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Wellbeing and Devolution

Reframing the Role of Government in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

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Wellbeing in Politics and Policy

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experiences
AM	Assembly Member (Wales)
COSLA	Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities
CPP	Community Planning Partnerships
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly (Northern Ireland)
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NPF	National Performance Framework
OBA	Outcomes Based Accountability
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PfG	Programme for Government
PSB	Public Service Board
RBA	Results Based Accountability
SNP	Scottish National Party
UN	United Nations

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Introduction

Abstract This chapter reviews the main philosophical debates pertaining to wellbeing, drawing a key distinction between personal wellbeing (living well) and societal wellbeing (living well together). The author explores how these translate into measures of social progress and the social indicators movement that has developed since the 1980s to include broader measures of progress than take into account inequalities and reflect the importance of sustainable development. She charts a parallel development of public performance measurement which has, in a similar timeframe, moved away from targets and indicators towards a deeper understanding of outcomes for citizens. Wellbeing frameworks, Wallace argues, must be seen as attempts by devolved legislatures to provide a broad measure of social progress and to hold themselves accountable for progress towards agreed social outcomes.

> If you want to be happy, set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy and inspires your hopes.
>
> Andrew Carnegie

Over the past decade, the three devolved legislatures of the UK (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) have embarked on substantial changes in how they understand, measure and contribute to social progress. This reframing of the role of government can broadly be described as a wellbeing approach, consisting of a measurement framework and a set of public policy reforms aiming to improve wellbeing.

Their stories are well known locally, and to each other, but less well known in England where much of the apparatus of UK policy analysis takes place, and internationally, where often they are seen as tiers of regional government and hence operate 'below the radar'. Within the UK, much of the literature focuses, understandably, on the UK Government's approach and the developments within the Office for National Statistics, the emergence of What Works Wellbeing and the work of the Cabinet Office. This book seeks to redress that imbalance.

For readers less familiar with the story of devolution in the UK, Chapter 2 begins with an introduction to devolution and the chapters on Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all begin with short summaries of the context in which their governments are operating.

The development of a wellbeing approach to public policy in the devolved legislatures is a function of the maturing of these governments and evidence of their desire to work differently to the UK state from which they are devolved. The governments sought to capitalise on their relatively small size by developing a 'whole of government approach' to public policy, underpinned by a framework that sets a single vision and tracks progress towards it.

In implementation, the approach challenges traditional governance models and demands integration between devolved and local government (vertical integration) and between different departments of government, services and professionals (horizontal integration). It raises interesting questions about the relationships between the three devolved jurisdictions and the extent to which they inspire and learn from each other, as well as providing insight into their relationship with the UK state.

The key question that this book seeks to answer is:

i. To what extent, and why, have wellbeing approaches emerged in the devolved jurisdictions?

Linked to this are two secondary questions:

ii. What has been the impact of the different approaches to wellbeing for policy development and evaluation?
iii. To what extent have the various actors (Scottish Government, Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Executive) collaborated with each other on the development of wellbeing policy? And what does this tell us about the use of devolved jurisdictions as 'policy laboratories' within the UK state?

This book arises from my previous research and my involvement in developments in two out of the three devolved jurisdictions (Scotland and Northern Ireland), as Head of Policy for the Carnegie UK Trust (an independent foundation). As May notes: '*Social policy researchers are neither "culture free" in their interpretations not in their research remits. Superficially similar terms can carry very different meanings and local practices are easily misread*' (2016, p. 457). There is a risk that I simply know more about Scotland and Northern Ireland. There is also a risk that the analysis will be biased either in favour of the jurisdictions I am most familiar with, or against them, as I am more actively involved in discussions around implementation of the frameworks and am privy to the warts-and-all behind-the-scenes conversations. The reader should reflect that I am both a reporter on the process and a participant in the policy process in these jurisdictions.

I have sought to address my own knowledge gaps through interviews with key stakeholders in each of the jurisdictions. In total, 14 interviews were held with senior civil servants, politicians and representatives of non-governmental organisations. As a participant in the policy process, I was able to access the views of people who had been very actively involved in the process of establishing and implementing the three wellbeing frameworks. These included:

- Sir John Elvidge, former Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government.
- Des McNulty former Member of the Scottish Parliament and Chair of the Finance Committee.
- Peter Davies, former Sustainable Development Commissioner for Wales.
- Sophie Howe, Commissioner for Future Generations in Wales.

- Simon Hamilton, Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly and former Minister for Finance and Personnel.
- Aideen McGinley, Co-Chair of the Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland and former Permanent Secretary to the Northern Ireland Executive.

Many of the interviewees waived their anonymity allowing the book to include a number of direct quotes. The detailed description of the process and the analysis carried out owes much to their involvement. A small number of key stakeholders also reviewed drafts to ensure consistency and accuracy. As I noted in the acknowledgements, I am grateful to these people for their insights and expertise. Any remaining inaccuracies or bias are my responsibility alone.

This introductory section begins with a discussion on wellbeing and wellbeing frameworks, followed by a brief outline of the contents of the chapters.

DEFINING WELLBEING

This book is about the practical application in social policy of a philosophical debate that has run for centuries: what is a good life; and consequently, what is a good society?

Over the past two decades, the word wellbeing has increasingly been used to describe this within public policy. But there remains significant confusion about the core meaning of the term in public policy:

> There has been a cacophony of different academic languages, terminologies, different approaches and different purposes. Confusion has arisen for example, where contributors in debates have been talking at crossed purposes because, while they seem to be agreeing about particular issues, there have been fundamental differences in the meanings of core terms that they are using. (McGregor 2015, p. 1)

Despite this, the relevance of the conversation in both policy and people's individual lives suggests a deep-seated sense of unease. We may not all be talking about the same concept of wellbeing, we may be struggling to deepen our understanding personally and collectively, but we are all seeking to find ways to articulate a sense that 'all is not well' (White 2017).

This book is about wellbeing as a concept for understanding social progress. Broadly speaking, there are two concepts of measuring and understanding social progress as wellbeing:

- Personal wellbeing—measuring the quality of one's life through subjective measures of life satisfaction and happiness. This was referred to as subjective wellbeing until relatively recently when the Office of National Statistics in the UK changed the terminology to reflect feedback that it was not clear. The term subjective refers to a category of data, personal wellbeing to a further sub-set within that.
- Societal wellbeing—a set of measures (objective and subjective) that are understood by the society as being essential components of wellbeing. Objective measures are those that are fact-based and observable (educational attainment, income levels). Subjective measures are based on personal opinions, judgements and feelings (perception of crime, satisfaction with services).

There are other concepts of wellbeing in social policy: wellbeing as mental health or more broadly as public health. Walker and John (2012) have provided an in-depth analysis of this shift, from public health as focused on the environment to lifestyle approaches, to the current development of wellbeing as language used to discuss the social determinants of health. Here the hierarchy is important, wellbeing is important because it can help public health practitioners and others to improve health. This differs from the approach of both personal and societal wellbeing where the health of the individual or population is one component of a good life.

Further, wellbeing as wellness is a concept increasingly used to market products and services aimed at improving individuals' wellbeing, what Sir Michael Aylward has referred to as '*tawdry self-help books*' (Walker and John 2012, p. ix). Recent technology advances have led to a proliferation of apps and gadgets that promote wellness.

But it is the two concepts of personal and societal wellbeing that seek to describe what a good life is, and what the role of governments is in securing this outcome. The analysis and commentary within this book are limited to these two definitions of wellbeing.

Personal Wellbeing—Living Well

Epicurus saw individual happiness as an end in itself. Developed further by Bentham and Mill, this utilitarian approach focuses on the individual's emotional state, with a good society being one which maximises the happiness experienced by its citizens. As such it is often referred to as hedonistic wellbeing. In classical utilitarianism, it is not the distribution that matters, merely the total amount of utility. That some are left behind is not necessarily problematic. There are moral objections to a focus on happiness as the goal of society. As Griffin points out, the difficulty is that '*If "well-being" is defined to include fulfilment of desires that are trivial, abnormal, cheap, disgusting, and immoral, perhaps it is too wide*' (1986, p. 39).

Outside of philosophy, many science fiction writers have tackled this issue, playing with the concepts of personhood, sentience and the good life. Free of the confines of the current world, we have false memories (*Blade Runner*) and painful memories removed by choice (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*), humans engineered without emotion (*Equilibrium*) and the creation of a market for outsourcing your pain (*Standard Loneliness Package*). For these writer and film-makers the message is clear: the human condition is complex and multifaceted, and the pursuit of happiness alone is not enough for a meaningful life.

Despite the growth of happiness economics (see for example Layard 2005), few modern interpretations of happiness in public policy exist in a pure form. It is a broader, but still personal, version of wellbeing that has been promoted over the past two decades.

At UK level, the Office for National Statistics has developed four standard questions to measure personal wellbeing (life satisfaction, worthwhileness, happiness and the absence of anxiety). The life satisfaction question is usually reported as the 'headline' figure and when new figures are issued, a set of newspaper articles follow suit discussing the 'best' place to live in the UK. This is not a pure measure of hedonistic wellbeing—the four questions include an evaluative component (life satisfaction) and a eudemonic component (worthwhileness).

A significant amount of academic and government attention in the UK has been paid to these measures of personal wellbeing as a means of understanding the contributory factors for individuals' wellbeing, and as a tool for policy formulation and policy evaluation. For example, the Treasury Green Book cautiously promotes the use of personal wellbeing as a mechanism for social cost-effectiveness analysis (HM Treasury 2018).

And there are reasons for caution. For one, evidence shows that there is a genetic component to wellbeing, which means that the proportion of personal wellbeing that governments can positively affect is smaller than it might first appear. Related to this, there are well-known life cycle trends in personal wellbeing and distributive effects which require careful analysis and care (see for example Laaksonen 2018; Walker and John 2012). Environmentalists caution against the short-termism of an approach which does not factor in the potential medium to long-term environmental costs of policy decisions (Whitby et al. 2014). And finally, there are critiques that argue personal wellbeing is further individualisation of the role of governments, focusing on interventions on the person rather than structural changes (White 2017). As an example, the New Economics Foundation developed a popular message through its 'Five ways to wellbeing' work which aimed to provide people with a basic guide to personal wellbeing: connect, be active, take notice, keep learning and give. While these activities are strongly correlated with personal wellbeing, they take no account of the structural factors at play that allow people to live a good life.

Societal Wellbeing—Living Well Together Now and in the Future

The Aristotelian-eudemonic tradition sees human flourishing as the goal for society. To flourish is understood as having a purpose in life, participating in society, having a community around oneself. There is increasing recognition within economics that people do not just seek to maximise their own wellbeing but also seek the wellbeing of others (McGregor and Pouw 2016). There are diverse literatures on human flourishing in health, economics and psychology.

To flourish, basic needs must first be met, housing, education, health and so on. Basic needs are universal to human beings, but their realisation is relative. For example, we may agree that housing is a basic human need, but the quality of that housing, how it is to be provided and what is tolerated as good enough housing, will differ across societies. Social norms in developed countries mean that overcrowding is an indicator of housing quality but in cultures where families live more closely together this would not necessarily be a detriment. The social indicators movement has succeeded in ensuring that we have reasonable measures of basic needs, comparative across developed nation-states.

Within the eudemonic tradition basic needs are necessary but not sufficient for a good life. While the absence of income, health or education may make flourishing difficult, their availability does not itself create flourishing. In a purely objective account of wellbeing, something of the meaning of a good life is lost. Understanding this gap, Amartya Sen developed the Capabilities Approach which seeks to supplement purely objective measures with an understanding of what people can do (functionings) and be (capabilities) (Sen 2009). While Sen always refused to provide a list of the central human capabilities (largely due to the relativism described above), his colleague Martha Nussbaum has done so (see Box 1.1).

Box 1.1: Martha Nussbaum's Set of Central Human Capabilities

1. Life. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length.
2. Bodily health. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health.
3. Bodily integrity. Being able to move freely from place to place.
4. Senses, imagination and thought. Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think and reason.
5. Emotions. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves.
6. Practical reason. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.
7. Affiliation. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others.
8. Other species. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.
9. Play. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.
10. Control over one's environment. Political and material (Nussbaum 2006).

Further, eudemonic philosophy includes the assessment of longer term harm caused by actions that create short-term happiness, it is therefore a philosophy that incorporates both the present and the foreseeable future, often described as the wellbeing of future generations.

Societal wellbeing is increasingly used to define this broader sense of living a good life. It is a multidimensional concept that describes progress in terms of improvements in quality of life, material conditions and sustainability (Coutts and Wallace 2017).

Balancing Personal and Societal Wellbeing

The balance between personal and societal wellbeing plays out in practice across the jurisdictions of the UK. While the UK Government has arguably focused attention on personal wellbeing measures in policy development (Austin 2016), Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have developed frameworks for measuring societal wellbeing.

In my experience, perception from outside Westminster is that personal wellbeing has 'captured' the wellbeing movement in the UK, with key proponents reinterpreting the word wellbeing as relating solely to personal wellbeing (Layard 2005). For example, in their analysis of government frameworks on wellbeing, the Global Happiness Council argues that '*only very rarely do the national programs or case studies under review place subjective wellbeing at the centre of their data gathering and policy analysis. In that sense, even these leading adopters are not yet able to provide the data and analysis needed to support the selection of policies according to their likely ability to improve human happiness*' (2018, p. 14). As this quote illustrates, proponents of personal wellbeing (and in this case happiness) identify it as the most important tool for understanding of wellbeing, ignoring other mechanisms of building evidence on policy impact on wellbeing such as public consultation and qualitative evidence. This is despite concerns that personal wellbeing scores can be influenced by low expectations, cultural norms, or 'internalised oppression' (White 2017). Northern Ireland for example, has the paradoxical situation of having simultaneously the highest regional wellbeing in the UK and the highest levels of suicide (Doran et al. 2015). Personal wellbeing therefore seems necessary but not sufficient to understand social progress.

On the other hand, as stated earlier, in a purely objective account of wellbeing something is lost: '*it is not credible in either scientific or political terms to achieve a comprehensive and realistic assessment of a person's*

well-being without taking account of the view from the person whose well-being is being assessed' (McGregor and Pouw 2016, p. 13).

In his philosophical argument on the limits of both personal and objective wellbeing Griffin concludes '*there is merit in a notion somewhere between … or in an eclectic concept that borrows from each*' (1986, p. 41). Each of the three governments—in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, took this approach, incorporating personal wellbeing but focusing clearly on societal wellbeing as it is understood in the Aristotelian-eudemonic tradition.

While none of the interviewees for this book discussed the philosophical origins of wellbeing, it is possible that they were aware of the deep roots of the debate. Knowingly or unknowingly, the policy-makers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland implemented the same compromise, borrowing eclectically from each tradition. As we will see, the balance in the devolved administrations is firmly on the side of societal wellbeing.

Wellbeing as a Concept for Understanding Social Progress

The concept of wellbeing as social progress has been developed by governments across the world. To understand this, we must first understand the nature of the problem that they are trying to solve—how do we adequately measure the progress of our societies?

The Failure of GDP

For much of the twentieth century, the dominant measure of social progress used has been Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP has become accepted shorthand for the performance and health of our economy, as well as a proxy for benchmarking wellbeing and prosperity in society:

> GDP is undoubtedly the most influential decision-making tool in the world. It has dictated the economic, social and environmental policies of most countries for most of the time since the 1950s… yet hardly anyone even knows what GDP stands for, let alone what its value was last year or by how much it is predicted to grow this year. How is it that what is held to be the most important indicator in the world remains a mystery to most people? (MacGillivray 1998, p. 65)

Let's unpack that mystery a little. GDP is not one objective number but an index, what we hear in the press is the result of a complex set of calculations. At its base, it is the value of all marketised goods and services produced within a country in a defined time period. It is influential because it is used as a proxy measure for social progress, if the economy is improving overall it is assumed that life must be getting better. This is the classical economists' view of social progress, with roots in utilitarianism: each individual is the best person to decide what gives them happiness, so increasing wealth increases their potential to achieve their desires via increased consumption.

The difficulties with this approach are immediately obvious. Indeed the creator of GDP, Simon Kuznets, counselled against it being used as a measure of social progress noting: '*the welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measurement of national income*' (Kuznets 1934, p. 7). This is not a book on economics so I will deal only briefly with the key arguments of the failure of GDP as a measure of social progress. For a fuller discussion see, for example, Lorenzo Fioramonti (2017) or Dirk Philipsen (2017).

As I have said, the core argument for using GDP as a measure of social progress is that rising GDP is linked to improvements in wellbeing more generally. This was called into question as early as the 1970s with the 'Easterlin paradox' whereby, after a certain point, increases in GDP did not result in increases in measures of life satisfaction for the country as a whole. What is true at a societal level is also true at an individual level—at a certain point in income levels, more money does not make people more satisfied with their lives. As Karen Scott notes: '*it is clear that a more complex relationship between income and happiness exists than the one that informs utilitarian economics*' (2012, p. 28).

But we must be careful here in equating *personal wellbeing* with a broader concept of social progress (*societal wellbeing)*. To argue that there has been no increase in societal wellbeing since the 1970s would seem unlikely. While we cannot go through all objective measures of societal wellbeing, a few that are common to societal wellbeing frameworks are instructive. I have used Scottish data to explore these:

- Life expectancy at birth for Scottish men rose by eight years between 1980 and 2013 and for women by six years.
- But while healthy life expectancy at birth for Scottish men in 1980 was 62.6 years and for women 65.9 years, by 2013 it had fallen to

60.8 years for men and 61.9 years for women—meaning the proportion of life spent in health fell by 12% for both groups (from 91 to 79% for men and 88 to 76% for women) (Scottish Public Health Observatory 2017).

- And there is no clear long-term trend on mental health in Scotland, with a slight decline between 1995 and 2003, then an increase between 2003 and 2013 (Scottish Public Health Observatory 2017).

Therefore, when we look at generally accepted objective indicators of health, rising GDP fails to show a clear, linear relationship.

Similarly, GDP tells us nothing about distribution within a country. Recent discussion of this within the UK has focussed on geographical and income distributions, particularly following the Brexit vote. Commenting on GDP figures, Andy Haldane, Chief Economist at the Bank of England highlighted:

A present there are only two regions across the UK – London and the South-East – where GDP per head currently exceeds its pre-crisis peak. In other words, in all bar two UK regions, there has been no real recovery even in GDP terms. The distribution of this income across rich and poor is no less striking… While the lowest 20% of earners have seen their wealth fall by around 20% since 2008, the highest-earning 20% have seen wealth rise by over 15%. (Haldane 2017)

The rate of income inequality in a society does have an impact on other tangible measures of social progress. According to the OECD, the Gini coefficient (measure of income inequality) for developed countries rose 10% between the mid-1980s and the late 2000s (OECD 2011a). Wilkinson and Picketts' 2009 report *The Spirit Level* charted the impact of inequality on key aspects of social progress, showing that for each of eleven different domains of wellbeing, outcomes are significantly worse in more unequal countries (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009).

The second set of arguments calls into question its suitability as an economic indicator of progress. GDP fails to account for changes in the asset base (depreciation of capital stocks and level of indebtedness). It also fails to correct for 'regrettables' and so includes as a positive the direct costs of crime, divorce, car accidents and industrial accidents, despite the impact that these may have elsewhere in the economy or

on wider wellbeing. Including expenditures that stem from activities or events that can seriously undermine economic (let alone overall) wellbeing seems perverse (The Round Table on Measuring Economic Performance and Social Progress in Scotland 2011).

A final set of arguments relates to the gender assumptions behind GDP. Adam Smith wrote: '*It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest*' (1776, p. 456). This may well be the case in goods, but many services are provided by women in caring roles which are excluded from the calculation of GDP. The basic services of caring, cleaning and washing remain primarily the responsibility of women in most countries. Adam Smith reportedly wrote the Wealth of Nations while living with his mother who we can presume did much of the housekeeping without regard to her own economic interest. In the UK, women report spending an average of 13 hours on housework and 23 hours on caring for family members each week; the equivalent figures for men are eight hours and 10 hours (Park et al. 2013). Valuing GDP as the principle measure of social progress, automatically excludes unpaid work carried out predominantly by women.

McGregor and Pouw identify the three allocative mechanisms for moving resources around society:

i. Individuals, households and communities. Based on reciprocity and mutual support.
ii. Private sector. Based on market exchange.
iii. Public sector. Based on redistribution and regulation (2016).

As they note, it is not helpful to consider these in complete isolation from one another. The case of early years childcare is illustrative. While a mother is on maternity leave there is a negative effect on GDP (her lost productivity) but when she returns, her wages, and the fees paid to childcare services, will be positively affecting GDP. Early return to work from maternity leave is associated with depressive symptoms, parenting stress and poorer overall health (Chatterji et al. 2013). The economic valuing of paid over unpaid caring is therefore perverse from a wellbeing perspective. There is a further anomaly as the state takes over provision of education first at three years old and then more comprehensively at five years old. The care provided by a private nursery or childminder contributes to GDP, the public provision of education does not. Decisions on

allocation of regulation and public provision of early years education and care therefore affect all three areas of resources in society, and the paid and unpaid contributions of members of society do not occur in isolation of each other.

This is not an exhaustive list of the issues with GDP but it shows the importance of caution over using GDP as a measure of social progress. As an economic measure it may be sufficient, but a measure of social progress clearly it is not. That it remains such a critical indicator for politicians and the media is an issue I will return to in the concluding chapter.

The Development of Alternative Measures of Social Progress

The roots of the current interest in measuring societal wellbeing as a mechanism to improve public policy can be found in the social indicators movement (White 2017) and the sustainable development movement (Drudy 2009).

There are a number of phrases used to describe initiatives to improve measurement of social progress: Beyond GDP, sustainable development, human development, happiness, wellbeing (or hyphenated as well-being).

Box 1.2: Internationally-Significant Wellbeing Initiatives

1968 Robert Kennedy speaks of the failures of GDP as a measure of social progress

1987 United Nations Brundtland Commission reports

1992 UN publishes first Human Development Index

2000 Millennium Development Goals agreed by UN

2004 1st OECD World Forum on 'Statistics, Knowledge and Policy' held in Palermo, Italy

2007 Istanbul Declaration on Measuring Social Progress

2009 Publication of Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report on Measuring Economic Performance and Social Progress

2011 OECD launches Better Life initiative

2012 UN publishes: Well-being and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm

2012 UN resolution on International Day of Happiness

2014 Social Progress Index launched

2014 How's Life in Your Region? Launches
2018 Group of Wellbeing Economy Governments launched
2018 Global Dialogue for Happiness held at the World Government Summit

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In 1987, the UN World Commission on the Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) recommended the use of sustainable development as an organising principle for human systems. Sustainable development is defined as '*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*' (Brundtland Commission 1987, p. 41). The three pillars of sustainable development are economic growth, environmental protection and social equality.

A few years later, the social indicators movement received a boost when the Human Development Index (HDI) was launched by the UN in 1992, providing internationally comparative information on social progress. It is a composite index of life expectancy, education and per capita income indicators, which are used to rank countries into four tiers of human development. A country scores higher HDI when the lifespan is higher, the education level is higher and the GDP per capita is higher. A relatively straightforward index, it was successful in gaining prominence as an alternative way of thinking about social progress and competition between nations. It did not, however, include an environmental component.

In 2007, the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank signed the Istanbul Declaration on measuring social progress (European Commission 2007). The Declaration recognised that many countries had developed measurement programmes for social progress, taking into account their own cultural backgrounds, but that '*they reveal an emerging consensus on the need to undertake the measurement of societal progress in every country, going beyond conventional economic measures such as GDP per capita*' (European Commission 2007, p. 1). They called for the following actions:

- encourage communities to consider for themselves what 'progress' means in the 21st century
- share best practices on the measurement of societal progress and increase the awareness of the need to do so using sound and reliable methodologies
- stimulate international debate, based on solid statistical data and indicators, on both global issues of societal progress and comparisons of such progress
- produce a broader, shared, public understanding of changing conditions, while highlighting areas of significant change or inadequate knowledge and
- advocate appropriate investment in building statistical capacity, especially in developing countries, to improve the availability of data and indicators needed to guide development programs and report on progress toward international goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals.

Spurred on by the Declaration there was an explosion of 'Beyond GDP' initiatives. In February 2008, President Nicolas Sarkozy of France asked Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean Paul Fitoussi to form the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress to review how statistics are used to measure progress in the economy and society. It had the following objectives: to identify the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress, including the problems with its measurement; to consider what additional information might be required for the production of more relevant indicators of social progress; to assess the feasibility of alternative measurement tools and; to discuss how to present the statistical information in an appropriate way (Stiglitz et al. 2009, p. 16).

The Commission's 2009 report has been hugely influential. It builds on an increasing volume of academic and professional literature looking at how to improve measurement of economic performance and wider social progress. The 'unifying theme' of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report is that the time is ripe for our measurement system to shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's wellbeing.

The recommendations were made in three 'clusters'. Firstly they argued for the reform of economic indicators themselves, for example to take into account income, wealth and consumption rather than

production and to make space for the distribution of these assets as well as the base numbers.

Secondly, they recommended the inclusion of a dashboard of quality of life indicators with improvements to the standard measures of people's health, education, personal activities and environmental conditions. In particular, they argued that substantial effort should be devoted to developing and implementing robust, reliable measures of social connections, political voice and insecurity that can be shown to predict life satisfaction. Again, they argued that the total number should be augmented with information on the distribution of quality of life dimensions and include measures of both objective and subjective wellbeing.

Finally they recommended improvements to sustainability indicators with environmental aspects measured through a carefully selected set of physical indicators. In particular, they argued for a need for a clear indicator of our proximity to dangerous levels of environmental damage (such as that associated with climate change).

The Stiglitz–Sen–Fitoussi recommendations take forward the capabilities approach but add to it the importance of measuring personal wellbeing. The report specifically recommends that '*statistical offices should incorporate questions to capture people's life evaluations, hedonic experiences and priorities in their own surveys*' (Stiglitz et al. 2009). This was seen as an essential corrective to the over-emphasis on objective indicators. The language is deliberate, life evaluations, hedonic experiences and personal preferences are separate measures. They did not prioritise one measurement over the other.

In 2011, UN member states unanimously adopted a resolution noting that GDP '*was not designed to and does not adequately reflect the happiness and wellbeing of people in a country*'. They instead invited countries '*to pursue the elaboration of additional measures that better capture the importance of the pursuit of happiness and wellbeing in development with a view to guiding their public policies*' (United Nations 2011). Since then, the OECD has led international efforts to improve measures of progress through its Better Life initiative. The programme includes online interactive tools to compare wellbeing across member states and guidance on measuring wellbeing. They have developed a dynamic framework for measuring wellbeing which includes quality of life indicators, material conditions and sustainability (Fig. 1.1).

