

Commission on Housing & Wellbeing  
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Dear Sir/Madam

### **Commission on Housing & Wellbeing – Consultation**

The Carnegie United Kingdom (UK) Trust welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Commission's consultation on housing and wellbeing. The Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work.

We welcome and strongly support the Commission's focus on wellbeing in its work on influencing future housing policy in Scotland.

Wellbeing is at the heart of our work at the Carnegie Trust. Our Trust Deed, written by Andrew Carnegie in 1913, was ahead of its time in charging us with the duty to improve wellbeing. Over 100 years we have covered a diverse range of issues in seeking to fulfil this duty. Since 2010 we have become more actively involved in promoting wellbeing in policy, which has resulted in the establishment of the first [Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring What Matters in Scotland](#).

It is from this experience that we offer our response to the Commission's consultation.

#### ***Definitions of wellbeing***

We are aware of the difficulties in defining the concept of wellbeing and recognise the difference in approach taken both within the UK and internationally. From our work in Scotland, we have found there to be general agreement on using a basket of objective and subjective measures to understand wellbeing. This approach to wellbeing allows for the measurement of outcomes and the development of a holistic picture of wellbeing across a range of different areas, which in turn allows for more careful consideration of societal inequalities. As part of our work in [Northern Ireland](#) we have been working with our partners there to develop a definition of wellbeing. The aim is for a definition that draws on a shared

understanding of both individual and collective wellbeing, where wellbeing is defined as the outcome of a society:

*Where everyone can realise their potential, enjoy their environment, work meaningfully and contribute to their community.*

Although this is still very much a draft we offer it to the Commission for information and interest in developing their work.

### ***The importance of housing for wellbeing***

Regardless of the definition of wellbeing applied, it is clear that housing has an important role to play in achieving it.

- Data from the ONS' [‘Measuring National Well-being, Where we Live’](#) suggests a correlation between life satisfaction and housing satisfaction. Of those reporting a low satisfaction with their accommodation, nearly half (47 per cent) reported a low satisfaction with their life.
- The National Performance Framework in Scotland has two national indicators explicitly related to housing – ‘improve access to suitable housing options for those in housing need’ and ‘increase the number of new homes’. The Commission may wish to consider whether these are sufficient.
- In Oxfam's [Humankind Index](#) an affordable, decent and safe home topped the list of the most important things in the lives of Scottish people in order to live well in their communities.

Whilst good housing can be seen as an end in itself in achieving wellbeing, it is also a means to an end, without which many other aspects of wellbeing in our lives would not be fulfilled. We therefore welcome the Commission's overview of the range of areas in which housing is relevant to wellbeing.

Over and above our comments above, our experience and the [research](#) on wellbeing shows that people having agency and control over their lives is important for their wellbeing. We would welcome housing policy that provides people with choice in this important area of their lives.

We hope that you find these comments helpful. If you would like to discuss our response, or would like more information about our work please contact my colleague Tara Murphy, Policy Officer at [taram@carnegieuk.org](mailto:taram@carnegieuk.org).

Yours faithfully,



Jennifer Wallace  
Head of Policy