

The implementation of wellbeing frameworks: What barriers are there?

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Social
wellbeing

Economic
wellbeing



Environmental
wellbeing



Democratic
wellbeing



collective
wellbeing
Carnegie
UK

At Carnegie UK we believe that **collective wellbeing** happens when **social**, **economic**, **environmental** and **democratic** wellbeing outcomes are seen as being equally important.

Background

2010-11
First Carnegie
UK Roundtable
on Measuring
What Matters
held (Scotland)

2014-15
Second
Carnegie UK
Roundtable on
Measuring
What Matters
(NI)

2018-21
Embedding
Wellbeing in
Local
Government in
NI Programme

2021-2022
Third Carnegie
UK Roundtable
on Measuring
What Matters
held (North of
Tyne Combined
Authority)

2012
Shifting the Dial
international
research
published

2016
Guidance on
Wellbeing for
Regions and
Cities published
(Carnegie
UK/OECD)

2019
Wellbeing and
Devolution
published



Barriers – Sustained leadership and vision

- Political short-termism makes the approach vulnerable to instability (NI) and change in Ministerial portfolios (Scotland)
- Competing academic and third sector terminologies damage the message – there is more that unites us than divides us.
- Insufficient places for people to come together to share the experience of culture change and sustain the movement.

Conclusion: wellbeing must be seen as a long-term, cross-party agenda.



Barriers – Vertical tensions

- Top down processes can feel disempowering to local government, communities and citizens.
- Bottom up processes can feel disconnected from the 'big picture'.
- There is an abundance of competing legislative, regulatory and performance management regimes.

Conclusion: wellbeing must be multi-linear and involve removing existing policies to make space.



Barriers – Horizontal tensions

- Wellbeing approaches require alignment between departments.
- Traditionally strong departments, aligned to professional power, can be obstructive. Finance, or Treasury, leadership is essential.
- Pooling finances to support cross-cutting wellbeing policies is seen as a threat to formal accountability.

Conclusion: Civil servants need legislative permission, a culture of collective leadership and career incentives to cooperate across traditional boundaries.



Paradigm shift or passing fad?

- Wellbeing can be seen as a paradigm shift in what government is for and how wellbeing can be achieved (moving beyond capitalist and welfare states).
- But governments enter the conversation through low-risk initiatives (e.g. dashboards of indicators) because what gets measured is what gets done.
- But getting it done requires radical incrementalism – statistics are the entry point, not the end point of the paradigm shift.

My question for Ireland: What's your ultimate ambition for the wellbeing framework?





Thank you

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