The OECD work identified 11 characteristics of individual wellbeing (Fig. 1.1): income and wealth, jobs and earnings, housing, education

Individual Well-being
(Populations averages and differences across groups)

Quality of life

Health status

Work-life balance

Education and skills

Social connections

Civic engagement
and governance

Environmental quality

Personal security

Subjective well-being

Material conditions

Income and wealth

Jobs and earnings

Housing

GDP

Regrettables

Sustainability of well-being over time
Requires preserving different types of capital:

Natural capital   Human capital
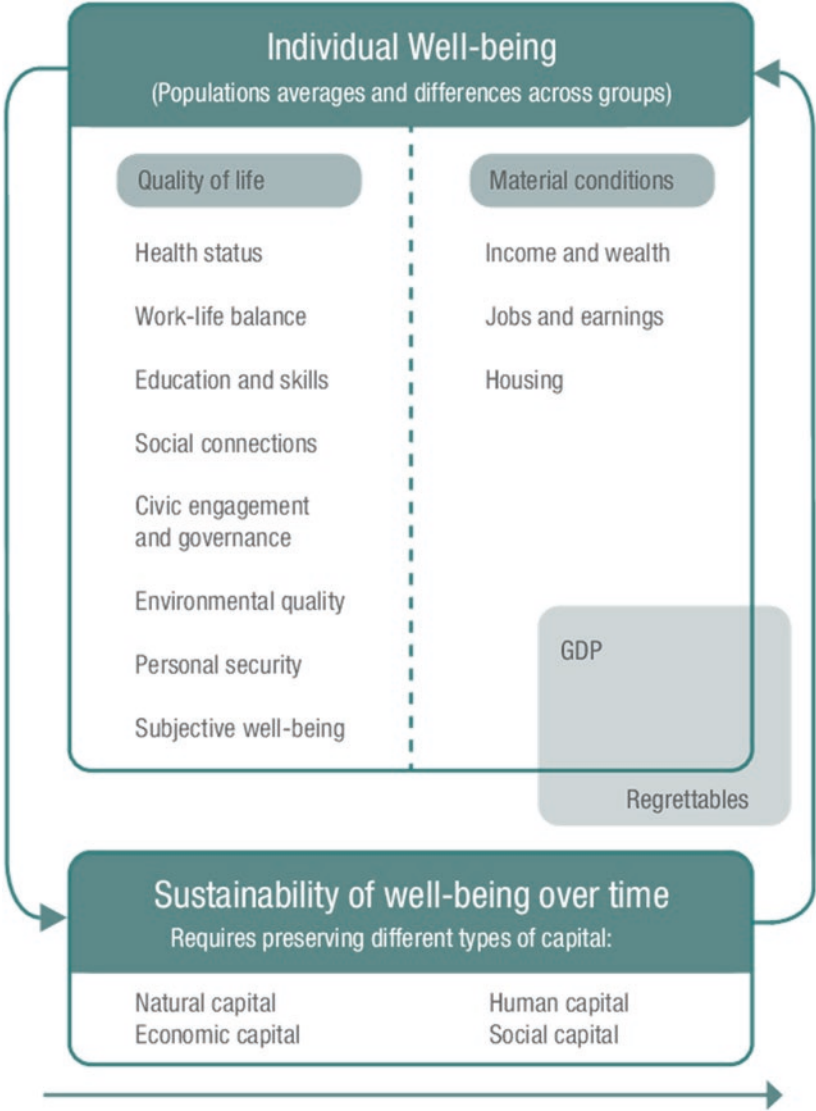Economic capital   Social capital

Fig. 1.1 OECD framework for measuring wellbeing and progress (*Source* OECD 2011b)

and skills, environmental quality, personal security, health status, work–life balance, civic engagement and governance, social connections and subjective wellbeing. As with the other frameworks this book considers, subjective wellbeing is only one characteristic of wellbeing and is not elevated above the others. They add to this sustainability of wellbeing over time (natural capital, economic capital, human capital and social capital) and specifically identify regrettables as items that contribute to GDP but not to wellbeing.

We can trace here the relativism of the indicators chosen to represent social progress. The OECD is a membership organisation for developed countries. In contrast, the Legatum Global Prosperity Index, is a global index and there safety and security is measured by the following indicators: *battlefield death rate, civil and ethnic war casualty rate, political terror scale (state violence and repression), refugees by country of origin and terrorist death rate* (The Legatum Institute 2017). Such indicators do not figure in the OECD Better Life Index or any of the wellbeing frameworks analysed in this book. While the outcomes are universal, our concept of what a good life is, and a good society, can only be understood by measurements that are specific to its own place and time.

Until this point, much of the 'action' around wellbeing was at a nation-state level. As the movement matured, more interest was generated at regional level. In October 2014, the OECD released *How's Life in Your Region?* the first analytical report on which their regional wellbeing tool is based (2014). It provides a common framework for measuring wellbeing in regions, and guidance to policy-makers at all levels on how to use wellbeing metrics for improving policy results, based on lessons from regions that have been using wellbeing metrics to improve the impact of policy (Coutts and Wallace 2017). A further regional tool was issued by the EU in 2016, the EU Regional Social Progress Index (European Union 2016). The EU tool follows the regional definition of the sub-national, NUTS2 so while information on the regions within Wales and Scotland are included, there is no specific output that aligns to the jurisdictions.

In August 2015, the United Nations' General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), replacing the previous Millennium Development Goals. The aim was to create a comprehensive package of goals and targets that can drive global efforts towards a sustainable and poverty-free world by 2030. The process of development was open and consultative with a total of five million people from

across 88 countries taking part and sharing their vision for the world in 2030. In response to the accusation that the previous six Millennium Development Goals were too narrow in focus, the SDGs tackle a broader range of issues, including gender inequality and climate change. The unifying thread throughout the 17 goals and their 169 targets is the commitment to ending poverty (see Box 1.3). There are around 245 indicators that measure global progress against the Goals. In total, 193 countries agreed to the SDGs, including the UK.

Box 1.3: UN Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (United Nations 2015).

Towards a New Approach to Governance

As the Beyond GDP movement was beginning to change its language towards wellbeing, a parallel development in social policy has also been nudging governments in the same direction. By the mid-2000s, the literature was shifting away from support for new public management towards whole of government approaches to public policy, here termed a wellbeing approach.

The key argument in this book is that the wellbeing framework is both a contributory factor and the result of a broader paradigm shift taking place in each devolved administration, developments which can be summarised as a wellbeing approach to government.

Table 1.1 shows outlines the development of public administration thinking in the UK. Initially the focus was on equality and

Table 1.1 Public administration, new public management and wellbeing approaches

	Public administration	*New Public Management*	*An emerging wellbeing approach*
Aim	Welfare	Welfare	Wellbeing
Measurement	Input focus	Output focus	Outcomes focus
Structure	Silo based	Silo based	Horizontal integration (whole-of-government)
Management	Command and control	Command and control	Vertical integration (localism)
Service approach	Professional	Managerial	Participative
Interventions	Universal core services and welfare for those in need	Universal core services and welfare for those in need	Universal core services, welfare for those in need and support for those at risk (prevention)

Source Original

'one-size-fits-all', the model which characterised the early years of the welfare state. Here broad improvements in wellbeing were achieved but increasing concerns were raised about the distributive effects and the diminishing returns from the model.

New Public Management began during the early 1990s but rose to dominance in the UK during New Labour years of 1997–2010. Itself a reaction to traditional public administration, a key aspect of new public management was its focus on measurement (the other elements included management and markets). Other countries such as New Zealand, Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands also used this approach extensively (Colgan et al. 2016).

During this time, the approach of the UK Government was to set targets to be reached, for example, improving waiting-list times or increasing the proportion of young people going into higher education. There are well-known problems with this approach:

- The ratchet effect: when targets are set based on the incremental improvement to the previous year managers can deliberately underperform to avoid increasingly demanding targets.
- The threshold effect: when a target is applied to everyone there is no incentive to 'go the extra mile' and it may encourage otherwise excellent services to reduce the quality or quantity of their performance to just what the target requires.
- 'Hitting the target and missing the point': where there is output distortion or the manipulation of reported results, sometimes called 'gaming' (Hood 2006).

The issue of gaming is particularly vexing for public services. A recent analysis by the Royal Statistical Society found that the target of 95% of people to be seen within four hours of attending Accident and Emergency led to a spike in those seen in the last ten minutes of the target window (i.e. 230–240 minutes) (Bird et al. 2017). There is evidence that outcomes are poorer after a four-hour wait (Burns 2017) but in the absence of information about the quality of care, this target tells us nothing about whether an individual's wellbeing was improved or harmed by the length of their particular wait. And it removes staff autonomy to respond to *relative* patient needs at any given time. The issue here is not that the indicator is wrong (4 hours is evidentially sound as a link to outcomes) but that turning it into a performance target affects

staff behaviour in unpredictable ways. And yet it is the focus of significant political and media interest.

A further set of problems with New Public Management was its tendency towards fragmentation. The examples given above of waiting times for healthcare related only to the health services, young people in higher education only to the education services. Departmental silos and silo mentality are endemic across public services, with many policy initiatives focusing solely on getting civil servants to plan together more effectively. By the early 2000s and the establishment of the devolved administrations, New Public Management was seen to have reached the limits of its effectiveness and public services were beginning to display behaviours which were creating mistrust within the population (OECD 2017).

A new approach was required and governments began to experiment with new ways of working. The literature has not quite settled on a language to describe the new approach, referred to variously as an enabling state, a relational state, strategic agility, whole-of-government approach and systems thinking. I have referred here to an emerging wellbeing approach, not to attempt to create a new category, but rather to indicate that there is no agreed terminology to describe the paradigm shift underway (as summarised in Table 1.1).

Research by Coutts and Wallace (2017), the Global Happiness Council (2018), Wallace and Schmueker (2012) and Whitby et al. (2014) have all identified a number of policy developments that sit alongside wellbeing frameworks (which identify outcome and indicators of social progress). These are summarised briefly below.

New political narratives on social progress as wellbeing
New narratives are being established to rebalance economic dominance of decision-making with environmental and social domains of wellbeing. This has been partly in response to the financial crisis of the late 2000s. Prolonged austerity and low growth has convinced some of the need for a new conversation. At the same time, the direct impacts of climate change are beginning to be seen within the UK and across Europe as a whole.

A wellbeing framework for measuring progress towards outcomes
A focus on outcomes, rather than inputs, processes or targets, is an essential component of the move to a wellbeing approach. Outcomes are selected that reflect citizens views of what constitutes wellbeing and are pursued over a number of years (decoupling outcomes from election timetables). Indicators track progress towards these outcomes, but these are

communicated as proxies that indicate progress, not targets to be achieved. Some also attempt to quantify the impact of current behaviours on the wellbeing of future generations.

Horizontal integration (whole of government)
With governments increasingly realising that the solutions to wicked policy problems can only be found in working together, as each part of the system (education, health, policing and so on) is dependent on the other to achieve its objectives. Whole-of-government approaches go further than joined-up or interagency working by ensuring that all stakeholder have the same vision and strategic priorities. (Colgan et al. 2014)

Vertical integration (localism)
There has been a corresponding drive to a new relationship between central and local government based on a shared understanding of the objectives but allowing for local tailoring to suit the needs and priorities of those communities. In some interpretations, this is included within the whole of government or systems thinking approach but for clarity I have separated it out.

Prevention
A wellbeing approach requires problems to be identified and responded to before they become too entrenched and difficult to resolve or mitigate. The lost opportunities of intervening too late are recognised as costly not just for the public purse but also for overall wellbeing.

Participation
That social progress cannot be understood without engaging people about what matters to them and that wellbeing cannot be 'done to' people but rather that is it a relational process where public servants enable people to realise their own wellbeing. There are a number of ways in which participation is discussed within public service reform. It can refer to the co-design of policies and services or the co-production of outcomes, where people have equal power and control to the professionals and providers in the process of service delivery. (Wallace 2013)

These elements are emerging in a number of jurisdictions, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but there is not yet strong enough evidence or analysis on their implementation and the difference that they make to policy-making or social change.

Bringing It Together: The Role
of the Wellbeing Framework

These independent developments on Beyond GDP, the social indicators movement and systems thinking in governance, come together in the same policy instrument—the wellbeing framework. If the overall change sought is a paradigm shift away from economic dominance, New Public Management and towards whole of government thinking, the wellbeing framework is how that change is implemented and communicated to policy-makers, professionals and the public. Wellbeing frameworks have a number of features (see Fig. 1.2). The OECD promotes the use of wellbeing frameworks and has produced guidance as a starting point to develop governments own framework and measures, taking into account local characteristics.

At a nation-state level there are a number of well-known examples of wellbeing frameworks. The Global Happiness Council has recently reported on the growth of these initiatives within governments, summarising them in the 2018 Global Happiness Policy Report these include:

- Australia: *Mapping Australia's Progress* (last published in 2013)
- Austria: *How's Austria*
- Belgium: *Complementary indicators to GDP*
- Ecuador: *Buen Vivir*
- Finland: *Findicator*
- Germany: *Wellbeing in Germany—what matters to us*
- Japan: *Commission on Measuring Well-being*
- Slovenia: *Indicators of Well-Being in Slovenia*

The UK also features in this list with the Measuring National Wellbeing programme run by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) which started in 2010. Its aim is to monitor and report on 'how the UK as a whole is doing' through measures of wellbeing. A progress report is published biannually covering areas including health, natural environment, personal finances and crime. The measures include objective and subjective data.

The data within the ONS framework covers the devolved jurisdictions and can be disaggregated to provide data specifically for the devolved jurisdictions. None of the jurisdictions under study saw this as instrumental in the development of their own frameworks, though there has been more discussion in Northern Ireland of the crossover between

Purpose

A clear articulation of a vision for the future of society (social progress) 'in the round', often directly invoking the word wellbeing to encapsulate this breadth.

Outcomes

Categories or domains of wellbeing, such as 'health' or 'education' are articulated as outcomes for citizens. These are broad statements of aspirations for all such as 'living long and healthy lives'.

Indicators

Outcomes are measured against a number of indicators. The number of indicators in a framework varies significantly. These indicators are 'proxies' for outcomes, not ends in themselves. In some cases, the indicators are indexes, they may also be objective or subjective.

Communication

Progress is charted visually through a dashboard often seeking to produce an overview of social progress on one page.

Fig. 1.2   Components of a wellbeing framework (*Source* Original)

the UK and devolved initiatives. The UK ONS wellbeing framework and the devolved wellbeing frameworks in the UK operate largely independently.

The existing frameworks vary in the extent to which they are stand-alone dashboards of indicators or than embedded directly in government decision-making structures. As we will see, the frameworks developed by the three devolved legislatures of the UK go further than most in embedding the framework in legislation and policy planning processes.

The Rest of the Book

The development of three wellbeing frameworks so close in terms of geography, culture, maturity of democracy and social issues, provides an opportunity to compare and contrast to better understand why they have established a wellbeing approach to government and what it may have achieved. We see in these three approaches the priority given to performance management (Scotland), sustainable development (Wales) and visioning (Northern Ireland). That three such different local catalysts have resulted in very similar wellbeing approaches can tell us much about its perceived value to politicians and the policy process. The question of whether any of these aspirations have been realised tells us much about the process of policy-making in small jurisdictions.

Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 introduce the devolved jurisdictions and outline the developments in each in further detail. While the frameworks developed in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to understand societal wellbeing all differ, they share common characteristics including a plurality of measures and an emphasis on objective measurement of wellbeing. The jurisdictions are covered in order of when their governments set a whole of government approach to societal wellbeing (Scotland in 2007, Wales in 2009 and Northern Ireland in 2018).

Chapters 6 and 7 switch from a jurisdiction to a thematic analysis, making overall comparisons between the three jurisdictions and drawing on wider developments in the UK and internationally. It looks at the extent to which the reforms have had an impact on political narratives and policy-making. It goes on to explore some of the challenges in assessing the impact of narratives, measurement and frameworks on policy and social change. Looking forward, it assesses whether the reforms are likely to continue and what the potential next steps are for the development of wellbeing by devolved governments.

A note on language: Talking about the three devolved jurisdictions of the UK creates a linguistic challenge. While many commentators refer to the 'nations' of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), this is not strictly accurate in the case of Northern Ireland which is a geographic region. The extent to which the people of Northern Ireland associate as a distinct group (as opposed to British or Irish), and therefore constitute a country is a deeply divisive issue. Surveys of identity show that fewer than a third of those in Northern Ireland identify as Northern Irish, with more identifying as British

(Garry and McNicholl 2015). I have therefore taken the approach of referring to the areas as jurisdictions, administrations or (when accurate) governments. This is less snappy, but hopefully more accurate.

A further small difference is also worth noting. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, wellbeing is not hyphenated while in Wales it is. It is not clear that there is any difference in meaning intended. For ease, I have used 'wellbeing' unless it is a direct quote from Wales or reference to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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CHAPTER 2

Understanding Wellbeing and Devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Abstract Wallace provides an overview of the responsibilities of the devolved legislatures of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and how these have developed over the past 20 years. Key facts on each jurisdiction are set out as are the trends in wellbeing. Wellbeing in each devolved jurisdiction is compared to the rest of the UK and the OECD regions to provide insight into the issues facing each jurisdiction. Wallace concludes with a discussion of mechanisms for assessing policy impact, noting in particular the importance of viewing governments impact on wellbeing as contribution not attribution.

UNDERSTANDING DEVOLUTION

> Devolution is a process, not an event.
>
> Ron Davis, Secretary of State for Wales
> (Institute of Welsh Affairs 1998)

Any study of devolved policy-making in the UK has to start from the basis that the systems of devolution implemented in the 1990s and 2000s are asymmetric, differing from each other in a number of important ways and each having a unique constitutional history:

> Asymmetry runs through every clause and schedule of the devolution legislation, from the fundamentals of powers and functions down to the niceties of nomenclature… These are not accidental choices… they are deliberate differences chosen to emphasise the difference in style and substance between the three devolved assemblies, and in particular between each of the devolved assemblies and their parent body at Westminster. (Hazell 2000, p. 269)

It is common to talk of devolution leading to divergence but this is to misunderstand the relationships between the constituent parts of the UK prior to devolution—presupposing an earlier state when the approaches were convergent. But Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland had administrative devolution long before they had legislatures (Greer and Jarman 2008). There never was one UK National Health Service, for example: the Scottish NHS was always a separate entity managed by the Scottish Office. Legislation for Scotland and Northern Ireland on key public services was separate, passed in Westminster Parliament when parliamentary time allowed for it.

To different extents, there are also separate professional groups in the devolved administrations. Elite professional communities around health, education and local government managed public services through partnership prior to devolution and were heavily respected actors not consultees or stakeholders. Policy-making was largely managed through consensus between these groups in the devolved administrations rather than led by political think tanks competing for space with new ideas (Greer and Jarman 2008).

The constituent parts of the UK have always proudly exhibited difference in policy and its implementation. Devolution has given a new tier of democracy, and new powers to act locally, but each devolved administration has had to establish itself within the previous policy community. They did not emerge from a vacuum.

Table 2.1 presents key similarities and differences between the administrations. Each was established (or re-established) in the New Labour era; each has an electoral system favouring proportional representation; each has a system of unitary local authorities and each has sought to carve out their approach to wellbeing over the past decades. But the discourse on wellbeing in each jurisdiction differs significantly. The extent to which there are common attributes and shared learning is a key question for the remainder of the book.

Table 2.1 Key facts about Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Population[a]	5,404,700	3,113,200	1,862,100
Public spending per head and as a proportion of the UK average[b]	£10,651 (16% above the UK average)	£10,076 (10% above the UK average)	£11,042 (21% above the UK average)
Governance	Scottish Parliament with 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) currently led by SNP minority government	Welsh Assembly with 60 Assembly Members (AMs) currently led by a minority coalition of Welsh Labour and the Welsh Liberal Democrats	Northern Ireland Assembly with 90 Members of the Legislative Authority (MLAs) currently suspended due to political deadlock
Percentage voting in favour of devolution in referendums (Scotland and Wales: 1997; Northern Ireland: 1998)	74.3%	50.3%	71.1%
Key areas devolved to each jurisdiction	Local government, Health, Social services, Education, Housing, Environment, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Economic development, Sport and recreation, Culture/language, Justice, Police, Prisons, Consumer advocacy, Some welfare and housing benefits, Income Tax	Local government, Health, Social services, Education, Housing, Environment, Agriculture, forestry and fisheries, Economic development, Culture/language, Sport and recreation, Consumer advocacy	Local government, Health, Social services, Education, Housing, Environment, Agriculture, forestry and fisheries, Economic development, Culture/language, Sport and recreation, Justice, Police, Prisons, Consumer advocacy, Social security, Child support, Pensions, Energy policy
Wellbeing framework implemented	2007	2009	2018
Key driver for wellbeing framework	Performance management	Sustainable development	Visioning

Sources [a]Office for National Statistics (2016), [b]UK Parliament (2017)

The powers of the three devolved administrations have become more similar over time. The Northern Ireland Assembly originally had limited powers over justice. These powers were increased following the Hillsborough Castle Agreement in 2010 which resulted in it taking responsibility for: criminal law, policing, prosecution, public order, courts, prisons and probation (Northern Ireland Office 2010). In terms of social security, formally, the Northern Ireland Assembly also has responsibility for social security, child support and pensions but, in practice, follows policy set by the Westminster Parliament to provide consistency across the UK.

Scotland increased its powers through the Scotland Act 2016. The Act gives extra powers to the Scottish Parliament and a Scottish Government including:

- The ability to amend sections of the Scotland Act 1998 which relate to the operation of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government within the UK including control of its electoral system (subject to a two-thirds majority within the parliament for any proposed change).
- Legislative control over areas such as road signs, speed limits, onshore oil and gas extraction, rail franchising, consumer advocacy and advice among others by devolution of powers in relation to these fields to the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Ministers.
- Management of the Crown Estate, the British Transport Police and Ofcom in Scotland.
- Control over Air Passenger Duty and Aggregates Levy.
- Control over certain aspects of several welfare and housing-related benefits and Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance.
- The ability to set Income Tax rates and bands on non-savings and non-dividend income.
- Extended powers over Employment Support and Universal Credit.
- The right to receive half of the VAT raised in Scotland.

Wales has also been on a significant constitutional journey. The Government of Wales Act 2006 introduced primary legislative powers for the first time. The Wales Act 2014 conferred tax-raising powers followed by the Wales Act 2017 which gave extra powers to the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government including:

- The ability to amend sections of the Government of Wales Act 2006 which relate to the operation of the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government within the UK, including control of its electoral system (subject to a two-thirds majority within the Assembly for any proposed change).
- Legislative control over areas such as road signs, speed limits, onshore oil and gas extraction, harbours, rail franchising, consumer advocacy and advice.
- Management of Ofcom in Wales.

The Wales Act 2017 recognised the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government as permanent among the UK's constitutional arrangements, with a referendum required before either can be abolished. The changes also moved Wales from a conferred matters model to a reserved matters model, which is used in Scotland and means that the Assembly is assumed to have legislative competence unless an area of law is formally reserved to the UK Government. The legislation however stopped short of providing Wales with the control given to Scotland over tax and benefits.

Within EU structures, the UK's three devolved jurisdictions are 'legislative regions' less than full member states but recognised as more powerful than regional or local authorities. Other EU countries with legislative regions include Germany, Spain, Italy, Austria and Belgium. These second-tier governments have primary legislative responsibility for key areas of government, often focused on social policy, but with some also holding economic and security powers.

Despite this formal status however, they fit somewhat awkwardly into international analysis. For example, the OECD How's Life in Your Region programme includes Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as regions (OECD 2016a). The OECD classifies regions as the first administrative tier of sub-national government (e.g. States in the United States, Provinces in Canada, or Régions in France) (OECD 2016b). It then goes on to sidestep the issue by referring to the 12 UK administrative areas as 'countries or regions'.

Trends on Wellbeing in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

While the OECD highlights the importance of improving the availability of data at regional level (OECD 2013), this is a minority issue within the UK devolved legislatures—all have access to relatively rich datasets from

official statistics. The issues faced by the devolved administrations, as we will see in later chapters, have far more in common with those from nation-states with a strong focus on putting wellbeing into policy practice (Wallace and Schmueker 2012).

However, comparative data can be problematic. Each wellbeing framework differs in the measures used and as such there is no direct comparison between their own indicator sets. Table 2.2 uses data from How's Life in Your Region to provide comparisons within the UK and internationally with the OECD regions. This gives some insight into the generic and specific issues faced by the jurisdictions. I present this with some caution: these are the best comparative figures, but they are not the ones used by the devolved governments to hold themselves to account through wellbeing frameworks. ONS data from the Measuring National Wellbeing programme could also have been used to identify key issues within the UK. I selected OECD data for this analysis to provide an international comparison.

The comparative data shows the similarities and differences in the social issues facing each jurisdiction. All three jurisdictions perform well on indicators of community (having a strong social network), access to broadband and the environmental indicator (air quality). They perform less well on health outcomes, with Scotland and Wales comparing poorly with other UK regions and overall around the middle of the ranking for OECD regions.

Compared to the 12 UK regions, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland experience relatively low income levels (though Scotland is notably higher), but compared to OECD regions as a whole they perform around the middle of the rank. Aligned to this, Scotland and Wales perform around the middle of OECD regions on employment, with Northern Ireland coming towards the bottom of the rank.

Northern Ireland also fares worse on indicators of education and democracy than Wales and Scotland, but it performs slightly better on the environmental indicator. Wales is the safest of the three jurisdictions, measured by number of homicides. But overall life satisfaction is slightly higher in Scotland and Northern Ireland than it is in Wales.

This brief description shows the difficulties in using wellbeing dashboards as comparative measures. Firstly, the international datasets use rather crude measures. Level of homicides may be comparable, but it is not the measure used in the three jurisdictions to assess safety (where both perceptions of crime and the crime rate are used). Secondly, as the

Table 2.2   OECD How's Life in Your Region indicators for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

	Scotland			Wales			Northern Ireland		
	Indicator	OECD regional ranking	UK regional ranking	Indicator	OECD regional ranking[a]	UK regional ranking[b]	Indicator	OECD regional ranking	UK regional ranking
Democracy: Voter turnout	71.1%	Good	High	65.7%	Fair	Good	58%	Poor	Poor
Education: Labour force with at least secondary education	83.2%	Good	High	80.7%	Fair	Good	76%	Fair	Poor
Employment (i) Employment rate (ii) Unemployment rate	(i) 72.6% (ii) 6.2%	Good	Good	(i) 70.4% (ii) 6.8%	Good	Fair	(i) 68.1% (ii) 6.4%	Good	Poor
Access: Household broadband	84%	High	Poor	85%	High	Poor	86%	High	Fair
Community: Perceived social support network	96%	High	High	95%	High	Good	95%	High	Good
Environment: Average level of PM2.5 ($\mu g/m^3$)	6.9	High	High	8.3	Good	Fair	6.1	High	High
Income: Disposable income per capita	$21,060	Good	Good	$19,035	Good	Fair	$17,722	Good	Poor
Health (i) Deaths per 1000 people (ii) Life expectancy	(i) 8.9 (ii) 79.3 years	Fair	Poor	(i) 8.3 (ii) 80.3 years	Fair	Poor	(i) 8.2 (ii) 80.4 years	Good	Fair
Safety: Homicides per 100, 000	1.2	Good	Poor	0.7	High	High	1.2	Good	Poor
Housing: No. of rooms per person	1.9	Good	Poor	2.2	High	High	1.9	Good	Poor
Life satisfaction: Average life satisfaction 0–10	7.1	Good	High	6.8	Fair	Fair	7.0	Good	High

[a]Ranked in quartiles against the 395 OECD regions (Upper quartile = High, Third quartile = Good, Second quartile = Fair, Lower quartile = Poor)
[b]Ranked against the 12 UK regions (Upper quartile = High, Third quartile = Good, Second quartile = Fair, Lower quartile = Poor)
Source OECD (2016a), How's Life in Your Region

indicators cluster around norms in developed welfare states, relatively small changes can have large impacts on the rankings, for example, a 2% difference in the employment rate pushes Northern Ireland to the bottom quartile of the OECD regional rank. And finally, the comparative data can only be seen as the start of a process of policy analysis, not a substitute for it. The only reasonable response to such data can be 'why is that the case?'

Understanding Policy Impact from a Wellbeing Perspective

In Chapters 3, 4 and 5 the process of developing and implementing the wellbeing framework is described and an assessment of policy impact is made. Chapter 6 discusses the overall comparative analysis and what we can begin to say about the use of wellbeing frameworks as a tool to transform government.

