



How was Suffolk's wellbeing over summer 2022?

March 2023

 mind Suffolk

Only 30.5% of Suffolk respondents were **meeting their Needs well** during Summer 2022

Individuals **who do not identify with their gender at birth** were, on average, **the least well** compared to other gender identities

Suffolk's **wellbeing** reached a **new low this Summer** compared to previous years (according to data collected since 2020)

The **three least well met emotional Needs** among **Suffolk's population**, on average, were **Community, Control, and Meaning & Purpose**

Only **12%** of respondents aged between **18 and 24 years old** were **meeting their Needs well**

Only **21%** of **unemployed respondents** and **11%** of **those unable to work** were **meeting their Needs well overall**

Just over **1 in 5 men** were **meeting their Needs well overall**, compared with **1 in 3 women**



Contents

What do we ask and how do we measure wellbeing?	4
Our Emotional Needs	5
How has Suffolk been this summer?	7
How does wellbeing compare to previous summers?	9
How well are different demographic groups?	10
Who is underrepresented in our data?	14
Research and evaluation consultancy	15
Appendix	17

What do we ask and how do we measure wellbeing?

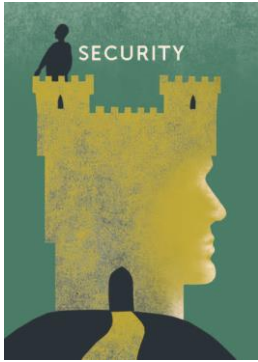
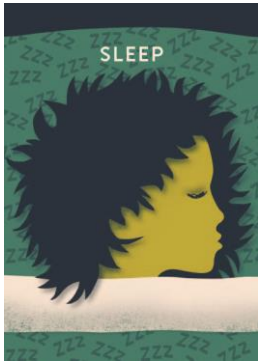
Suffolk Mind's research team is gathering anonymous data from the local population all the time. We ask people how well they are meeting their Emotional Needs, using our validated mental health measure: the Emotional Needs Audit (ENA).

They score each Need from -3 (not met at all) to +3 (very well met). A score below 1 means the Need is not well met and the person is susceptible to stress and therefore mental ill health. When analysing the data, we consider an individual to be meeting a Need well if they are 66% met or higher (i.e., having an average score of 1 or more). An overall measure of good mental wellbeing can therefore be estimated by an average of all Needs combined.

We also ask people about the factors that might be influencing how well their Needs are met at the moment. This includes barriers to meeting Needs; for example, finances or physical health. After Summer, we began collecting data on supporting factors that enable people to meet their Needs, such as their relationships or their community involvement.

And finally, we also ask for a few personal details so that we can understand what is happening within various demographic groups and identify any differences amongst groups; for example, based on sexuality or gender identity.

Our findings inform service development at Suffolk Mind and help us identify opportunities and needs within public services.



The Emotional Needs

Sleep helps calm emotions and repairs our body. We can tell our Need for Sleep is met when we feel rested after waking up

Food & Drink is about feeling you get energy, nutrition and pleasure from your diet – however that looks for you

Control is feeling we are free to make choices for ourselves, and part of meeting this Need is recognising that there are things we can't control

Meaning & Purpose is feeling motivated and that there is a point to getting out of bed in the morning. This can be met through meeting our Need for Achievement, through helping other people, or by being part of something bigger than ourselves

Achievement is met by feeling stretched and challenged by the things we do

Emotional Connection is about feeling connected in smaller, more intimate groups. **Close Relationships** is about feeling we can be completely ourselves around at least one other person (or a pet!)

Movement isn't just about going to the gym or out for a run. Getting our heart rate above resting level just three to four times a week – whether that's a brisk walk, dancing or hoovering – is enough to trigger an endorphin release equivalent in its effect to anti-depressant medication

Security is to do with our need to feel safe and secure in our surroundings. Some examples of where we meet our Need for Security is in our housing situation, financially or in relationships

Privacy is about being able to get time away from distractions and have time to process our thoughts and emotions

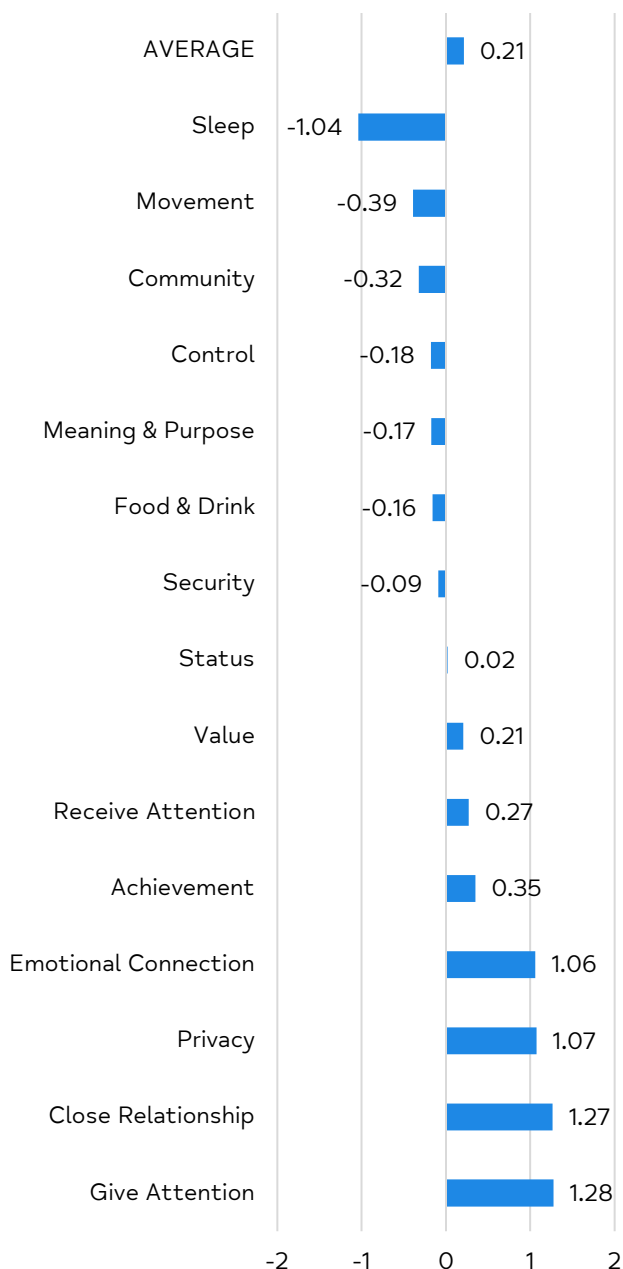
Status is met by feeling appreciated and respected as a person. **Value** is about feeling appreciated for our actions and contributions

