



Wellbeing and Sustainability Measure for London

Understanding quality of life in the capital

May 2022



Executive summary

Qualitative research was undertaken with Londoners over December 2021 to January 2022 to help inform the development of the Wellbeing and Sustainability Measure for London. The aim of the research was to gather an up-to-date and London-wide view as to the most important aspects of quality of life for Londoners, to ensure the Measure is specific to London and Londoners. The research included exploratory digital diaries with 30 Londoners followed by four video focus groups. The key findings are set out below:

- Londoners see quality of life as two levels: having an ‘essential’ and then a ‘good’ quality of life
- The pandemic led to a greater appreciation of community and the outdoors. It also showed what ‘success’ could look like, in certain aspects of life in London, for example the emptier streets, peace and quiet, and less congested public transport
- There are many features of London that Londoners appreciate, such as its cultural offering, diversity, public transport, and local amenities. However, cost of living, traffic, and crime are the key downsides and are seen to be particularly pronounced in London
- This qualitative research identified a number of key domains to consider when creating a Wellbeing and Sustainability Measure for London:
 - Foremost, health and wellbeing, personal finances, housing, and work and employment are seen to be crucial to quality of life in London and are the most important domains to include in a Measure
 - Transport, environment, neighbourhoods, public services and government, people and communities, and crime and safety are also important to quality of life, but their ranking varied among participants
- The research also identified some key considerations when developing the Measure:
 - Access and equality were highlighted throughout the research and should be reflected in the domains
 - There is some caution about including Londoners’ behaviours in the measure
 - Geography is seen as the key structural factor affecting quality of life. As such, the Measure should allow comparisons by geography



Introduction



Background to the research

Following the Mayor's commitment in his 2021 manifesto, the GLA City Intelligence Unit were tasked with producing a Wellbeing and Sustainability Measure for London.

Qualitative research was conducted with Londoners to help inform the development of the Measure. The objective of the research was to gather an up-to-date and London-wide view as to the most important aspects of quality of life* for Londoners. This was to help ensure the Measure is specific to London and Londoners.

Alongside the qualitative research, the GLA conducted community engagement to include the experiences of Londoners who are often underrepresented in research. This report sets out the key findings from the qualitative research and includes key insight from the community engagement.

* this report uses the term 'quality of life' throughout. Although quality of life and wellbeing are closely related, we referred to quality of life in the research to ensure participants focussed on the broader aspects affecting their lives rather than the perhaps narrower scope of 'mental wellbeing' or 'mental health and wellbeing'

*“Now is also the right time to look afresh at how we measure our success as a city. For years, we’ve measured prosperity — like most cities and countries — in terms of material wealth that is generated by our economic activity. But the strength, sustainability and wellbeing of our economy and society are not currently properly reflected. So I’ll work with others to establish a new **measure of wellbeing in London** as the core indicator of our city’s success as a place to work and live for all its residents.”*

Overview of the research

The qualitative research was split into two phases and findings from those phases form the bulk of this report. Community engagement took place alongside this to complement the qualitative research, and key findings have been included throughout (see the full report [here](#)).



Exploratory digital diaries (Dec 2021)

- 2-week digital exercise conducted using an online qualitative research platform (Recollective) to explore what is important to quality of life for Londoners
- 30 Londoners took part, recruited to include a broad cross-section of Londoners



Focus groups (Jan 2022)

- 90-minute video focus groups to discuss a draft Measure and test out key domains and indicators
- 18 participants from the first phase took part in the groups



Community engagement (Jan 2022)

- 2 community engagement sessions to explore quality of life for Londoners
- 20 community groups participated, representing a variety of communities across London



Understanding quality of life

When asked what quality of life means to them, Londoners initially think about two levels: an 'essential' and then a 'good' quality of life

Essential (what you need)

- Being healthy – physically (free of pain and being able to live independently) and mentally
- Timely access to good quality and free essential services – notably healthcare and education
- Decent accommodation – warm, safe, not cramped, and comfortable
- Financial and job security – not having to worry about bills or buying food
- Social support – not feeling isolated or lonely and having friends, family, or a partner to support you

“The things that come to mind when I think of the term ‘quality of life’ would be having access to the essentials that allow us to live a healthy and comfortable life.”

