

Guernsey Annual Better Life Indicators Report

2021

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This report contains an adapted version of the OECD Better Life Index Initiative, including the Regional Wellbeing framework. It gives an overall impression of quality of life in Guernsey compared to other jurisdictions, via a set of internationally comparable indicators.



States of Guernsey
Data and Analysis

1.1 Introduction

The measures in this report are adapted from the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) Regional Wellbeing framework and Better Life Index initiatives. These adapted indicators were adopted in 2017 to enable monitoring of government performance in achieving the States' high-level outcomes that underpin the overarching 20-year vision for Guernsey agreed by the States in 2016: *"We will be among the happiest and healthiest places in the world, where everyone has equal opportunity to achieve their potential. We will be a safe and inclusive community, which nurtures its unique heritage and environment and is underpinned by a diverse and successful economy."*

The framework for measuring wellbeing was developed by the OECD to address a gap in the statistics available. It is intended to give a broad picture of the living conditions experienced by a population, since these are not always illustrated well by measures of economic growth. The framework uses several different measures to assess overall wellbeing levels.

This report is used to support the States of Guernsey's ongoing policy planning and monitoring process. It provides an overall impression of living conditions in Guernsey, which is intended to help give an objective view of the effectiveness of the policies of the States and help highlight areas that need attention. In this edition, indicators have been presented in a manner that is more comparable with the equivalent publications from other jurisdictions. It should be noted that the measures presented are intended to be evaluated over the long-term and that the information is historical (relating to 2021 and earlier), so provides a reflection of the past policies of the States as well as recent global and island conditions.

Throughout the first section of this report, Guernsey's wellbeing indicators are presented in the context of the OECD member countries wherever methodologies are comparable. The second section presents Guernsey's figures at a regional level.

Information is incomplete in some areas of this edition. Work is continually being undertaken to try to source the missing data but, in the pursuit of openness and transparency, the report is being published with the gaps highlighted. It is hoped that this report can still usefully inform the public, States' Members and any proposed changes to the policy priorities or work streams of the States. Details regarding which data is not available or not comparable and actions that are being taken in order to fill the data gaps are included in the relevant sections.

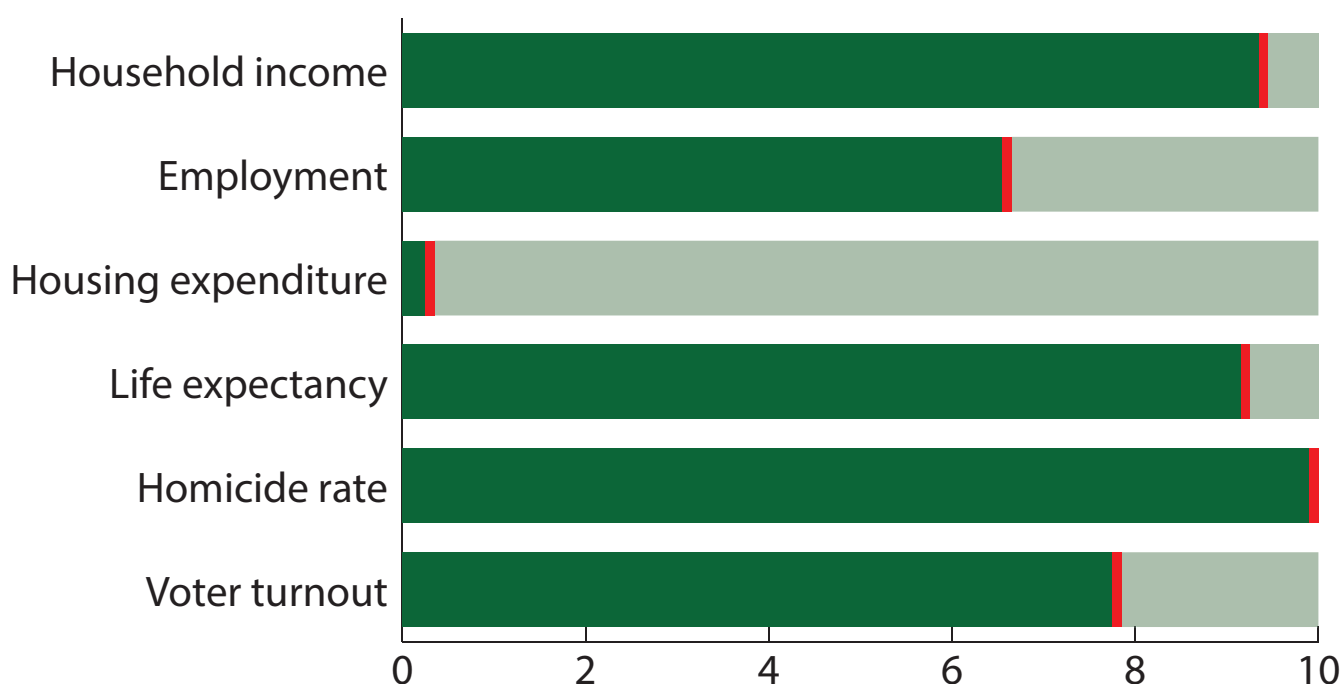
2.1 Summary of Better Life Index

In this section, Guernsey's wellbeing indicators are presented in the context of the OECD member countries wherever methodologies are comparable. Not all of the indicators are comparable within each sector, and some may be relating to different years. The OECD Better Life Index comprises 24 measures over eleven dimensions of wellbeing: income; jobs; housing; health; safety; civic engagement; community; education, environment; life satisfaction; and work-life balance. Guernsey has fully comparable data for six of the 24 measures (shown in **Figure 2.1.1**).

