and delivery.</p>
<p>Health Behaviours of School Aged Children (HBSC) study</p>	<p>Seeking funding</p>	<p>The HBSC surveys only take place every 4 years. The sample sizes are also comparatively small, thus not providing sufficient information for guiding operational delivery.</p> <p>This international survey is funded on a country-by-country basis. In the UK, funding was secured by the University of Kent to conduct the study in 2014, 2018 and 2021/22. In the 2021/22 wave, 5,377 young people took part. This sample provides a strong snapshot of national health behaviours but it is not longitudinal and cannot provide localised data to aid localised efforts to improve wellbeing.</p>
<p>The Children’s Society Good Childhood Report</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Children’s Society is a member of the Our Wellbeing, Our Voice coalition. While the annual Good Childhood Report provides a useful national snapshot of wellbeing, it is limited in scale and localisation.</p> <p>The Children’s Society self-funds the annual Good Childhood Report through its charitable funds. The report draws on the organisation’s annual household panel survey of a minimum of 2,000 children and young people and other publicly available datasets to provide an overview of children’s wellbeing based on the most recent data. Its ability to draw localised insights is limited by the scale and size of samples, and it is also not directly embedded within policy to inform decision-making.</p>

<p><u>PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)</u></p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The PISA study uses a comparatively small sample, is not longitudinal, and does not provide the kind of granular data at a neighbourhood level that would allow local communities to take action.</p> <p>The OECD’s PISA study is an international research project that seeks to understand young people’s attainment across key subjects and their wellbeing. Whilst the PISA study provides a useful snapshot of young people’s wellbeing it cannot be used to inform local planning and delivery because of its lack of localised data.</p>
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The above examples of wellbeing measurement and reports are also complemented by existing localised wellbeing measurement programmes in specific geographic locations. Whilst the combination of these local and national measurements provide a helpful picture of children and young people’s wellbeing, a national wellbeing measurement programme would address the limitations across these existing mechanisms, namely:

- **Scale:** a national wellbeing measurement programme would enable greater reach to overcome existing limitations (both nationally and locally), enabling demographic understandings as well as national scale.
- **Embedded:** a national wellbeing measurement programme would enable the data to be embedded in policymaking both locally and nationally, enabling the insights to directly inform commissioning and policymaking, overcoming existing barriers to utilising current mechanisms.
- **Consistent:** a national wellbeing measurement programme would bring insights together into a consistent format, providing trustworthy insights and avoiding data being split over multiple different sources.

Questions for the Minister

During the Report Stage of the Bill, we are requesting MPs to show support for national children and young people’s wellbeing measurement and to ask the Minister to keep an open mind on the proposal.

If a wellbeing measurement programme is already driving action to support young people in your constituency, or you could see the benefit in a voluntary national approach, please raise the issue. We have suggested the following:

Q1. “Schools in my constituency are already benefiting from local wellbeing measurement, providing them with rich data and the evidence base they need to deliver robust interventions to support pupils. Data is also allowing school leaders to work more closely with colleagues in health, local government and the charities sector, to respond to issues like whether young people have access to good opportunities in their free time or once they leave school.

Given the focus of this Bill on both wellbeing and schools, would the Minister be open to meeting members of the Our Wellbeing, Our Voice coalition, to hear more about the benefits of a national programme of wellbeing measurement and what it could bring to schools across the country?”

Q2. “Young people in this country have the lowest levels of life satisfaction in Europe and wellbeing is at an all-time low.

Does the Minister agree that a national programme of children and young people’s wellbeing measurement would provide schools, health, national and local government the granular data we need to drive improvements for young people, and help to reverse these downward trends?”

Suggested amendment

NC42: Establishment of National Wellbeing Measurement Programme

(1) The Secretary of State must establish a national children and young people’s wellbeing measurement programme.

(2) A programme established under this section must -

- (a) conduct a national survey of the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in relevant schools in England;
- (b) support schools in the administration of the survey;
- (c) make provision for parental and student consent to participation in the survey, ensuring that participation is voluntary and that results are handled confidentially; and
- (d) regularly publish the results of the survey and provide relevant data to participating schools, local authorities and other public bodies for the purposes of improving children and young people’s wellbeing.

(3) A programme established under this section must -

- (a) be developed and piloted within two years of the passing of this Act;
- (b) be fully implemented in England no later than the start of the academic year three years after the passing of this Act;
- (c) be reviewed as to its effectiveness by the Secretary of State every three years.

(4) Any review of the programme under subsection (3)(c) must be published and laid before Parliament.

(5) For the purposes of this section “relevant school” means -

- (a) an academy school,
- (b) an alternative provision Academy,
- (c) a maintained school,
- (d) a non-maintained special school,
- (e) an independent school, or
- (f) a pupil referral unit,

other than where established in a hospital.

Campaign supporters