In making the assessment of policy impact, I had access to the perspectives of experts in each of the jurisdictions, written and oral evidence submitted to the Governments and Parliaments/Assembly, parliamentary debates and analysis of written policy reports.

The analysis brought together these evidence sources, and those impacts reported on are the ones that are shared by more than one stakeholder or data source in each of the jurisdictions. Too often policy-making is seen, and described, as a 'black box' which is impenetrable from the outside. To shed more light, I use a categorisation of impact developed by the Annie E Casey Foundation in the USA (see Table 2.3). This separates out advocacy change, policy change and social change, avoiding the conflation of one with the other which is all too common in analysis (Organizational Research Services 2007).

This categorisation is particularly relevant for an analysis of wellbeing frameworks as the evidence suggests they operate at all three levels:

- They seek a change in the narrative and understanding of social progress away from economic dominance towards a multidimensional approach.
- They aim to have a discernible impact on policy-making to ensure decisions are made that are based on assessment of impacts across all domains of wellbeing.
- Through the above, they aim to improve outcomes for citizens across the range of wellbeing domains.

Table 2.3 Impact categorisation

Advocacy change	Policy change	Social change
Evidence of changes in understanding and support for an issue	Evidence of changes in policy development and implementation	Evidence of large-scale societal change
Advocacy change aims to provide the essential infrastructure that leads to policy change and subsequently to social change	Changes in social policy (legislation, regulations, guidance, funding) aim to improve how goods and services are delivered to achieve specific outcomes for citizens	Often relies on policy and advocacy change but has a real-world impact, measured by national statistics

Source Annie E Casey Foundation (2007)

Policy analysis is often carried out to determine if the programme intervention was indeed responsible for any social changes. But seeking to establish causality or attribution can be extremely difficult and often misleading. The approach taken is therefore to seek contribution analysis which provides '*not definitive proof, but rather provides evidence and a line of reasoning from which we can draw a plausible conclusion that, within some level of confidence, the program has made an important contribution to the documented result*' (Better Evaluation, online). The Scottish Government explicitly uses contribution analysis to understand the impact of the National Performance Framework (Scottish Government 2011).

The intention is therefore not to prove a particular outcome from wellbeing frameworks but rather to explore the contribution that the frameworks have made to policy-making by exploring the available evidence. The theory of change developed is that the wellbeing framework contributes to a wellbeing approach to government activity, which in turn improves social outcomes. In compiling this analysis, my aim has been to tell a story of the development and implementation of wellbeing frameworks in such a way as to can draw tentative but credible conclusions about the contribution made to advocacy, policy and social change in the three jurisdictions.

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Scotland: Wellbeing as Performance Management

Abstract Scotland was the first of the three devolved legislatures to embark on a wellbeing framework. The framework applies to all government departments and public bodies and aligns their activities by seeking improvements in 11 National Outcomes. With over 10 years of experience, it tells a strong story of how a focus on wellbeing can reorientate government by creating a shared language for public services and a sense of unity of purpose. The process also reframed the relationship between the Scottish Government and local government, with differing views on the success of this process. There are clear policy outcomes in relation to early intervention and joined-up working, however question marks remain over the extent to which the Scottish Government has reframed its role, particularly in the relationship between citizens and the state where participatory measures remain in their infancy.

Keywords Scottish Government · National Performance Framework · Public sector reform · Localism · Outcomes · Participation

The Scottish Government wants Scotland to be the best place possible to live, work, grow up and study in… As a government we recognise that economic growth is hugely important, but it must be matched by improvements in our environment, in people's quality of life, in the opportunities available to people and the public services they have access to…

> As a government and as a country, the challenge this new framework sets us all is to make progress in these areas to improve wellbeing across Scotland. The new NPF belongs to all of Scotland and together we can fulfil the promise contained in it.
>
> Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland
> (Scottish Government 2018a)

Introduction

Scotland was the first jurisdiction in the UK to begin experimenting with wellbeing frameworks. Introduced by the first Scottish National Party government of Scotland in 2007, it began life as an internal tool for performance management of public services. Over a decade, it has grown in prominence and impact and has increasingly been linked to policy-making for inclusive growth. The latest iteration published June 2018, represents its full development from a performance management tool to a wellbeing framework.

Context

The Treaty of Union was established in 1707 and made the UK Parliament the legislative body for England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. During nearly 300 years of the union of the parliaments, Scotland continued to have its own legislation and had distinct legal, church, local government and education systems. The policies determined for Scotland were not dictated by London but were rather the product of a consensus among the Scottish 'ruling' class of professionals administered by the Scottish Office and headed by a Secretary of State for Scotland (Kellas 1989).

The people of Scotland voted in favour of devolution in 1997. For the first two sessions of the Scottish Parliament (1999–2003 and 2003–2007), the Scottish Executive was run by a coalition government, formed between Scottish Labour and the Scottish Liberal Democrats. In 2007, the Scottish National Party won the election as the largest single party but governed as a minority government. They were returned to power in 2011 with a majority (69 out of 129 seats) and they are currently operating again as a minority government (2016–the present day).

The political history is important as it was this new minority government that came to power in 2007 seeking to find a new way to manage

public services and deliver for the people of Scotland. They sought to build a collective responsibility for outcomes, measured through a new performance framework *Scotland Performs.* The origins of the Scottish wellbeing framework are therefore firmly in outcomes-based **performance management**. Its development over a decade into a wellbeing framework is due to the continued leadership shown by the small SNP cabinet, the involvement of a wider group of stakeholders and the desire for Scotland to be seen as a leading nation in public sector reform and sustainable development.

Table 2.2 identifies some of the key issues facing the wellbeing of the people of Scotland. On many international comparators Scotland performs well, particularly on community and environmental indicators. Internationally compared to the OECD regions, Scotland does not perform well on health outcomes however, and indeed is poor compared to the UK regions. The continued poor health of the nation is well-known and the subject of many public health and broader social interventions, but the outcomes remain stubbornly resistant to change.

Catalysts

The National Performance Framework (NPF) is the product of two initially disconnected sets of thinking, one political and one within the civil service (Table 3.1).

The political origins of Scotland Performs can be traced back to the first session of the Scottish Parliament. At that time, the roles and responsibilities of each parliamentary committee were being established. The Finance Committee were responsible for the budget scrutiny process, providing them with a formal role in reviewing spending proposals. They took a critical approach to the (then) Scottish Executive's budgeting process. For example in their report on the draft budget *Investing in You* in 2000, they argued:

> Often, the targets that are contained in the document do not match the level of detail in the budgetary information. We have concerns that there is poor linkage between the overarching priorities and the individual targets: it is often not clear how the implementation of individual, administrative targets will underpin the achievement of the high-level policy priority or how increased funding in a certain area will lead to a specific target being achieved. (Scottish Parliament Finance Committee 2000, para. 30)

Table 3.1 Timeline for the development of the Scottish wellbeing framework

Scottish Parliament re-established	1999
Finance Committee report on Cross-cutting Expenditure on Deprivation recommends local and national outcomes	2006
Minority SNP government elected	2007
Scotland National Performance Framework established	2007
Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Economic Performance and Social Progress reports	2011
Oxfam Humankind Index published	2012
Referendum held on Scottish Independence	2014
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act passed	2015
Consultation on National Outcomes held	2017
Scotland becomes a founding member of the international Group of Wellbeing Economy Governments	2017
National Outcomes laid before Scottish Parliament	2018
New National Performance Framework published	2018

Source Original

This criticism of input budgeting and targets continued through the Finance Committee meetings of Sessions 1 (1999–2003) and 2 (2003–2007). In the 2002–2003 Draft Budget, for example, there were around 400 targets. The Committee's report on Cross-cutting Expenditure on Deprivation raised concerns about the impact on local government of ring-fenced funding agreements and a lack of strategic direction, leading to silo-based working and a lack of integration and innovation at a local level (2007). They found 10 different funding streams spread over five departments and agencies which were regarded as specifically targeting areas of deprivation. They concluded: '*Councils and their partners should agree their intended outcomes and the steps they will take to ensure these are delivered and seek approval from the Scottish Executive as part of their contribution to achieving agreed national outcomes*' (2007, para. 15). In this report we can see the origins of the Scottish approach to outcomes which developed later into the wellbeing framework called Scotland Performs. By the time of this inquiry, the Deputy Convenor was John Swinney MSP, who would become Finance Minister when the Scottish National Party came to power a year later in 2007.

During the same time period, parallel but unconnected conversations were taking place among the senior civil service. Sir John Elvidge (Permanent Secretary of the Scottish Government 2003–2010) was key

to this process and reviewed outcomes on education, health, poverty and productivity with senior civil servants. Together they concluded that silo-based policies were not tackling the underlying factors that were holding back social progress. These conversations were cascaded through the Scottish Government management structure, asking people at all levels to consider the conundrum of how an organisation could be essentially good at meeting its targets (measured against the Programme for Government commitments) but fail to make progress against broader measures of outcomes. The conversation was influenced by an increasing awareness of the limits of New Public Management, in particular, the incremental change it encourages as opposed to ambitions for more transformative approaches.

These two threads came together following the election of the Scottish National Party as a minority government. Their manifesto for the 2007 election contained a commitment to outcomes-based performance frameworks, inspired by a visit from the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Tim Kaine, and his senior officials, who had implemented a framework called Virginia Performs. Virginia Performs is a performance leadership and accountability system within state government. It begins with a vision for Virginia's future: responsible economic growth, an enviable quality of life, good government, and a well-educated citizenry prepared to lead successful lives and to be engaged in shaping the future of the Commonwealth (Wallace 2013). The originators of the Scottish scheme cite Virginia Performs as the inspiration, though it is likely that they were also influenced by other international schemes such as Measuring Australia's Progress. What is clear however is that the original aims were to improve public services through better measurement, rather than a focus on sustainable development or belief in the importance of moving away from GDP as the sole measure of social progress (though these have emerged subsequently).

As a minority government, rather than a coalition, the number of Cabinet posts from 2007 has been smaller than in either of the preceding governments of Scotland. This smaller structure provided a further incentive to change the dominant, Westminster-based, model of Ministerial responsibilities to create a system of collective responsibility for outcomes (Elvidge 2011). This approach became the cornerstone of the Scottish Model of Government, where government is perceived as a single entity, managed through:

- An outcomes-based approach to delivering the objectives of government
- A single statement of purpose elaborated into a supporting structure of a small number of broad objectives and a larger, but still limited number of measurable national outcomes
- A system for tracking performance against outcomes and reporting it transparently and accessibly
- Single leadership roles controlling each of the political and Civil Service pillars of government, supported by small senior teams
- Understandings of the roles of the members of the senior political and Civil Service teams which give primacy to contributing to the collective objectives of the team (Elvidge 2011).

From the outside, these changes appeared sudden and radical, but from inside the civil service they were the logical conclusion of an internal conversation that had taken place over many months.

The first NPF was published in 2007 and consisted of four layers: a purpose statement; seven Purpose Targets (economic growth, productivity, participation, population, solidarity, cohesion and sustainability; measured by 11 indicators); 15 National Outcomes; and 45 National Indicators. The indicators were updated in 'real time' as new data appeared on the Scotland Performs website. The communications approach mirrored that of Virginia Performs, with trends recorded as improving, maintaining or worsening. Strict criteria on statistical changes were adopted to avoid accusations of political manipulation of these judgements.

With the origins of the NPF known best in political and civil service circles, interest from outwith the Scottish Government was slow to emerge. For example, a conference held in Dundee in 2009 had the title *Measuring What Matters* and was hosted by the Community Development Alliance Scotland in partnership with the International Association for Community Development, the Carnegie UK Trust and the Scottish Community Development Centre, but no direct links to the Scottish Government initiative were made at that time.

The connection between the NPF and the international movement on wellbeing frameworks was first made by the Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Scotland's Economic Performance and Social Progress. The roundtable was set up as a direct response to the recommendation of the Stiglitz–Sen–Fitoussi report that: '*At the national level, roundtables*

should be established, with the involvement of stakeholders, to identify and prioritise those indicators that carry to potential for a shared view of how social progress is happening and how it can be sustained over time' (Stiglitz et al. 2009, p. 19). The Scottish roundtable was chaired by Professor Jan Bebbington, St Andrews University and set up by the Carnegie UK Trust and the Sustainable Development Commission for Scotland. Members came from the public, private and third sectors.

The report did not initially set out to review the NPF. At the outset, only a few of the members knew of its existence. This is characteristic of the time, as even a leading textbook on social policy in Scotland gave the NPF only two mentions across 15 chapters, covering everything from inequality to environment to crime (Mooney and Scott 2012). As one roundtable participant noted, it was a rather pleasant surprise to find that Scotland already had a system that performed reasonably well against the recommendations of the Stiglitz–Sen–Fitoussi report (Wallace 2013).

Sir John Elvidge (Permanent Secretary of the Scottish Government 2003–2010) told me, that prior to the report of the roundtable, the term wellbeing was not used in relation to the NPF: '*If one reverse engineers from the content of the national performance framework, one can see there's a very broad concept of what it means to be successful nationally, it is implicit in that framework, and now we would probably use the word wellbeing as a way of summing up that breadth of vision, but we didn't at the time.*' The launch of the Commission report marked an important milestone in its development, as partners from other public and third sector organisations began to see the potential of the approach.

The first NPF was a 10-year vision for Scotland but it was updated in 2011, partly in response to the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services which sought to encourage the Scottish Government to take a more rounded approach to public policy (Christie 2011) and partly to reflect priorities as outlined in Manifesto Commitments, the Government Economic Strategy, Programme for Government and Spending Review documents. There were some changes made to the indicators but the most significant change was the inclusion of a new National Outcome related to older people—'*Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it*'—reflecting the demographic significance of the ageing population and the government's commitment to independent living, enablement and health and social care integration (Scottish Government 2016).

The Carnegie UK Trust was not the only external organisation that was advocating for a rethinking of the measurement of social progress. In 2012, Oxfam Scotland published the first Humankind Index for Scotland. The index was based on a consultation process with people across Scotland in order to establish what aspects of life make a difference to them. Almost 3000 people were involved in one way or another (focus groups, community workshops, street stalls, an online survey and a YouGov poll). Their priorities were then mapped onto existing data about Scotland's population, often using the same indicators as the NPF. The researchers calculated the change in indicators between 2007/08 and 2010/11. Using this index, they found that since 2007–2008, Scotland's prosperity has increased by 1.2%, meaning that according to the range of areas that people in Scotland value, Scotland appears to have become more prosperous (even if just marginally) (Oxfam Scotland 2012). The Humankind Index received significant parliamentary and press interest, including a debate on the floor of the Parliament and an evidence session to the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee in 2012 (Scottish Parliament 2012). Since that time however there has been no further version published and few mentions by parliamentarians.

Following recommendations from external stakeholders, the Scottish Government sought to legislate for the NPF within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (Wallace 2013). The Act responded to concerns that the methodology of the NPF was not adequately embedded and would be vulnerable to future changes of government. The Act requires that Scottish Ministers must determine the national outcomes that result from, or are contributed to by, public services relating to non-reserved matters. In doing so they must consult, have regard to inequalities and report on prepare and publish reports about the extent to which the national outcomes have been achieved. There is no requirement that the previous model of purpose, targets, outcomes and indicators be followed. There is therefore much flexibility as to how the national outcomes may be presented and measured.

Embedded within a broader piece of legislation, the intention to place a statutory duty on Scottish Ministers to consult on and publish National Outcomes received limited responses from consultees during the Stage 2 scrutiny of the bill. Those that did comment tended to make general calls for greater openness and transparency. UNISON Scotland were one of the few to make detailed comments:

Scotland Performs has surface similarities to Virginia Performs but is nowhere near as extensive in terms of data or analysis. The Virginia site offers both easy to read graphics for a range of geographical and subject areas for those looking for snapshots as well as explanations/discussions of issues and extensive data for those seeking wider information or wishing to do their own analysis. Scotland Performs is not the "go to" place for data on Scotland or the delivery of its services nor has it become a source of debate or discussion. (Scottish Parliament Information and Research Service 2014, p. 13)

The Act rectifies one of the criticisms of earlier iterations of the NPF (Wallace 2013) by requiring consultation on the National Outcomes stating that Scottish Ministers must consult:

i. Such persons who appear to them to represent the interests of communities in Scotland and;
ii. Such other persons as they consider appropriate.

The legislation does not stipulate the groups to be consulted. There were Stage 2 amendments to the Bill by Scottish Labour to put groups such as children's organisations on the face of the Bill, these were not passed, in part due to the restricted nature of the list presented.

As a result of the Act the Scottish Government did consult more widely on the revised National Outcomes:

• A series of public discussions facilitated by the Carnegie UK Trust involving 215 people;
• Street stalls run by Oxfam Scotland which engaged 300 people; and
• Engagement with 102 children through the Children's Parliament.

The findings were combined with earlier findings from the Fairer and Healthier Scotland conversations conducted in 2015 and 2016. These were extensive public engagement exercises which asked what a fairer, more equal Scotland would look like (Fairer Scotland) and what a healthier Scotland would look like (Healthier Scotland). Both exercises comprised substantial public engagement, involving more than 16,000 participants at public events and reaching more than 40,000 people online through social media, websites blogs and other platforms. There were also activities to engage with civil servants, other public sector organisations and the third sector.

The refresh was overseen and informed by the NPF Roundtable. Derek Mackay, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution, chairs the Roundtable with members from across the political parties in Scotland and non-governmental organisations (Carnegie UK Trust, Oxfam Scotland, Scottish Trade Union Congress, Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities, Scottish Human Rights Commission, Scottish Environment LINK and the Scottish Local Government Partnership).

Components

The 2018 framework has been streamlined, removing the Purpose Targets (which were often criticised for a heavy economic focus). The new framework consists of:

- Our Purpose: To focus on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased well-being, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
- Our Values: We are a society which treats all our people with kindness, dignity, compassion and respect, and acts in an open and transparent way.
- National Outcomes:
  - We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy
  - We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination
  - We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally
  - We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally
  - We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient, and safe
  - We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential
  - We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
  - We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone
  - We are healthy and active
  - We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment
  - We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely.
- 81 National Indicators (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 The national indicators for Scotland

Material conditions	Quality of life	Environment
Businesses (number, objective)	A positive experience for people coming to Scotland (%, subjective)	Sustainability of fish stocks (objective)
Skills under-utilisation (%, objective)	Access to superfast broadband (%, objective)	Natural capital (index, objective)
Unmanageable debt (%, subjective)	Attendance at cultural events or places (%, objective)	Carbon footprint (number, objective)
Entrepreneurial activity (index, objective)	Child social and physical development (%, objective)	Greenhouse gas emissions (number, objective)
Persistent poverty (%, objective)	Children have positive relationships (%, subjective)	Marine environment (%, objective)
Exporting (£, objective)	Confidence of children and young people (%, subjective)	Energy from renewable sources (%, objective)
Cost of living (%, objective)	Crime victimisation (%, objective)	State of historic sites (%, objective)
High growth businesses (number, objective)	Educational attainment (%, objective)	Journeys by active travel (%, objective)
Productivity (index, objective)	Engagement in extra-curricular activities (%, objective)	Biodiversity (index, objective)
Gap in male and female employment (%, objective)	Health risk behaviours (index, objective)	Condition of protected nature sites (%, objective)
Relative poverty after housing costs (%, objective)	Healthy life expectancy (years, objective)	Access to green and blue space (%, objective)
Food insecurity (in development)	Healthy start (%, objective)	Waste generated (number, objective)
Employees on the living wage (%, objective)	Healthy weight (%, objective)	Visits to the outdoors (%, objective)
Innovative businesses (%, objective)	Influence over local decisions (%, subjective)	
International networks (in development)	Loneliness (%, subjective)	
Spend on research and development (£, objective)	Mental wellbeing (index, subjective)	
Gender pay gap (%, objective)	Participation in a cultural activity (%, subjective)	
Employee voice (%, objective)	Perception of access to justice (%, subjective)	
Growth in cultural economy (%, objective)	Perception of crime rate (%, subjective)	
Scotland's reputation (index, objective)	Perception of local area (%, subjective)	
Income inequalities (ratio, objective)	Physical activity (%, objective)	

(continued)

Table 3.2 (continued)

Material conditions	Quality of life	Environment
Contribution of development support to other nations (£, objective)	Places to interact (%, objective)	
Gender balance in organisations (%, objective)	Premature mortality rate (number, objective)	
Children's material deprivation (%, objective)	Public services treat people with dignity and respect (%, subjective)	
Wealth inequalities (%, objective)	Quality of care experience (%, subjective)	
Economic participation (%, objective)	Quality of children's services (%, objective)	
Skill shortage vacancies (%, objective)	Quality of public services (%, subjective)	
Land ownership (%, objective)	Resilience of children and young people (in development)	
People working in arts and culture (%, objective)	Satisfaction with housing (%, subjective)	
Contractually secure work (%, objective)	Scotland's population (number, objective)	
	Skills profile of the population (%, objective)	
	Social capital (in development)	
	Trust in public organisations (%, subjective)	
	Work place learning (%, objective)	
	Work related ill health (%, objective)	
	Young people's participation (%, subjective)	
	Child wellbeing and happiness (%, subjective)	
	Children's voices (%, subjective)	
Total 30: 27 objective, 1 subjective, 2 in development	**Total 38**: 18 objective, 18 subjective, 2 in development	**Total 13**: 13 objective

Source Scottish Government (2018a)

In a further development, each National Outcome is clearly linked to one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Scottish Ministers are under a duty to revise the National Outcomes at least every five years and in doing so they must consult widely.

Reports about the extent to which the National Outcomes have been achieved or not achieved must be prepared and published by the Scottish Ministers when they consider it appropriate. The report must include information on progress since the previous report; however, the format of the reporting will be for the Scottish Ministers to decide. The Scottish Government is currently testing an interactive website for communicating progress against the national indicators.

Contribution

With 10 years of experience, the Scottish experience ought to provide evidence on the impacts of a wellbeing framework. There are contradictory views on its success. Within the civil service there is a strong belief that the framework has been transformative. But for others the scale of the change sought has not been realised.

This section explores whether there is evidence to suggest that the NPF has contributed to advocacy, policy or social change against the six categories of change identified by previous research as potential benefits of a wellbeing framework (narratives, horizontal integration, vertical integration, participation, prevention and budgeting).

A New Narrative on Wellbeing

The language of the original purpose statement was intentional. It talked of Scotland 'flourishing'. In doing so the Scottish Government was alluding to wider conversations about social progress. However messages were clearly focused on public services and at accountability to the public for good governance. The first press release for Scotland Performs (the website that was used to present the outcomes and indicators from 2008 to 2018) cites that aim as '*to track the success of the Scottish Government's objectives of making the country wealthier, safer, healthier, greener and smarter*' (The Scotsman 2008). The focus on government activity, rather than the wellbeing of the people more widely, was reinforced by the 2015 legislation which relates the National Outcomes to the activities on public services, and only on devolved matters.

As the framework has developed and established more focus on sustainable development, a consistent message from non-governmental organisations has been that the purpose statement was too focused on economic growth (Oxfam Scotland/Scottish Environment Link/ STUC 2017). In the 2018 iteration, the purpose statement has been retitled from 'The Government's Purpose' to 'Our Purpose' to better reflect views that it should belong to all of Scotland, and to ensure all sectors (public, private and voluntary) can unite behind it. In addition, the Purpose has been slightly rephrased to reflect the commitment to a 'sustainable and inclusive economy' an alongside the aim to improve the 'wellbeing' of all Scotland's people. For many, this has not gone far enough, with non-governmental organisations arguing that growth of the economy can still be seen as a goal for Scotland with wellbeing separate to it, rather than the economy being subservient to wellbeing (Oxfam Scotland/Scottish Environment Link/STUC 2017).

The dominant view of the NPF is that it has not received the attention that it deserves. It is therefore useful to cross-check this perception against evidence. As the target is at least in part to improve accountability, scrutiny and decision-making, the mentions in the Scottish Parliament are a useful barometer of the extent to which the approach is embedded in these processes. Between 1 January 2007 and 31 March 2018 there were 615 separate references to the NPF in the official report of the Scottish Parliament. Of these, almost 200 were in debates or committee meetings that referred to the NPF only once or twice. If we remove these, in the 10 years of the NPF there were 61 substantial discussions of the NPF in the Scottish Parliament (including committee meetings).

Of these, 10 were during Parliamentary debates. At the Committee level, the committee most likely to refer to the NPF in debate was the Finance Committee (17 times). The Environment Committee referred to the NPF substantially in eight meetings (five during the 2011–2016 session when it was called the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee then the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee, and three times in the current session when the Committee is known as the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee). The Education Committee has referred to it substantially only four times in ten years and the Health Committee only once.

Moreover, this analysis shows the development over time of the interest in the NPF. During the 2007–2011 parliamentary session, there were

no debates that referred to the framework more than twice during the main Plenary session of the Parliament. From 2011 to 2016 there were nine debates that referenced the framework more than three times during the debate.

This metric is admittedly superficial but it is instructive in a number of ways. Firstly, it is simply incorrect to suggest that there is no parliamentary interest or awareness of the NPF. Use of the NPF in debate is widespread, as a source of evidence or as a debating topic in its own right around the mechanisms for holding government to account or in terms of openness and transparency. Secondly, the analysis provides further evidence that the approach is linked strongly to public sector reform and this is the overriding purpose in the minds of parliamentarians. Its use in environmental debates is less apparent. But more tellingly, it provides evidence of the limits of the tool. Where Scotland's professions are strongest, in education and health, the NPF is of limited interest and use.

Horizontal Integration

In 2007–2008 when the NPF was being implemented, several related organisational changes were also put in place. To mirror the smaller Cabinet of the minority SNP government, the Scottish civil service was restructured to have a smaller number of Director-Generals (currently six) and Directors underneath this level (currently 30). The aim of the changes was to build collective responsibility for performance across the government and public sector.

The Director-Generals are responsible for a number for Directorates with coherent themes, so for example, as one would expect, the Director-General for Education, Communities and Justice is responsible for the Learning Directorate and the Housing and Social Justice Directorate (among others). But these areas of responsibility are broader than the traditional UK civil service structure. And they are charged not just with making the connections between Directorates that they have responsibility for, but also making connections across portfolios held by other Director-Generals.

The NPF approach was well received by the civil service, providing them with an opportunity to shift their own work towards outcomes and contribute to meaningful, and lasting, change for Scotland. Within this general positive approach though, the implementation was dependent on the leadership within Directorates. In areas where

implementation moved quickly (e.g. in Justice) there was a clearly identifiable leader at Director-General or Director level. The Scottish Government reports that it has made an explicit policy of recruiting open and collaborative leaders into the civil service who can see beyond their immediate area of responsibility and situate themselves and their work against a wider set of outcomes for all of society as set out in the NPF (Menzies 2017).

The structural changes at Director-General level clearly had an impact through a smaller and tighter senior civil service. But leadership was also shown at Director level, and hence more clearly focused on a specific policy area. A clear vision of the role of the service or sector was required prior to engaging in integrated working with other parts of the public sector.

The operational activity for the NPF is carried out by the Performance Unit, within the Office of the Chief Statistician and Performance. This unit is a mixed team of statisticians and policy professionals, linking the data analysis to the policy intention and promoting the framework across the government. The team is located within the government and as such is not an independent statistical unit. As part of the implementation of the NPF 'outcome leaders' were established with one 'leader' per national outcome. This enabled sharing of information across Directorates, when more than one is contributing to an outcome.