Good (a little bit more)

- + Spending time with friends and family
- + Being able to do hobbies and things you enjoy
- + Job satisfaction and work-life balance
- + Money to treat yourself occasionally
- + A sense of community

“A good quality of life, according to me, is not just having the essentials but having a little bit more than that.”

Londoners value the city's activities, diversity, public transport, and local amenities

When asked what they like most about living in London, and what is unique when compared to life in other towns or cities in the UK, participants reflected on:

- The **variety of things to do and see** in London – art and culture, nightlife, restaurants, shopping, attractions etc.
- The **diversity and acceptance** – the multi-culturalism, thriving communities (e.g. LGBTQ+) and tolerance
- The **public transport** – always close to a station or bus stop, being able to travel anywhere in London (or outside of London), the cost compared to other towns and cities
- The **easy access to shops and amenities** – the proximity, choice, opening hours, and diversity of London's high streets and town centres
- The **opportunities for work and education** – the availability and variety of jobs, sectors, and courses

Qualitative research found that these are all things Londoners to an extent take for granted and realise the importance of when outside of London.

“Life is better because there are more opportunities to discover new places and activities and meet interesting people... There are many events and a big cultural offer and because it is so large there are always new spaces and changes to explore.”

“I really like the diversity and I don't feel like an outcast. Where I grew up, it was not very diverse and I could not wait to leave to come to London.”

“Many ethnic community shops and groceries that allow people to be in touch with their cultural background.”

“Travel in London is definitely better, as public transport is unavailable after midnight elsewhere. Public transport is also far more regular, and I appreciate that buses are cheaper here too.”

While the cost of living and inequality were by far the biggest downside of living in London

On the flip-side, Londoners readily acknowledge the **high cost of living** (especially rent and property prices, despite higher salaries) and **inequality** as the main downside of living in London. For some, this has a big impact on quality of life.

Other challenges or issues in London, which are seen to be key factors affecting quality of life for Londoners specifically include:

- **Traffic** – especially the proximity to residential areas with associated impacts of air pollution and noise
- **Housing** – access to good quality and appropriate housing with sufficient space
- **Poverty** – this was discussed as a significant challenge for some Londoners, with specific reference to food poverty
- **Crime** – specifically knife crime and risk for young people as well as women's safety at night
- **Social networks** – some commented on the challenges of being away from their family (especially younger participants), the difficulty finding friends (those new to London), the lack of friends in their local area, and the lack of places to meet and connect with others

Some Londoners accept these as a compromise for the positives on the previous page, whereas for others the above make them question whether quality of life is better or worse living in London.

“Living in London is expensive. Rent, childcare, council tax, etc. Its not always easy to manage and a lot of people, myself included, have struggled to make ends meet.”

“I really want to buy our dream home. Unfortunately, the type of home I want seems completely out of reach in London and we would possibly have to leave the city.”

“Knife crime is a major concern and worry in London. I understand it happens everywhere, but it just feels amplified here. I have three young boys and I'm constantly thinking about this and whether we should move because of this reason.”

“There is also more congestion and air pollution here, and it is slightly overpopulated.”

The 'hustle and bustle' of life in a city highlights the importance of peace and quiet for quality of life

Throughout the research, Londoners praised the culture, nightlife, and 'buzz' of London. They also value the aspects that make London a 24-hour(ish) city; with late night venues, late shop opening hours, and 24-hour transport. These are seen as important for the quality of life for many participants, especially younger Londoners.

However, participants talked about **fast pace of life and overcrowding** in London, whether traffic, crowds, busy public transport, or the 'rat race'. This became especially apparent when thinking about other towns and cities in the UK, where participants reflected on a slower and calmer pace of life and the easier access to nature.

