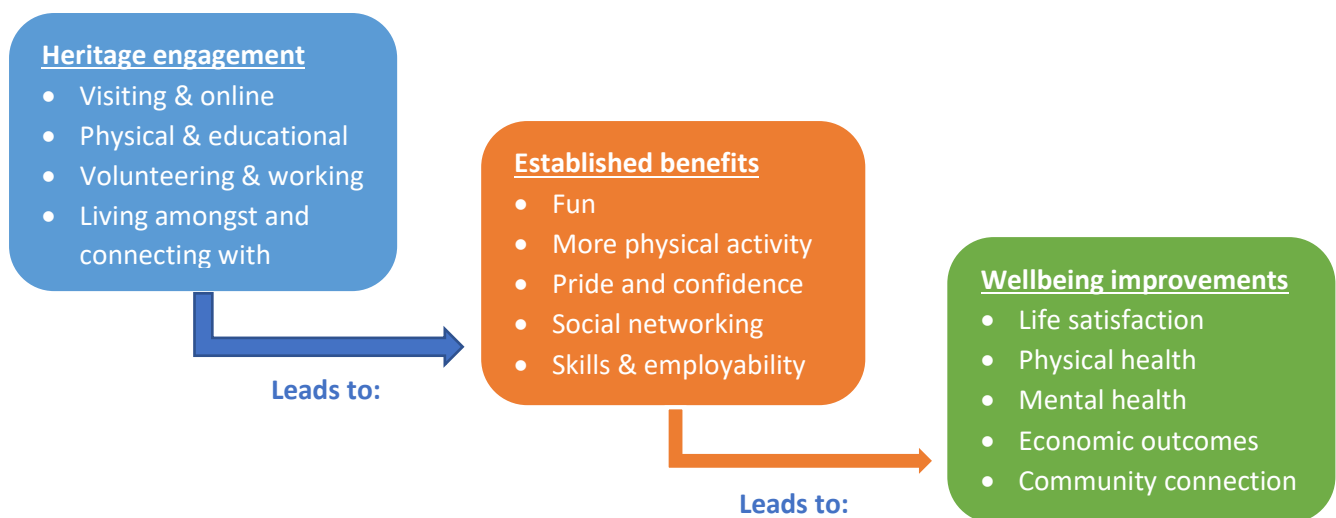


The Links between Scotland's Historic Environment and Wellbeing

The historic environment has a contribution to make to individuals', communities' and society's wellbeing.

At present there is not a single, comprehensive source for defining and capturing wellbeing in the sector. HES has therefore started a programme of research to better understand the flows from types of heritage engagement, through their resultant benefits and to the final anticipated changes in wellbeing. The scope covers HES activities, those of the wider sector and beyond.

The aim is to better target heritage-related activities towards people who are most in need of improved wellbeing. To do this, we are developing a framework by engaging with wellbeing organisations, sector stakeholders and the public: this primary survey report is a part of that wider process.



Policy context

There is a growing trend of countries shifting their success measure from GDP growth to wellbeing improvement. This focus on wellbeing is now in the Scottish Government's Purpose Statement at the heart of the National Performance Framework (NPF):

To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive growth.

HES's Corporate Plan for 2019 onwards: *Heritage for All* introduced a key performance indicator (KPI) to measure and "increase wellbeing from Scotland's historic environment". During 2019/20 we committed to developing a wellbeing framework and a self-reported baseline measure.

Study design and findings

Progressive Partnership were commissioned in summer 2019 by HES to complete the survey work necessary to inform the KPI baseline. The questionnaire design was informed by an initial literature review, drawing on existing definitions and sources considered best practice.

The survey has given more information about the contribution heritage can make. While many of the benefits are well established, this is the first time we've had this level of detail in terms of the self-reported causal links between engagement and individual wellbeing uplifts.

The survey sample was selected to capture those already engaged with heritage to allow us to explore the resultant benefits. It includes the general public, HES members, workers in

heritage and third sector organisations, business representatives and students. The results give a good indication of the positive relationship between heritage and wellbeing, as well as the key drivers. This sample choice means that the results cannot be extrapolated to the entire population. There are, however, existing engagement measures (e.g. in the Scottish Household Survey) to provide context as we draw on the study results to explore how we can extend the established benefits to those most in need.

The Survey Report suggests that the baseline measure to use could be:

76% of people surveyed self-reported that their overall life satisfaction is improved through their engagement with the historic environment.

A more comprehensive measure is that 86% of respondents reported a wellbeing benefit – an improvement in at least one of the following measures: happiness, life satisfaction, feeling healthier, a sense of being worthwhile or less anxious.

However, wellbeing measurement is a developing field so our measure will have to evolve to capture new best practice. It is therefore necessary to take a broader look at wellbeing in line with the Scottish Government's current thinking. With that in mind our Corporate Plan reporting will have to be more holistic than a single headline measure to fully capture change. We need a comprehensive approach to demonstrate how the historic environment best delivers wellbeing benefits through targeted interventions across the full spectrum of activity in *Heritage for All*. This will draw on our survey results, practice in the field and a range of other data sources.

Next steps – extending established benefits

The survey baseline data is informing the on-going design of our services and new pilot initiatives, aimed at ensuring those most in need of benefit get it while maintaining the contribution we've established the sector is already making at an individual level.

The focus for 2020/21 is to continue to develop our approach in consultation with experts in the field to understand how heritage can extend the established individual wellbeing benefits to the broader community and society levels required by the NPF.



We and the sector can make some progress but cannot and should not do this alone. Our Corporate Plan: *Heritage For All* and the Historic Environment Strategy: *Our Place in Time* recognise that, to be most effective, this needs to be both community-led and delivered in collaboration with other organisations and sectors to address the underlying issues affecting wellbeing, and to change the infrastructure accordingly to deliver sustainable social change.