Since implementation in 2007, the NPF has influenced policy development across the central civil service. The Scottish Government reports that there are now several aligned frameworks which link to the National Outcomes:

- Active Scotland
- Commonwealth Games 2014
- Housing and Regeneration
- Justice
- Procurement

The use of the National Outcomes as a 'hook' by those seeking to influence policy has developed significantly, for example the Commission on Housing and Wellbeing (2015) the National Library Strategy (Scottish Library and Information Council 2015) and the Legal Aid Review (Evans 2018) all placed their recommendations within the context of the

national outcomes. A case study on the revised approach to Justice is set out to explore how this works in practice.

Case study: Rethinking Justice

It is difficult to attribute general trends to specific policy changes but the Scottish example comes close in providing a coherent story around the impact of the reforms to the justice system. The Directorate took a strong evidence-based approach to rethinking justice. This confirmed the need for early and targeted intervention to prevent offending and to reduce reoffending. While the Justice Division was 'responsible' for offending and reoffending rates, it was clear from this work that improving links between the justice system and other public services such as housing and employment would be critical to their success.

The process was one of dialogue within the Justice Division and with colleagues in other Divisions and public bodies. As one source told me: '*the indicators in the Justice dashboard were developed through a change process that everyone had signed up to; so there was real change in relationships and how people interacted with each other, in how business was done.*'

The average number of reconvictions per offender has decreased by 17% in the past decade. This fall has been driven significantly by those aged 25 and under, with average reconvictions falling by 20% for under 21 year olds and by 26% for the 21–25 age group (Scottish Government 2017). The Scottish Government analytical teams are cautious about attributing this change directly to the change in government approach. As a comparison, the adult reoffending rate for England has decreased by less than one percentage point since 2005 (UK Ministry of Justice 2018).

However, despite these examples, alignment is not complete and there remain many examples of policies that do not take account of the NPF. Health and social care in particular has a complex landscape of accountability structures with legislative and policy targets and outcomes woven through multiple layers of administration. There are currently three sets of indicators that are used to assess the performance of health and social care services in Scotland:

- The NPF indicators (81 indicators set out in Table 3.2, of which 13 have a direct relationship to health and social care).
- Local Delivery Plan indicators and standards (19 indicators which are largely objective indicators including cancer detection rates, waiting times, the treatment time guarantee, referral to treatment times).
- Health and Social Care Integration Indicators (23 indicators which are a mix of subjective assessments including ability to look after one's own health, living independently, having a say in one's care and objective data such as premature mortality rate, staff satisfaction rates, emergency admissions and readmission rate).

As Harry Burns notes in his review of targets and indicators in Scottish health and social care: '*the present system of targets and indicators is fragmented and many of the indicators do not lend themselves to effective improvement interventions*' (Burns 2017, p. 30). This was continued even after the most recent update to the NPF where two days later a set of priorities for public health were issued by the Scottish Government (2018c).

There is other evidence of a lack of alignment with the achievements noted by education and planning in relation to the NPF tending towards inputs and processes, while others report on programme level impacts rather than impacts on society as a whole (Scottish Government 2017).

Further, there is no clear articulation from the Scottish Government of how the National Outcomes, and indicators, should relate to the performance management of specific programmes or services.

Vertical Integration

The SNP government that came to power in 2007 also had in its sights a new relationship with local government. It established a Concordat between Scottish and local government which set out a new, mature relationship between Scottish and local government (Scottish Government/COSLA 2012). It secured a reduction in ring-fencing, monitoring and scrutiny for local government in return for Single Outcome Agreements which bind local authorities (originally local councils but now through joint Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs)) within overall government outcomes (through the NPF) but also taking account of local priorities. While the new relationship between Scottish and local

government was initially perceived relatively positively, as time has gone on it has become more problematic. Some commentators have drawn attention to the Concordat's limitations and the lack of willingness of the Scottish Government to tackle some of the more difficult issues around localism, such as a lack of community engagement (Osborne et al. 2012; Blackburn and Keating 2012).

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 gives statutory purpose to community planning for the first time and places a duty on CPPs to produce and publish a local outcomes improvement plan (LOIP) and a locality plan which identifies the local authority sub-areas which are experiencing the poorest outcomes and outlines both the action proposed and the timescale for improving outcomes at the local area. The Improvement Service, NHS National Services Scotland and NHS Health Scotland worked with a small number of CPPs to develop their LOIP, which CPPs were required to have in place and approved by 1 October 2017. The LOIPs published demonstrate the priority outcomes of different local authorities.

The Scottish Government has continued its work to join up public services at a local level through the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 which established Integration Authorities to plan and deliver health and social care services for their area under the management of Integration Joint Boards. While the policy goals are to develop seamless services, at a service level, the proliferation of measures and indicators for different purposes is problematic. Children in Scotland reported that of the performance coordinators they interviewed in research on health and social care integration estimated that they were already aware of over 400 measures and indicators that had to be recorded and reported for a combination of local and national monitoring (Stephen et al. 2015).

Away from this administrative complexity that the system has created, there are calls for greater powers for local government in Scotland. The concordat may have stabilised relationships between Scottish and local government for a time but it did not resolve the central issue of the correct balance between powers between the tiers of democracy in Scotland. The Commission on Local Government concluded that:

> relying on national governments for direction and funding has contributed to a feeling that local government is accountable up to the centre, rather than out to its communities… That the Scottish Parliament is in exactly

the same position with respect to Westminster illustrates how 'top down' the whole framework of democracy is. (Commission on the Future of Local Democracy 2014, p. 8)

The Commission identified improving wellbeing as the goal for local government but not draw any connection between this and the wellbeing framework.

The Scottish Government is currently carrying out a Local Governance Review which will consider how powers, responsibilities and resources are shared across national and local spheres of government, and with communities. The first phase is focusing on communities alone and so it is too early to assess whether the wellbeing framework has had any influence here.

Participation

The NPF did not start from a strong position on participation. The development of indicators was seen as a technocratic exercise, the choice of outcomes, a political one. Only slowly, and with considerable lobbying from non-governmental organisations, did it develop a sense of the importance of citizen participation for the framework to have legitimacy (Wallace 2013).

This is emblematic of a larger issue in Scottish life around renewing democracy and civil society. A number of initiatives are underway to encourage greater conversation and debate between the people of Scotland and decision-makers. These include travelling Cabinet meetings, where Cabinet meets in different towns and cities across Scotland, followed by a live-streamed public meeting; and Experience Panels involving people who have directly encountered the benefits system to have a role in shaping Scotland's new social security power (Menzies 2017).

Potentially more transformative is the growing use of participatory budgeting by local authorities. Agreement was reached with COSLA that at least 1% of local government budgets will be subject to participatory budgeting by the end of 2021, giving communities more influence than ever to make decisions on how funding is spent in their localities; giving tens of thousands of people a say in how almost £100m will be spent (Scottish Government 2017).

The National Outcomes do not refer explicitly to democracy, though the values statement does refer to being 'open'. The measurements

selected include influence over local decisions and trust in public organisations, but the Scottish Government did not include the common international indicator of voting levels for Scottish Government or local government elections (despite it performing well internationally on this). It is not entirely clear therefore what the view of the Scottish Government, through the NPF is of democracy as a component of wellbeing, and there is limited evidence of any direct contribution from the NPF to participation in democracy.

There are however reasons for optimism, one area where the 2018 NPF has strengthened its approach is the importance it has placed on children and young people's voice which is actively measured and promoted.

Prevention

The Scottish Government has committed to 'a decisive shift towards prevention' (Scottish Government 2011) as a response to the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services reform which concluded:

> The adoption of preventative approaches, in particular approaches which build on the active participation of service users and communities, will contribute significantly to making the best possible use of money and other assets. They will help to eradicate duplication and waste and, critically, take demand out of the system over the longer term. (Christie 2011, para. 6.8)

Reflecting on this significance Sir John Elvidge notes that the drivers for a new early years strategy actually came from Scotland's poor record on offending and reoffending. Rather than seeing this as a justice issue, the approach taken was to focus on what were seen as the root causes of offending: poverty and adverse childhood experiences.

Here the Scottish Government took an improvement science approach to improving outcomes through the Early Years Collaborative (EYC). Heavily influenced by health improvement science, the EYC was established in 2012 as a multi-agency platform to improve outcomes for children and families. This was specifically linked to the National Outcome that Scotland be 'the best place in the world to grow up' but the group identified their own indicators (based on the proportion reaching developmental milestones, which is now included in the revised 2018 indicator set).

In many discussion papers, prevention becomes inextricably linked to interventions in the early years of a child's life, focusing on life stages rather than prevention across the life course. The interpretation of prevention as relating to life course can reinforce silo approaches, making prevention the responsibility of specific services, rather than a more transformative, cross-cutting approach.

One example where we can see a shift to prevention cited by the Scottish Government is the youth employment strategy (Developing the Young Workforce) which aims to reduce youth unemployment levels by 40% by 2021. It is explicitly referred to as early intervention on youth unemployment. The strategy provides work-relevant education to young people, giving them appropriate skills for the current and anticipated jobs market. It does this by:

- Creating new vocational learning options
- Enabling young people to learn in a range of settings in their senior phase of school
- Embedding employer engagement in education
- Offering careers advice at an earlier point in school
- Introducing new standards for careers guidance and work experience (Scottish Government 2017).

Through this approach, the Scottish Government achieved their target by May 2017, four years earlier than planned. Scotland's youth unemployment rate is currently 9.8%, lower than the 11.3% rate in the UK as a whole (Scottish Government 2018b). That this example is cited in an evidence report on the impact of the NPF shows that there are links made between this strategy and the indicators on youth unemployment. But it is telling that the focus is on a target developed from the NPF rather than continuous improvement in the indicators.

While the aspirations are clear in policy development, few stakeholders report that there has been a shift in behaviours (or funding). As Paul Cairney notes in his analysis of prevention in Scottish public policy, the lack of clarity over the meaning of prevention and early intervention allows CPPs to fit much of their current services under that heading, some have even replaced the Scottish Government definition with their own within their Single Outcome Agreement (Cairney 2016).

Budgeting

As noted earlier, one of the key drivers was the work of the influential Finance Committee in the second Parliamentary Session (2003–2007). However, it was not until 2014 that the NPF was formally reported to the Scottish Parliament as part of the Budget scrutiny process. Initially it was argued that the Scotland Performs website which hosts the indicator data was publicly available and thus accessible to any committee of the Scottish Parliament. But the Committees themselves asked for tailored reports covering their areas of interest. The Performance Unit therefore began preparing Performance Scorecards for each Committee of the Scottish Parliament to review as part of their scrutiny of the budget. These Scorecards summarise the trends in indicators and show whether performance is improving, maintaining or worsening. In the second iteration of the Scorecards, the Performance Unit also provided an accompanying report setting out the inter-dependency of indicators and outcomes, rectifying concerns that the Committee structure was diluting the whole-of-government approach of the framework.

There was generally positive feedback on the Scorecards, however in 2017 the Finance and Constitution Committee reported:

> Despite this new performance-based approach the budget process has remained largely iterative and forward looking. The focus tends to be on examining the Scottish Government's expenditure proposals for the following year. There is little scrutiny of budget decisions at a strategic level including whether the Scottish Government is making any progress against its declared objectives. (Scottish Parliament Finance Committee 2017, p. 1)

Similar criticisms are made by the Scottish Council on Development and Industry and the Scottish Chambers of Industry (Scottish Parliament Finance Committee 2013).

This is despite significant efforts made by Audit Scotland to move public bodies to what it calls 'priority-based budgeting' which focuses on the delivery of priority outcomes and allocates money to those services or areas which make the greatest contribution to delivering these outcomes. Audit Scotland goes on to note that '*this approach means services or activities which contribute least to outcomes may be reduced or withdrawn*' (Audit Scotland 2011, para. 68). Disinvestment, simply stopping doing things that do not contribute to wellbeing outcomes, has proved to be the most difficult part of the process.

Conclusion

The Scottish experience on wellbeing frameworks provides some evidence of the link between a wellbeing framework and advocacy, policy and social change. Its key strength remains within its origins, as a whole-of-government approach for the Scottish Government, operating at the horizontal level. The success of the tool for vertical integration has been hampered by the number of competing initiatives which affect local services in unpredictable ways.

The framework itself has been significantly improved in the 2018 refresh and now more clearly states the connection with sustainable development and a vision for Scotland as a whole. It has evolved from its earlier internal performance management framework. The journey towards more environmental focus and citizen participation has required the active involvement of non-governmental organisations. There remains a central question of whether the framework is a government framework for public services or a vision for the future of Scotland.

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Wales: Wellbeing as Sustainable Development

Abstract Wales is at the global forefront on legislation on sustainable development, with the origins of this dating back to the original legislation on devolution in 1998. The most recent legislation, the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 clearly links duties on sustainable development to public sector reform and concepts of prevention, collaboration, integration, involvement and long-term thinking. The Act places equal weight on all aspects of wellbeing, directly challenging the economic dominance in policy-making. In implementation, a strong culture of performance management for public services has arisen which some commentators argue detracts from its original aim of sustainable development. Early indicators of impact can be seen, particularly in relation to the development of thinking and practice on adverse childhood experiences.

Keywords Sustainable development · Participation
Future generations · Welsh Government · Public sector reform

We knew that it would not be easy. Only a few countries have ever done this. Only in Wales are we ambitious enough to legislate for wellbeing goals for sustainable Wales… Wales remains committed to sustainable development and is bold and confident enough to take this step. We are a small country, but that does not mean that we should not be ambitious.

Carl Sargeant AM, former Minister for Natural Resources speaking in 2014 (National Assembly for Wales 2014)

INTRODUCTION

Wales is at the global forefront of legislation on sustainable development, going further than all other legislatures in requiring public bodies to safeguard the interests of future generations. But while they are lauded internationally their story is far from common knowledge in policy circles in the UK. Within Wales, there is a sense that the transformation has not yet been as wide-reaching as its architects had hoped.

CONTEXT

The Assembly has 60 members, known as Assembly Members (AMs) elected for five-year terms under an additional member system. Forty of the AMs represent geographical constituencies, elected under the First Past the Post system. The remaining 20 AMs represent five electoral regions, each including between seven and nine constituencies, using the d'Hondt method of proportional representation. The Assembly must elect a First Minister, who selects ministers to form the Welsh Government. The electoral system encourages coalition government.

The Welsh Assembly was initially the weakest of the three devolved legislatures, and Welsh legislation most entwined with English Law. However successive Acts have enhanced its powers. These Acts, in 2006, 2011, 2014 and 2017 have brought the powers closer into line with the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly, most notably providing for tax-raising powers and establishing a Welsh Revenue Authority. There is now a substantial body of Welsh legislation leading to specialisms in Welsh public policy and Welsh law.

Wales voted narrowly for a devolved assembly in 1997 (50.3–49.7%) and the powers of the Secretary of State for Wales were transferred on 1 July 1999, granting the National Assembly of Wales the power to decide how the Westminster government's budget for devolved areas

is spent and administered. While initial support for the Welsh Assembly was muted, the 2011 referendum on the right to make primary legislation found 63.5% of the population in favour of the extension of powers, suggesting growing popular support for the institution (Chaney 2016). Between 1999 and 2018 there have been five elections for the National Assembly. Welsh Labour has always been in government in Wales, either as a minority administration (2011–2016) or in coalition with the Liberal Democrats (1999–2007 and 2016–present day) or Plaid Cymru (2007–2011).

The UK and international comparisons on wellbeing published by the OECD (see Table 2.2) show consistent strengths in housing, safety and community support. Wales scores poorly compared to the 12 regions of the UK on health however and on access to broadband. People in Wales report lower levels of life satisfaction than those in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

CATALYSTS

Wales has a deep commitment to sustainable development. The Government of Wales Act 1998 included a requirement on it to make a scheme setting out '*how it proposes, in the exercise of its functions, to promote sustainable development*', with requirements to keep the scheme under annual review, to remake or revise it when a new government was formed, and to carry out an effectiveness review of the scheme at the end of each government term. The duties were renewed in the Government of Wales Act 2006, which created a clearer separation between the legislature and the executive and hence placed the duty on the newly established executive body rather than the National Assembly (Table 4.1).

Politicians played a clear role in promoting the sustainable development strategy with early leadership provided by Sue Essex AM (Minister for Environment, Transport and Planning 2000–2003 and Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services 2003–2007) who was instrumental in getting the Assembly's commitment to sustainable development inserted into the original Government of Wales Act. Support for civil society involvement in sustainable development came from the establishment of Cynnal Cmryu (Sustain Wales), which was formed in 2002 and helped to promote the duty of sustainable development.

There have been three sustainable development strategies which operationalised this duty: Learning to Live Differently (2000–2003),

Table 4.1   Timeline for the development of the Welsh wellbeing framework

Government of Wales Act 1998 creates a statutory duty on Welsh Government to promote sustainable development	1998
First Sustainable Development Strategy 'Learning to Live Differently' published	2000
Cynnal Cymru/Sustain Wales established	2002
Second Sustainable Development Strategy 'Learning to Work Differently' published	2004
First Sustainable Development Indicators published	2005
Government of Wales Act introduces sustainable development duty	2006
Reduction in number of departments within Welsh Government	2007
One Wales, One Planet policy introduced which identified sustainable development as the central organising principle of the Welsh Government	**2009**
Sustainable Development Charter launched	2010
Commissioner for Sustainable Futures appointed	2011
Launch of The Wales We Want	2014
The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 passed	2015
Commissioner for Future Generations established	2016
First deadline for wellbeing assessments from public bodies	2017
First annual wellbeing reports due from public bodies	2018

Source Original

Learning to Work Differently (2004–2008) and One Wales: One Planet, The Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government (2009–2016). One Wales: One Planet identified its ambition to make sustainable development the central organising principle of the Welsh Government. The policy included a strategy for delivering sustainable development, comprised of actions grouped around resource use, environment, economy and society. It set out a number of headline indicators for sustainable development, including wellbeing. These 44 indicators were reported on annually and progress indicated through a traffic lights system (Statistics for Wales 2015). It is this date that I have taken to refer to the implementation of the wellbeing framework. While other aspects were in place before, it is the identification of a central unifying concept (in this case sustainable development) that differentiates One Wales; One Planet from other policy initiatives.

In a thorough review of the sustainable development strategy, PricewaterhouseCoopers (2011) found that there was strong political and managerial leadership on sustainable development but that this was not consistent across the organisation, with some seeing the duty

as belonging to the Sustainable Development branch team rather than a whole-of-government responsibility. Embedding the approach was further hampered by the lack of formal requirements to assess policies for their impact on sustainable development.

While the report authors note they were seeking policy or programme changes that had a clear cross-sectoral approach, rather than activities that focused on improving one domain of wellbeing, the identified policy successes focused strongly on environmental programmes (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2011). The examples of success given include (but were not limited to) the Arbed Programme, which had a positive impact on climate change, tackling fuel poverty and improving the local economy by creating Welsh jobs, and the Climate Change Strategy 2010, which while focused on improving outcomes in one domain (environment) includes cross-sectoral initiatives to deliver on the commitments.

Conversations on mechanisms to strengthen the duty as a central organising principle therefore began relatively early in the process. The 2011 Welsh Labour manifesto tackled the issue by committing to putting sustainable development into legislation—with the aim of: '*embedding sustainable development as the central organising principle in all our actions across government and all public bodies*' (Welsh Labour 2011, p. 93). The manifesto commitment was secured by Jane Davidson MLA who had been a powerful advocate for environmental issues, leading the campaigns for the plastic bag charge and the focus on recycling targets. Ms Davidson stood down at this election and was therefore not involved in its further development.

Welsh Labour also committed to setting up a new Sustainable Development Commission, following the abolition by the UK Government earlier in 2011. Initially this was a non-statutory post of Sustainable Futures Commissioner. No such parallel move was made in Scotland or Northern Ireland, further cementing its credentials as a government taking sustainable development seriously. The Commissioner was supported by Cynnal Cymru, providing a level of independence from the centre of government.

The Bill was also influenced by the publication of a Wales case study as part of broader cross-jurisdictional research into the use of alternative indicators in policy. It found that the sustainable development indicators were not used effectively across Welsh Government policy-making due to a variety of barriers that result in them not being seen as having a

meaningful role within the policy-making process (Michaelson 2013). These barriers were clustered around four key themes:

- A lack of relevance for key audiences (including a lack of a strong narrative, context and meaning; too many indicators across Welsh Government and poor design and selection of individual indicators)
- A lack of connection to priorities and action (including tensions about how the sustainable development indicators should relate to other priorities and a reluctance to prioritise within indicator sets)
- Perceptions that the Sustainable Development Indicators distort the true priorities of the Welsh Government (for example, being seen as too weighted to environmental issues, being seen as a false technocratic solution)
- Political pressures affecting the use of indicators (including, a lack of fit between the evidence from indicators and the factors driving political decision-making and pressure on politicians to be seen to be taking quick action).

It was clear by this point that the aim of putting sustainable development at the heart of the work of the Welsh Government was being hampered by the complexity of the communication. The shift in language from sustainable development to wellbeing was therefore intentional, as Sophie Howe Commissioner for Future Generations in Wales told me: '*framing it in that way was thought to be more easily understandable to people*'. While sustainable development is a broad concept, it is often marginalised by stakeholders who see it solely in relation to environmental issues (Whitby et al. 2014). The use of the word wellbeing was seen as having a broader appeal. A further important point was made by interviewees. Wellbeing, by this time, was a word that had already been incorporated into Welsh legislation, with the passing of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014. Though it should be noted that the definitions are quite different, with the prior Act citing a range of dimensions of personal wellbeing, rather than the definition that is within the later legislation of which is more clearly a statement of societal wellbeing (linked to economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing).

There were, at the time, separate attempts to bring in performance management approaches akin to Results Based Accountability through

the Programme for Government.[1] This approach makes clearer distinctions between outcomes, outcomes indicators and performance indicators. The overall aim was to assess policy areas and programmes and increase joined-up working. But no effort appeared to be made to link the Sustainable Development Indicators to the Programme for Government indicators, leading to confusion and an understandable prioritisation of the Programme for Government targets.

In May 2012, the Welsh Government launched an initial consultation on plans for a new piece of legislation, the Sustainable Development Bill but taking into account these findings and a general shift in narrative, the working title was changed to the 'Future Generations (Wales) Bill' and then finally to the 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015'. The political stewardship of the Bill also changed. Initially it was introduced by Jeff Cuthbert, AM Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty (2013–2014). Following a reshuffle it become the responsibility of Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for Natural Resources.

The shift in language and approach had a mixed effect on galvanising a broader movement for change. For over two years the Welsh Government and the Commissioner for Sustainable Futures, Peter Davies, held what was claimed to be Wales's biggest National Conversation on 'The Wales We Want' which encouraged people to take part in a different type of conversation beyond the short-term pressures of everyday life. The report of the shows the success of this open and inclusive model with engagement of almost 7000 people (Commissioner for Sustainable Futures 2015). The role of public engagement and participation was essential to this phase however it is interesting to note that it is not now referred to very often.

Components

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a legal duty on all public bodies to carry out sustainable development, and improve and achieve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. Understanding the Welsh legislation requires careful reading.

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[1] It is worth noting here that Results Based Accountability and Outcome Based Accountability, referred to in the chapter on Northern Ireland are in fact the same thing. RBA is only referred to as OBA in England and Northern Ireland.

In summary the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 requires a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development:

- by taking action which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met,
- without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,
- by taking account of the sustainable development principle,
- and following the five ways of working, and
- in setting objectives for well-being and taking action to achieve them (Davies 2016).

It is therefore not the most straightforward of frameworks to understand or implement. As noted in the introduction, it goes further than other examples of duties on sustainable development by requiring public bodies '*to undertake a* process *in accordance with the principle directed towards the achievement of a particular outcome*' (Davies 2016, p. 44). The Act stops short of requiring these objectives to be met.

The wellbeing objective set by public bodies must maximise the organisation's contribution to each of the seven national Well-being Goals (see Box 4.1). But importantly, it is their own objectives that they are under a duty to seek to achieve, not the broader well-being goals.

Box 4.1: The Seven National Well-Being Goals for Wales

  i. A prosperous Wales. An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
  ii. A resilient Wales. A nation which maintains and enhances a bio-diverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
 iii. A healthier Wales. A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

iv. A more equal Wales. A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).
v. A Wales of cohesive communities. Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
vi. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
vii. A globally responsible Wales. A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

The Act also contains Five Ways of Working which public bodies need to evidence that they have considered in applying the Sustainable Development Principle to carry out sustainable development and improve and achieve economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing. These are:

- Long-term: The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
- Integration: Considering how each public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.
- Involvement: The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.
- Collaboration: Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.
- Prevention: How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2018a).

These correspond closely with what is already known about the potential impact of wellbeing as a narrative for public policy but the articulation is clearer than in other examples, and the linking of principles with ways of working in legislation is unique in the UK.

On 14 November 2016 the Welsh Government published their objectives, which reflect the government's aspirations for change over the longer term. These were further revised in the Prosperity for All Programme for Government which set 12 objectives. Figure 4.1 shows the alignment between the programme for government and the governments' well-being objectives.

These national objectives are monitored through 46 national indicators (see Table 4.2), which are monitored through an annual report.
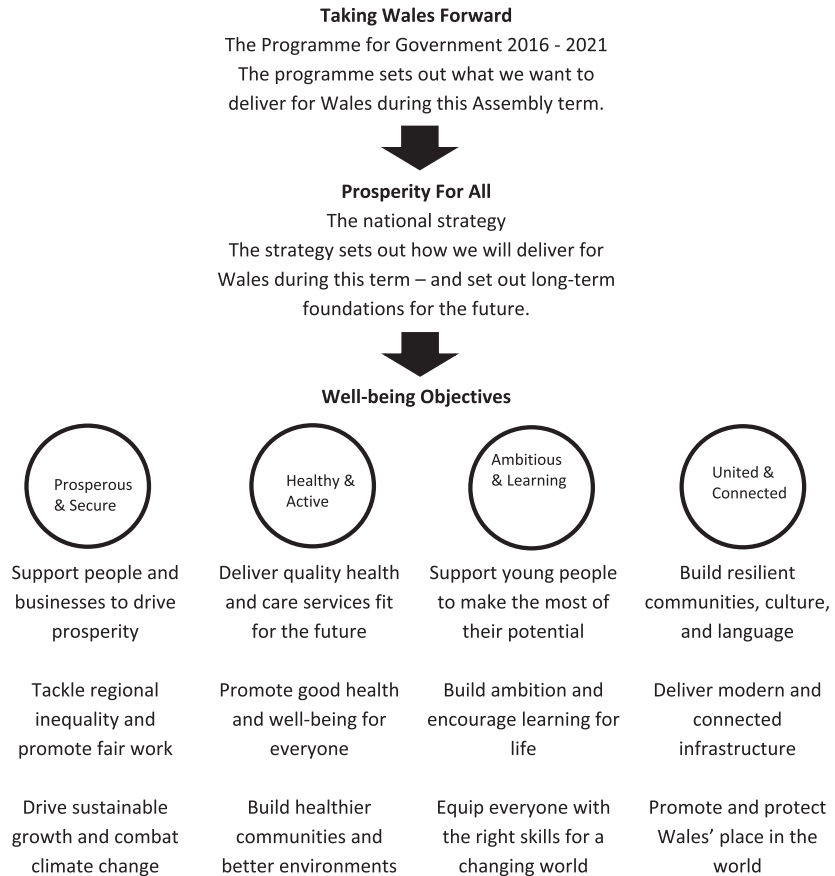
Taking Wales Forward
The Programme for Government 2016 - 2021
The programme sets out what we want to
deliver for Wales during this Assembly term.

Prosperity For All
The national strategy
The strategy sets out how we will deliver for
Wales during this term – and set out long-term
foundations for the future.