The comparable information can be used to give a summarised view of how Guernsey performs in relation to the other countries. **Figure 2.1.1** below presents this information visually, showing how Guernsey is positioned for the fully comparable measures.

Ten is the score given to the highest performing country and zero is the score allocated to the lowest.

Figure 2.1.1 Summary of scores



The OECD publish the data for its member countries on <https://stats.oecd.org/>. Figures are taken from there for comparison with Guernsey and only those that are fully comparable are presented.

2.2 Better Life Index dimensions - income

Household income is an important indicator of the resources available to the population to satisfy its basic needs. It can be a symbol of life satisfaction and perceived self-worth for individuals within a population. In this report, a household's net disposable income represents the resources available to a household after payment of tax and social security contributions but before housing costs, and is shown as a **per capita figure** up to 2020. Data used in these calculations can be found at www.gov.gg/household, where more detailed information on household income is available. These figures also include an estimate of "social transfers in kind", defined as goods and services provided by government and non-profit institutions that benefit individuals but are provided free or are at subsidised prices and would typically include education and healthcare. It should be noted that Guernsey's methodology for estimating social transfers in kind may differ to other countries' methodologies. The figures are converted to Purchasing Power Parity, which adjusts for differences in currency exchange rates and differences in the cost of non-housing goods and services in different jurisdictions, using a UK conversion factor to allow comparison with other jurisdictions. Household income in Guernsey is fairly high relative to many comparator jurisdictions, reflecting low levels of unemployment and a high level of employment in sectors with a high level of added value. Guernsey ranked 3rd out of 32 countries for this measure in 2020.

The income dimension of the OECD Better Life Index also includes a measure of household wealth, which is not available in Guernsey.

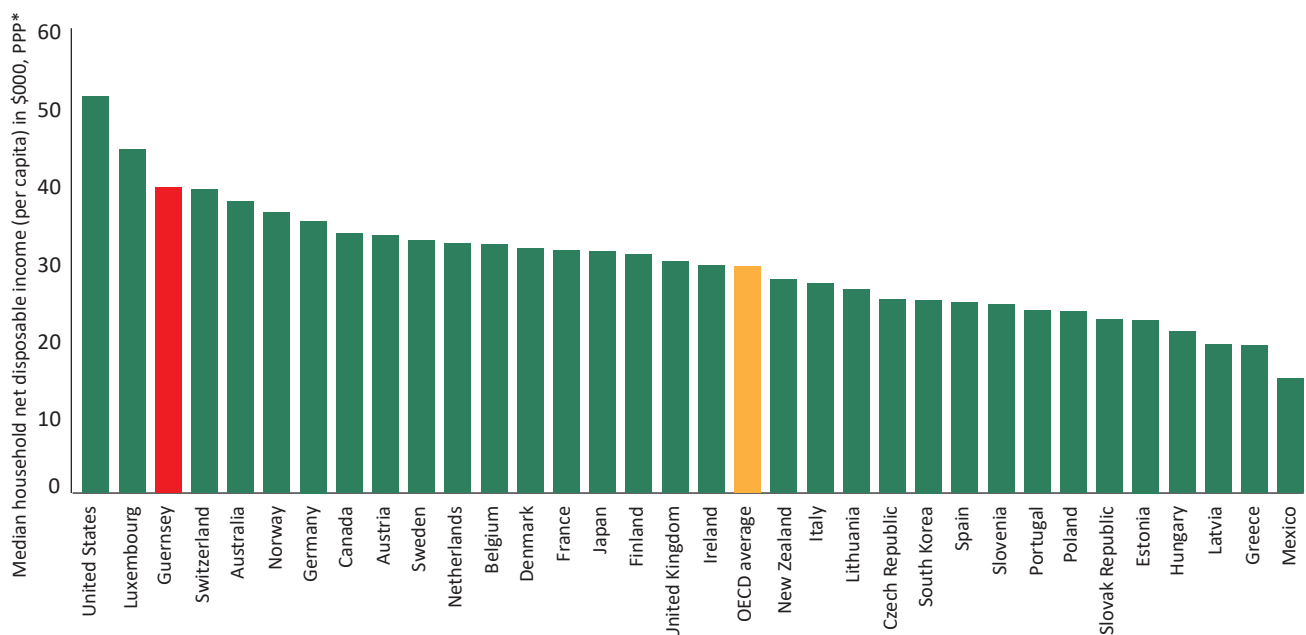
Table 2.2.1 Net disposable household income per capita

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Household net disposable income per capita (£s)	27,185	27,576	27,264	28,002	28,079	27,098	na
Household net disposable income per capita (US\$ PPP*)	39,229	40,023	39,802	40,701	40,872	39,386	na