Giving and Receiving Attention is about exchanging positive attention with those around us. It is a finite resource, but can be replenished by better meeting the Need for Privacy

Community is met when we feel we're part of a group

How has Suffolk been this Summer?

Summer 2022 (n203)



Here, we have the average ENA score as a whole on very top, and then the 12 Needs are separated into 15 questions in the ENA. These are ordered here in terms of least well met on average at the top of the graph, to most well met towards the bottom of the graph.

We received 203 responses from those within Suffolk between 1st June and 1st September 2022. Of all respondents, just 30.5% are meeting their Needs well overall (i.e., having an overall average score of 1 or more across all Needs combined).

As we can see on the left, emotional Needs relating to interpersonal relationships are among the best met Needs on average. Suffolk's Needs for Close Relationships and Emotional Connection are well met on average – with scores above 1. This shows that people are feeling connected in smaller groups and are accepted for who they are in at least one relationship in their lives.

Giving Attention is the best met Need on average, but it is quite a bit higher than Receiving Attention, which suggests that people may feel they are giving others more attention than they get back. Although this discrepancy is something we often see across our datasets, being able to give and receive positive attention is important, as is being able to recharge after giving other's your attention. One way we can recharge is by meeting our Need for Privacy.

Community is the least well met emotional Need on average. It is also much lower than Emotional Connection and Close Relationships, which indicates that people are feeling less connected in larger groups. 3 in 5 people in Suffolk didn't feel like they were part of a wider community during Summer 2022, compared with less than 1 in 2 for the previous two Summers.

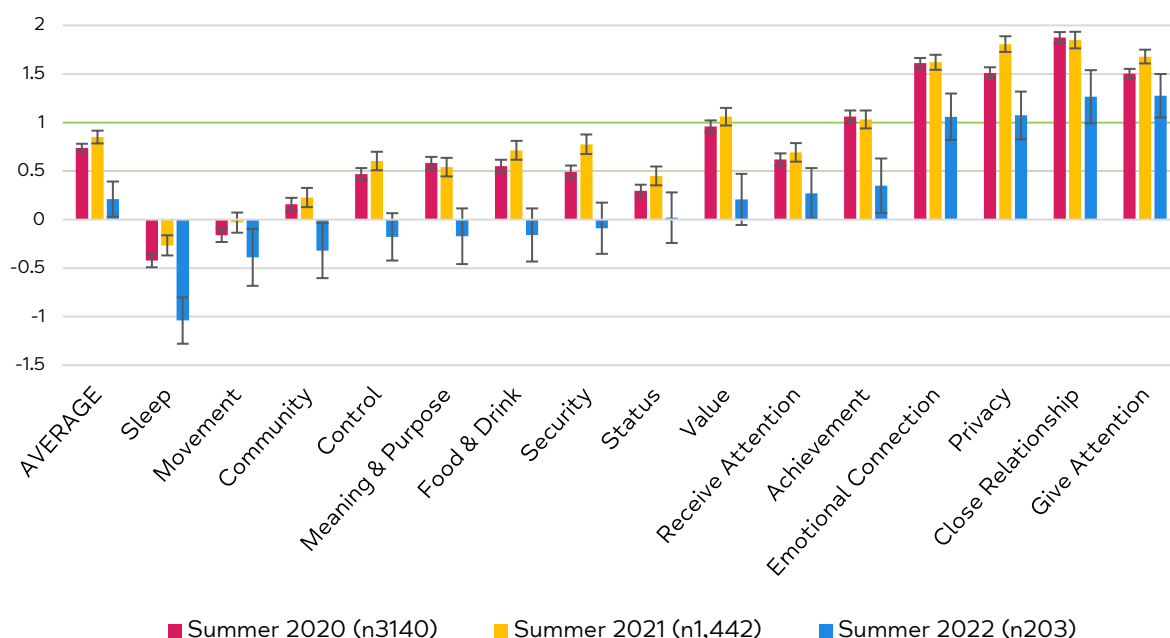
Achievement is a less well met Need on average (falling below 1), suggesting that people in Suffolk may not be feeling as stretched in their daily lives as they would like, and may not feel much internal achievement about their actions. Meaning & Purpose is another less well met Need on average, which indicates that people may not be feeling purposeful about their actions. We can help ourselves to better meet our Need for Meaning & Purpose by contributing towards something bigger than ourselves, and this is reflected by the fact that over the Summer volunteers were meeting their Need for Meaning & Purpose much better than the Suffolk average (with an average score of 1.86, on a scale of -3 to 3). Meaning & Purpose can also be better met by meeting our Need for Achievement, with the two Needs being strongly positively correlated within the data; therefore, we would expect to see that if Achievement is low, so is Meaning & Purpose (and vice versa).

Value indicates how much people feel others appreciate them for their actions and contributions, whereas Status indicates how much people feel others appreciate and respect them as a person. As we can see on the previous page, both Value and Status are less well met Needs on average, although Value is better met than Status. This suggests that, on average, people are feeling that they are more appreciated for their actions than they are as individuals.