Participants do not necessarily want the 'buzz' to go away, but some of the associated impacts affect Londoners' quality of life – noise, rubbish, stress, and anxiety. This is particularly true for those who live on or close to high streets and busy roads. For this reason, **access to green and open spaces** is crucial for many Londoners, to provide respite and peace and quiet. This is also something Londoners have come to value more as a result of the lockdowns. Though the ability to access these spaces and experience peace and quiet can vary considerably among Londoners, based on where in London they live.

"I'm not a fan of the constant noise of traffic outside, and sirens, because I'm a light sleeper. I don't like when places are overcrowded, i.e. tube stations at rush hour, as it makes me feel anxious and claustrophobic."

"I also feel like outside London has a better quality of living. Its a slower life and people seem to have more time for each other."

"Other towns in the UK...they do provide you with a break from London life because London constantly keeps on pushing you [...] to be as productive as possible to be a cog in the wheel. So, yeah, I think definitely these other towns provide you with a sense of calmness and peace that you don't get in London."

Londoners have a greater appreciation of community and the outdoors since the pandemic

Participants reflected on the **community spirit and offers of support** in their local area during the first lockdown – this included mutual aid groups and support to those marginalised and vulnerable, such as food delivery services. Even if participants themselves weren't active in their community, or in need of support, there was an appreciation of togetherness.

There is also greater appreciation of **green spaces** and **spending time outdoors** due to the time spent in lockdowns.

Participants also positively reflected on:

- Proximity to essential **shops and amenities** in their area
- The quietness, stillness, and **empty streets** – being able to explore London in that way, especially those living centrally
- Spending **more time** with family, friends, or leisure
- Greater appreciation of **friends and family**
- Greater appreciation of **being healthy**
- Good (and quiet) **public transport** for those who needed it
- Greater **appreciation of London** itself – the restaurants, pubs, attractions, activities that Londoners missed

“People coming together to boost morale...also a sense of community with the appreciation of health workers and those on the frontline.”

“I also appreciated local green areas to walk in and convenience of food stores within walking distance.”

“My favourite thing about living in London during this time was how empty the streets were. I loved going out for walks (when it was permitted) and appreciating the beauty of London without the noise of traffic and busy streets.”

“I liked the lack of traffic and continued provision of buses and trains which were not crowded once I started to use them again.”

Though the pandemic created its challenges, or exacerbated existing ones

This came out strongly through the community engagement, where participants reflected on some of the challenges experienced during the pandemic especially among marginalised groups. These included:

- The **exacerbation of poverty (including food poverty) and inequality** amongst those already disadvantaged in society and experiences of poverty amongst individuals not previously affected
- Increase in **hate crimes** and racism, specifically towards East and South East Asian communities
- Rise in **mental health** issues, especially amongst children and young people
- Difficulties **accessing services and support, especially health and mental health services**, due to pressures and lack of capacity leading to lengthy waiting times or suspension of services – adding pressure to already stretched service provision
- The move to online service provision which posed new challenges for **digitally excluded** Londoners in accessing services, such as GP services, accessing information about support offers, staying in touch with people, buying things etc.

“NHS mental health services are difficult to access, especially for people newly arrived in the UK and are on repeat medication prescriptions.”

“A lot of young people / children were not able to interact in person...[this] caused a lot of mental health issues.”

“Parents struggling to support their children from home, put food on the table, engage them.”

“Stigma around the Asian population for spreading Covid, it’s used as an excuse for discrimination.”

“...services are stretched and do not have the capacity and/or funding to support individuals.”

The pandemic also highlighted the importance of social cohesion and government

Although participants acknowledged a sense of community and collective spirit during the first lockdown, demonstrated by 'Clap for Carers' and mutual aid, the most cited downside of living in London during the pandemic was **frustration with others** – those not wearing face-masks, those breaking the rules, or those creating or spreading misinformation.

Government satisfaction and trust and were also raised throughout the research, mostly in relation to the Government's Covid-19 response but also over events and issues taking place during the pandemic such as Government scandals, free school meals, Black Lives Matter and instances of racial discrimination by the police. Some participants reflected on experiences that hinder trust and satisfaction such as negative stereotyping by institutions and the inability to access services and opportunities, for example by migrants due to barriers within the immigration system. Though others also reflected on the positive freedoms and rights set by Government such as same-sex marriage.