* purchasing power parity

Sources: Rolling Electronic Census, Data & Analysis, States of Guernsey accounts

Figure 2.2.1 Household income per capita - comparison with OECD member countries (latest available years)



Source: OECD.Stat

2.3 Better Life Index dimensions - jobs and earnings

Guernsey's economy enjoys high employment participation and low unemployment rates. Guernsey is able to sustain low unemployment rates, in part, by allowing the expansion of the workforce to meet the demand for labour by bringing in workers from outside the island. This practice is particularly evident in highly seasonal sectors like hospitality. This allows the workforce to expand and contract while placing less pressure on participation and unemployment rates. This pattern allows Guernsey to sustain significantly lower unemployment levels than are typically seen in larger jurisdictions while still meeting the demands of employers for skilled labour.

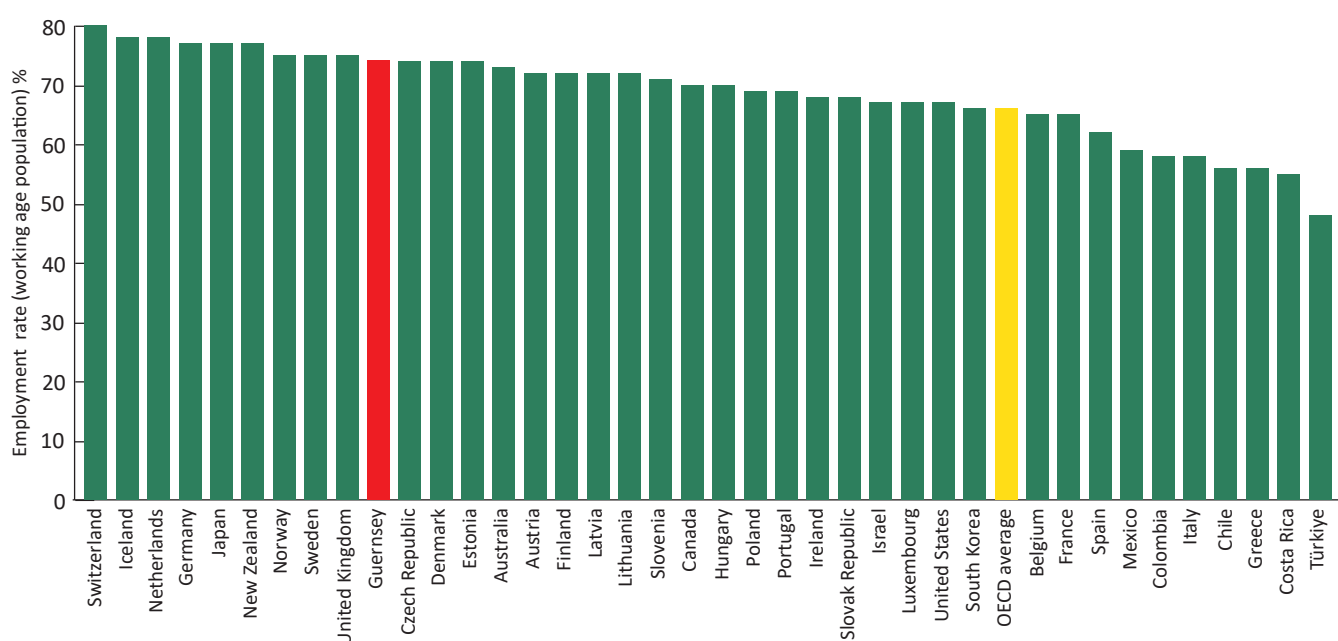
The employment participation rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed and self-employed people of working age by the total number of people of working age. For this measure, Guernsey ranked 10th out of 39 countries (2021 data).

The impact of restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic can be seen in this report. Guernsey entered lockdown in March 2020 and came out in stages, fully opening in June 2020. As the number of people in the labour market is seasonal and typically increases from March to a peak in August, it is likely that the travel restrictions and self-isolation requirements had a large impact on employment throughout 2020. There was a second lockdown in the first quarter of 2021.

Table 2.3.1 Employment rate, working age population

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Employment rate (% working age population, 16-64)	74.8	75.2	75.9	75.8	75.6	73.9	74.2

Figure 2.3.1 Employment - comparison with OECD member countries



Source: OECD.Stat

2.3 Better Life Index dimensions - jobs and earnings (continued)

The long term unemployment rate is the number of people who have been unemployed for a year or more divided by the total labour force i.e. the total number employed and self-employed or seeking work. Both the employment and unemployment measures are good measures of the health of an economy and engagement of the population in its economy. Unemployment is closely associated with poor wellbeing. **Figure 2.3.2** below shows that Guernsey compared very well with other jurisdictions in 2019, ranking 3rd out of 37. Further details on employment and unemployment in Guernsey are available from www.gov.gg/population.

The long-term unemployment rate was not calculated during 2020 or 2021, but will become available from 2022 and will be included in the next report. The overall unemployment rate is given below, for information.