Well-being Objectives

Prosperous & Secure	Healthy & Active	Ambitious & Learning	United & Connected
Support people and businesses to drive prosperity	Deliver quality health and care services fit for the future	Support young people to make the most of their potential	Build resilient communities, culture, and language
Tackle regional inequality and promote fair work	Promote good health and well-being for everyone	Build ambition and encourage learning for life	Deliver modern and connected infrastructure
Drive sustainable growth and combat climate change	Build healthier communities and better environments	Equip everyone with the right skills for a changing world	Promote and protect Wales' place in the world

Fig. 4.1 Prosperity for all: The national strategy—Well-being statement (*Source* Welsh Government 2017b)

Table 4.2 National indicators for Wales

Material conditions	Quality of life	Environment
Material deprivation (%, objective)	Healthy life expectancy (years, objective)	Non-recycled waste (number, objective)
Income inequality (%, objective)	Child development (%, objective)	Air pollution (number, objective)
Innovative businesses (%, objective)	Low birth weight (%, objective)	Renewable energy capacity (number, objective)
Gender pay gap (%, objective)	Skills level of the population (%, objective)	Soil quality (number, objective)
Productivity (index, objective)	Adult healthy behaviours (%, objective)	Ecological footprint (index, objective)
Gross disposable income (£, objective)	Educational attainment (%, objective)	Housing at flood risk (number, objective)
Job satisfaction (%, subjective)	Child healthy behaviours (%, objective)	Energy performance of housing (%, objective)
Social return on investments (£, objective)	Influence over local decisions (%, subjective)	Museums and archives holding archival/heritage collections meeting UK accreditation standards (number, objective)
Employment rate (%, objective)	Access to services (%, subjective)	Quality of historic environment assets (number, objective)
Quality of work (%, objective)	Perception of crime (%, subjective)	Greenhouse gas emissions (number, objective)
Economic activity (%, objective)	Satisfaction with neighbour-hood (%, subjective)	Greenhouse gas emissions by consumption of global goods and services (number, objective)
	Respect and belonging (%, subjective)	Areas of healthy ecosystems (number, objective)
	Volunteering rate (%, objective)	Biological Diversity (index, objective)
	Mental wellbeing (index, subjective)	Quality of blue space (%, objective)
	Loneliness (%, subjective)	
	Housing quality (%, objective)	
	Prevention of homelessness (%, objective)	
	Attendance at arts, culture and heritage events (%, objective)	
	Welsh use (%, objective)	
	Welsh speaking (%, objective)	
	Physical activity (%, objective)	
Total: 11	Total: 21	Total: 14
10 objective, 1 subjective	14 objective, 7 subjective	14 objective

Source Welsh Government (2017d)

Other public bodies must determine their own well-being objectives and action to achieve them.

The Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales was created to 'disrupt business as usual' by promoting the principles of the Act, and to support public bodies as the legislation is implemented. The Commissioner also has responsibilities for ongoing monitoring of implementation of the Act, alongside the Auditor General for Wales (Menzies 2017). The creation of a statutory body with responsibility for monitoring the Act was a direct response to the closure of the Sustainable Development Commission—locating the powers in legislation was seen as a mechanism for ensuring its survival when the political composition of the government changed.

The link between the well-being framework and its origins in sustainable development were strengthened in September 2017 when the Welsh Government provided a mapping tool, linking the wellbeing goals to the Sustainable Development Goals (Welsh Government 2017d).

CONTRIBUTION

A New Narrative on Wellbeing

The original aim of the wellbeing framework was to challenge the dominance of short-term and economic decision-making by requiring action across the domains of wellbeing. The environmental roots of the framework have carried forward into the main narratives around its implementation.

Finding the balance between environmental and social domains of wellbeing has not been straightforward. The Sustainable Development Alliance (a network of 30 organisations working for a thriving environment in Wales) campaigned strongly in favour of the need for legislation (Sustainable Development Alliance 2014). But there were disagreements as the Bill was under scrutiny on the extent to which environmental issues were being addressed. For example, Chris Johnes analysis for think tank Egino argued: '*It does not treat the three pillars of sustainable development equally: it is much more focused on the social pillar and is more of a public sector reform bill than a sustainable development one*' (Johnes 2013, p. 3). The Stage 1 report cited stakeholder concerns that these issues were being omitted or under-represented in the Bill (National

Assembly for Wales Environment and Sustainability Committee [2014a](#)),
the Minister Carl Sargeant AM was clear in his response:

> This is not an environmental Bill. We will have an environmental Bill. This
> is a sustainable development and well-being Bill and I do not accept that
> the environment is not considered in this Bill at all. (National Assembly for
> Wales Environmental and Sustainability Committee 2014a, p. 15)

During Stage 2 amendments direct references to 'climate change' were
inserted into the first two goals and the second goals were amended to
include a more explicit reference to the concept of environmental lim-
its in the context of a resilient environment. During Stage 3 proceed-
ings a definition of sustainable development was included with a stronger
requirement to carry out sustainable development.

Environmental groups also argued for specific targets to be intro-
duced, not just indicators. The Welsh Government succeeded in arguing
that this would not be necessary. However, the question of whether the
indicators can tell us enough about the progress of Wales, and how it is
aligned to performance management of public services was not resolved
during the legislative scrutiny stage.

Policy debates on the proposed M4 relief road have brought the issue
of the balance between the economy and the environment to the fore-
front. In September 2017 the Future Generations Commissioner for
Wales wrote to the independent inspector for the M4 Corridor Around
Newport Public Local Inquiry, William Wadrup, raising concerns about
how the Welsh Government had interpreted their duties under the
Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 (National Assembly for
Wales 2018). In this additional evidence, the Commissioner, Sophie
Howe made a number of substantial comments that show the change in
approach between the original sustainable development strategies and
the wellbeing framework:

> I need to stress that while the terminology remains the same: 'sustaina-
> ble development principle', its meaning under the Act has changed.
> I would therefore expect all public bodies covered by the Act and those
> taking decisions within them to demonstrate how they are doing things
> differently. I would expect to see reference to the new sustainable develop-
> ment definition and consideration of short term/long term needs and an

explanation as to how they have reached their decision using the five ways of working. (Howe 2017b, p. 2)

This suggests a much higher burden of proof is expected under the new legislation and an explicit balancing of current and future needs which is far more challenging to normal practice in policy development and decision-making.

She goes on to discuss the balance between the economic pillar of wellbeing and environmental, cultural and social pillars, in particular: '*one pillar **cannot** override the others… The balancing in this revolutionary Act means giving as equal as possible weight to each element and not allowing one to tip the scale'* (Howe 2017b, p. 2). In arguing that the M4 relief road requires trade-offs to be made between the different pillars of wellbeing, Ms Howe believes that the Welsh Government are in danger of setting a damaging precedent and reducing the power of the Act to force change in policy-making.

Her final set of concerns relate to the application of the Act to individual policy decisions. Evidence from the Welsh Government suggested that it is their view that it is the collective endeavour of the government, as a public body, that must achieve the wellbeing objectives. Ms Howe is clear that her interpretation is that each individual decision must seek to achieve all the wellbeing objectives set. To argue that decisions can relate to one department or to one domain of wellbeing is, she argues, to undermine the spirit of the legislation. The decision on the M4 will not be made until towards the end of 2018, for the above reasons it will be a test of the Act, both in terms of its substance and in terms of the power of the Commissioners' Office to lead change.

Horizontal Integration

The collective approach to wellbeing is reinforced in a number of ways in Wales, for example, as one of the five ways of working. In the annual report on progress towards the wellbeing goals highlights that '*it is not a report about the performance of any organisation, but the collective change we are seeing in Wales*' (Welsh Government 2017a).

The Welsh Government acknowledges that the issues facing Wales can only be tackled through new ways of working, including joined-up programmes. The Welsh Government has set out its desired approach to integration which specifically includes shifting to a 'whole of government

approach', with commitments to a cross-departmental working and taking a life-course approach, recognising that people do not live their lives by policy boundaries, or by the public services they receive (Welsh Government 2017b).

In its first decade, the Welsh Assembly Government took a traditional approach to organising government departments. Since 2007 successive reforms have reduced the size of the top tier of the civil service, initially to seven Directorates and then to four Groups—headed by the Permanent Secretary, two Deputy Permanent Secretaries, and the Director General for Health and Social Services (who is also Chief Executive of NHS Wales). The size of the civil service has also decreased by around a fifth over the course of a decade, in reaction to the reduction in the block grant to the Welsh Government from the UK government (Welsh Government 2018). The Group structure is further sub-divided into directorates which align to the areas of responsibility devolved to the Welsh Government to administer (Welsh Government 2017c). The senior civil service have their own personal objectives aligned to the wellbeing goals and ways of working and the Permanent Secretary has initiated a wider review of the performance management, progression arrangements, leadership training and other development programmes (Auditor General for Wales/Welsh Audit Office 2018).

A civil service business improvement programme ran from February 2015 to March 2017 to develop the organisation to better meet the needs of Ministers. One of its innovations was the creation of a new Cabinet Office to provide greater strategic capability to support the First Minister and Cabinet in driving and coordinating the business of government. Further activities are ongoing, with the Cabinet Office supporting the implementation of the new ways of working across the civil service.

There is already a strong sense of the development of wellbeing as the golden thread linking different policy areas. Frameworks that articulate a strong link include:

- The Early Years Outcomes Framework
- Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action
- NHS Wales Outcomes and Delivery Framework
- The Public Health Outcomes Framework.

These frameworks each have their own outcomes and indicators but aim to be complementary to the wellbeing goals and ways of working. The

alignment at policy level is meaningful, but there is limited evidence so far of changes to practice within these policy areas.

The Finance Committee's report of its Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2018–2019 commented specifically on the Decarbonisation programme (Welsh Assembly Finance Committee 2017). The Welsh Government has set an ambitious target for the public sector to be carbon neutral by 2030. As with previous comments on the draft budget, the investment in decarbonisation was welcomed but there was a concern that the activities were disconnected and a request for greater strategic alignment of decarbonisation activities. In reflecting on current progress, Sophie Howe, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales notes: '*it* [the energy efficiency in housing programme] *has a benefit in terms of the potential to give work, employment opportunities, contracts to local SMEs, it has benefits to people in communities in terms of reducing heating bills, keeping people warm, it has a benefit to health in terms of keeping people out of hospital due to cold weather conditions and the like. So we're starting to see them thinking in that broader context in terms of how they're taking that work forward*' (National Assembly for Wales 2018, para. 13).

The statutory nature of the wellbeing framework in Wales means that it automatically applies to all public bodies. The duty is on the 44 bodies to show that they have applied the sustainable development principle in their work. While this is far-reaching, it cannot be said to encompass all public services in Wales. There are some interesting anomalies. Firstly, the Welsh police forces are not included as policing is not a devolved function (though the Public Service Boards are required to invite the police boards to participate, and all have done so). Secondly, some bodies are not classed as public bodies under the Act, including Estyn (the schools inspectorate), the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and the Wales Ambulance Services Trust. Further, a detailed report by the Auditor General for Wales highlighted that the duties do not apply directly to private sector or third sector bodies delivering public services or subsidiary bodies (2017).

Vertical Integration

The relationship between Welsh Government and Welsh local government has been tense for some time. As a small jurisdiction, the relationship between central government and local government can struggle as

both sides seek to protect, their own powers and responsibilities. Welsh local government does not always welcome the activity of the Welsh Government in its areas, seeing this as duplication or event displacement of their role (see for example, the debates over the Welsh Government Communities First programme which funded projects in areas of multiple deprivation (National Assembly for Wales Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee 2017)).

Welsh Government and local government in Wales sought a new relationship from 2010 when local outcome agreements were established, drawing directly on experiences in Scotland. Local authorities were asked to set out their outcomes and align them to the strategic objectives of Welsh Government. In return, they received a grant for achieving the outcomes, though this represented only 1% of an authority's income. They were nevertheless an important signal of a move away from New Public Management towards outcome-based accountability.

Welsh local government has also been significantly affected by austerity policies. The Welsh Local Government Association identifies that since 2010 there has been a cut of £720m from local services resulting in budget reductions of between 20 and 50% (Welsh Local Government Association 2015). The Welsh Government has prioritised protecting the health budget, from 2013–2014 onwards, NHS spending has steadily increased as a proportion of the Welsh resource budget since, to reach 48% in 2017–2018, up from 43% in 2011–2012 (Ogle et al. 2017).

Tensions have also been heightened by recurrent debates over the correct 'size' of Welsh local government and whether the 22 local authorities should be in some way slimmed down. The policy was on hold following the Brexit vote, as the Welsh Government agreed to suspend proposals for the merger of local authorities in the Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill initially published in 2015. In early 2018, this option was back on the table with the publication of a green paper.

It is within this context that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is being implemented. Stage 3 amendments to draft Bill had sought to remove the sections relating to establishment, participation, scrutiny and functions of public service boards. These amendments were lodged by the Welsh Conservatives and supported in part by Plaid Cymru due to concerns about adding an extra layer of bureaucracy and removing democratic voice at local level.

The successful passing of this section of the Act placed a statutory duty on 44 key public bodies, including local authorities and Local

Health Boards (which together make up 30 of these public bodies), to improve social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing in Wales in pursuit of the seven national well-being goals. The Act strengthened the previous Local Services Boards (introduced in 2007). The 19 reinvigorated Public Services Boards (PSB) for each local authority area are integrated decision-making bodies for local public services which must include the local authority, the Local Health Board, the Welsh Fire and Rescue Authority, and the Natural Resources body for Wales. The PSB must also invite Welsh Ministers, the Chief Constable within the local authority area, the Police and Crime Commissioner for the police area, a representative of Certain Probation Services, and at least one body which represents relevant voluntary organisations in the locality to become a member.

PSBs are not themselves responsible for the delivery of public services, they are responsible for the integrated planning of public services. In their first two years of existence, PSBs have been required to:

- assess the economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing in the area (the well-being assessment)
- set objectives which are designed to maximise their collective contribution to the seven well-being goals; publish a Local Well-being Plan on the steps it will take to meet their objectives, consulting widely on their assessment of local well-being and their Plan and begin working to deliver on these objectives.

Assessment Phase

The first well-being assessments produced by PSBs in 2017 outline place-based priority outcomes, such as children have a good start in life; young people and adults have good jobs; people have a decent standard of living; and people are healthy, safe and independent. But in assessing them, the Commissioner concluded that there was still much work to do to link activities between different sectors and a tendency to return to traditional ways of working (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2017). The report also queried the extent to which the Act was being seen as transformative, with some authorities seeing the wellbeing assessments and plans as a continuation of Single Integrated Planning (Cardiff, Swansea and the Vale) while others took a more radical approach based on life stages (Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire) or

a more strategic approach looking at local determinants of wellbeing (Monmouthshire, Powys, Cwm Taf) (Netherwood et al. 2017).

In the review of the first wellbeing assessments carried out by the 19 Welsh Public Sector Boards, the Commissioner for the Well-being of Future Generations identified the limitations of current thinking on wellbeing:

- A tendency to revert to describing wellbeing in traditional ways rather than relating local data to the wellbeing goals as defined in the legislation
- A lack of capability and confidence in relation to looking at the long-term
- A lack of meaningful consideration of the interconnections between issues and what data means in different contexts and communities (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2017).

The impact of these plans is hampered by a plethora of local strategies. Local authorities and their partners have numerous duties placed upon them to produce plans and strategies which are aimed at improving the well-being of people in their area. Many of these plans and strategies show overlap and duplication, and the many competing priorities and extensive partnership structures used to pursue these have resulted in too much complexity and reduction in operational efficiency amongst public bodies. One confusion example is that the Welsh Government also legislated for Population Assessments under the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014, using a different definition of wellbeing.

The use of wellbeing in relation to two separate local assessments, occurring at a similar point created confusion (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2017). The Well-being assessments and the Local Well-being Plans run parallel to other local planning documents, and while they are meant to take account of each other there is no sense of a unified set of interlinked plans. As the WLGA Labour Group notes:

> The presence of two Acts covering much the same ground on the wellbeing and partnership agenda creates duplication and means an additional set of pieces in an already over-elaborate jigsaw of joint working across Wales. (Welsh Local Government Association Labour Group 2016)

The group called for a 'radical delayering' of the Welsh public policy landscape.

Objective Setting

Those bodies that fall under the Act (two-thirds of which are local bodies) are required to set their own wellbeing objectives. In 2017 there were 345 wellbeing objectives set by the 44 public bodies. The Office of the Commissioner for Future Generations of Wales analysed these and found a number of themes. The vast majority of public bodies (80% or above in each case) set objectives that relate to what the Commissioner has referred to as their core business of: health and social care; organisational strategy or management; communities and education. Seven in 10 public bodies referred to the environment and slightly less to the economy (66%). Culture, a key aspect of wellbeing in the Act was included in objectives for 61% of public bodies, with less set objectives relating to connectivity (transport and digital, 55%) or equality (48%) (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2018b). There are therefore valid questions over the extent to which the message of collective responsibility for the wellbeing goals has been implemented and whether the emphasis given to culture and the environment in the legislation is being met by policy change within public bodies.

Participation

Prior to devolution in Wales there was an underdeveloped civic infrastructure. Non-governmental organisations with policy remits, where they existed at all, were often small off-shoots of UK organisations and their opportunities to engage were limited to formal consultations with the Welsh Office. The introduction of a new tier of democracy via the Welsh Assembly has turned the business of policy in Wales into a dynamic process with a civil society that contributes actively to rich debate. For example, in response to a consultation on lobbying in Wales, Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN) set out:

> We believe that the National Assembly for Wales has established a pattern of open and inclusive government which gives the opportunity to all kinds of organisations, as well as individual electors, to influence in an open and democratic way elected representatives and government. (National Assembly for Wales Standards of Conduct Committee 2018, p. 11)

However relative to the Scottish or UK governments, the space for open policy dialogue appears limited and there are concerns about the relative size of the third sector in Wales (Wales Council for Voluntary Action 2018).

The wellbeing goals, Welsh Government objectives and national indicators do not place emphasis on democracy and participation. The Welsh Government national indicator set measures influence over local decisions and volunteering rates but not wider measures of democratic participation (voter turnout or trust in institutions). Democracy does not feature at all in the national strategy Prosperity for All (Welsh Government 2017b).

The Wellbeing Statement developed to supplement the current Programme for Government (Prosperity for All) outlines the key features of the Welsh approach to participation with the public to date:

- Continuing dialogue with delivery partners and stakeholders
- Insight from the assessments of local wellbeing carried out by PSB, and subsequent work on well-being objectives by public bodies provided important insight into the sustainability issues at the local level, and the priorities for public bodies
- Permanent Secretary engagement with over 1000 staff across the Welsh Government
- Work on the Valleys Taskforce and its innovative approach to involvement provides insight into how best to engage citizens in the issues that affect them (Welsh Government 2017b).

It is notable that two of these relate to communication within public services, rather than direct engagement of the public (and one requires us to assume that the public are included in the definition of a stakeholder). There is a risk here of conflating joined-up working within government with participation of citizens and the third sector (which are themselves commonly confused but require separate consideration). Some interviewees raise concerns that the focus on statutory partners and formal mechanisms may crowd out the opportunity for genuine participation from civil society and citizens themselves.

In late 2017, the Welsh Government and WWF Cymru announced that they are collaborating on a series of workshops to explore the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act's implementation and its effective delivery. These aim to bring together Welsh Government senior officials

and a wide range of third sector organisations to share perspectives and experiences of the Act, discuss areas of good practice and improvement and to apply this learning to a cross cutting, high level area of Welsh Government policy.

At local level, the approach to public participation and engagement has continued through into the development of well-being assessments by the Public Sector Boards, with independent analysis showing that many had consulted with communities about what wellbeing meant to them though concerns were raised that this was too focused on the existing structure of services rather than being user or future focused (Netherwood et al. 2017).

The third sector has also raised concerns about the extent of their involvement in PSBs development of local wellbeing assessments. Some perceived the assessments as being a top-down approach to create plans and documents that may not resonate with local issues and concerns (Welsh Council for Voluntary Action 2017). This experience is not uniform across Wales—a number of PSBs have moved away from an assumption of local government control to Chairs and/or vice-Chairs who come from other public bodies or non-governmental organisations.

Further, the nature of the evidence presented by the third sector, based on case studies and qualitative evaluations, did not fit well with the overall quantitative approach to monitoring wellbeing through national indicators. There has been little support for local authorities or their partners on how to consider different types of evidence to build an overall picture of wellbeing to ensure their local frameworks have resonance with citizens.

One indication of the direction of travel is the introduction of participatory budgeting with commitments made to develop this approach further. Participatory budgeting sessions are expected to inform future Welsh Government budgets, though to date this has not happened and so it remains an aspiration rather than an action at this time. The complexity and jargon of budget documents was identified as a specific barrier to public engagement in the budget process by Oxfam Cymru (Richards 2017).

Overall therefore we see a mixed picture on participation, with strong rhetoric and some exemplary practice in PSBs. Together this does not add up to a coherent picture of the role of citizens and civil society organisations in the development and delivery of wellbeing.

Prevention

Prevention is one of the five ways of working identified in the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. Welsh Government has identified the need for a clearer focus on preventing ill health, improving emotional resilience and reducing the levels of homelessness. The need for prevention is explicitly linked to the barrier of silo-based working (Welsh Government 2017b).

There are many examples of preventative working in Welsh public services, particularly in health and social care. Many of these pre-date the current wellbeing framework, such as the Together for Health Strategy 2011–2016.

Overall, financial pressure, particularly on local government budgets limit the ability of Welsh and local government to pursue programmes of preventative spend. Many of the universal services that provide much-needed infrastructure for preventative programmes are being cut, such as libraries, parks and community spaces (Welsh Local Government Association 2015).

Box 4.2: Case Study: Fairbourne Moving Forward

Gwynedd Council's project on Fairbourne: Moving Forward is focused on mitigating the impacts of climate change for a coastal community. Fairbourne can no longer be saved from rising sea levels caused by climate change. By 2050 (and based upon current scientific predictions) the village will be returned to the sea.

Innovate to Save (a NESTA and Welsh Government programme) is supporting the establishment of a Fairbourne community interest company (FCIC), which will buy homes from homeowners in the village allowing them to move from the area and reinstating a level of choice about moving away. Vacant homes will then be rented out (via local authorities, charities, groups, organisations) to disadvantaged members of society. This project will be produced and refined in collaboration with the existing community in order to maintain its support with the integration of new incoming residents from vulnerable groups (such as older people, people with mobility requirements, ex-service people, families with young/vulnerable children). These homes will be maintained by local tradesmen whose businesses have suffered due to villagers not undertaking home improvements to their

homes, which have been devalued considerably, which will contribute to sustaining the economy in the area.

The project involves experts from Gwynedd Council, YGC, Natural Resource Wales, Welsh Government, Royal Haskoning DHV, North Wales Regional Emergency Planning Group, the Emergency Services, Welsh Water and the local community.

While the project is in the early stages of development it is a strong example of a wellbeing approach (linking economic, social and environmental outcomes) and of acting now to reduce the further negative impacts of climate change on the residents. Further information is available at http://fairbourne.info/

In the debates around the draft budget 2018–2019 concerns were again raised that the aspirations for prevention were not being realised through the distribution of public funds. The Sustainable Development Alliance argued that this was complicated by the number of different legislative definitions of prevention, and the different understanding of prevention between professional groups. In particular, they argued that prevention is about far more than preventative health spending (Meikle 2017). A key fault line appears to be between a health definition based on early identification and targeting of at risk groups, and other approaches which focus further upstream or are universalist in nature. The Welsh Government has established a Third Sector Partnership Group to explore the issue of the definition of prevention.

Sophie Howe (Commissioner for Future Generations) told me that the lack of a definition of prevention is problematic for implementation, along with the difficulties caused by austerity: '*It's a bit of a perfect storm in a way, less money, less capacity, less focus on innovation but there's less focus on training and raising people's heads up. But I think the Act is starting to help in challenging that.*'

An area of significant policy development in Wales has been on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). While this predates the Office of the Commissioner for Future Generations, they have identified it as a priority area for action. Bringing together the ways of working on long-termism and prevention, the aim is to improve the wellbeing of future generations by reducing harm in early childhood. The impact of the national work on ACEs can be seen filtering through to the local

wellbeing action plans where 16 out of the 19 Public Service Boards have identified ACEs as one of their priorities. It is early to review in terms of witnessing social change, but the policy intention is crystallising around the need to support children to safeguard the interests of future generations.

Budgeting

Early in the process of the implementation of the wellbeing framework, the Welsh Assembly Finance Committee took an active interest in the extent to which draft budgets aligned with the well-being goals and objectives.

The Welsh Assembly Finance Committee was critical of the lack of connection between the well-being objectives and the ways of working and the draft budget. In its report on the draft budget 2017–2018, they referred to the link between the wellbeing goals and the budget as 'limited'. They recommended that a strategic integrated impact assessment be carried out for future budgets to show how the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 had impacted on the development of the budget. Here the Committee was looking for evidence of wellbeing as the golden thread linking decisions on the budget across departmental lines.

For the following year's budget, a strategic integrated impacts assessment was indeed carried out and it was possible to identify some areas where integrated thinking had taken place, for example in the links made between decarbonisation and the capital investment in the 21st-century schools programme. In her evidence to the Committee on the following year's budget (2018–2019), the Commissioner for Future Generations was scathing about the speed of change to the budget process, arguing that a greater number of references to the Act in the draft Budget did not automatically mean that changes were being made to the allocations, and she queried whether there was more 'saying' than 'doing' (Howe 2017a). In later evidence to the Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee she pointed out that while only 10% of the health and well-being of a nation is reliant on health-care services, the Welsh Government allocates 49% to health-care services (National Assembly for Wales 2018). Similar points were also made by the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action and the Sustainable Development Alliance. While recognising

that it is early days for a new approach, these stakeholders were frustrated that the narrative around collective action to achieve the goals appeared to have little impact on budget decisions that were still framed around traditional departmental boundaries. There are questions here about the ability of the wellbeing framework to counteract existing power structures.

Further concerns were raised about the impact of short-termism in budgets on the ability of public bodies to implement the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Here the Welsh Government is curtailed by its own funding arrangements with the UK Government which are agreed on a year-to-year basis. To challenge short-termism, the Welsh Government is called on to set clear directions of travel to provide as much certainty as possible, within the overall structure of annualisation.

Conclusion

While the central organising principle of sustainable development was set in 2009, it proved difficult to ascertain any impact of this until the passing of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. The Act has reset the understanding of sustainable development and the mechanisms for carrying it out and the discussions I had all started from 2015 as the point at which any impact could be ascertained.

The original narrative of environmental wellbeing remains strong, particularly in the interventions of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. But a strong culture change narrative has also arisen in public services which is more in keeping with performance management than sustainable development and it will be a challenge to maintain focus on all domains of wellbeing. Early commitments to participation of citizens appear to have given way to a linked, but not identical, need for greater third-sector involvement in service and policy planning.

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Northern Ireland: Wellbeing as a Vision

Abstract Northern Ireland introduced its wellbeing framework through the draft Programme for Government in 2016. The approach aimed to create a shared vision for a post-conflict society and assist the power-sharing Executive in working together for shared outcomes. Continuing political instability, and the suspension of the Northern Ireland Executive, has limited the implementation of the approach. Despite this, progress has been made in communicating the approach of aligning programme, population and societal outcomes. The wellbeing duty on local government, established in 2014, has been vital in taking forward the approach through Community Plans and all evidence points to a continuation of the wellbeing approach in the revised Programme for Government once the Executive is re-established.