The issues above reveal the role that other individuals and government have on quality of life – not just the impact on their actions, but also the broader feeling of satisfaction and shared values within society.

“London is quite crowded and there is a significant proportion of selfish people who refuse to wear masks or abide by social distancing rules.”

“A bad government can destroy our quality of life.”

“I thought how the government handled the school lunches earlier this year and last year was absolutely appalling, and the way they treated the NHS throughout the pandemic is despicable.”

Spending time with others and enjoying leisure time are key for one's quality of life

This came out throughout the research but was evident when participants were asked about their highlights over the past week and month, which mostly revolved around spending time with friends and family or leisure activities – celebrating a birthday or baptism, going to a wedding, visiting friends, seeing family for the first time in a while, going on a night out, going out for dinner, going away for the weekend, going to a show, going on a date, joining a dance class, starting volunteering, starting a new hobby, exploring new areas of London etc.

These are all things that create happiness for participants and lead to the 'good' level of quality of life. Though participants identified barriers to doing leisure activities:

- **Having the money** – as mentioned, cost of living is a key issue for Londoners, and many do not have the money to regularly do all the things they enjoy and make the most of what London has to offer
- **Having the time** – regardless of cost, some said they simply do not have much spare time to enjoy themselves whether through working long, tiring, or anti-social hours, or household chores, caring, or other requirements
- **Accessing spaces** – irrespective of cost and time, some said that due to the lack of spaces to connect in their local area and lack of leisure amenities such as community centres and youth centres, their ability to spend leisure time with others was restricted.

“The term ‘quality of life’ to me means having the time to do the things that I really enjoy doing.”

“The past month has been pretty good. I've been able to really enjoy London. I tried out a new dance class, I went to a brilliant exhibition.”

“A high I guess was I recently went to Yorkshire saw a few friends and that was really, really enjoyable. Just good to catch up and see new places and do things which is not always what I'd be doing every single weekend...over the past month I've [also] been exploring London quite a lot.”

“My daughter was baptised on the weekend. And so that was really nice, having all the family together and friends and we had a really lovely Sunday roast in the pub after. So that was the highlight of my month.”

Future hopes and concerns are centred on health, work, finances, housing, poverty (and Covid)

We asked participants what their key hopes and concerns over the next few years are:

- **Health** – being/remaining fit and healthy (as well as friends and family) and knowing they can access key services. There are concerns among older participants about their health and ability to live life as they currently do.
- **Work** – to find work, to be earning more, have progressed at work, and (especially among younger participants) have moved into a job or sector they enjoy or started up a business. Though there is some pessimism and concerns around job security
- **Finances** – feeling more financially secure, having less debt, having money to enjoy life (especially for retirement), receiving sufficient financial support, having more savings (e.g. to buy a house or flat)
- **Housing** – to be able to buy a home, move into a bigger home, move to a better area, live in a safe and comfortable home, and to not have to worry about poor landlords or housing offers
- **Poverty** – increased poverty was a key concern from the community engagement, as well as access to food, the ability to afford basic items and expenditures, and financial support
- **Covid** – many participants talked about the pandemic and hope to see life return to normal, but there are concerns about new variants

“I definitely do not want to be working in hospitality anymore. In fact, it's my aim to get out of it in 2022. In 2025, I'll be 41 years old. I'd like to be doing something that makes me happy and I enjoy.”

“I want to have saved for our home deposit and be in a position to look at buying our forever home.”

“I would like to think that I will not be worrying about the same issues I do today. That I will be back in full time employment and financially stable. That I will be able to enjoy holidays, trips and going out again.”