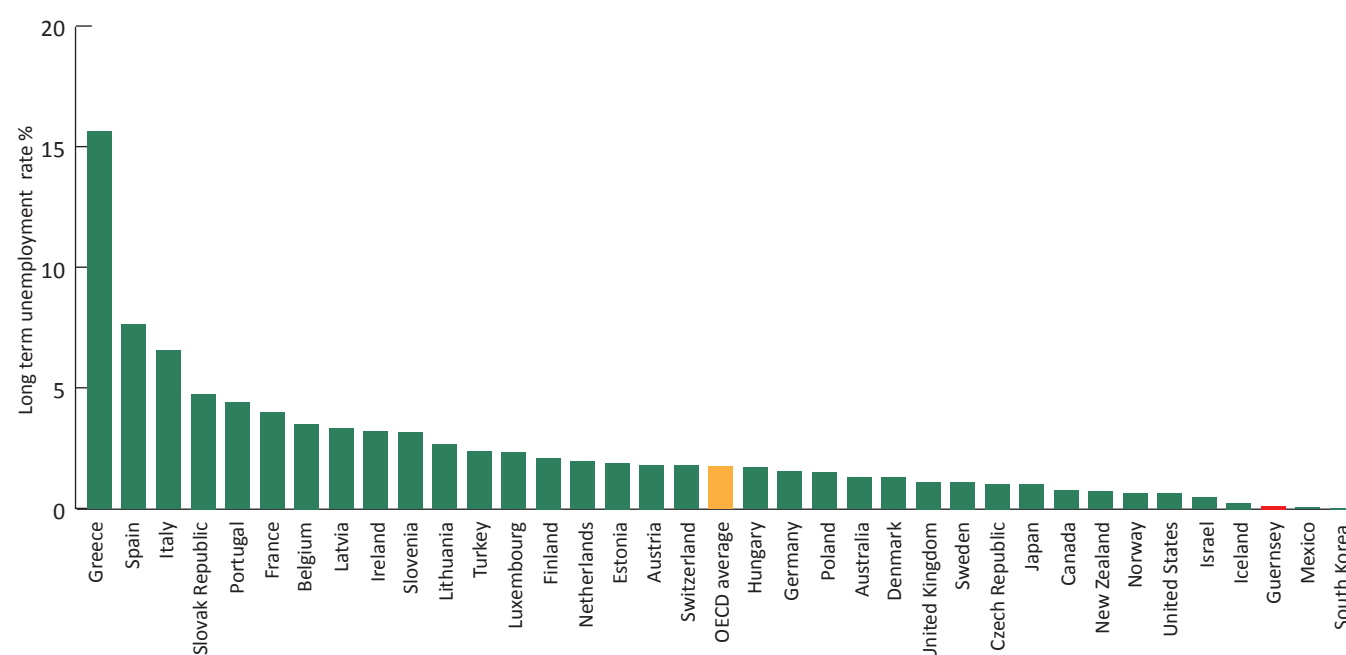
Table 2.3.2 Long term unemployment

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Long term unemployment rate (% of workforce)	0.23	0.19	0.21	0.17	0.13	na	na

Table 2.3.3 Unemployment

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Average unemployment rate (total registered unemployed as % of workforce)	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.3	2.5	3.7	2.9
Average unemployment rate (wholly unemployed as % of workforce)	1.3	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.1	2.2	1.6

Figure 2.3.2 Long term unemployment - comparison with OECD member countries (2019)



Source: OECD.Stat

2.3 Better Life Index dimensions - jobs and earnings (continued)

Guernsey's median average earnings figures do not take hours worked into account and so relates to all earners, including those working part-time. This is different to the OECD figures, where hours worked are also taken into account, giving full-time equivalent earnings. Plans are being developed to improve Guernsey's data in this area.

Comparisons have not been made, but trends in average earnings have been included for information.

Table 2.3.4 Median average earnings (four quarter average (nominal))

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Median average earnings (all earners)	£30,953	£31,656	£32,200	£33,263	£34,160	£35,006	£36,732

This section of the OECD Better Life Index also includes the indicator, "Labour market insecurity", which looks at the expected earnings loss, measured as the percentage of the previous earnings, associated with unemployment. This is not measured in Guernsey.

2.4 Better Life Index dimensions - housing

The OECD housing measures are: number of rooms (not including kitchens, bathrooms, utility rooms or garages) per person; number of households with no flushing toilet for their sole use; average spend on housing as a percentage of household income.

Guernsey collects data on the number of bedrooms per person, an indication of whether housing is overcrowded or underutilized. Bedroom data is currently available for approximately 84% of the residential property in the island and this showed that, overall, there were 1.1 bedrooms per person. More information on the domestic housing stock of Guernsey is available from www.gov.gg/property. This is not comparable with the “rooms per household” measure in the OECD Better Life Index.