Security and Control are also less well met Needs, on average. As will be touched upon in the following sections, external factors may be presenting barriers to Suffolk's ability to meet these Needs, as financial concerns have grown out of the pandemic and persisted with the cost-of-living crisis. In comparison, Privacy is well met on average, being much higher than Security and Control (which are both sitting below 0). This demonstrates that, on average, people feel able to obtain privacy when they need to, and this is important as it allowed us to process our thoughts and emotions throughout the day.

Unfortunately, all the physical Needs (of Sleep, Movement, and Food & Drink) are unmet on average, with Sleep being the least well met Need overall. Although Sleep is often the least met Need across our datasets and it can feel as though there's little we can do to improve our sleep, this is something to keep an eye on. Sleep can be a good indicator of when people are moving towards stress, particularly if they aren't meeting their Needs for Security or Control, and this can make them more vulnerable to mental ill health. Movement and Food & Drink are higher than Sleep but are still unmet Needs, both having average scores falling into the negatives.

Wellbeing by Summer



How does wellbeing compare to previous Summers?

According to data collected since 2020, Suffolk's wellbeing has reached a new low this Summer compared to previous years. During Summer 2020, 47% of respondents from Suffolk were meeting their Needs well overall (i.e., scoring 1 or more across all of their Needs combines). This increased slightly to 50% in Summer 2021, as we saw Covid restrictions fully ease. This upward trajectory did not, however, continue into Summer 2022, and we have instead seen a decrease to just 31% of people meeting their Needs well overall.

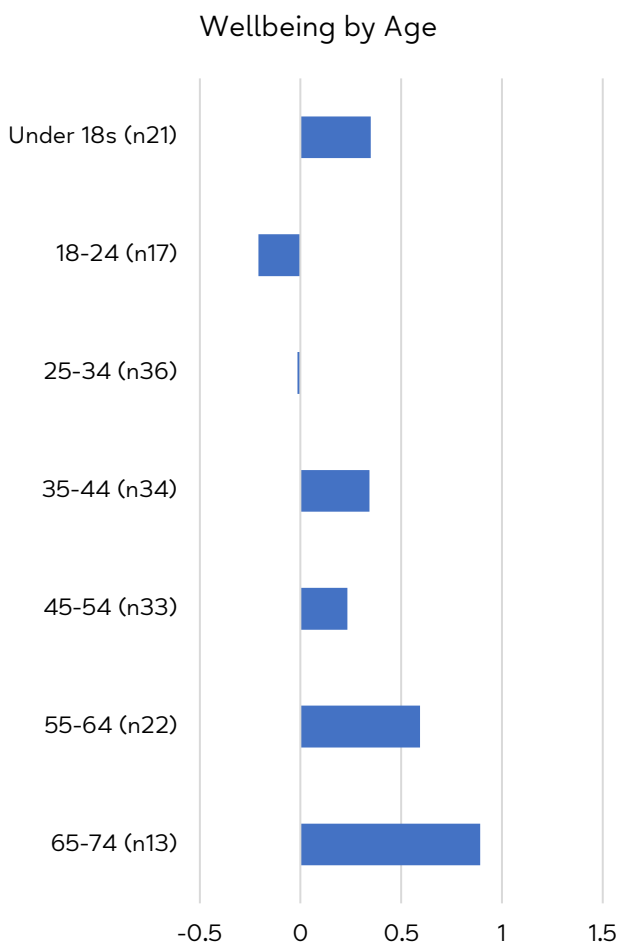
Despite the sample size for Summer 2022 being much smaller than previous years (being less than one tenth of the sample size for Summer 2020), we have used confidence intervals to determine whether the differences in wellbeing are statistically significant. The error bars above indicate the values we would expect our averages to fall within if we repeated this research. We used a 95% confidence interval; therefore, we can be 95% certain that the averages would fall within these ranges, if we were able to go back and collect data on Summer wellbeing per year again.

Based on the above results, we can say with 95% certainty that the difference between Suffolk's overall average wellbeing each Summer is statistically significant. If we look at statistically significant differences in how well each Need is met, during Summer 2022 Suffolk was meeting 12 of the 15 Needs significantly less well than in Summer 2020 or Summer 2021.

During this Summer, some of Suffolk's previously well met Needs became less well met on average (falling below 1). Value and Achievement took a considerable hit, becoming less well met Needs on average. The biggest barriers to Suffolk meeting its Need for Value were individuals' relationships (65%, n50), followed by their work situation (51%, n39). The biggest obstacles to meeting the Need for Achievement were people's work situations (57%, n39), followed equally by their financial situations and physical or mental health (both 46%, n31).

The least well met emotional Needs have also changed slightly over the years, with Status no longer being amongst the three worst met emotional Needs on average, as it was in Summer 2020 and 2021, despite becoming less well met overall.

How well are different demographic groups?



Wellbeing by age

Those aged between 18 and 24 were the least well in Suffolk on average over Summer, when compared with other age groups. Only 11.76% of respondents aged 18-24 were meeting their Needs well overall, compared with 53.85% of those aged between 65 and 74 meeting their Needs well.

Community and Control were the least well met emotional Needs on average, amongst of 18- to 24-year-olds. The most significant barriers to this age group meeting their Need for Control were their work and financial situations, with 73% (n8) of those who identified barriers believing these factors hindered their ability to feel in control of their lives and the decisions they make. These were also the top two barriers identified by those aged between 25 and 34, who weren't meeting their Need for Control well (52%, n11 for both).