Developing the Measure

Research identified key determinants of quality of life* to consider when creating a Wellbeing and Sustainability Measure for London



Health and wellbeing

Happiness; Life satisfaction; Being able to carry out day-to-day activities; Access to services (A&E, GP, and mental health waiting times)



Personal finances

Cost of living; Disposable income; Savings; Financial security; Financial education; Household and food poverty



Housing

Affordability (renting and buying); Quality (warm, safe, spacious); Homelessness



Work and employment

Pay; Employment opportunities; Working hours / work-life balance; Job satisfaction; Progression; Representation (e.g. ethnicity, gender, disability)



Public transport

Cost; Proximity; Congestion; Frequency and duration; Safety



Neighbourhoods

Proximity to essential shops and amenities; Health of the high street / town centre; Places for people to connect (community centres and youth centres)



People and communities

Social interaction; Loneliness and isolation; Belonging; Community cohesion; Volunteering; Discrimination and prejudice



Environment

Traffic; Air quality; Noise; Access to green space; Cleanliness / litter



Public services and government

Trust in government; Satisfaction with local authorities; Sense of freedom and equality; Accessible public services; Relationships with public institutions



Crime and safety

Sense of safety; Crime (violent / theft); Street lighting; Police satisfaction / trust

*Health and wellbeing, Personal finances, Housing, and Work and Employment were consistently ranked throughout the qualitative research as being most important for quality of life. The level of importance of the remaining domains varied by participant.

1. Health and wellbeing

This came out in both phases of the research as being one of, if not the, most important domain to include in the measure.

The key indicators to include are:

- Happiness
- Life satisfaction
- Being able to carry out day-to-day activities
- Access to services (A&E, GP, mental health waiting times)

This strongly interlinks with some of the other domains, notably personal finances, housing, and people and communities.

For older participants, 'day-to-day activities' was seen more as being able to live independently and was particularly important for their quality of life.

Although happiness is key and is seen as a good proxy for general wellbeing, some questioned the reliance on a single reading in time and were unsure how this would be measured. Others wanted more explicit reference to mental health.

None mentioned life expectancy or specific health outcomes, such as cancer outcomes, but participants instead referred more day-to-day health and wellbeing without pain or illness.



2. Personal finances

Alongside health and wellbeing, this is also seen to be one of the most important domains. As mentioned, cost of living is seen to be a key downside of life in London – despite the employment opportunities and higher wages than elsewhere in the country. Participants felt that the measure needed to reflect the financial reality of living in London.

This is broken down into:

- Cost of living
- Disposable income
- Amount of savings
- Financial security
- Financial education
- Household and food poverty

Again, this also strongly interlinks with some of the other domains, notably health and wellbeing and housing.

Financial education was not mentioned in phase one of the qualitative research but was discussed in all focus groups in phase two – especially in relation to young people, for example the importance of being taught how to manage finances at school.



3. Housing

This was cited among the most important domains, after health and wellbeing and personal finances.

This is broken down into:

- Affordability (both renting and buying property)
- Quality (warm, safe, spacious, appropriate, and ideally outdoor space)
- Homelessness

This is closely linked with personal finances, as housing is seen to be the number one driver of cost of living in London as well as homelessness. The ability to save and sense of financial security is also heavily influenced by the cost of renting.

When discussing affordability of housing, participants often talked about the cost of housing in relation to incomes and the importance of looking at both pay and housing together.

Housing was mostly discussed in an aspirational sense, with the goal being to own a home (with particular concerns for younger Londoners). The provision of social housing was mentioned by some.

There was some discussion (with mixed views) on the number of high-rise developments in London and gentrification across the city.