Table 2.4.1 Average number of bedrooms per person

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Average number of bedrooms per person	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.1

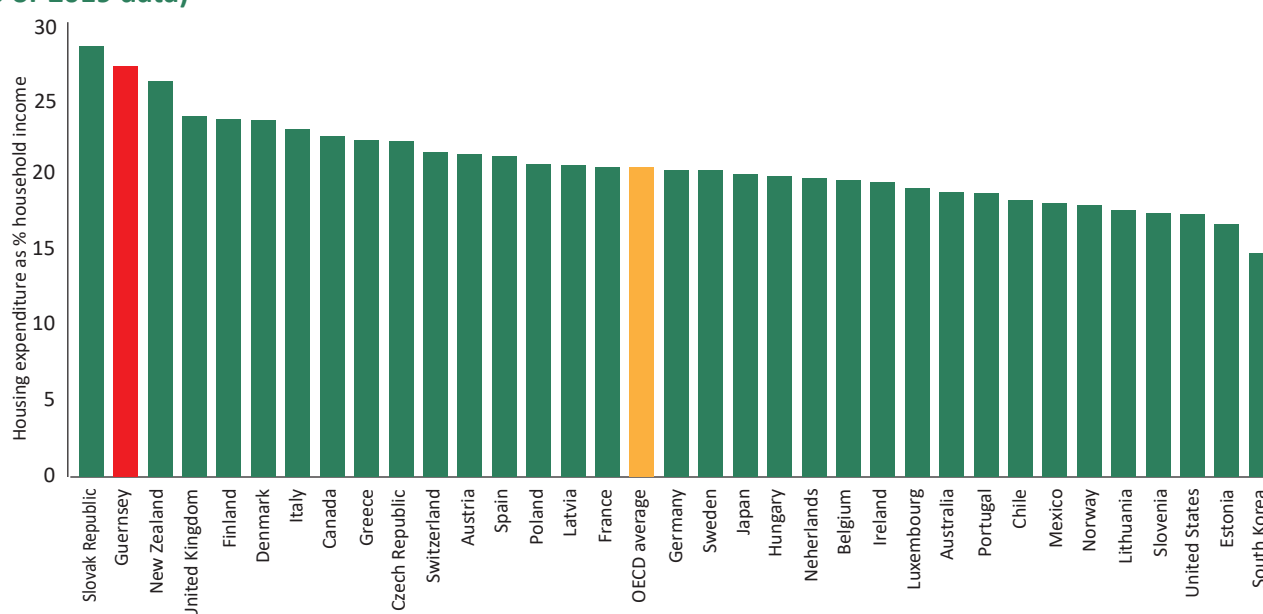
There is no available data on the number of households without access to lavatory facilities.

Housing expenditure, defined as expenditure by households on housing and maintenance (includes housing, water, fuel, furnishings, household equipment and routine maintenance of the house) expressed as a percentage of net disposable income is an indicator of household wellbeing. Guernsey’s housing costs are high compared with the OECD countries, ranking close to bottom, meaning that households in Guernsey have to spend relatively more of their budget on housing.

Table 2.4.2 Housing expenditure as percentage of disposable income

Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021
Housing expenditure as % household income	24	26	27	na

Figure 2.4.1 Housing expenditure as % disposable income - comparison with OECD countries (2020 or 2019 data)



Source: OECD.Stat

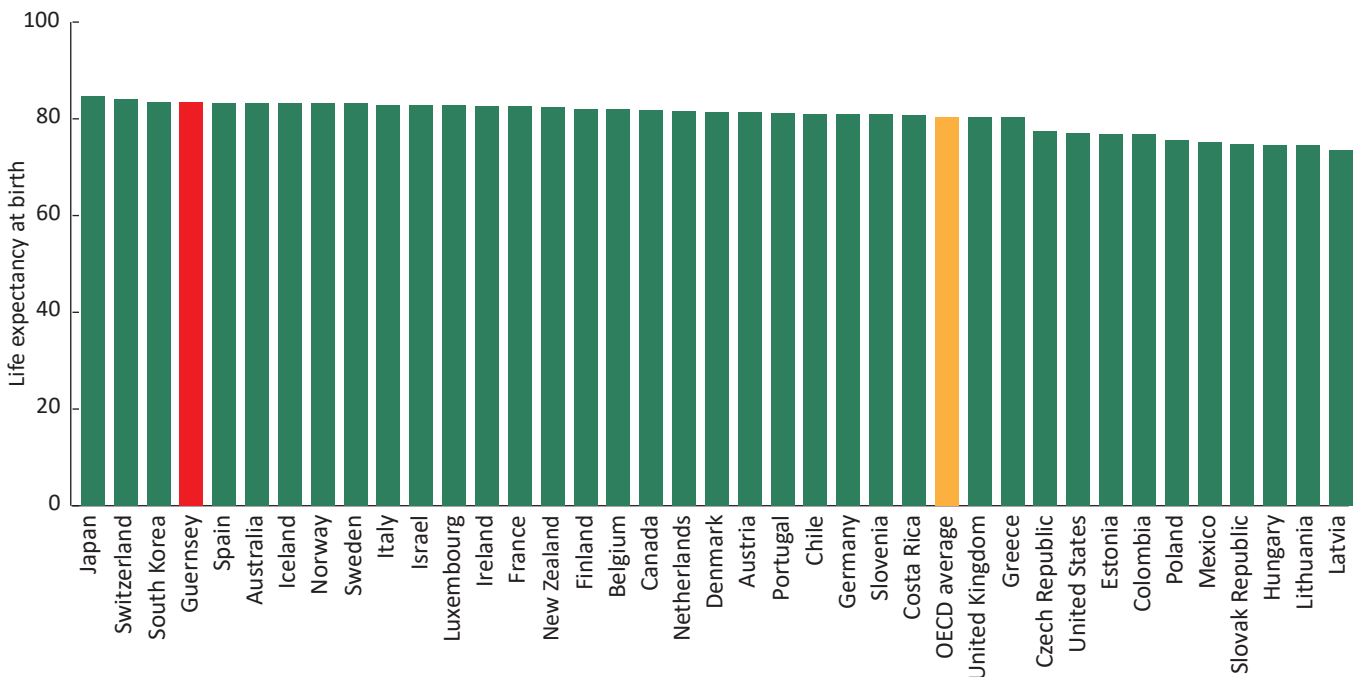
2.5 Better Life Index dimensions - health