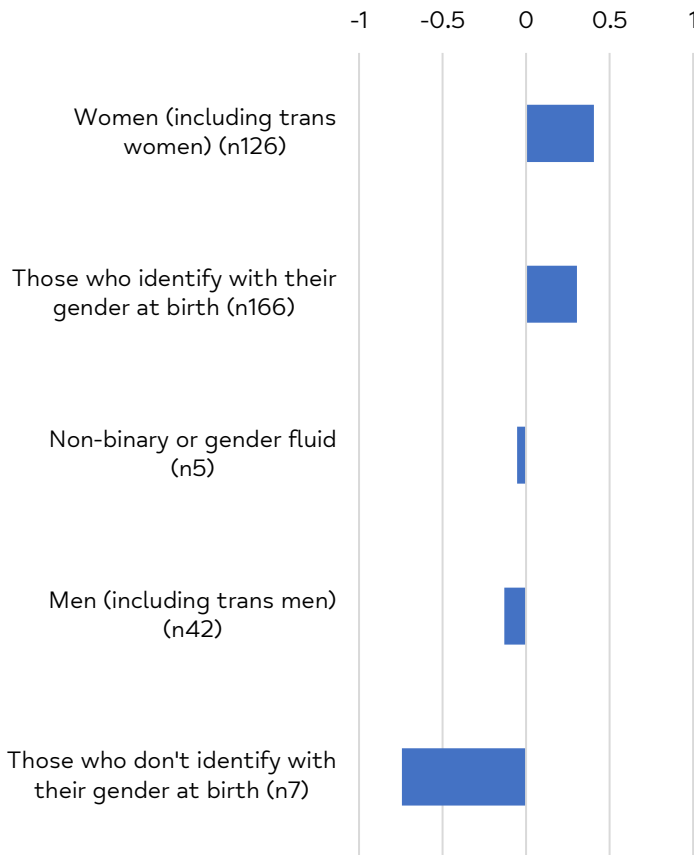
The biggest barrier identified by respondents aged between 18 and 34, who weren't their Need for Community well, was their community involvement (or lack thereof) (57%, n17), followed by their relationships (37%, n11), and their work and financial situations (both 30%, n9).

Over Summer, those aged 65 to 74 were meeting their Needs the most well out of all age groups on average. Yet their overall average score fell below 1, at 0.89, demonstrating that even the most well age group was still not meeting its Needs well on average. However, this age group was meeting 7 of the 15 Needs well on average, compared with 18 to 24 years old meeting just 3 of their Needs well on average. All age groups were struggling to meet their physical Needs well, with the biggest barrier for each of the three physical Needs being people's physical or mental health.

Since Summer, we have started collected data on supporting factors (i.e., factors that enable individuals to meet their Needs well) and not just barriers to meeting Needs. Therefore, in future, we can determine what may be supporting those who are most well to meet their Needs.

Where we receive fewer than 3 responses per reportable group, we do not report on the average wellbeing of this group – to ensure all responses remain anonymous.

Wellbeing by Gender Identity



Wellbeing by gender identity and sexuality

As we can see on the left, women (including trans women) have higher average wellbeing than men (including trans men). Only 37.3% of women are meeting their Needs well overall, and just 21.43% of men. We are keen to hear more from men, as this is a group we typically find harder to reach – with our sample size for women being three times greater than it is for men.

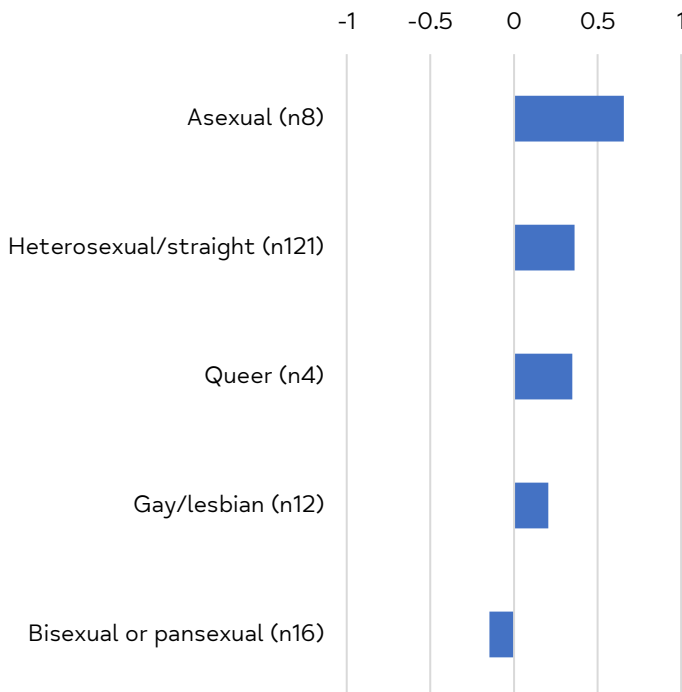
Individuals who do not identify with their gender at birth are, on average, the least well compared to other gender identities. This is followed by men, and individuals who identify as non-binary or gender fluid.

Status, Community, and Meaning & Purpose are some of the least well met emotional Needs amongst those who do not identify with their gender at birth.