Keywords Northern Ireland Assembly · Post-conflict
Good Friday Agreement · Vision · Outcomes · Community planning

We must not be wedded to the old ways of Government and we are committed to a new, better and more innovative approach.
    Martin McGuiness MLA (Deputy First Minister, Sinn Fein) speaking in July 2016 (Doran and Woods 2016)

> There is a great deal that the governing parties agree on; on having a good health service, economy, and so on. We do have a shared vision and we need to focus on that to implement it. I think people are optimistic.
>
> Emma Little Pengelly, MLA (Junior Minister at the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Democratic Unionist Party) speaking in Sept 2016 (Carnegie UK Trust 2017)

Introduction

Northern Ireland was the last of the three devolved legislatures in the UK to introduce a wellbeing framework, beginning its journey in 2015 and with a working draft published in 2018. The framework had ambitions to create a conversation that sat above the constitutional debates that create such political vulnerability in Northern Ireland. The suspension of the Northern Ireland Executive in early 2017 is proof that the 'new conversation' has not yet taken root. However, despite the political vacuum, there is still reason to be optimistic.

Context

The Acts of Parliament that formally brought the UK and Ireland Parliaments together came into force on 1 January 1801. Ireland was 'partitioned' into north and south in 1921 under the Government of Ireland Act 1920 immediately prior to the Irish war of independence which led to the establishment of the republic in 1922. From 7 June 1921 until 30 March 1972, the devolved legislature for Northern Ireland was the Parliament of Northern Ireland, which always had an Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) majority and always elected a UUP government.

By the late 1960s, tensions between communities in Northern Ireland were rising leading to 'The Troubles', a 30-year period of conflict which led to the deaths of over 3600 people. The Northern Ireland Parliament was suspended on 30 March 1972 and formally abolished in 1973 under the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973. For the next 25 years, Northern Ireland was under direct rule from Westminster, managed by a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

A lengthy process of talks between the Northern Ireland political parties and the British and Irish Governments resulted in the Good Friday Agreement of April 1998 (Northern Ireland Assembly 1998). The Agreement was endorsed through a referendum held on 22 May

1998 and subsequently given legal force through the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Northern Ireland Assembly has full legislative and executive authority for all matters that are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Government Departments.

The agreement implemented a model of power-sharing government which has brought a form of 'compulsory coalition'. A First Minister and a Deputy First Minister are elected to lead the Executive Committee of Ministers. They must stand for election jointly and to be elected they must have cross-community support by the parallel consent formula, which means that a majority of both the Members who have designated themselves Nationalists and those who have designated themselves Unionists and a majority of the whole Assembly, must vote in favour. In 2012, there were five parties in government and an 'opposition' of only four out of 108 MLAs (Oliver 2013).

Despite the care taken over its design, the Northern Ireland Assembly has not been a stable entity, being suspended five times, two for significant periods of time. It was suspended on 14 October 2002 due to disagreements around weapons decommissioning, the suspension lasting until 8 May 2007. The second lengthy period of suspension is currently ongoing—sparked by the resignation of Martin McGuiness MLA, Deputy First Minister in protest of a scandal involving the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme in early 2017. A subsequent election did not lead to the establishment of a power-sharing agreement and so negotiations resumed in the autumn of 2017.

At the time of writing (June 2018), the UK Parliament has passed a budget for the financial year of 2017–2018 enacted following the failed talks in February 2018. The overall budget received a boost in 2018–2019 as a result of the confidence and supply arrangement with the UK Government. The 2018–2019 budget identifies the following areas as benefiting from this additional funding: Infrastructure £200m, Health Transformation £100m, Health & Education £80m, Tackling Severe Deprivation £20m and Mental Health £10m (Northern Ireland Executive 2018d).

This complicated history is critical to understanding why and how the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive sought to establish a wellbeing approach. The multi-party Executive had led to a clientelist approach to the development of the programme for government, with each party and individual MLA arguing their own interests, resulting in deeply fragmented government. The aspiration was that a wellbeing framework could assist in longer term **political visioning** (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Timeline for the development of the Northern Ireland wellbeing framework

1998	Good Friday Agreement
1998	NI Assembly meets for first time
2002	Suspension of NI Assembly
2006	St Andrews Agreement
2007	Reconvening of NI Assembly
2010	Hillsborough Castle Agreement
2013	CUKT and Queens University Belfast seminar on Wellbeing Frameworks
2014	Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland established
2014	Stormont House Agreement
2014	Roundtable study trip to Scotland to meet with the Deputy First Minister John Swinney MSP
2015	Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland reports
2016	Draft Programme for Government sets societal wellbeing at the heart of the framework
2016	Second draft Programme for Government released for consultation by the Northern Ireland Executive
2017	Suspension of the NI Assembly
2017	Elections failed to resolve the political deadlock
2018	**Working Draft of the Programme for Government Outcomes Framework issued**

Source Original

CATALYSTS

As the brief outline and timeline show, the constitutional settlement between the UK and Northern Ireland has gone through several iterations since devolution in 1998. The 2006 St Andrews Agreement, 2010 Hillsborough Castle Agreement and the 2014 Stormont House Agreement all sought to resolve the issues that were causing political instability. The first set of changes in 2006 brought in a new ministerial code and changed the Good Friday Agreement by setting a process whereby the First Minister and Deputy First Minister are appointed based on the first and second largest party in the Assembly, respectively, and no longer by election of the NI Assembly. In 2010, the Hillsborough Castle Agreement brought in further devolution of policing and justice.

The 2014 Stormont House Agreement set in place institutional changes which, unintentionally, paved the way for the wellbeing

framework approach. Firstly, they reduced the number of departments from 12 to nine. Secondly and crucially, they agreed that the draft Programme for Government would have to be agreed prior to the appointment of the Executive. While previously, parties and Ministers could argue simply for their 'piece' of the programme (and the budget they felt appropriate to it), they now had to consider the programme in the round, as a full programme for government without special pleading for their own departments.

Spending on public services in Northern Ireland is consistently higher than in England, Scotland and Wales (UK Parliament 2017). But this has not translated into better outcomes for citizens, as one interviewee told me '*money wasn't solving the problems*'. As Table 2.2 shows, Northern Ireland scores 'high' on only two out of 11 indicators, scoring poorly (i.e. in the bottom quarter of regions in the UK) on six. Using the NI Research and Statistical Authority 'wheel' of wellbeing indicators, derived from the ONS Measuring National Wellbeing programme and therefore including comparator information with the UK as a whole, Northern Ireland performs worse than the UK as a whole on governance (voting and trust in government), education and skills, personal finances and some aspects of health (NISRA 2017).

While the reasons for poorer outcomes are complex, the system of governance was seen by interviewees as a contributory factor. The power-sharing system meant that previous Programmes for Government had been reduced to 'laundry lists' of project-level targets, requiring government to deliver certain programmes, or spend particular amounts of money. Simon Hamilton MLA (Minister of Finance and Personnel from 2013–2015, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 2015–2016 and Minister for the Economy 2016–2017) told me:

> We were producing programmes for government which were just long, long, long lists of commitments that were fairly easy to achieve, and we did achieve most of them, but we gained nothing, these was no sense that things were moving in the right direction.

At an operational level, policy development is heavily siloed. On a very pragmatic level, policy-makers in Northern Ireland were aware that budgets would be decreasing in the coming years.

The impetus for moving to a wellbeing approach to government was a recognition that while successive governments were delivering on their

mandates for that electoral term, outcomes for citizens were not improving. Simon Hamilton MLA went on to comment:

> There wasn't a eureka moment, a moment the penny collectively dropped, but below the surface there had been a growing sense of dissatisfaction. There was a sense that we hadn't been making the most of devolution, that the survival of devolution itself wasn't enough… there was a feeling that devolution wasn't improving people's lives in the ways that it was supposed to.

While internally to the government there may have been clarity over the nature of the problem, the identification of a wellbeing approach as a potential solution came from non-governmental organisations, through two initiatives that began as separate entities but came quickly to similar conclusions.

The first was the Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, a partnership between the Carnegie UK Trust and Queens University Belfast established in 2013. The 18 members comprised civil servants and individuals from business, the third sector, youth, academia and local government. The group's deliberations followed the definitions of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi commission (2009) and from the outset the Roundtable identified the need to encourage a new narrative or vision drawing on the language of wellbeing:

> In order to move forward, we need an idea of where we are going and one that resonates with citizens. Wellbeing provides an easily understood concept which can form the basis of a new approach to the relationship between citizens and government, focusing on assets and shared responsibilities between citizens, communities, government and the private sector. The concept of wellbeing can be used to link the everyday experiences and priorities of people with the sometimes remote and often opaque world of policymaking and politics. (Carnegie UK Trust 2015, p. 5)

Democratic accountability and public trust were core to the aims of the wellbeing framework, as conceived by the Roundtable. They concluded that the time was right to develop a 'wellbeing framework' to guide and support the work of all public services in Northern Ireland and identified seven steps in taking forward this agenda:

Step 1: Set wellbeing as our collective goal
Step 2: Engage the public
Step 3: Establish new ways of working

Step 4: Align tiers of government
Step 5: Communicate social progress
Step 6: Improve accountability
Step 7: Support the Wellbeing Framework (Carnegie UK Trust 2015).

The second initiative was led by the National Children's Bureau NI and focused on advocating for outcomes-based accountability (OBA). The origins of this initiative followed the post New Performance Management thinking, with Celine McStravick[1] noting the frustration that despite all the funding being invested in Northern Ireland, outcomes for children were not improving. The NCB NI were influenced heavily by Mark Friedman's methodology, an approach which aims to improve programme and population outcomes (Friedman 2005). Here outcomes are defined as '*a population condition of well-being for children, adults, families and communities, stated in plain language*' (p. 19).

These two initiatives shared the aim of having a much clearer idea of where NI is heading, and what kind of society it aspires to be. But there are differences too. The Carnegie Roundtable approach was based on the desire to rebalance decision-making away from economic dominance and towards social and economic outcomes. Friedman's methodology is agnostic on this point. And while the definition of outcomes is the same, the scope differs. Friedman's approach does not seek to agree outcomes across all domains of wellbeing—it may for example relate to a good start in life for children, or a clean environment. A further issue is that looking at OBA at programme level inevitably means a focus on particular groups in society. It does not tell you how society as a whole is progressing, or if there are trade-offs between different groups when making decisions. So we can see that these initiatives are operating at different strategic levels in public services.

The two initiatives have been mutually supportive by creating a supportive political and civil service environment for outcomes to be discussed. Both initiatives held large events in 2016 with clear political support. For example, the NCB event included addresses by the First Minister Arlene Foster and the Deputy First Minister Martin McGuiness and had an audience of almost 500 (public policy conferences in devolved administrations rarely involve over 100 people).

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[1] Celine McStravick is Director of NCB in Northern Ireland and a leader in the campaign to introduce Outcomes Based Accountability to Northern Ireland.

This positive momentum was short-lived, however, as Celine McStravick told me: '*We felt we were starting to see real movement in government and we were looking forward to collaborative delivery plans coming out… but that didn't happen. Within eight weeks we had no Executive and within 12 weeks our Deputy First Minister had passed away*'.

Components

There have now been three iterations of this Programme for Government, the first and second both issued in 2016 and the third, current 'working draft' which is still subject to political agreement. It is this working draft that I refer to in this analysis (Northern Ireland Executive 2018a). It contains:

- A purpose statement: 'Improving wellbeing for all—by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth'
- 12 outcomes:
  1. We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy
  2. We live and work sustainably—protecting the environment
  3. We have a more equal society
  4. We enjoy long, healthy, active lives
  5. We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential
  6. We have more people working in better jobs
  7. We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other
  8. We care for others and we help those in need
  9. We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity
  10. We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest
  11. We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure
  12. We give our children and young people the best start in life
- 49 indicators, including four indexes: the private sector NI Composite Economic Index, a Respect Index, a Nation Brands Index, A Better Jobs Index (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Wellbeing indicators for Northern Ireland

Material conditions	Quality of life	Environment
Private sector NI Composite Economic Index (index, objective)	Confidence of older people (%, subjective)	Waste recycled (number, objective)
External sales (£, objective)	Inequality in healthy life expectancy (%, objective)	Greenhouse gas emissions (number, objective)
Business innovation (%, objective)	Attainment gap (%, objective)	Active travel (%, objective)
Employment rate by council (%, objective)	Healthy life expectancy (%, objective)	Air quality (number, objective)
Energy security (%, objective)	Preventable mortality (%, objective)	Marine quality (number, objective)
Income poverty (%, objective)	Mental wellbeing (%, subjective)	Biodiversity (%, objective)
Employment inequality (%, objective)	Quality of health and social care (in development)	Water quality (%, objective)
Economic inactivity (%, objective)	Educational attainment (%, objective)	
A Better Jobs Index (in development)	Access to superfast broadband (%, objective)	
Under-employment (%, objective)	Engagement in arts/culture (%, objective)	
Graduate destinations (%, objective)	Perception of respect for cultural identity (%, subjective)	
Total spend by external visitors (£, objective)	Respect Index (in development)	
Reputation (Index, objective)	Crime rate (%, objective)	
Average journey time on key economic corridors (in development)	Length of criminal cases (time, administrative)	
Seasonally adjusted employment rate (%, objective)	Reoffending rate (%, objective)	
Housing supply (%, objective)	Control over social care (%, objective)	
	Life satisfaction of people with disabilities (%, subjective)	
	Households in housing stress (%, objective)	
	Perception of openness to Catholics and Protestants (%, subjective)	

Table 5.2 (continued)

Material conditions	Quality of life	Environment
	Online use of public services (in development) Low birth weight (%, objective) Quality of schools (%, objective) Destination of care leavers (%, objective) Child development (in development) Confidence of the population (%, subjective) Skills level of the population (%, objective)	
Total: 16 14 objective, 2 in development	**Total: 26** 6 subjective, 1 administrative, 15 objective, 4 in development	**Total: 7** 7 objective

Source Northern Ireland Executive (2018a)

Contributions

A New Narrative on Wellbeing

No more silo working but working across boundaries, organisations, groups and the community for the common good.

> Martin McGuiness MLA speaking in July 2016
> (Doran and Woods 2016)

The fragility of the political environment in Northern Ireland affects each area of implementation of a wellbeing framework. As the OECD review concluded '*the divisions in Northern Ireland are an endemic factor which affects most areas of government and public administration'* (2016, p. 84). Those involved in advocating for wellbeing frameworks were conscious of this and argued that the challenges of the 21st century required *a new conversation for new times.* As Simon Hamilton MLA told me:

We have political parties in government together who don't share the same vision… even though we have a consensus model and try to bring everyone together and govern together, everything is fractured. So it made

sense to stop, shape a vision of what we're trying to work towards and then set out to achieve it.

In emerging from conflict, Northern Ireland has an urgent need for new political narratives:

> In a post-conflict society, much is at stake in the design and delivery of policy. There are risks for all of us when public confidence falls away from systems of governance and a disconnect between politics and the lives of citizens is allowed to replace an enlivened sense of ownership, accountability and engagement.

> Every negative perception of governance – expressed as concerns about security, welfare, social exclusion, health or budgeting – carries the weight of a deeper possibility: a crisis in the implicit social contract or understanding between government and citizen, with all of the risks that entails for a society journeying out of enmity. (Doran et al. 2015, p. 31)

The opportunity provided by a wellbeing framework is to create a common language that sits above the political decisions and constitutional struggles without suggesting that these do not exist. In a post-conflict society, it is a tight-rope walk.

The conversation around the wellbeing framework was the first real attempt by the politicians in Northern Ireland to have a discussion with each other, stakeholders and eventually the public, that centred on values and principles, rather than pragmatic politics. Gray and Birrell argued '*there has been a notable absence of reference in policy documents to a conceptual and values base for policy decisions*' (2016, p. 164).

Political support for the approach was carefully cultivated with the DUP and Sinn Fein represented at the Carnegie Roundtable. Early support from Simon Hamilton MLA (Democratic Unionist Party) and the Chair of the Finance Committee (Daithi MacKay MLA, Sinn Fein) was backed up by 2016 with clear support from the First Minister and Deputy First Minster:

> One of the successes was listening to the politicians at the same time as we were talking to the senior civil service and taking cognisance of the advice from within the system who were very respectful of the politics. I think that combination's almost unique. (Aideen McGinley,[2] interview)

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[2] Aideen McGinley was Co-Chair, of the Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, she was formerly a permanent secretary in the Northern Ireland Executive and Chief Executive of Fermanagh District Council.

The opportunity to speak of aspirations for Northern Ireland without recourse to the constitutional issues provided a glimmer of hope in how a new politics could be created.

Not all parties were supportive of the new Programme for Government. Smaller parties such as UUP, did not support the draft Programme for Government in 2016 and refused to take part in the newly formed power-sharing executive. Their criticism was of the lack of detail in the draft Programme for Government on the deliverables, calling the draft framework of outcomes 'motherhood and apple pie' (BBC 2016).

The sudden stoppage of the Northern Ireland Assembly has held the wellbeing framework in suspended animation—neither fully implemented nor fully dormant. There is however a clear commitment from the civil service, local government and civil society to the wellbeing framework contained within the draft Programme for Government.

Horizontal Integration

Reform of the Northern Ireland Civil Service was underway prior to the wellbeing framework but is part of the same set of reforms. Departmental restructuring was announced in March 2015 with a reduction of departments from 12 to nine, to provide greater coherence in department responsibilities and a reduction of duplication of effort.

The OECD's first subnational Public Governance Review was commissioned in Northern Ireland by Simon Hamilton while he was Minister in the Department of Finance in 2014. The review found that the lack of horizontal integration across government departments was a key cause of inefficiency and duplication. It found that the Executive was not functioning as an effective centre of government, instead using its time and resources to resolve political disagreements. It concluded that in practice the Executive was not effectively exercising its role in strategy-setting, playing only a limited role in whole-of-government oversight and coordination and failing to exercise collective responsibility for decision-making (OECD 2016).

Speaking soon after the report launch, the author Adam Ostry underlined current fiscal constraints and the specific challenges of coalition government in Northern Ireland, with the subsequent

demand for 'leadership and fearlessness' from a non-partisan civil service equipped to deliver evidence-based policy advice (Doran and Woods 2016).

Ministers therefore used the draft Programme for Government to give strong messages to civil servants that they had permission to work across departmental boundaries. Interviewees report a significant shift in willingness of civil servants to discuss policy interventions that they would not previously have seen as their responsibility—for example the Department of Education taking an active role in services for pre-school children and engaging proactively with health colleagues, or diabetes strategies being implemented through education services.

The NI Civil Service have been working hard to address the issue of taking forward the approach without a government, as one interviewee summarised: '*You can't have a programme for government without a government* [nonetheless] *there was a clear direction of travel, and political support for that direction of travel. There is also continuing support from very many of the key vehicles that the government would do business with in the community and private sector.*'

There have been examples of alignment between the draft Programme for Government and departmental strategy documents such as the Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026, which states alignment with the PFG and includes actions on multidisciplinary and inter-professional working and training (Northern Ireland Executive 2018c). This strategy benefited from an allocation from the £1 billion boost to the NI finances from the Confidence and Supply arrangement with the UK Government following the 2016 UK General Election (Box 5.1).

Box 5.1: Case Study: Digital Transformation Strategy

The Programme for Government (PfG) includes a commitment to increasing use of online channels (Northern Ireland Executive 2018b). As this is an area that cuts across departments the Digital Transformation Strategy has been developed to align with other key Government Strategies including the eHealth and Care Strategy for Northern Ireland and the forthcoming Industrial Strategy. The Digital Leaders Forum and the niDirect User forum are being refined and reinvigorated to improve support for, and shaping of, the identified programme of work and ensure that all departmental strategies and action plans are aligned with the digital service Strategy.

But the strategy goes further than bringing others together to support the achievement of the digital indicator, it also identifies that digital public services have a real and meaningful impact on the daily lives of our citizens which helps achieve the outcomes agreed in the PfG. The strategy sets out to promote digital thinking and collaboration within policy development and planning to place digital services at the forefront of supporting PfG outcome-based delivery. While it is too early to identify specific policy outcomes from this intention, there is a clear 'golden thread' in the advocacy of the wellbeing framework that is contributing to changing behaviours.

In mid-2018 the Executive Office published an Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018–2019 which takes as its starting point the 12 outcomes set in the draft Programme for Government and provides '*direction and clarity*' for those working within the system (Northern Ireland Executive 2018e, p. 1). The document identifies outcome owners for each of the twelve outcomes, within the civil services, and each outcome chapter is co-authored by civil servants from different but relevant departments.

The NI Audit Office soon after published a good practice guide for public bodies on performance management, outlining its expectations on the connection between the Programme for Government outcomes and indicators and those developed by public bodies and reported through their Delivery Plans (see Box 5.2).

Box 5.2: Northern Ireland's tiered approach to accountability for outcomes

- Programme outcomes: relating to the users of the service (e.g. improved personal wellbeing).
- Population outcomes: relating to the whole population but for a specific outcome (e.g. living healthier lives).
- Societal outcomes: relating to the whole population, for the set of outcomes that reflects societies' view of what comprises wellbeing.

The guidance separates out the accountability for performance management from direct accountability for the Programme for Government outcomes (Nothern Ireland Audit Office 2018). As they note, there has been significant confusion over accountability and they endorse the view of the Building Change Trust that:

> No single programme of intervention can be held solely accountable for the achievement of any PFG outcome. Rather it is the sum of the contributions of agencies, programmes and services that move us towards the realisation of outcomes for the population. And so those who plan or provide interventions are answerable for the extent to which their activities deliver the contributions promised (performance accountability) but not for the delivery of PfG outcomes (population accountability). (Inspiring Impact 2017, p. 23)

This guide, and the above description, has significance for wellbeing frameworks in the rest of the UK and further afield, where the relationship between performance management and societal wellbeing has not been as clearly articulated. This is an issue I will return to in Chapters 6 and 7.

Vertical Integration

Community leadership and local government play an important part in the outcomes approach story. Local government in Northern Ireland is responsible for community planning, waste and recycling services, leisure and community services, building control and local economic and cultural development. Unlike Wales and Scotland, they are not responsible for education which is managed by one body, the Education Authority (2018) or housing, managed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, gave the eleven newly created local authorities (down from 26) the responsibility for leading community planning processes for their respective districts. In doing so they must identify:

a. long-term objectives for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the district and
b. long-term objectives in relation to the district for contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in Northern Ireland.

The purpose of the reform of local government was to create efficiency savings (to be reinvested into services), to strengthen the coherence of local public services and to provide local government with the key role in relation to Community Planning (OECD 2016). Given this legislation places duties on sustainable development and societal wellbeing, it is notable how rarely it is used to contextualise the work on OBA, again suggesting the initiatives operate at different levels.

The resultant Community Plans extend beyond the local government electoral cycle (next elections in 2019) with six plans looking forward as far as 2030, and four to 2032. The Plans act as local wellbeing frameworks in which local authorities and their partners as Community Planning Partnerships must take account of wellbeing at a local and NI level.

As the NI Local Government Association notes in its response to the draft Programme for Government:

> Councils are working with their community planning partnerships to develop local sets of outcomes and indicators, and it is vital that all participants – central and local – are facilitated by district councils to ensure that each local area is involved in informing and in contributing to achieving the agreed Northern Ireland outcomes, the necessary action plans, performance framework and local priorities which will form part of the overall 'jigsaw' of strategy for the foreseeable future. (NI Local Government Association (NILGA) 2016, p. 3)

Local councils see the Programme for Government as part of 'a family of plans' but alignment is not straightforward. It is complicated by the different timescales between the Executive and local council. Community plans tend to be long term, up to 2030, whereas the Executive's Programme for Government would normally encompass a five-year term. Nevertheless, Aideen McGinley who reviewed each one for the Carnegie UK Trust Chair of the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland programme, told me *'every one of the local government community plans worked towards the draft Programme for Government in terms of what their outcomes are and they are continuing to do that'* (Box 5.3).

Box 5.3: Case study: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Community Plan 2017–2030

ABC Borough adopted an outcomes-based approach for its community plan and used processes and approaches that align with the wider wellbeing approach. The Borough used an open and consultative approach to developing its Community Plan, in particular making use of digital resources such as their online consultation hub https://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.citizenspace.com/ and holding thematic workshops in which 245 people expressed their views and opinions on where their priorities should be focused.

The plan identifies three cross-cutting themes (connectivity, equality and sustainability) and nine outcomes (confident community, healthy community, welcoming community; enterprising economy, skilled economy, tourism economy; creative place, enhanced place, revitalised place). While the language differs from the Programme for Government, the approach is aligned and the community plan document includes an annex that shows how the two lists of outcomes relate to one another. There is also some alignment with indicators, particularly around the health and economy outcomes and the Borough has also selected a number of additional indicators to reflect its own needs and priorities, such as the number of high-quality parks/green spaces and the percentage of people who feel that the town centre is a safe and welcoming place.

For implementation, outcomes have a designated Thematic Action Planning Team which is charged with developing a two-year action plan, focusing on the collaborative actions. In some cases, these teams are responsible for more than one outcome. The community plan conforms to the differentiation made between population outcomes and performance management, making it clear that the indicators are set for population level with the Action Plans expected to stipulate separate performance management indicators.

In a further innovation, the Borough is proposing to establish a community panel with membership from the community and voluntary sector to assist in the governance structure for community planning. There is no upper limit for the panel. The group will have a specific remit for advising on engagement and communication with communities.

To aid in the development of indicators to map progress, and to ensure alignment to the Northern Ireland indicators, each local council was offered the services of a NISRA statistician (though this did have to be paid for). The impact can be seen in a number of Community Plans which successfully balance the connection with the PfG indicators and the indicators that are available and relevant locally (e.g. Lisburn and Castlereagh Council). This was a radical step change for the agency which had not previously worked directly with local government. In a further show of support for the Friedman approach, NISRA statisticians have all been trained in outcomes-based approach (OBA) techniques.

Aside from this technical offering, there are concerns that support for implementation has been limited to statutory guidance for the operation of community planning from the Northern Ireland Executive, and the services of Community Places, an independent organisation which provides advice and guidance on outcomes-based community planning and the structure and content of Community Plans. The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) has called for more budgetary certainty to support longer term council investment decisions designed to assist in the delivery of the Programme for Government and community planning.

Prevention

Narratives on prevention as a part of the wellbeing approach are not well established in Northern Ireland. As with the other jurisdiction, there is a strong conflation of prevention as an early intervention for children. For example, the Early Intervention Transformation Programme is a £25 million investment that aims to improve outcomes for children and young people across Northern Ireland by embedding early intervention approaches. It is funded jointly by five government departments and the Atlantic Philanthropies, itself evidence of a shift towards horizontal integration. It was established in 2015, prior to the wellbeing framework but is now seen by stakeholders as a major contribution to the outcome 'we give our children and young people the best start in life' with the lead indicator being 'percentage of children who are at the appropriate stage of development in their immediate school year'. The projects funded include ante-natal education and care, and family and employability support to young parents serving custodial services (Social Change Initiative 2017).

The health sector has innovated on interventions that allow people to receive health and social care at home. The Programme for Government includes a specific indicator on this as an outcome on quality of life. The NI-wide Acute Care at Home programme will make sure that patients have, within their own home environment, the same access to specialist tests as hospital inpatients and receive consultant led assessment and treatment. Southern Health and Social Care Trust, which has been piloting the programme since 2014 has reported a 22% reduction in acute bed days from nursing homes amounting to a 64% reduction in cost by providing care in the community setting (Tonner and Farrell 2017). Roll-out is expected to be completed by 2020. A recent publication on community development for health is further evidence of a broadening of the concept of prevention.

Participation

The Northern Ireland Executive was conscious that moving to a vision of wellbeing and improved outcomes for citizens would require involvement from actors outside of government. Previous Programmes for Government had attracted very little response when open for consultation. However, the new outcomes-based draft Programme for Government attracted five times more responses than the previous version when it was released for consultation in 2016 (Menzies 2017).