Life expectancy may indicate the level of access to health services in a region. The life expectancy at birth for Guernsey is presented as a three year rolling average ending in the year indicated, due to the relatively low size of the population in Guernsey. Long life expectancy is generally associated with high living standards. Factors such as the quality of sanitation, diet, health care, working conditions and community support services all contribute to longer life expectancies. The figure is reasonably stable over the longer historical trend, which is included in the Facts and Figures Booklet at www.gov.gg/ff. Guernsey ranked 4th out of 38 countries.

Table 2.5.1 Life expectancy

Indicator	2013-15	2014-16	2015-17	2016-18	2017-19	2018-20	2019-21
Life expectancy at birth	83.3	83.0	82.7	82.6	83.0	83.4	83.5

Figure 2.5.1 Life expectancy at birth - comparison with OECD member countries (latest available years)



Source: OECD.Stat

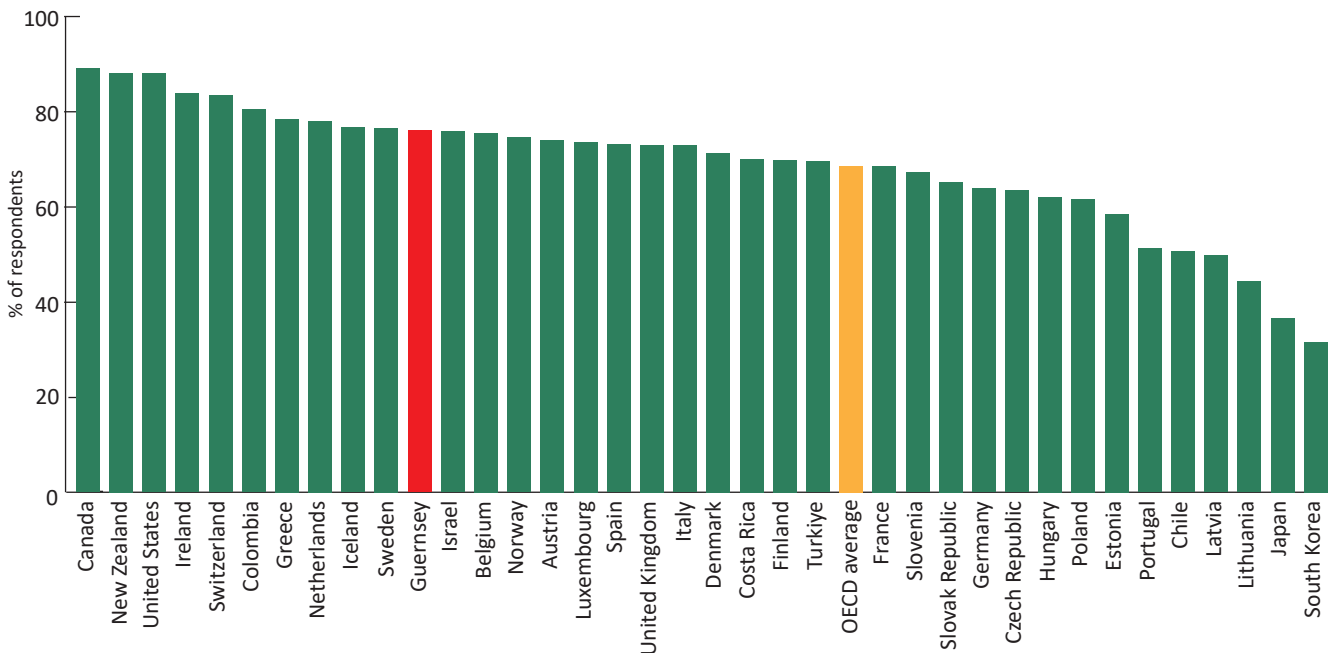
2.5 Better Life Index dimensions - health (continued)

The Guernsey and Alderney Wellbeing Survey 2018 (www.gov.gg/wellbeingsurveys) surveyed more than 2,600 people and the results were published in December 2019.

Respondents were asked, “How is your health in general?”. 76% of people thought their health was good or very good, compared with the OECD average of 69%. This placed Guernsey joint 11th out of 37 when compared with other OECD countries.