4. Work and employment

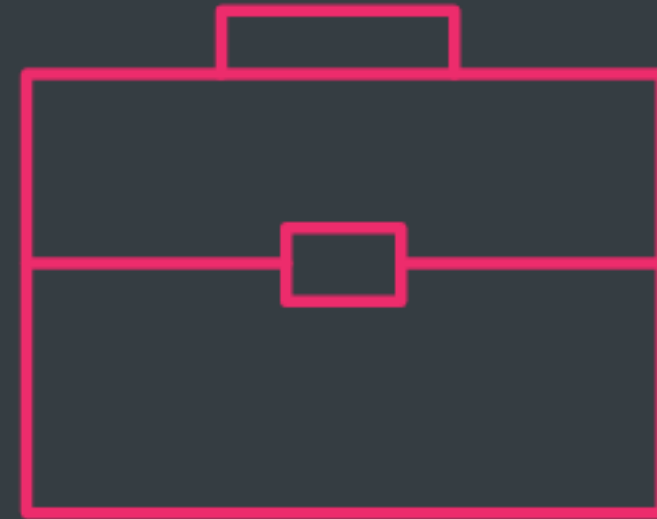
This was cited among the most important domains, after health and wellbeing and personal finances – and on par with housing, though not relevant to all Londoners.

This is broken down into:

- Pay levels (including pay gaps)
- Employment opportunities
- Working hours / leisure time
- Job satisfaction
- Progression opportunities
- Workforce representation (ethnicity, gender, disability)

Again, this also strongly interlinks with some of the other domains, notably health and wellbeing, personal finances, and leisure time. This was seen to be a particularly important domain given the amount of time spent at work (for those in work) and the impact it can have on mental wellbeing.

Although few talked specifically about job security, this was indirectly brought up alongside financial security.



5. Transport

Public transport came up throughout the research as something that Londoners particularly value about living in London, and is seen to be key to life in a big city.

This is broken down into:

- Cost of public transport
- Proximity to transport (train station / bus stop)
- Congestion (crowding) on public transport
- Frequency and duration of public transport trips
- Safety on public transport (incl. staffed stations)

Although this is acknowledged as being important for all groups of Londoners, it is seen to be particularly important for older Londoners (proximity being key) and lower-income Londoners (affordability being key).

This is something that's seen to vary, to an extent, across London and can be dependent on geography e.g. fewer public transport links in Southeast London.



6. Neighbourhoods

As mentioned, one thing participants particularly value about life in London is the easy access to shops and amenities – again, this was highlighted during the pandemic. The importance of your local area / high street / town centre was highlighted throughout the research as being a key factor for one's quality of life.

This domain links strongly with the environment (e.g., noise and congestion in your neighbourhood), transport, and crime and safety. Key additions are:

- Proximity to essential shops and amenities
- Health of the high street / town centre (independent shops, diversity of shops, affordability, quality, aesthetics, public spaces)
- Places for people and communities to connect (e.g., community centres and youth centres)

Although crime and safety applies across London, this was mostly mentioned in relation to a sense of safety in one's neighbourhood rather than, for example, central London.



7. People and communities

The social aspect of life, especially the importance of family and friends, came out throughout the research, especially when reflecting on the pandemic.

This is broken down into:

- Social interaction with others
- Not feeling lonely or isolated
- Sense of belonging
- Community cohesion
- Volunteering
- Discrimination and prejudice

Small everyday interactions, e.g., saying hello to a neighbour or having a chat with a shopkeeper, were mentioned throughout, especially when comparing with other parts of the country.

Proximity to friends or family was raised by some as being important to them, i.e., having or not having friends or family close by, though others did not think this was a suitable indicator to include due to the feasibility of this in London.

The quality of relationships is key to participants and diverse relationships were discussed in relation to building a greater sense of awareness of the challenges some communities face. Many talked about community cohesion and belonging.



8. The environment

The environment also came up throughout the research – especially those aspects unique to life in a big city, as well as the changes that were appreciated during the pandemic (as mentioned earlier, showing what ‘success’ can look like).

This is broken down into:

- Road congestion
- Air quality
- Noise
- Access to green space
- Cleanliness / litter

This is also something that’s seen to vary across London and can be dependent on geography, for example some parts of London having more/better green areas than others. Though this goes deeper than the neighbourhood level and into the street level, with congestion, air quality, and noise sometimes varying from street to street. The impact on quality of life for those living on or very near high streets was apparent.



9. Public services and government

The importance of public services and government came out in the research and particularly so in the community engagement.