Northern Ireland has a less than straight forward history on citizen engagement. Immediately post-devolution, a Civic Forum was established as part of the Good Friday Agreement but the Forum was closed during the first suspension of the Assembly. In 2016, the First Minister the Rt. Hon. Arlene Foster and deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness announced the creation of a new six-person panel from civic society, as promised in the Fresh Start Agreement. The panel consists of members who hold prominent roles in community and voluntary sector organisations. It is currently suspended due to the suspension of the Assembly.

The OECD review on Public Governance concluded that too much engagement remains procedural (OECD 2016). The draft Programme for Government did not include democratic engagement as an outcome. This led to some losing trust in the process of establishing the outcomes, with concerns raised that the Programme for Government outcomes were pre-determined (Carnegie UK Trust 2017). There has also been

very little information on how the measurement of social progress will be communicated to stakeholders and citizens.

Outside of government, the Building Change Trust has been active in supporting greater participatory democracy. Their Civic Activism programme is testing out a range of participatory tools to explore their applicability to Northern Ireland. They have also recently announced that they will fund a Citizens' Assembly, the first for Northern Ireland, and they convene and fund the Northern Ireland Open Government Network.

Participatory budgeting is similarly at an early stage in Northern Ireland, again with the impetus coming from the independent funding sector rather than government itself. This initiative is led by the Big Lottery Fund and seeks to create an environment that would be able and willing to experiment with participatory budgeting. These two initiatives are very much at the advocacy change stage of the policy process.

At a local level, there have been much more compelling stories of engagement, with the Belfast Agenda (their Community Plan) developed in consultation with 200 organisations and 2000 individuals through a series of consultation and engagement events (Belfast City Council 2017).

Budgeting

The budget process has been heavily affected by the political instability. With no Minister to approve the budget, it was sent to the UK Minister to approve for 2018/2019. The detailed governance arrangements for the NI Executive are particularly onerous and difficult to implement flexibly (Northern Ireland Audit Office 2018).

The absence of a government does not provide greater flexibility to the civil servants. Their limited power over decisions was reinforced in mid-2018 by a Belfast High Court judgement which blocked a decision by a senior civil servant to approve a waste incinerator plant (Belfast Telegraph 2018).

There are examples of pooling budgets to allow for horizontal integration, such as the £25m Early Intervention Transformation Programme and the £100m Health Transformation programme, but the strict rules on budget allocation means that greater flexibility in funding for prevention or joined-up working is likely to be difficult to achieve (Northern Ireland Audit Office 2018).

Conclusions

The politicians in Northern Ireland took a bold step in 2016 by shifting their whole programme for government to become a wellbeing framework. This willingness to try a different approach, in a complex and tense political environment, should be applauded.

The political instability has left the project incomplete. Previous analysis has shown the importance of leadership in moving forward culture change, but in Northern Ireland, the lack of political leadership is also compounded by significant change within the civil service with many of the key senior civil servants involved in initiating the new approach having moved on or retired. This analysis was completed while Stormont was still suspended in 2018. However, all evidence points to a continuation of the wellbeing approach in any revised Programme for Government.

In that vacuum, local government and Community Planning Partnerships have continued to develop their approaches further, with a legislative base that refers to sustainable development and using the draft Programme for Government for guidance.

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Cross-Jurisdictional Analysis

Abstract This chapter explores the key components and characteristics of the wellbeing approaches taken by Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Despite different origins, there are remarkable similarities between the approaches taken by the devolved legislatures. Each framework blends objective and subjective data and all three prioritise quality of life indicators over environmental and economic indicators. Wallace goes on to argue that the impact of wellbeing frameworks on approaches to government can be seen as setting wellbeing as an overarching goal for government, wellbeing as a conversation to discuss social progress, wellbeing as a framework for public services and wellbeing as an approach to delivering public services.

Keywords Indicators · Performance management · Social progress · Public sector reform · Leadership

Towards a Shared Understanding of Wellbeing

As described in the preceding chapters, each of the devolved governments developed their wellbeing framework to address specific needs. It is interesting therefore to note the extent to which the wellbeing frameworks and approaches have converged (see Table 6.1).

The component parts of the wellbeing framework have coalesced almost completely, consisting of a vision statement, a set of outcomes

Table 6.1 Key components and characteristics of a wellbeing approach to governance

	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Catalyst	Performance management	Sustainable development	Political visioning
Components			
Vision statement	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outcomes	11	7	16
Indicators	81	46	49
Characteristics			
Statutory duties	Yes	Yes	No
Participatory methods	Fair	Strong	Weak
Aligned to sustainable development goals	Yes	Yes	No

Source Original

and a dashboard of indicators. The dashboard approach is also shared by the UK Office of National Statistics, which measures wellbeing through 42 indicators grouped into ten domains. The difference in the devolved legislatures is the innovation of shifting the measurement dashboard into a broader framework around the purpose of government, and within an outcomes approach.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have all taken the approach of a dashboard of indicators, rather than an index or use of subjective wellbeing as a headline indicator. And they have done so for the same reasons, they believe that this is the best way to enable the use of wellbeing data in policy development. The indicators share certain characteristics:

- **Quantitative**: Even those that come from qualitative sources (such as quality of early years education provided) are given numeric values when measured (the number of schools with positive reports).
- **Source**: They derive from official sources, such as the household surveys, labour force surveys and information from scrutiny bodies (auditors and regulators).
- **Mixed**: They provide a mix of objective indicators (e.g. crime levels) and subjective indicators (e.g. perceptions of crime). They all include a measure of personal wellbeing, but not the same one.

- **Non-hierarchical**: All indicators are given equal weight in the frameworks.
- **Cross-cutting**: Many indicators cut across more than one domain of wellbeing.
- **Comprehensive**: Include the key domains of wellbeing that governments are seen as having a legitimate role in influencing.

There are also shared conventions in reporting the indicators. They each report the direction of travel (improving, maintaining or worsening) based on statistically robust changes. The exact calculations differ depending on the type of indicator. They each report with a narrative attached, a description of the change over time and the policy context within which this change occurs. And they all provide further analysis based on socio-demographic groups, to allow for comparison between different sections of society. Scotland updates its websites in 'real time' as soon as new indicators become available, which will be the approach in Wales once established. Northern Ireland does not.

Types of Data

The similarities and differences in indicators are worth explorations (see Fig. 6.1). To recap from the introduction:

- Objective data may be about people and supplied by people but it is factual data. It can be further subdivided into those that are collected for the jurisdiction as a whole, for example greenhouse gas emissions or productivity, and those that are aggregated from individual level, for example education attainment rates.
- Subjective data is collected from individuals about their own experiences. For example, perceptions of crime. It can be information about individuals (their feelings of confidence, self-esteem or mental health) or their perceptions of places or services (e.g. whether they feel that public services are delivered well in their area).

The number of exact matches between each indicator set is low. In some cases, the differences are due to priorities given to different issues. In Northern Ireland, a number of indicators relate to the post-conflict environment—for example, they measure the proportion who believe their cultural identity is respected by society and the proportion who believe
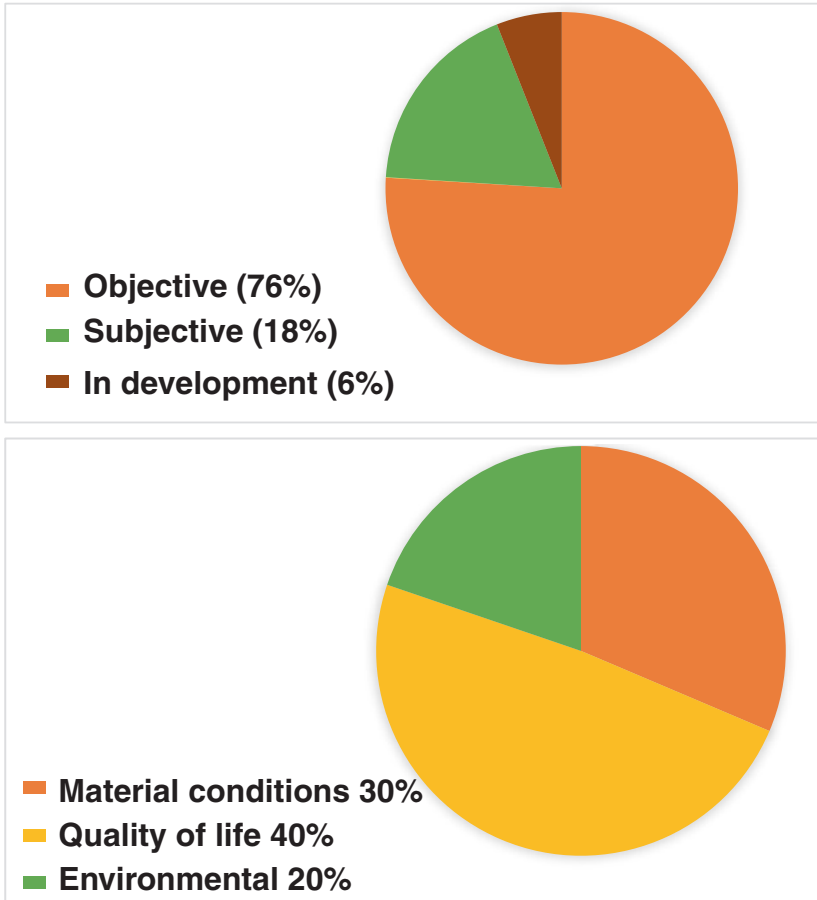
Fig. 6.1 Analysis of indicators (Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland combined) (*Source* Original)

that all leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres in their area are 'shared and open' to both Protestants and Catholics. Wales contin- ues its interest in cultural identity by measuring the number of Welsh speakers and makes a significant effort to measure future stocks (includ- ing historical archives) as well as current conditions. Scotland, with the

most indicators, includes a large number of measurements that indicate a range of inequalities, and is the only framework to include measures of the subjective views of children and young people.

Other differences are less clearly identified to cultural and political priorities. Some appear to be clear omissions such as the lack of a measure of water quality in Scotland. Others relate to expert disagreements or lack of maturity of the social indicators themselves. Each jurisdiction prefers a different measure of income inequality, for example, which appears to depend on the advice from government statisticians. All clearly aim to measure the quality of jobs, but this is emerging in the social indicator movement and there is no clarity yet on what should be included (White 2018).

These differences show that the development of the frameworks is an art, not a science, those involved are seeking to balance political priorities, available data and stakeholder views. In no case did the civil servants involved run statistical regressions or modelling to identify the 'best fit' indicators either to a dominant indicator within the domain, or to personal wellbeing.

Each of the wellbeing frameworks blends objective and subjective data. The vast majority of the indicators (an average of three-quarters across the three frameworks) are objective indicators. Scotland has a slightly higher proportion of subjective indicators (24% compared to 17% and 13% in Wales and Northern Ireland, respectively).

Objective and subjective data are therefore present in the three wellbeing frameworks, but the priority is to report on objective indicators. The wellbeing frameworks of the devolved governments are more focused on objective fact (education, housing, health, income), rather than citizens' satisfaction with their lives, or measurements of wellbeing that prioritise citizens' ability to exercise control over their own lives. Relating this to the philosophical underpinnings of wellbeing in Chapter 1, it appears that each government is prioritising a basic needs approach to wellbeing. The measurements of material conditions are almost all objective and the measurements of quality of life are similarly weighted towards the objective.

There are elements of the frameworks that push towards a Capabilities Approach and in particular towards a number of items on the list of capabilities developed by Martha Nussbaum (2006). There are measures of life, bodily health and affiliation in all three frameworks. Northern Ireland measures self-efficacy and locus of control. Wales and Scotland

measure the capability of 'control' through engagement with decision-making processes. In all jurisdictions, citizens' physical activity is measured, and their cultural participation—but none come close to the concept that Nussbaum thought essential—that of play. There is no measurement of satisfaction with work-life balance in any of the frameworks. The capabilities of senses, imagination and thought are not measured, nor is the practical reason. In excluding these capabilities, each government is inadvertently drawing a line between the business of government and the known contributors to wellbeing. The Northern Ireland framework has never purported to be anything but a framework *for the government*. Scotland has recently moved closer to the Wales approach of the framework being *for the people*. Even so, both Scotland and Wales limit inclusion to those areas that the government has a clear and legitimate role.

Domains of Wellbeing

In terms of the broad categories of wellbeing (quality of life, material conditions and environment), almost half relate to quality of life (49% across the three frameworks). Wales has the greatest proportion of indicators on environmental issues with 14 out of 46 (30%). Scotland has only 13 out of 81 indicators relating to environmental issues (16%), while it has 30 material conditions indicators (37%) and 38 quality of life indicators (47%). Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of quality of life indicators (55%), 29% cover material conditions and environmental indicators account for 16%. The preponderance of quality of life indicators relates not to the science of wellbeing (all were developed through consultation, not statistical methods) but to their relevance to the devolved legislatures core competencies on social policy. All prioritise the quality of life issues that they can have the most direct impact on.

The largest difference is in the extent to which the material conditions indicators are balanced by environmental indicators. In Wales, there are more environmental indicators than material ones (30% compared to 24%). In Scotland and Northern Ireland, the material conditions indicators are given substantially more 'space' in the framework (to reiterate, in Scotland and Northern Ireland 37% and 29% of indicators relate to material conditions respectively, but environmental indicators account for only 16%). Here very starkly we can see the real-world impact of the

different origins: Scotland and Northern Ireland prioritise quality of life than the economy, Wales prioritises quality of life and then the environment. Matching the beyond GDP origins of the Welsh framework, the power of the economy is far reduced in this framework and subservient to quality of life and the environment—not the dominant force.

Structure of the Frameworks

There are other similarities in the development of the structure of the wellbeing frameworks. In Scotland and Wales, early versions had two levels. In Scotland these were 'purpose targets', in the initial Sustainable Development Plans, in Wales there were headline indicators linked to the long-term targets. In both cases, this layering caused confusion and sent mixed messages: all indicators are equal but some are more equal than others. And in both cases, the renewal of the frameworks required by legislation in 2015 (the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) provided an opportunity to refresh and remove the tiered approach.

There are also similarities in the characteristics of the wellbeing approach to governance, though these are less pronounced. Scotland and Wales have legislated for their frameworks, securing them past the next election. Northern Ireland has not done so due to the complexities of the Good Friday Agreement, there was no appetite at that point (pre-Brexit) to unpick the legislative framework for devolution. Northern Ireland also stands apart as the jurisdiction that has not sought to align the framework with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Understanding the Impact of Wellbeing Frameworks on Approaches to Governance

The introductory chapter set out the hypothesis that wellbeing frameworks are both a cause and a consequence of a new way of thinking about the role of governments. A move that continues the shift away from the top-down, one-size-fits-all approaches that characterised much of the welfare state across the UK in the 20th century. This chapter explores the extent to which we have evidence that the shift has moved beyond rhetoric to policy and social change.

In researching this book, my aim has been to tell a story of the development and implementation of wellbeing frameworks in such a way as to

draw tentative but credible conclusions about the contribution made to advocacy, policy and social change in the three jurisdictions.

At the outset of this analysis, it is important to stress that Northern Ireland has had limited time to impact on social outcomes (though the local government duties came into effect in 2015). Abercrombie et al. identify that it takes seven to 10 years for successful changes to be implemented (2015). Scotland and Wales fit comfortably within this timescale but in both the cases, the legislative underpinning is relatively new— both passed legislation to secure the approach in 2015 and so impact from this legislation is just beginning to emerge.

Wellbeing as a Goal

Each framework has wellbeing clearly identified as a goal. Scotland's purpose statement is to '*focus on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth.*' Wales has opted for a legal definition which requires all public bodies to '*carry out sustainable development and improve and achieve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.*' Northern Ireland sets the purpose of government as '*improving wellbeing for all – by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth*'. There are similarities of language here, but clear differences in the balance between economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

The wellbeing approaches that gave rise to these statements of goal or purpose were developed to solve different problems in each jurisdiction: problems of public services, problems of sustainable development and problems of political visioning. These are not mutually exclusive categories. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, there was a strand of 'beyond GDP' particularly from the non-governmental stakeholders. In Wales, legislation on sustainable development provided an opportunity to include a set of powers and duties relating to the culture of public services.

Over time, the narratives around the wellbeing frameworks have coalesced. Wales has moved into the space of public sector reform, while Scotland has aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals. Northern Ireland mixes public sector reform aims at the devolved level with sustainable development aims at the local level.

The wellbeing frameworks in Wales and Scotland are therefore an articulation of the need to rebalance decision-making, reducing the primacy given to economic decisions and placing more emphasis on the social and environmental outcomes and on equality more broadly. Despite these intentions, the dominance of economic thinking can be seen in the political narratives of each jurisdiction.

> Our society is crying out for a more ethical approach to finance, but we still return to the very criteria that got us into trouble in the first place. We promote the chase for AAA credit ratings, wealth generation becomes an end in itself rather than a means to an end and we end up promoting the values of greed and selfishness. (Kenneth Mackintosh, MSP speaking in the Scottish Parliament) (Mackintosh 2012, online)

> Overall, there was therefore a strong sense that economic growth was the ultimate aim of the Welsh Government. (Michaelson 2013, p. 114)

While there is evidence of new narratives on balancing the domains of wellbeing, there is also evidence of the primacy given to economic outcomes in policy decisions. The debate in Scotland is often focused on the Purpose Statement and the weight it gives to economic outcomes (though a lot hinges on how you interpret 'sustainable economic growth'). Analysis of policy and legislation by Andrea Ross, Professor of Environmental Law at the University of Dundee, shows that the Scottish Government itself has not been consistent in how it defines sustainable economic growth (Ross 2015). For example, is it about balancing economic, social and environmental outcomes now or does it also have a reference to the future? The new National Performance Framework (NPF) goes someway to rectifying this by the use of the word 'wellbeing' but detractors continue to be concerned that the model does not challenge the dominance of economic thinking. This is a delicate balancing act for the SNP Government whose principal aim remains to secure Scottish independence from the UK. Experience from the 2014 referendum shows that economic arguments were decisive in the 'no' vote. Since that time, the Scottish Government has given considerable weight to the messages that it is a competent manager of the economy, most recently in a detailed analysis of the economic case for independence (Sustainable Growth Commission 2018).

In Wales, Lang and Marsden (2017) chart the development of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and its focus on growth and investment potential. As the authors note, despite the legislative requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, '*economic growth is the primary metric against which the impact of the City Deal will be assessed by the UK Government*' (2017, p. 10). This raises questions about the extent to which it is the political narrative within Wales which prioritises the economy, or whether it is subject to the UK government's approach to controlling the terms of the City Deals in devolved jurisdictions.

The experience in Wales provides useful insight into the use of sustainable development as a unifying narrative. They retain the strongest narrative connection to sustainable development with the focus on future generations. But their experience was that as a term, sustainable development was not able to mobilise and motivate across the public sector. The review of the first wellbeing assessments made by Public Services Boards found that in general, there was a lack of acknowledgement or evidence that specific issues, such as poverty, impact on many of the seven national wellbeing goals. There was a tendency to link poverty to the prosperous goal or equal goal, rather than integrating issues and seeking a holistic view of the local area (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2017). Interviewees reported that there were still instances where the wellbeing of future generations was seen as in tension with economic outcomes.

That wellbeing frameworks are not a substitute for political decision-making may seem obvious but goes to the heart of the limits of the evidence-informed policy. The OECD, in their submission to the Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, offered words of caution about the limits of a wellbeing approach to policy: '*[wellbeing] should not be understood as providing a technocratic solution to solve the prioritisation dilemmas that are at the heart of government – which concern values as much as numbers*' (Doran et al. 2015, p. 17). The wellbeing frameworks is only one source of evidence in policy-making, and while it is one that has a role and weight attached to it, the real world of politics means that attention continues to be paid to inputs (the numbers of police on the street, class sizes, location of hospitals) and targets (waiting times for treatments, exam results being above the year before). There is a significant challenge here to raise media awareness of other measures and their benefits. To date, this is not a challenge that the devolved governments have embarked upon.

Wellbeing as a Conversation

A common critique of the wellbeing frameworks is that the indicator sets do not seem to grab the public's, or perhaps more accurately the media's, attention the way that GDP does. There have been calls in Scotland for an official index of wellbeing, inspired by the Oxfam Humankind Index. This, it is argued, would provide a figure that works as a 'hook' to counter the effect of GDP. This is similar to the arguments used to support the use of headline subjective wellbeing indicators. However, as we have seen, this is not the approach taken by any of the three devolved governments. Professor Stiglitz offers this insight in his advice to the Scottish Parliament:

> Let us not try to get everything into one number. Let us consider various dimensions and then discuss things. Are we not emphasising the environment enough? Are we not emphasising inequality enough? Are we not emphasising employment? Let us have a dialogue about that. (Scottish Parliament 2013, online)

Interviewees in Wales and Northern Ireland noted the tendency among the civil service to turn any number presented back into a target to be met. As one civil servant noted: '*indicators are just there to give you an indication of whether things are going well not a slavish set of targets*'. But as Sophie Howe (Commissioner for Future Generations) reflected to me during her interview that it can be hard to present measurements in a way that supports a wellbeing approach: '*The biggest challenge to work through is the need to monitor and track the progress that's being made without driving the wrong sort of behaviours, where people chase the number as a target and create perverse consequences.*'

Partial blame is attributed by interviewees to the powerful professional interest groups in favour of the status quo. While this is undoubtedly true, there is a more complex public narrative to consider, the role of the media in supporting the wellbeing approach was not proactively raised in any of the interviews for this book, nor did it appear in the desk-based analysis. But the media's obsession with inputs is as much an issue for public policy as its obsession with GDP. While of course there is an issue of leadership, it is understandable that no politician wishes to be the one pilloried in the press for slashing NHS budgets.

There are practical as well as political reasons for the continued dominance of these targets, and indeed of GDP itself. Many of the indicators used in the wellbeing frameworks are reported annually, not weekly, monthly or quarterly; they are therefore both less immediate reflections on public services and less familiar to the media. They are issued when they become available and as such it is difficult to tell a coherent story. There is an assumption in much discussion on evidence into policy and practice that decisions will wait until there is sufficient evidence. The *real politik* does not support this ideal state with decisions made sometimes very quickly in response to a specific set of circumstances. That politicians attach significance to the timeliest data, even if it is not the most comprehensive or robust, is not surprising. Over time, the digital transformation and automation means that it is likely that national statistics will be replaced by administrative and personal data—Experian already knows more about the financial health of the UK than the Office of National Statistics. There are challenges here in relation to the balance between privacy, personalisation and public service improvement, but the direction of travel is clear (Scott 2018).

The move to using indicators as a conversation about social progress, what is working and what is working less well (or not at all) is slow to materialise. But the difficulty here is providing a clear story of the direction of travel for social progress. The wellbeing frameworks in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland provide robust information on which to monitor and evaluate the impact of government interventions. But they go further than merely reporting on statistical trends, they seek to analyse these trends within their specific policy context. In this way, the process can be seen as 'social reporting', described as information on social structures and processes, and on preconditions and consequences of social policy, regularly, in time, systematically and autonomously (National Economic and Social Council (Ireland) 2009, p. 49). We have seen in the preceding chapters that Wales was the most open and inclusive jurisdiction in the development of its wellbeing framework, with Scotland making recent improvements here. The engagement in Northern Ireland succeeded in terms of the governments' own expectations of the level of public participation, but this is less than that expected in the other jurisdictions.

The examples to date provide analysis of individual indicators and their contribution to National Outcomes in Wales and Scotland. But they stop short of providing an overall analysis of the direction of travel,

or discussion of the interrelationships between different indicators and outcomes. There is still a sense of compartmentalisation within the reporting, clustering around traditional professions or old departmental groupings.

The new Scottish Government national performance website (in beta testing) is an attempt to break away from this by providing an interactive data tool which allows individual indicators to be examined by sub-group and 'pooled' for outcomes. Further, government analysts are cautious about ascribing causation to changes, which limits the ability of external stakeholders and the public to make use of the data to hold the government to account.

Governments as a whole appear cautious about overstating the importance of the indicators, perhaps aware that they are not always in control of the drivers of negative changes. But greater emphasis needs to be placed on telling this story. In their comments on the Scottish Government Consolidated Accounts, Audit Scotland (not known for throwing caution to the wind) reported that '*they* [the Scottish Government] *do not report on the performance of individual portfolios or the Scottish Government as a whole, limiting the reader's ability to see the Government's own contribution to national outcomes*' (Auditor General for Scotland 2017, p. 18).

Wellbeing as a Framework

Each of the devolved governments has specifically set out to see public services, or the business of government, as a single system, and used the wellbeing framework to articulate these common goals. A wellbeing framework is therefore, potentially, a very powerful tool allowing the centre of government.

The framework in this sense is less of a set of supporting structures and more of a rhetorical device to emphasise the role and values of government, and in particular to signal a move to a different way of working.

Within the devolved governments, there were different approaches to the location of this responsibility for the framework. Northern Ireland developed its Centre of Government following the OECD review (OECD 2016), placing more emphasis on the newly restructured Executive Office (formerly the Office of the First Minister and Deputy

First Minister). It is the Executive Office which oversees the draft Programme for Government, and hence the wellbeing framework.

In Wales, statutory powers on wellbeing are split between powers and duties to implement the Act (placed on Welsh Ministers, in particular, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance) and scrutiny powers located in both the Welsh Audit Office and the office of the Commissioner. The Commissioner for Future Generations in Wales has not as yet used her powers of review but in a memorandum of agreement with Welsh Audit Office, the two bodies have agreed to share information. This dual approach is seen by interviewees as particularly helpful for parts of the system that do not respond directly to the narratives on culture change, but who are influenced by budgets.

In Scotland, responsibility for the NPF sat for a number of years with the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance, the Constitution and the Economy, John Swinney MSP. While he retained the Deputy First Minister role in a 2017 reshuffle, he did not take the NPF with him; instead, it stayed with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance. Underneath the Ministerial remit, it has moved in 2018 to a clear ownership with the Director-General Scottish Exchequer who is responsible for the overall Scottish Budget including tax, spending and measuring performance, and for advice, support and systems on finance and procurement. Reflecting on the role of the Finance Ministry in Scotland, Sir John Elvidge told me that while its role is '*as a service function to the collective, it was conceived of as a team of people whose job it was to meet the objectives of the government, it is not the kind of dominant force that it is in most government structures*'.

It is not yet clear whether the location of control of the wellbeing framework has any effect on the overall impact. There are advocacy advantages to the Commissioner in Wales being independent, being able to speak outside the system, as she has been doing on the M4 relief road inquiry. On the other hand, there may be policy advantages to being located close to central government decision-making, particularly related to prioritisation and budget setting. Being located within a central unit and connected to the Finance departments should have led to greater implementation of wellbeing as a whole-of-government approach.

Ideally, there should be a sense of cascading frameworks, with each level connected to the vision statement and outcomes set by the government. It is not at all clear that this is what has happened in any of the jurisdictions under study. The key document in the devolved

governments is the Programme for Government which sets priorities for action. The Scottish Programme for Government makes little reference to the NPF. Wales retained the Programme for Government but link it clearly to the wellbeing goals through a wellbeing strategy. Northern Ireland reworked the approach to the Programme for Government completely transforming it into a wellbeing framework.

At the local level, the picture is similarly mixed. The legislative requirements in Wales have meant that public bodies have to move quickly to reflect the well-being goals into their own planning procedures. In Northern Ireland, local government requirements to plan for economic, social and environmental wellbeing pre-dated the draft framework but in practice, all local authorities have aligned to the draft Programme for Government outcomes. Scotland, despite the longest history, has the weakest connection between the former Single Outcome Agreements and the NPF. In all three cases, there is now a compulsion on local government to at least take account of societal wellbeing in the planning of its own work.