Questions regarding islanders’ health were asked in the Community Surveys held in 2020 and 2021. Results from the Community Surveys can be found at www.gov.gg/covid19data. The next Wellbeing Survey will be conducted in 2023.

Figure 2.5.2 Self-reported health (latest available years)



Source: OECD.Stat; Guernsey and Alderney Wellbeing Survey 2018

2.6 Better Life Index dimensions - work life balance

There are two measures in the work life balance section of the OECD Better Life Index: the first looks at the proportion of dependent employed whose usual hours of work per week are 50 hours or more and the second looks at time devoted to leisure activities and personal care.

These measures are not currently calculated in Guernsey, but this area was addressed in the recent Community Surveys - findings relating to working hours, work-life balance and work location can be found at www.gov.gg/covid19data.

2.7 Better Life Index dimensions - education and skills

The Guernsey and Alderney Wellbeing Survey 2018 (www.gov.gg/wellbeingsurveys) surveyed more than 2,600 people and the results were published in December 2019.

The overall level of education of a region can affect its productivity, crime rate and levels of political engagement. However, wide differences in educational attainment within a region can lead to divergence in the range of earnings. The Wellbeing survey asked about educational attainment, with 85% having completed formal education to at least secondary level. This figure is not directly comparable to that in the OECD statistics.

Other measures in the OECD education dimension are: student skills and years in education.

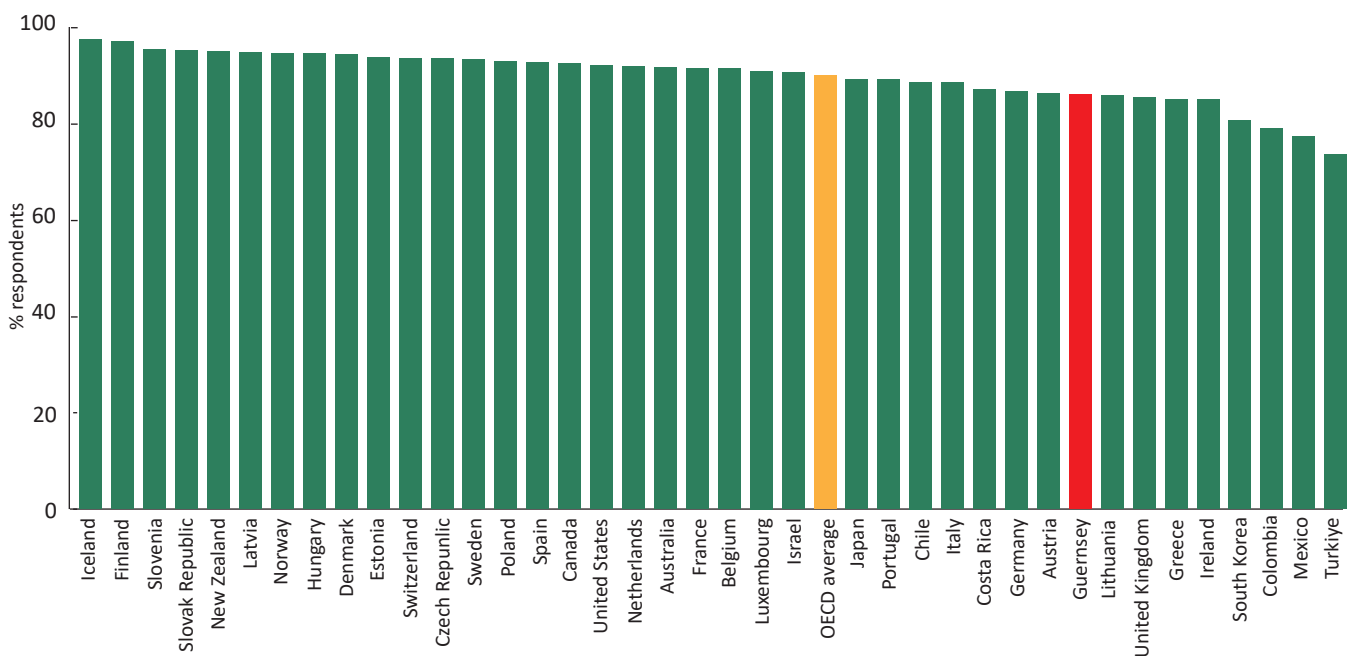
2.8 Better Life Index dimensions - community

The Guernsey and Alderney Wellbeing Survey 2018 (www.gov.gg/wellbeingsurveys) surveyed more than 2,600 people and the results were published in December 2019.

One of the questions asked about perception of the respondent’s social network - did they feel they had plenty of people they could rely on when they had problems? 86% thought they did have people they could rely on, which is a lower percentage than many OECD countries. It should be noted that the question was worded slightly differently in the OECD surveys - “If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them?”

The next Wellbeing Survey will be conducted in 2023.