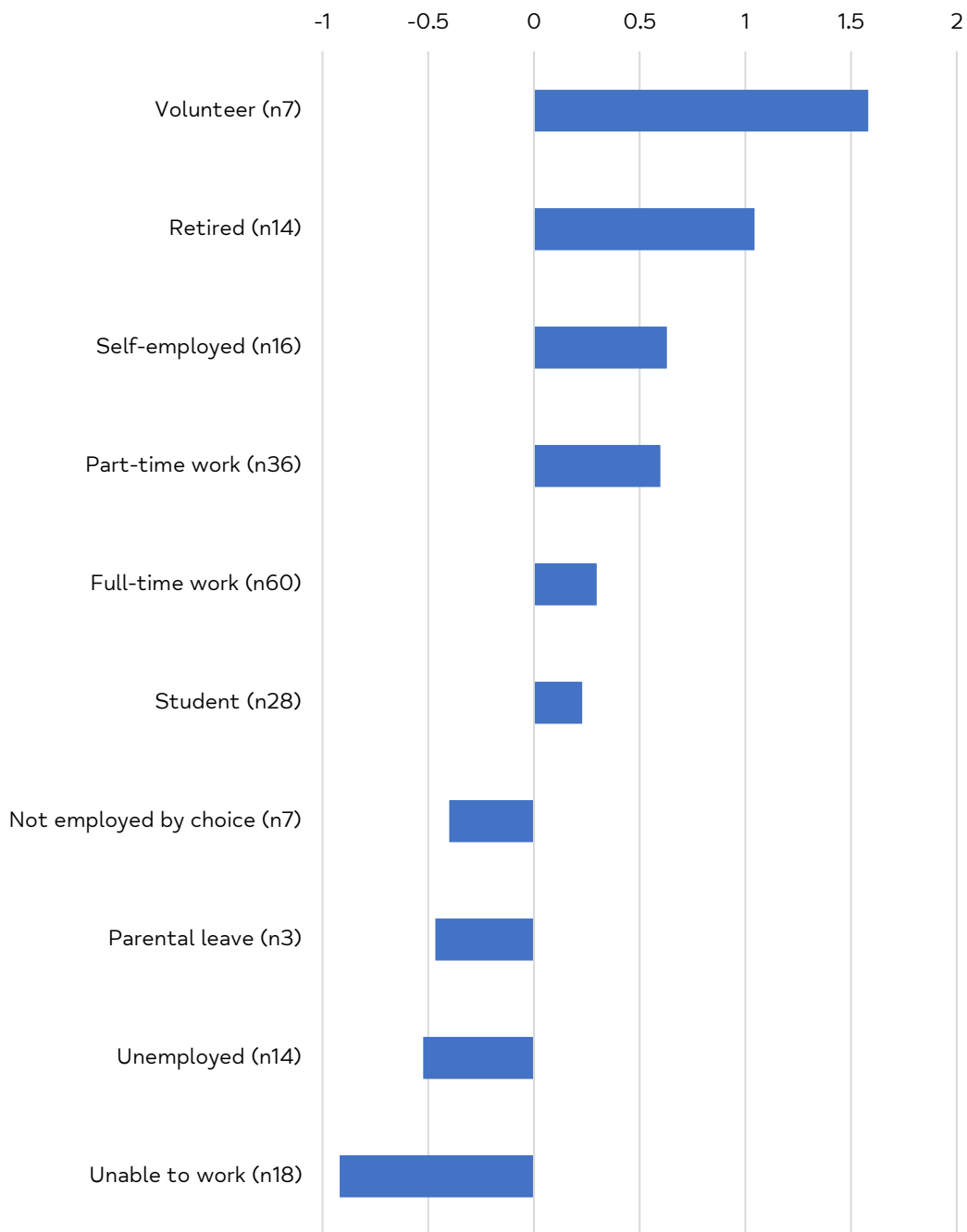
Among those who weren't meeting their Needs for Status and Community well, the biggest barriers identified by respondents were their community involvement (60%, n3 for both) and their relationships (60%, n3 and 80%, n4, respectively). The most significant barriers to meeting their Need for Meaning & Purpose were individuals' relationships (60%, n3) and work situations (60%, n3).

However, our data on individuals who do not identify with their gender at birth and/or are non-binary or gender fluid is limited, with just 12 responses in total during Summer 2022. It may not, therefore, be representative of the wider community. However, we have since embarked on a project, alongside Suffolk County Council, to gain a greater understanding of wellbeing amongst the LGBTQ+ community in Suffolk. We are keen to hear from the LGBTQ+ community, and wish to gather more data on trans, non-binary, or gender fluid individuals, so [please do complete our ENA if this is of interest.](#)

Wellbeing by Sexuality



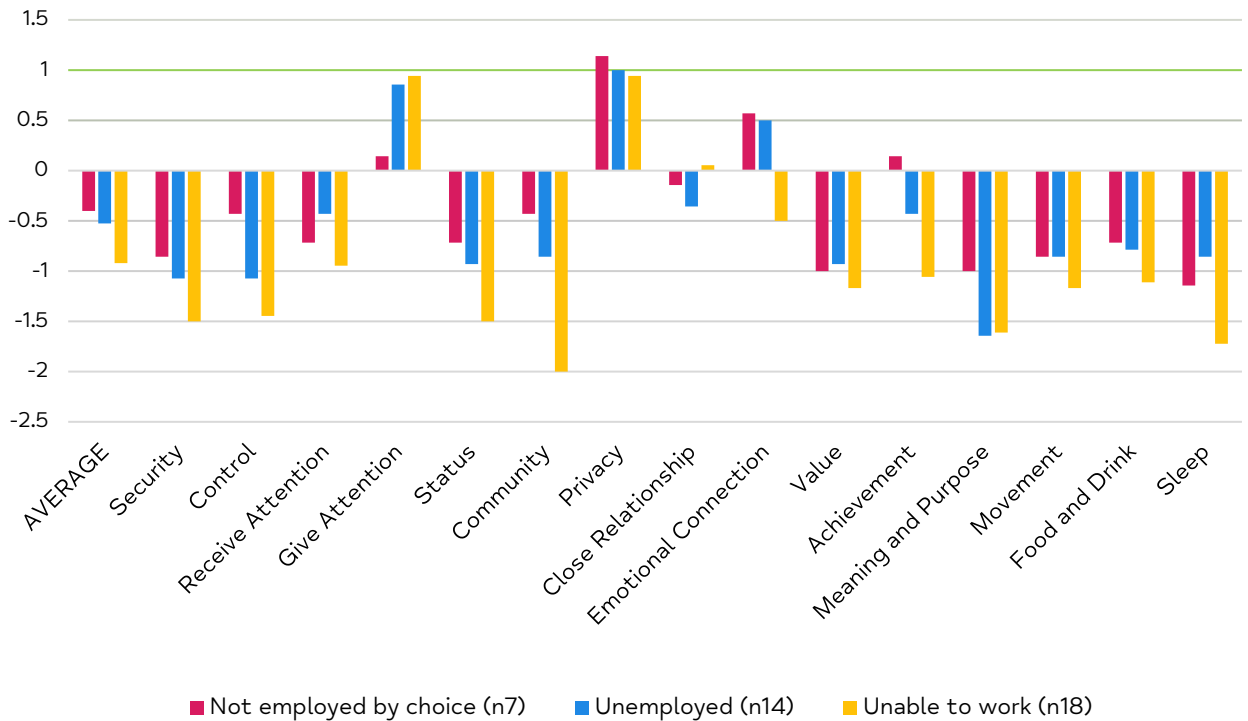
Wellbeing by Economic Status



Wellbeing by employment status

Those who are unemployed or unable to work are meeting their Needs the least well, on average, compared with other economic statuses. In contrast to 85.71% of volunteers meeting their Needs well overall, only 21.43% of unemployed respondents and 11.11% of those unable to work are meeting their Needs well overall.

