

# Wellbeing guidance

This guidance will help you address the outcome 'People will have greater wellbeing' in your project. It is for everyone applying for a grant, regardless of the size or type of organisation you represent or the amount you are requesting.

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## Introduction

Heritage has a strong role to play in improving wellbeing for people in the UK. By bringing us together at all stages of our lives, building connectedness and a sense of belonging in our neighbourhoods, supporting individual confidence and self-esteem, and providing opportunities for people to be active, heritage projects can make a significant contribution to the way people feel about their lives.

### What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is a broad term but put simply by the [WhatWorksCentre for Wellbeing](#), it is about "how we are doing": "It's how we experience life – quality of life, good physical and mental health, and being part of our communities. It's about how external conditions affect our lives and how we function in society."

At an individual level, wellbeing sums up feelings of contentment, enjoyment and self-confidence which, when strong, often lead to good relationships, engagement with the world around us, the resilience to deal with more difficult times in our lives, and a sense that we can do the things we want to do.

Wellbeing is affected by a wide range of factors, including, for example, income, work, education and skills, mental and physical health, relationships, loneliness and social isolation, as well as the environment around us.

### Achieving our outcomes

To achieve our wellbeing outcome you will need to show that individuals taking part feel more connected to the people around them and/or the place where they live as a result of involvement in your project, or that they feel they are playing a useful part in things. You or your external evaluator will need to use recognised evaluation methods for measuring wellbeing and ask the people involved about how they feel before and after their involvement. Participants will report increased happiness, greater satisfaction and/or that life feels more worthwhile as a result of their involvement in your project. Some people might report reduced levels of anxiety.

A project that is focussed on wellbeing can also help achieve some of our other outcomes, depending on the kinds of activities you are planning and who they are aimed at, for example:

- A wider range of people will be involved in heritage
- People will have developed skills
- People will have learnt about heritage

## Improving Wellbeing

The NHS recommends five ways to achieve better wellbeing: to connect, be active, take notice (or be mindful), learn and give back. Heritage projects are often well placed to use this framework (developed by the New Economics Foundation) and can offer a range of opportunities for people to build these steps into their lives, helping them fulfil their personal and social goals and achieve a sense of purpose in society.

### The five ways to Wellbeing and heritage

Projects that bring us together to participate in activities or to volunteer can play an important role in combating loneliness whether we are aged under 25 or over 65, and can support us to build social connections and engage with others socially in a safe environment.

Heritage projects can help us stay mentally and physically active whether we are gardening, building, interviewing, walking, dancing, guiding, hedge-laying or film-making. Visiting heritage, including landscapes and nature, or getting involved with heritage organisations, can provide us with opportunities to get some fresh air, to be curious, to appreciate beauty and to reflect on the world around us.

Learning is one of the five ways to wellbeing and also another outcome in our framework. Learning new things can help us build our self-confidence and happiness and change how we think about our lives. Heritage projects can offer learning opportunities for people of all ages, appealing to the full range of learning styles and including activities that involve us making, doing, sharing, writing, leading or drawing.

Finally, volunteering in heritage can help us feel useful and a part of our communities, offering us a way to give something back to society. Volunteering can help us experience working in a team, help build relationships and support one another, or lead to us developing in new directions and moving on to take up different opportunities.

The Canal and River Trust is just one example of a heritage organisation that has linked the Five Ways to Wellbeing to its [work](#). The staff of Westonbirt Arboretum have shared the learning from their community development work through a useful [booklet](#) describing activities to improve wellbeing.

## What could you do?

We will expect your proposals to be in proportion to the size of grant you are seeking and your overall capacity and experience. Here are just a few examples of the kind of activity we can fund to inspire your thinking:

- opportunities for people experiencing isolation to volunteer, with an objective of supporting them into paid employment;
- horticultural or nature-based conservation activity run in partnership with a mental health charity, designed to help people get active;
- creative courses responding to an art collection for people using mental health services, resulting in public exhibitions of their work;
- museum collection handling sessions for people with dementia in care homes, reducing the isolation the residents feel, and up-skilling staff to use heritage resources;
- bespoke visits to a heritage site for people experiencing autism, planned as a response to loneliness and to build social networks;
- the creation of volunteering and leadership opportunities, developed in partnership with a charity working with disabled young people;
- community archaeology projects designed to include isolated young people not in education, work or training;
- providing transport, a warm welcome and bespoke activities to enable a wider range of people to see heritage that is beautiful, stimulating or relaxing;
- museum visits and a creative programme designed for parents with young families on low incomes.