The key indicators are:

- Trust in government
- Sense of freedom and equality
- Satisfaction with local authorities and services
- Accessible public services
- Relationships with public institutions

The point about satisfaction with local authorities was not explicitly mentioned by participants in the qualitative research, but some talked about the variation in local authorities across London – there was a sense that some provide better services, or generally do more for their residents, than others.

The last two indicators were highlighted in the community engagement sessions as the importance of government and the public sector providing services that are accessible to those who face barriers (e.g. digital skills, literacy, language, physical) as well as effective communication and being able to reach all communities and citizens.



10. Crime and safety

Sense of safety came out throughout the research in different contexts. In many cases, this was a broad sense of safety alongside happiness, in others it was mentioned in terms of safety on public transport, safety walking at night, or living in safe housing. Safety is particularly important for women.

This is broken down into:

- Sense of safety (in local area as well as on public transport)
- Crime (violent crime and theft)
- Street lighting (particularly in quiet places at night)
- Satisfaction / trust in the police

Participants talked about what they saw as key solutions to crime and safety, notably street lighting and CCTV. However, there were mixed views on CCTV – not all were convinced that more CCTV is a good outcome.

The police was also contentious topic, as some saw more police on the streets as good whereas others didn't. Regardless, Londoners' relationships with the police was seen as important – whether that's experiences with the police or trust in the police.





‘Access for all’ should underpin the Measure

Throughout the research, including when discussing draft domains in the focus groups, participants talked about the importance of access – all Londoners having access to healthcare, having a park close to where they live, being able to use public transport etc.

In most cases, ‘access’ is seen to be more important than ‘quality’. Using green spaces as an example, the priority is that Londoners have easy access to green spaces – whether that’s a park within walking distance or small pockets of greenery on their high street – not necessarily how good those spaces are or how often Londoners use them. Participants therefore preferred indicators such as ‘the proportion of Londoners who live within a 15-minute walk of a park’ rather than ‘the proportion of Londoners who visit their local park on a regular basis’.

Quality was still seen to be very important for some domains, for example in relation to public transport (frequency, reliability, crowding) and neighbourhoods (i.e. health of high streets and available amenities), but access was on the whole deemed to be more important across the board.



There is some caution about measuring Londoners' behaviours

The previous point about how often Londoners use parks is worth highlighting. Although parks and green spaces are valued a lot, and participants acknowledge the benefits of spending time outdoors, whether or not somebody spends time in a park is seen to *partly* come down to personal preferences.

This was more apparent when talking about other behaviours, such as participation in art and culture. Although many participants value what London has to offer, in terms of its art and culture, some may prefer spending their leisure time at home with family, eating out, or playing sport rather than going to a museum. Some were cautious of measuring the number / percentage of Londoners who go to a museum, for example, as they questioned whether an increase in that number should be viewed as a positive outcome and whether that number should be compared by different parts of London or by different groups of Londoners.

There were some behaviours that are more easily associated as being 'desirable' and worth measuring, such as volunteering and physical exercise, but on the whole the more important thing is that those who want to do something can – having the time, finances, and opportunities to do so, rather than uptake.




Geography is seen as the key structural factor affecting quality of life

Throughout the research, participants reflected on where somebody lives as being a key determinant of quality of life. As mentioned previously, inequality was mostly linked with geographical inequalities. Public transport links, green spaces, traffic, crime etc. were all seen to vary across London – not necessarily by borough, but more on a neighbourhood/ward or even street (in the case of traffic) level. There was, to an extent, a sense of a 'postcode lottery' with regards to quality of life in London.

Ultimately, income was also a key factor and participants saw the two as being strongly interlinked: income determines housing, which determines where you live and how nice your local area is.

As such, participants thought it was important that the Measure is broken down into geography. There was acknowledgement that 1 score for London would not reflect the varying experiences across London. Though the preference was for the measure to incorporate as many demographic groups as possible, in addition to geography, notably age, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status / income, and disability.



Date: May 2022

For more information, please contact OpinionResearch@london.gov.uk

City Intelligence
Greater London Authority
City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
London E16 1ZE

www.london.gov.uk

Copyright © Greater London Authority, 2022