Average wellbeing for those not in employment



If we look at average wellbeing amongst those who aren't in employment, including those not employed by choice, unemployed, or unable to work, we can see that people who are unable to work are the least well on average. Those who are unable to work aren't meeting any Needs well on average, while those who are unemployed or not employed by choice are only meeting their Need for Privacy well on average. Despite those who are not employed by choice being the most well out of these three groups, only 28.57% are meeting their Needs well and they are still much less well than those with other economic statuses (including those who are self-employed, retired, or volunteers).

Meaning & Purpose is particularly less well met amongst those who are unemployed or unable to work, on average. The biggest barriers to Meaning & Purpose, among unemployed respondents who weren't meeting this Need well, are people's financial situations and their relationships (63%, n5 for both). Meaning & Purpose is an important Need for individuals to stay well, and can often be maintained through continuous growth and contributing towards something bigger than ourselves. Yet, work (or a lack thereof) can present a significant barrier to meeting this Need, with people's work situations being amongst the top barriers identified by Suffolk respondents who weren't meeting their Need for Meaning & Purpose well (58%, n45, of those who identified barriers to meeting this Need).

Who is underrepresented in our data?

We collect information on a number of demographic factors, alongside the Emotional Needs Audit (ENA) data, including gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity and nationality, economic status, and income. Of those who chose to complete the demographic questions alongside our ENA, we can see that some demographics are underrepresented in our data, and this is something we are eager to change.

Men (including trans men) made up just 20.7% of respondents in Suffolk throughout Summer 2022, despite making up over 49% of the Suffolk population.¹

Those aged between 18 and 24 years old amounted to just 8.4% of respondents. However, this is more proportionate to the Suffolk population, with 15 to 24 years olds making up 10.2% of people in Suffolk.

We struggled to hear from a range of ethnicities or nationalities, with zero respondents identifying as black, despite accounting for 1.3% of Suffolk's population. Similarly, just 1.5% of respondents identified as Asian, despite making up 2.3% of the local population. Compared with Suffolk's population, this means we have disproportionately low response rates from Black and Asian individuals. Although it is worth noting that not everyone chooses to answer our demographic questions, which are entirely optional in our ENA, as only 36.5% of respondents identified as white (yet constitute 93.1% of the Suffolk population).

We also did not receive any responses from the GRT community throughout Summer.

Could you help us connect with individuals who are less represented in our data? If so, please reach out to us on Research@suffolkmind.org.uk

¹ According to 2021 census data, available to view at Suffolk Observatory, [Population Report for Suffolk](#)

Research and Evaluation Consultancy

Mental Health Research Consultancy

Are you an organisation looking to gather actionable insights on the mental wellbeing of your staff, a service or service users, or a community or locality? Suffolk Mind's Research Consultant will work with you, tailoring the research to your needs, and analysing and presenting the information in a way that's meaningful and actional to you.

Our unique approach to mental wellbeing means that the process of gathering data enables research subjects to reflect on and learn about their emotional Needs. With our support and signposting options, participants will be supported throughout.

Once data collection concludes, we are able to drill down into the data, examining the areas of particular interest to you.

Suffolk Mind's Mental Health Experts are also able to provide additional insight on your findings, and with our large body of regional data on mental wellbeing, we are able to compare and contextualise your results to your local area. We will share results of the research in the way that is most useful to you. We offer consultancy for short, one-off projects, or ongoing, periodic research.

Our Consultant can visit or arrange to meet you to:

- Help design an evaluation or research framework to meet the needs of your organisation or that of your funders
- Develop the research tools required; be they questionnaires, interviews or case study guides
- Advise on conduct
- Present the findings including reports, infographics, videos and much more
- Help you implement the results. We work with you to find the best use the of research results enabling you to grow and respond
- Reporting on your findings. For example, we can help you to illustrate the social value of the work you are doing, show your intervention has had a lasting behavioural affect, or demonstrate health and wellbeing of beneficiaries has improved
- Ethical research and evaluation

Population research

We have extensive experience in researching whole or part populations; this includes evaluating mental health across the county of Suffolk and mapping how well geographical areas or different demographics are meeting their Needs. We are currently embarking on a project alongside Suffolk County Council to better understanding wellbeing in Suffolk, and our findings will be used to improve wellbeing in the county.

Service evaluation

Our expertise in the mental health and wellbeing field is embedded in our research, evaluation, and monitoring work. We work with organisations running services that require ongoing research and evaluation to measure the impact, for internal purposes and to meet funding requirements. At Suffolk Mind we evaluate all of our services including Workplace Wellbeing, Waves and Suffolk Work Well. This helps us to evaluate the quality and effectiveness across Suffolk Mind and the impact we have on individual service users, whilst continually monitoring and improving each service.