## Who will you involve?

There are a range of considerations in planning a project designed to impact on individuals' wellbeing. Be clear about who you are targeting, be realistic about what is achievable, and explore whether there are local organisations you could partner with.

### Targeting people with the lowest wellbeing

If you are developing a project that is *mainly* focused on achieving the wellbeing outcome or you plan to address wellbeing as part of a grant application over £250,000, we will expect you to **benefit those people whose wellbeing is the lowest**. This is because research shows that following high quality interventions, increases in wellbeing are the greatest for people whose levels of wellbeing are the lowest at the outset.

Working to improve the wellbeing of people who face social exclusion, for example, due to ill-health or a low income will also help you achieve our outcome 'A wider range of people will be involved with heritage'.

### Gathering information

In your application you will need to demonstrate that there is a need for the project. It might be useful to start by understanding the data that exists on personal wellbeing for your [local authority](#) area(s).

We have provided some useful sources with this guidance. There is now significant evidence of the differences in wellbeing between population groups, indicating, for example, that lower income groups have lower average wellbeing than those on higher incomes. [Research](#) also tells us that some ethnic groups have lower than average wellbeing. People with the poorest personal wellbeing are more likely, according to [ONS](#) research, to experience one or more of these characteristics or circumstances: self-report very bad or bad health; be economically inactive with long-term illness or disability; be middle-aged; be single, separated, widowed or divorced; have no or basic education; be renting or living in supported housing.

## Consultation

You should shape your plans through consultation, talking to potential participants and community advocacy organisations about your ideas. Make sure your project is designed to deliver what participants want in a way that will meet their needs.

On a relatively small scale, for example, you might want to develop a relationship with a local care home. You would need to find out what activities already take place in the home and what existing awareness or interest there is in your heritage amongst staff and residents. Older people can feel socially isolated and care staff may be uncertain how to use local heritage resources. Listening to both groups about what they would like to gain from your heritage project, you could plan engaging, high quality heritage participation together that is designed to improve social connections for everyone involved and sustained in the longer term.

If you are planning a large project it might be appropriate for you to consult with health partners. In England, you could contact your Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), ask to talk at the CCG patient participation meetings, or draw on your understanding of Local Authority Joint Strategic Needs Assessment work. In Scotland, Joint Health Improvement Plans might help inform your work. This kind of consultation will help to situate your project within the bigger picture of your area's health infrastructure and agreed local health needs.

## Partnerships

The most impact is often achieved by partnerships of heritage organisations and health organisations or charities, working together. They involve staff who are closest to the client group and understand their needs. They can often play an important role in ensuring there is ongoing support for the participants beyond the project, so sustaining project outcomes. They might, too, be better placed to advise on appropriate evaluation techniques and help facilitate the collection of personal evaluation data.

Working with partners will help you to be more strategic. You could consider developing a project with your local disability organisation (e.g. Mencap or MIND), supported housing charity, or community organisation working with people with long-term health conditions. You could make links with national initiatives outside the heritage sector, including Age Friendly Communities, Dementia Action Alliances or the youth sector.

If a partnership approach isn't right for you, seeking advice from organisations already focussed on increasing wellbeing and challenging health inequalities will add relevance to your heritage project and help you plan for success.

## Planning your approach

Experience tells us that the highest quality interventions are significant in length and designed and delivered by experienced staff.

### Programme

The most successful heritage wellbeing projects have offered well-planned experiences to the same people over an extended period of time, as opposed to one-off events. Regular activity over a minimum of 10 weeks has been shown to be effective. Two case studies, from Manchester Museums and The Restoration Trust, demonstrate this approach and show positive results.

If you have the appropriate skills in your team, using a co-production model, where participants work with you to influence the way the project is designed and delivered, can lead to stronger outcomes. Alongside improvements in wellbeing, participants might want to achieve broader goals, such as increased independence, skills to travel independently, wider social networks, training, accreditation or qualifications.

### Staff resources

Higher than usual staff to participant ratios may be necessary depending on the needs of people you are working with. You may need to involve mentors in your project as well as those leading the delivery of activity. Staff should be properly trained. They may need to demonstrate a flexible approach and be prepared to adapt programmes and the pace of delivery to the needs of participants.