Even where the strategic links are clear, there is evidence of a lack of coherence. In conversations in all three jurisdictions, the health sector is singled out as a sector that has a weak alignment to the wellbeing frameworks. The health profession sees the ultimate goal to be improved health for all, rather than seeing health as one domain of wellbeing. Similar arguments on supremacy can be found elsewhere, for example in the environment, but these are not matched by the power held by the medical profession. One of the difficulties here is that there is no hierarchy of legislation in the legal systems of the devolved administrations, each Act (even when it duplicates or uses different definitions) has equal status. A wellbeing framework may have legislative weight, but it does not have any more weight than any other legislation. In the absence of clear connections to funding decisions, its power is muted.

One of the consistent barriers to impact from a wellbeing approach is the retention of traditional approaches to budgeting. The ambition of the wellbeing framework has not been met by changes in the budgeting process within governments. Shared responsibility for the outcome is not matched by shared budgets. In Northern Ireland, this is complicated by the strict rules on departmental authority created by the power-sharing agreement. More broadly, there is no consensus on how to budget for wellbeing approaches such as prevention. The approach taken in each jurisdiction has been to provide dedicated funding for intersectoral

projects; these specific funds are by their nature relatively small in comparison to the budgets as a whole and can be vulnerable to cutbacks when funding is tight (Colgan et al. 2014).

In each case, the link between resources allocated and outcomes achieved is opaque, even where information is presented as part of the budgetary process. If wellbeing outcomes that cut across departmental boundaries are to become the primary focus of public policy, they need to be supported by appropriate budgetary processes. It is easy to see how a policy or programme that depends on resource inputs from a number of different departments may struggle without a clear process for allocation of funds. The kind of budgeting for outcomes envisaged would clearly be different in terms of both scale and approach.

Wellbeing as an Approach

There is broad recognition in political statements, policy documents and through the interviews carried out for this analysis, that a wellbeing approach is a significant culture change for the public sector. As former Finance and Personnel Minister, Simon Hamilton, and the former Chair of the Finance and Personnel Committee, Daithí McKay, noted in their joint statement on wellbeing in Northern Ireland, the global conversation about wellbeing is about much more than measurement. It is also about 'doing things differently'. Many of the conversations and interviews I had focused on wellbeing not as a framework of measurement but as a catalyst for change. For example, one civil servant I spoke to stated that their biggest surprise in working on the framework was that '*first and foremost this is a hearts and minds issue, it's a conversation with colleagues, it's a change process… it's not about writing clever policies, it's about delivering them and recognising that do to that we have to behave differently*'.

To date, the culture change is most clearly evidenced at senior levels. Within the civil service, there is a point at which the agenda and policy formulation is decoupled from implementation. Aideen McGinley reflects on this in her interview with me: '*there's a layer in the middle of the civil service that is the hardest to convince – I call it the treacle layer*'. From her perspective, this relates largely to an over-reliance on habits, or social norms (the sense of 'this is how we do it here'). Taking a behavioural science perspective, we can see that the various parts of the 'system' are not necessarily pushing in the same direction and that there are

other levers that can be pulled to encourage culture change. For example, culture change can be reinforced through extrinsic motivation where it is built into performance management and reward systems, or intrinsic motivation by reinforcing the values of public service (see for example Northern Ireland Audit Office 2018).

Supporting culture shifts in the delivery of public services requires investment in capacity building programmes: '*If there is no change in system capacity, there will be no change. Managing complexity is one of the core capacities*' (Colgan et al. 2016, p. 69). There were discussions, and references in policy documents to the role of a new type of civil servant, a boundary spanner whose job it is to help manage this complexity, with a range of transferable skills rather than expert knowledge in a defined policy area.

Moving to horizontal integration within government requires a different approach to performance management. Traditionally progression was secured through technical expertise rather than the skills required to work across departments and with different layers of government and external stakeholders. These skills include intellectual analysis, networking skills and systems thinking. Scotland is the only jurisdiction that tackled this issue head-on, constructing a new model of performance management that sees staff graduating to a greater focus on horizontal skills as they progress in the organisation. As Sir John Elvidge told me during his interview: '*The transition around what we will value and what we will reward was at the heart of the cultural change.*' There is no clear evidence of the impact of this change yet though some cross-cutting groups have been set up to consider outcomes within the Scottish Government and including non-civil servant members.

Yet a notable gap in the interviews and analysis for this book is the extent to which wellbeing frameworks encourage those working in public services to behave differently, so that their activities are intrinsically beneficial to wellbeing rather than serving as a means to an end (Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH 2017). There are far more examples of changing the structures and planning systems for public services (*what* public services are delivered, and *by whom*) than there are of changing behaviours in services (*how* public services are delivered).

In their review of policy recommendations on sustainable happiness (defined broadly not just subjectively), the Centre for Bhutan Studies and Gross National Happiness identified four themes that should be taken into account in making the analysis:

- Supporting autonomy. Respecting the capacity of people to make decisions about their own lives.
- Supporting relationships. Recognising that people are social beings, operating within a set of family and community relationships.
- Supporting competence. Focussing on what an individual can do with a view to developing their ability to improve their own wellbeing.
- Supporting engagement. Recognising the importance of having a sense of purpose and encouraging and supporting people to engage in meaningful activity.

In their work on Beyond GDP, Social Justice Ireland developed a similar set of wellbeing tests that should be applied to programmes (Reynolds and Healy 2009). Here the goal of wellbeing in policy implementation is not to reform public services or restructure them, but rather to deliver services in a way that maximises wellbeing.

What would such a wellbeing approach to governance look like in practice?

It would almost certainly involve a decisive shift towards prevention. For much of the post-war period, the dominant focus of intensive social policy interventions was on those identified as 'in need', classified as such through legislation. This approach required individuals and families to evidence problems (or for professionals to identify them as such) before being able to access support. Muir describes the current model as follows:

> If one looks across the majority of mainstream services, they are generally of this reactive kind: the police service is mainly focused on solving crimes and catching criminals, hospitals are about treating and caring for people once they have become sick and prisons effectively warehouse offenders, successfully rehabilitating only a minority. (Muir 2012, p. 10)

Moving from crisis intervention to prevention has been a key discussion in public policy, and one that each of the three jurisdictions have embraced. But impact is clearly hampered by a lack of shared definition within and between jurisdictions, something also noted as problematic by the National Audit Office (2013). From the work that has taken place in the three jurisdictions, we can see a number of programmes that are delivering upstream preventative public services. These can help us map out what prevention in action looks like:

- From institutions to community-based interventions (health and justice).
- From prescribing antidepressants to social prescribing.
- From antisocial behaviour interventions to whole-family support programmes.

The language of wellbeing certainly supports a shift to prevention but the impact to date is not overwhelming. Wales does identify prevention as one of the five ways of working for wellbeing, in Scotland and Northern Ireland, the narrative is more focused on the impact of austerity on public sector budgets and the need to drive efficiencies. As noted above, while there has been a shift in the narrative on the importance of prevention, particularly for children and young people, there has not been a corresponding shift in budgets to support it.

The second clear area of policy change that a wellbeing approach would require is co-production, going further than consultation and engagement by recognising the intrinsic power within citizens to act to improve their own wellbeing. There are two levels of co-production: co-design of services and co-delivery of outcomes.

Within the co-design of services, people are acting as citizens, engaging locally or at devolved level to influence the design of public services. At a devolved level, none of the jurisdictions measure voting as an indicator of wellbeing, though it is a standard indicator in international indexes. There is a preference for measuring 'influence over local decisions', though of course this is not a measure of the success of the devolved governments at engaging with their citizens, but rather of local government. At a community level, each jurisdiction struggles with articulating the difference between volunteering and supporting strong community relationships. The frameworks and documents overemphasise the role of organised activities and organisations and underestimate the importance of places and spaces for people to interact without a public-sector agenda (Ferguson 2017).

The evidence for a shift towards co-production is stronger at an individual level, there is more emphasis on the active engagement in service delivery for outcomes, particularly in health and social care. The frameworks do make some reference to these issues, Scotland for example has recently introduced indicators that will measure the extent to which young people feel their views are listened to and respected.

While there is evidence of a shift towards a wellbeing approach, it is not overwhelming. The activities appear to remain on the margins of public services rather than being a 'golden thread'. The traditional view of public services as being *done to* someone *in need* still dominates.

In the introduction, I quoted McGregor and Pouw in their identification of the three allocative mechanisms for moving resources around society:

1. Individuals, households and communities. Based on reciprocity and mutual support.
2. Private sector. Based on market exchange.
3. Public sector. Based on redistribution and regulation (2017).

The traditional economist view clearly overstates the role of the private sector. The traditional welfare state overstates the role of the public sector. The wellbeing approach calls on both to be rebalanced by recognising the role that individual, households and communities play in improving their own wellbeing.

The Challenges Ahead for Wellbeing Approaches

Reflecting on the wellbeing frameworks and approaches it is easy to conclude that they are stable parts of the machinery of policy-making and governance in each of the jurisdictions. Their legislative basis, the support from within the system and from across political parties makes them relatively secure. Their impact however is not guaranteed. There are three key challenges that each government ought to address.

The first challenge is to understand the key role of the wellbeing framework as a communications tool to frame the work of the governments. They tell us something about who we are as a society and where we are going. The communication is both internal to public services and external to citizens. Within public services, many will need convincing of the effectiveness of the approach and yet scant attention is paid to providing those within the system with clear stories of impact that they can understand and articulate to others. Similarly, far more attention needs to be paid to communicating the content of the frameworks to the public and sparking a conversation about social progress.

The second challenge is to allow the frameworks to breathe and evolve in different parts of the system. Within public services, the

language used to assess impact by those in senior positions is that they are seeking alignment, a golden thread between different parts of the system. What they are not seeking is mindless duplication or cut-and-paste policy-making. There is a risk that in seeking clear impact, conformity on outcomes and indicators is what is measured and expected, rather than conformity around the spirit of the approach. In the relationship between public services and citizens and communities a similar 'letting go' is required. The framework document may belong to the government, but societal wellbeing belongs to all citizens. There is a risk that by taking responsibility for all aspects of wellbeing other activities are crowded out or displaced. More attention needs to be paid to the contribution of people to our own individual and collective wellbeing with government playing a supporting and enabling role rather than a provider role.

The final challenge is to support leadership for culture change from diffuse places and people. The development of wellbeing frameworks owes much to a small number of people who took a risk and wanted to try something different. But their success in implementation has many leaders, from different sectors and professions. Public services are good at supporting leadership at the centre, for wellbeing approaches to be successful there will have to be ways of supporting leaders wherever they emerge.

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Conclusions and Reflections

Abstract In this concluding section, Wallace brings together the evidence and analysis to argue that the devolved legislatures are engaged in a complex process of policy diffusion and policy learning, among themselves and as part of the global movements on wellbeing and sustainable development. She argues that wellbeing frameworks are an example of the non-rational, non-linear nature of policy development. That these initiatives developed during the first phase of devolution for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is not a coincidence, they are best understood as a mechanism for codifying what the governments stand for (their values) and their role in relation to the UK state. With economic wellbeing largely remaining within the competency of the UK government, the devolved legislatures have chosen to implement frameworks that highlight areas that they have direct powers over. In communicating their values to the people, these new governments are also communicating their value to the people.

Keywords UK · Devolution · Policy learning · Policy diffusion · Wellbeing · Sustainable development

The research for this book raised interesting questions for me about the relationships between the three devolved jurisdictions, and the extent to which they inspire and learn from each other, as well as providing insight into their relationship with the UK state. This concluding chapter

considers these issues in more detail and explores the extent to which the devolved governments use of wellbeing as a frame amounts to a rethinking of their role as developing legislatures.

Policy Transfer, Policy Learning and Policy Diffusion

In the early days of devolution it was argued that the new governments would create 'laboratories of democracy' with each experimenting and learning from the others (Birrell 2010). In practice, the constantly evolving nature of devolution in the UK limits the opportunity for both policy learning (taking findings from other jurisdictions and applying them to your own) and policy transfer (implement a policy that one of the other jurisdictions has tried out first) (for a sound discussion see Paul Cairney's blog, Cairney 2018).

Focused on their own internal priorities, interviewees report that there is simply limited space in the civil service timetable to keep up with the literature in other jurisdictions or make study trips to visit practice elsewhere in the UK. Given the conditions, it is perhaps surprising that there is as much policy learning as there currently is. A study of over 200 policy-makers and practitioners carried out by the Carnegie UK Trust found that seven out of 10 say that they have a working knowledge of evidence from their sector from the rest of the UK and the same proportion say evidence from their sector from the rest of the UK influences their work (Carnegie UK Trust 2018).

Analysing this in relation to wellbeing frameworks we can conclude that Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland all engaged in policy learning to different degrees, but that only Northern Ireland adopted policy transfer—taking the policy of a national performance framework from Scotland and implementing it in their own jurisdiction. As Simon Hamilton MLA told me:

> It was incredibly helpful that Scotland had taken the first steps and that it had been a success, there was a good positive example right on our doorstep. If it had been somewhere else in Europe or the far side of the world, I don't think it would have caught on this quickly.

Neither policy learning, nor policy transfer, happens organically. A key mechanism for policy learning is through inviting speakers from elsewhere to attend policy events. Experts from Wales and Scotland were

invited to events in Northern Ireland during the development phase (2014–2016) to share their experiences with a local audience, and this did appear to have an impact on their thinking.

But the most critical factor in the policy transfer from Scotland to Northern Ireland was the study trip taken by the Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland to meet with Scottish stakeholders, including John Swinney MSP (then Cabinet Secretary for Finance). This was referred to by Aideen McGinley and Simon Hamilton as a 'turning point' in the process of considering a wellbeing approach. Later in the development, this was solidified by former permanent secretary Sir John Elvidge providing expert advice and support to the Northern Ireland Civil Service through a series of internal workshops. There were examples too of local authority staff sharing experience from Scotland to Northern Ireland.

There are far fewer examples of policy learning between Scotland and Wales. There was some learning around the central-local dynamic around 2010, but this did not continue into a shared dialogue on wellbeing frameworks. This perhaps reflects the different origins of their wellbeing frameworks. It may have taken some time for actors in each of these jurisdictions to realise that they were on a shared journey.

Scotland and Wales may not have directly influenced each other at the outset but they were heavily influenced by international developments. In Scotland, the inspiration was Virginia Performs (one of a set of state-level performance initiatives that developed in the early 2000s), solidified by study trips from the senior staff in Virginia. In Wales, the inspiration was the Millennium Development Goals and specifically the global consultation on The World We Want.

Nevertheless, we can see clearly where improvements have been made based on learning between the three jurisdictions:

- Negative lesson-drawing: the need to build a movement of support behind wellbeing as the purpose of government (Scotland to Northern Ireland).
- Positive lesson-drawing: local government alignment (Scotland to Wales), linking directly to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Wales to Scotland); utilising audit capacity (Wales and Scotland to Northern Ireland).

But the above analysis perhaps takes too linear a model of policy learning and transfer. It is more likely that outside of a very small number of close relationships between senior civil servants where direct policy learning took place, we are generally observing a process of policy diffusion. Policy diffusion originated in the United States as a term that summarised how different American states would emulate each other. This has similarities with the UK as the States in America, like the devolved jurisdictions in the UK, have a shared culture, history and language. In this context, ideas disperse into the policy atmosphere, creating a climate of opinion. Ideas can therefore be contagious without it being clear exactly how such information was gathered or where the inspiration originally came from (Stone 2017). For example, in reflecting on the decision to name the consultation on wellbeing in Wales a 'national conversation' Peter Davies (former Sustainable Futures Commissioner for Wales) commented in his interview: 'I *do not remember the origins of the positioning as a 'national conversation' but was requested by the Minister to lead it.*' National conversations were by this point in time, becoming rather common in Scotland where they had been held on constitutional change (2007–2009) and later on Fairer Scotland (2015) and Healthier Scotland (2015).

As Birrell notes, while mechanisms exist to connect civil servants, there is no formal mechanism for policy learning between politicians across the UK (2010). The closest such body is the British–Irish Council, established under the Good Friday Agreement which provides a forum for the UK and Irish Governments, the devolved governments of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the governments of the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey to come together. The role is to exchange information and cooperate on matters of mutual interest. The work programme to date has focused on clear areas of policy development, such as early years, housing and creative industries, rather than cross-sectoral issues such as public sector reform. While the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales, and the An Taoiseach of the Irish Government tend to attend, the UK is most often represented by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Ministers with relevant portfolios.

In their review of evidence exchange, the Alliance for Useful Evidence made several recommendations to improve sharing of learning across the UK including increased interchange of staff between the four governments and more networks of officials from the four governments that work on similar issues (Paun et al. 2016). The experience of the

wellbeing frameworks would take this further and bring in other actors, including the independent funding sector and not-for-profit organisations who occasionally instigated as well as supported the initiatives.

From Advocacy and Policy Change to Social Change?

In assessing the impact of wellbeing frameworks in devolved governments, it quickly becomes apparent that the evidence of impact is problematic. There are few academic studies of the impact. In the case of Northern Ireland this is understandable, it is a very small jurisdiction and has only relatively recently experimented with wellbeing. It is less clear why there are so few studies of the impact in Scotland and Wales.

Those analyses that do exist come from the grey literature and these tend to take interviewees' comments at face value, so an approach is 'transformative' or 'revolutionary' because it has been called such by a stakeholder, not because of clear evidence of impact. And clear evidence of impact is hard to find. There are two potential reasons for this: the frameworks themselves are not having the desired impact; or there are impacts, but they cannot easily be traced to the wellbeing framework.

The idea of a clear linear connection between wellbeing frameworks and decisions is to misunderstand the policy process itself. Rationalist policy analysis argues that all potential options should be considered and weighed up before coming to a decision. And yet we know this is not the case. Practicalities mean governments have limited time for such options appraisals. The party-political process of producing a manifesto for government is hardly scientific or rational. Wellbeing frameworks themselves are an example of the non-rational nature of policy development. Key stakeholders have admitted that they were not entirely sure what they were doing when they started the initiatives. They had analysed the problem and considered the issues, but there was no clarity over what to do next.

Power analysis also asks us to consider what options never make it to the table. The issue of the extent to which each jurisdiction is taking a wellbeing approach tended to be solidified in the annual budget scrutiny undertaken by parliamentary committees in Scotland and Wales. But this formal decision-making comes far down the line of policy formulation. It is far harder to analyse the extent to which potential solutions are framed by contemporary narratives. The process of the controversial M4 relief road is instructive here, the decision is between two routes, the blue

route and the black route. As Jenny Rathbone AM notes, the discussion was never open to other options: '*we don't know what the alternative ways are of spending £1.5bn to resolve the identified problem of congestion on the M4*' (National Assembly for Wales 2018, online).

Given the new analysis carried out for this book, each jurisdiction can clearly tell a story of the contribution made by wellbeing frameworks to impact at the various levels (advocacy, policy and social change). For some, such as the Scottish Justice Strategy, while we cannot rule out other factors, the evidence is strong enough to attribute at least some of the social change to the framework itself. More commonly, the impact is indirect. In these cases, there is an argument to be made around the potential contribution of the framework to policy decisions but it has to be probed for, it is not offered clearly by those involved in the policy development.

Why might this be the case? Part of the explanation may lie in the way the framework influences decision-making. Several interviewees commented that it changed conversations, focusing them on the difference that is being made to citizens. They talk about asking questions of themselves and others when using the framework. Questions like: *Why are we doing this? What difference are we actually making? What else is going on here that is stopping the change from happening?*

Identifying changes in decisions being made is problematic precisely because of the nature of the change in the decisions themselves: '*It's changed the nature of the dialogue. I can be absolutely categorical about that, at all levels of government, across government departments, at local and national level. It's the way in which conversations are framed—it's a mindset change*' (Peter Davies, former Sustainable Futures Commissioner Wales, interview).

In assessing the wellbeing framework, we cannot do so in isolation of other changes, nor can we argue a clear linear cause and effect. Speaking at a conference in Northern Ireland on the impact of the NPF, Professor Carol Tannahill argued that the framework has helped to align people in the same direction, but it was not enough as '*other stars need to align*' (Carnegie UK Trust 2017, p. 5). These other stars gather around the components of a wellbeing approach.

To understand the relationship between the wellbeing framework and the wellbeing approach, we need to avoid the suggestion of linearity and instead look at the roles being played. A wellbeing approach summarises a number of changes to how government thinks about its role and how it achieves outcomes for people. The wellbeing framework is how that paradigm shift is communicated to policy-makers, professionals and the

public. The two exist together: without a drive to change the framing of governance, a wellbeing framework would be nothing more than an interesting way of presenting social indicators.

The analysis in this book identifies strengths and weaknesses in each jurisdiction. What might fruitful areas for positive lesson drawing be at this stage in development of the frameworks and approaches?

Firstly, Northern Ireland may be the last of the three to implement a wellbeing framework, but it has come closest to articulating how the approach works as a golden thread through the system. The NI Executive makes consistent reference to the different layers of activity: performance accountability, population accountability and societal well-being. This has solidified into an approach that allows indicators and outcomes to be developed that suit services (performance), population (departments) and society (government) but not to make the mistake of confusing one with the other. The health department can be responsible for service indictors and treatment outcomes, but the health of the people (measured through life expectancy, for example) is the responsibility of government as a whole (Northern Ireland Audit Office 2018). Similar effects can be seen in Scotland and Wales, but with less clarity over the reasons for the difference and less certainty for those involved over what is expected.

Secondly, Wales may have started out from a desire to have sustainable development as a central organising principle, but it can teach the other jurisdictions about legislating for culture change. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 includes a set of ways of working for public bodies that are challenging to the dominant model of public service design and delivery. They are similar of course to the approaches in Scotland and Northern Ireland, but these do not have legislative weight behind them. Further, the ability to audit and formally review progress is a powerful tool for change, alongside the softer approaches used by the Commissioner to support public bodies and to act as an advocate for future generations.

Finally, Scotland shows that there are real social impacts that can be traced to the wellbeing framework. There are people in Scotland today whose lives are better because of changes in how the justice system thinks about its contribution to society. The culture change required to achieve these improvements was unlocked and supported by the framework. And culture change itself was recognised as an essential component of the wellbeing approach and supported and invested in across the civil service.

Understanding Complexity in Wellbeing

There is an underlying tension in the three examples of wellbeing frameworks: whose responsibility is it to improve wellbeing? The conversations that have been taking place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all start from a position that it is the primary role of governments. The clarity of their statements is to be celebrated.

Underneath this overall vision however, there are tensions. The introduction to this book set out the concept of a wellbeing approach as a mechanism for whole-of-government thinking, but the *whole* has its bounds at the limits of government. And yet we know that much of what makes life worth living is about our relationships: our families, our friends, our community. This space, the private and the civic, is by its very nature, non-governmental.

At a societal level, we cannot hold one part of the system responsible for outcomes. For example, given what is known of the social determinants of health, it is not possible to hold the health service solely responsible for health outcomes, ignoring the known contribution of education, housing, employment and welfare to health outcomes. If we take a well-known example, life expectancy is increasing due to large reductions in smoking levels. The biggest single causal factor is the ban on smoking in public places. But other factors also contribute, smoking cessation groups, for example, and the widespread availability of e-cigarettes and vaping as a socially acceptable alternative.

We can take this a step further and see that while we can reward the governments for the improvements in health caused by the reduction in smoking, doing so removes the contribution of the market (in producing a viable alternative to smoking) and individual citizens who themselves took the step of stopping smoking. If governments were to be truly transformative in their approach, they would also recognise the contribution of the people. As discussed in Chapter 5, the governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have stopped short of this transformation.

If the framework is owned by the government, then it is responsible for it in its entirety. But if the language shifts to the 'we' being the people, then accountability is also shared, with government seen as only contributing to social progress rather than owning it. Such a shift would require a new politics, not just a new approach to governance.

A New Politics for Wellbeing

For Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the development of a wellbeing framework was a natural step forward in their devolution journey. In each jurisdiction, stakeholders talked of the promise of devolution and the lack of progress made on improving outcomes in the intervening years. The devolved jurisdictions all have relatively small populations and systems that encourage (or in Northern Ireland's case require) coalition government. The size of the population, the relative size of the machinery of politics and government and the close relationships that exist between all parts of the system may have contributed to a shared diagnosis of the core problem—years of additional funding, and greater democratic accountability, had led to much activity but painfully little by way of change to people's actual wellbeing.

Having identified the problem, the key stakeholders in each jurisdiction set about finding solutions. Here individual politicians played significant roles in moving forward the wellbeing framework. In the debates in the Scottish Parliament, initially on the Humankind Index and then on the National Performance Framework, parliamentarians noted the cross-party support for moving beyond GDP: '*The fact that the debate is being held today is significant, as is the strength of cross-party support, along with support beyond the chamber, that it has secured*' (Claudia Beamish, MSP, Labour (Scottish Parliament 2012, online)). The 2018 membership of the Cabinet Secretary's Roundtable on the National Performance Framework includes active membership from the Scottish Green Party, the Scottish National Party, Scottish Labour and the Scottish Conservatives. The developments in Northern Ireland were consciously designed to be cross-party, indeed as Simon Hamilton MLA told me: '*If you didn't have cross-party agreement you wouldn't have got anywhere*'. The experience in Wales was slightly bumpier, with disagreements relating to the balance between economic and environmental issues and the balance between sustainable development and public sector reform. The core aim of legislating for a sustainable development principle did not however appear controversial.

What could inspire such unanimity of purpose?

For much of this analysis, I have referred to the devolved governments as though they have little or no relationship to their 'parent' Parliament in Westminster. In doing so, I followed the evidence from written sources and interviewees, parliamentary debates and reports which refer to

Westminster only rarely, and only to note that the devolved approach is different (and by strong implication, better). The desire to do things differently appears in many policy conversations in the devolved jurisdictions.

The four legislatures of the UK (UK, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) are engaged in a complex system of their own. Scotland and Wales seek to mark out their differences from Whitehall, Northern Ireland aligns with the UK politically but seeks to assert itself as a mature government by emulating Scotland and Wales.

The economic and welfare policy responsibilities that remain within the competency of Westminster have a substantial effect on wellbeing. There is an argument therefore that rather than rebalancing the dominance of the economic model on government decision-making, what the devolved governments are actually saying is that they wish to accentuate the areas of wellbeing over which they have control. The domains of social and environmental wellbeing are broadly within devolved competency. Do devolved jurisdictions highlight these due to sustainable development arguments, or are they highlighting areas where they have direct powers under the constitutional settlements? If this is the case, it is not a damning criticism. Devolved administrations can make little difference to people's lives where they do not have real powers.

As the devolution settlements evolve further, and devolution of powers on the economy seems set to grow and mature, this logic may alter. At the time of writing (June 2018), the extent to which the UK Government will retain the powers it is taking back from the European Union or will allow the devolved legislatures to take them directly is unclear. But the effect of Brexit on intra-UK relationships is beginning to crystallise suggesting a tense time ahead for the relationships between the different tiers of governance in the UK.

For now, there remains a riddle at the heart of a devolved administration's approach to wellbeing: why would a government seek accountability for outcomes they cannot directly affect? Part of the answer to this question may lie in the concept of a framework for government itself. In the maturing of their approach, the devolved legislatures are seeking to articulate that they stand for the common good and hold within themselves the values of the society that they govern. It is no surprise that these smaller and newer legislatures have sought to codify what they stand for. It is no surprise that they have done so in ways that bind each other to a shared set of outcomes. In communicating their *values* to the people, they are also communicating their *value* to the people.

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