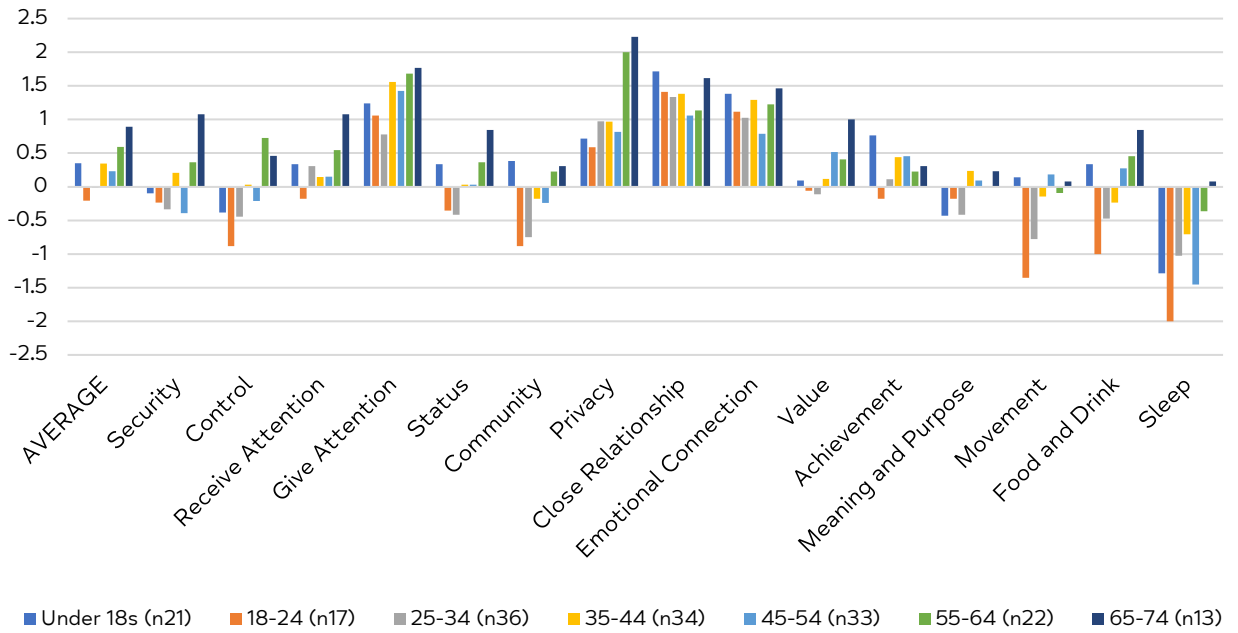
Organisations

Suffolk Mind's Wellbeing Culture Programme helps to create a healthy workplace culture, which enables you and your colleagues to stay well and perform optimally.

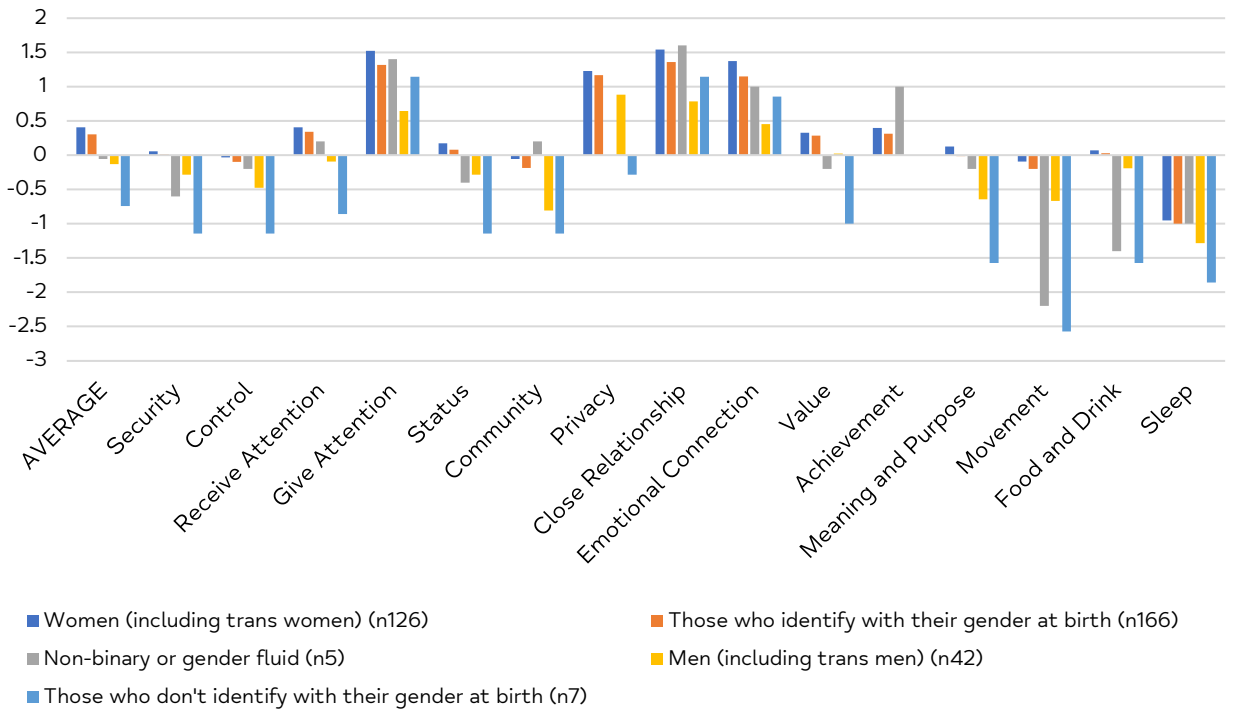
Book an initial appointment today by emailing naomi.simons@suffolkmind.org.uk.