If you do decide to work in partnership, be aware that some organisations may be new to heritage. Plan enough time and budget to exchange ideas on what wellbeing looks like from your different sector contexts and to build and maintain your relationship during project delivery.

### Safeguarding

If you are planning to involve vulnerable people in your project, whose levels of wellbeing may be low, think about safeguarding and work in partnership with organisations with existing expertise in [safeguarding principles and standards](#).

### Budget

Plan your budget closely taking into account the needs of prospective participants and their advisers, so that reasonable aspirations e.g. accreditation for training, can be met.

Consider whether your budget needs to include travel, support worker and/or care costs. It might need to include training for staff e.g. Mental Health First Aid. You should include evaluation costs so that you can demonstrate the difference made.

## Measuring impact

There is a huge weight of advice, endorsed by government, academics and funding organisations, to help measure wellbeing outcomes. We will expect you to draw on these resources to help you evaluate your project.

It is important that you measure the impact of your wellbeing-focused activities on the participants, so that you can demonstrate the difference your project has made, improve yours and others' practice, and have the evidence to advocate for future work. Use our evaluation guidance [[link](#)], which sets out general principles of good practice, to inform your plans.

We will expect you to evaluate your activities from the start by gathering baseline data so that you can track the change your project brings. Depending on the nature and focus of your activities and the background of people involved in your project, you may consider using quantitative measures (usually validated scales), qualitative measures such as interviews, focus groups and diaries, or a combination of the two. Combining both quantitative and qualitative methods will give you the opportunity to assess change in wellbeing but also explore why and how wellbeing has changed.

### Measuring wellbeing

We recommend that you use the 'How to measure your impact on wellbeing' guide produced by [What Works Centre for Wellbeing](#).

This toolkit recommends, in particular, using four Annual Population Survey questions devised by the Office of National Statistics. These are questions based on life satisfaction and feelings of happiness, anxiety, and that life is worthwhile. Using the ONS questions with a 0-10 scale will allow you to compare your evaluation data with the UK population data that ONS compiles.

The toolkit also links to the 'WEMWBS' (Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) methodology, a more in-depth tool usually used in the context of mental ill-health. It is appropriate for measuring the wellbeing of people above the age of 16, The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (SCWBS) has been devised for young people aged 8-15.

If you are working in a museum or similar context the [Museum Wellbeing Measures toolkit](#) produced by University College London is also helpful.

### Research ethics

If your project involves vulnerable people, such as children or adults with learning difficulties, it is important that your evaluation approach and methods comply with

ethical guidelines. The [Social Research Association](#) and the [British Education Research Association](#) provide guidance.

## Additional Resources

Over the last 25 years in the UK, and around the world, there has been increased awareness of how important wellbeing is in all our lives, based on extensive research. The following links provide high quality resources, tools and case studies to help you explore wellbeing further.

- [What Works Centre for Wellbeing](#) defines wellbeing and provides a range of evidence to support good practice. The findings on [community connections](#) are useful in a heritage context.
- The Office of National Statistics (ONS) provides [advice](#) on measuring personal wellbeing for those who want more detail.
- Sir Michael Marmot's review of [health inequalities in England](#) stresses the importance of 'strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention', emphasising the need for cross sector alliances to improve our health on a societal level.
- In Scotland, [The ScotPHO Profiles](#) provide information on health inequalities. Further information is available from the [Scottish Government](#) mental and physical health.
- The [Physical Activity Health Alliance](#) in Scotland have developed community projects, including evaluation training.
- Greenspace Scotland has also produced useful guidance and research. See: [Health outcomes framework](#)
- In Wales the [Wellbeing of Future Generations Act](#) includes a range of goals including 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."
- The Mental Health Foundation Wales produced [Fundamental Facts](#) in 2016.
- The [Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance](#) involves influential cultural and health partners across England, including museums where specific [research](#) and evidence exists. The [London Arts and Health Forum](#) is aligned and provides a useful local network.
- [Methodologies for measuring impact](#), with Prof Helen Chatterjee and Dr Nuala Morse is useful webinar on YouTube.
- [Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing](#), All Party-Parliamentary Group on Arts Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Report, July 2017.
- [The State of Happiness: Can public policy shape people's wellbeing and resilience?](#) is an interesting read from The Young Foundation (2010)
- More recent work by the [London School of Economics](#), is compiling research on well-being over the life course.
- Research in the [social impact of HLF projects](#) demonstrates wellbeing outcomes and that those with the least wellbeing benefit the most (BOP, 2011).