Appendix

Wellbeing by Age

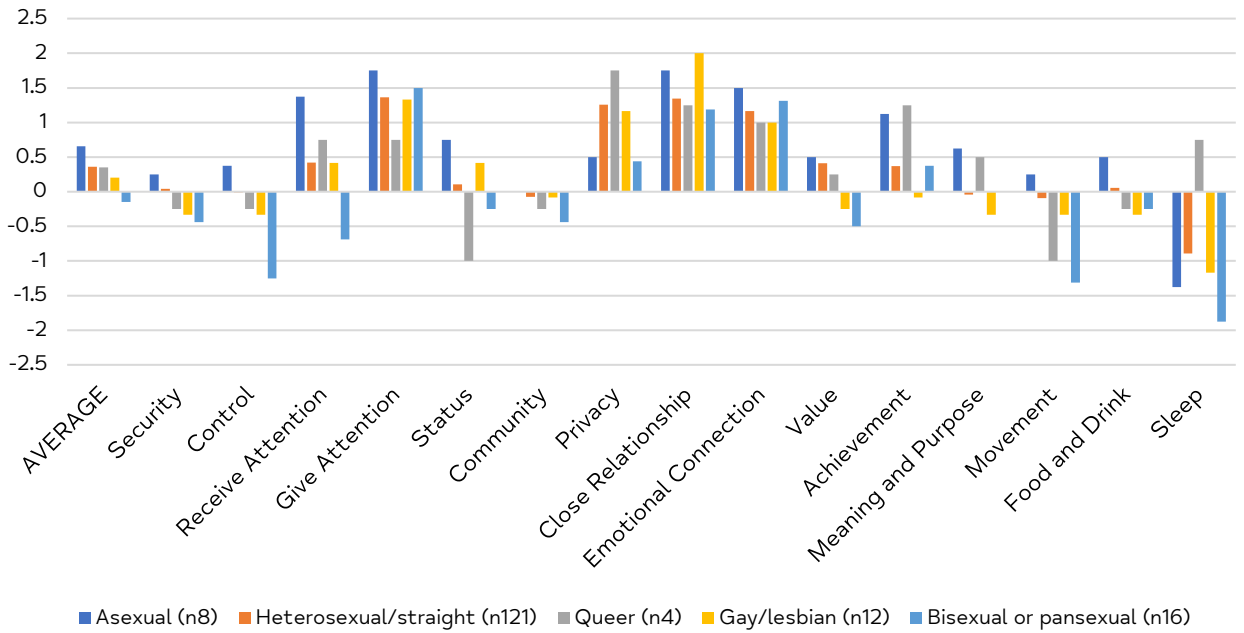


Wellbeing by Gender & Gender Identity

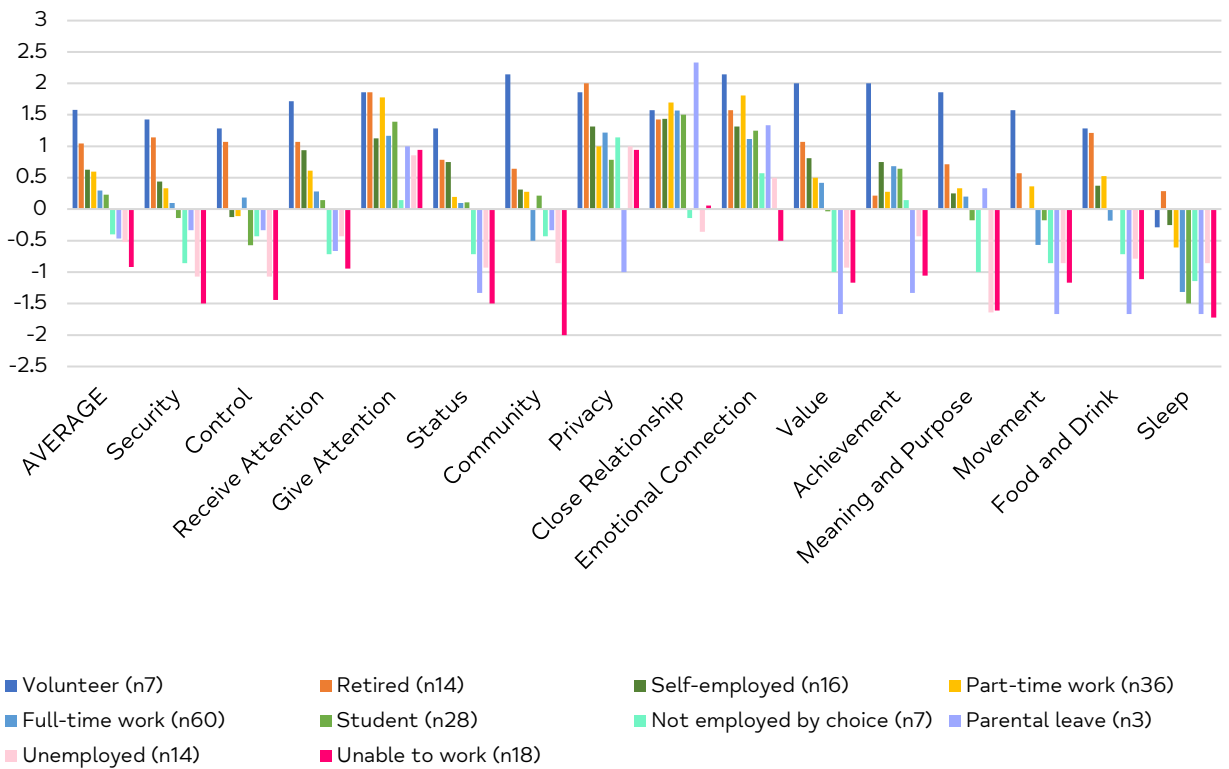


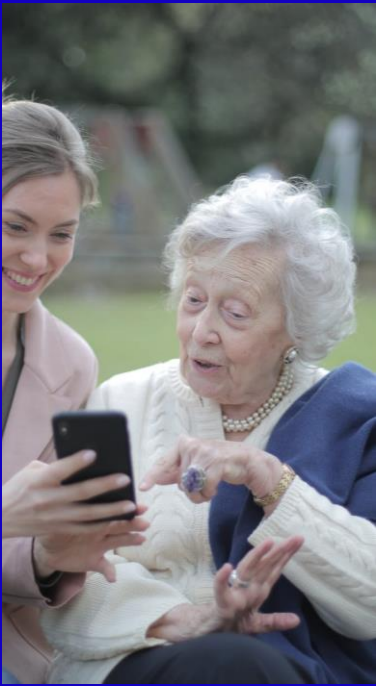
Appendix

Wellbeing by Sexuality



Wellbeing by Economic Status





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