Figure 2.8.1 Perceived social network (latest available years) - not fully comparable



Source: OECD.Stat, Guernsey and Alderney Wellbeing Survey 2018

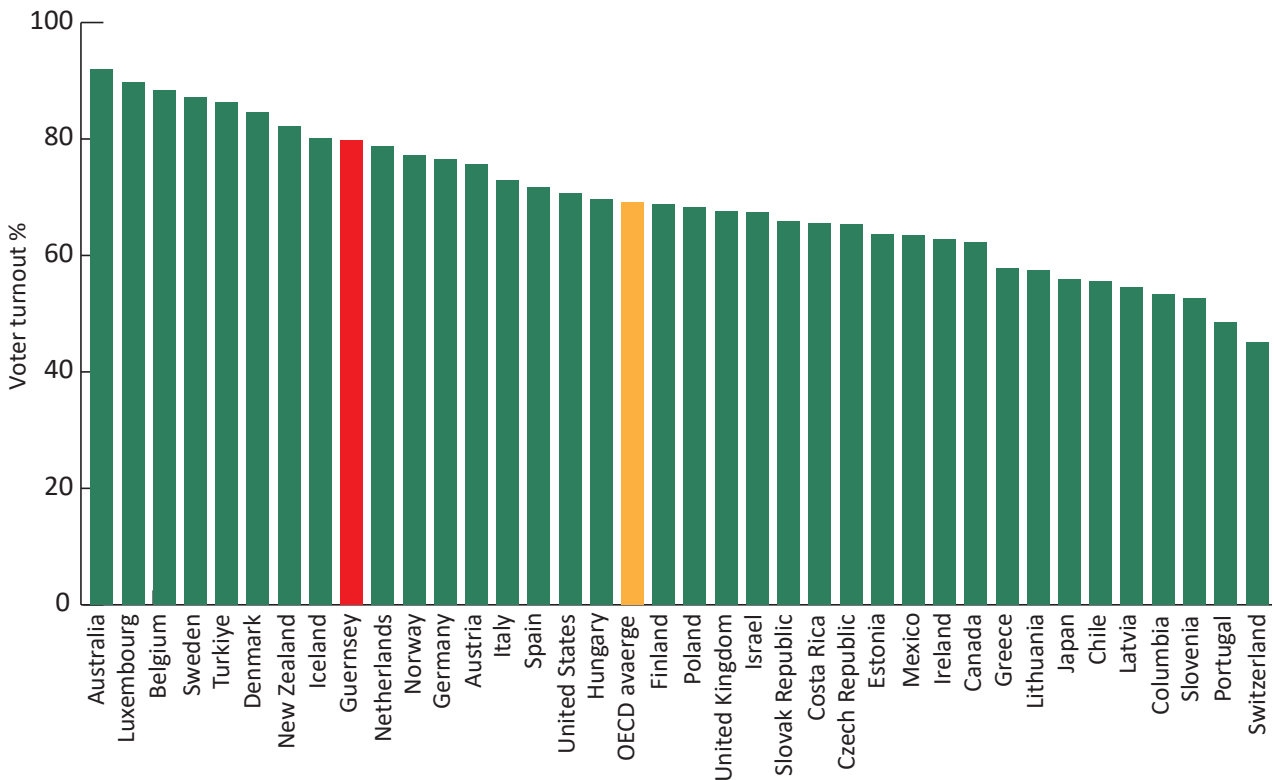
2.9 Better Life Index dimensions - civic engagement

Voter turnout gives an indication of the public’s trust in government and of their willingness to participate in their own governance. In the 2020 election a record 80% of people on the electoral roll voted. **Figure 2.9.1** shows the percentage of people registered to vote who participated in the latest election in each country. Voting is compulsory in some countries (such as Australia), with varying degrees of enforcement. In Guernsey you need to be eligible to vote *and* put yourself forward to be included on the electoral roll to have the right to vote in an election, whereas inclusion on the roll is automatic in other jurisdictions. Guernsey placed 9th out of 37 countries for this measure, with a figure of 80%.

If we look at the people that voted in the 2020 Guernsey election as a percentage of all the eligible people, the figure reduces to 50%.

The second measure in the OECD dimension is “stakeholder engagement for developing regulations” and is survey based. This is not addressed in Guernsey.

Figure 2.9.1: Voter turnout - comparison with OECD member countries (latest available years)



Source: OECD.Stat

2.10 Better Life Index dimensions - environmental quality

The quality of the local environment is an important factor in the current and future wellbeing of a country. Air pollution and satisfaction with water quality are used as measures in the OECD Better Life Index.

Air pollution levels fluctuate year on year, but are decreasing over the longer historic trend. The method used to calculate air pollution in Guernsey differs from that used in the OECD, so comparisons are not made in this report.

Satisfaction with water quality is not something which is asked in Guernsey, so comparisons cannot be made.

For information purposes only, Guernsey's trends in air quality, drinking water quality and bathing water quality are shown below:

Table 2.10.1 Air quality

Indicator	2013-15	2014-16	2015-17	2016-18	2017-19	2018-20	2019-21
Nitrogen Dioxide levels ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	16.5	14.9	13.6	15.5	16.0	15.2	13.8

Table 2.10.2 Drinking water quality

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Nitrate concentration at customer taps (mg per litre, mean)	26.2	21.7	22.5	22.0	17.9	24.2	22.7

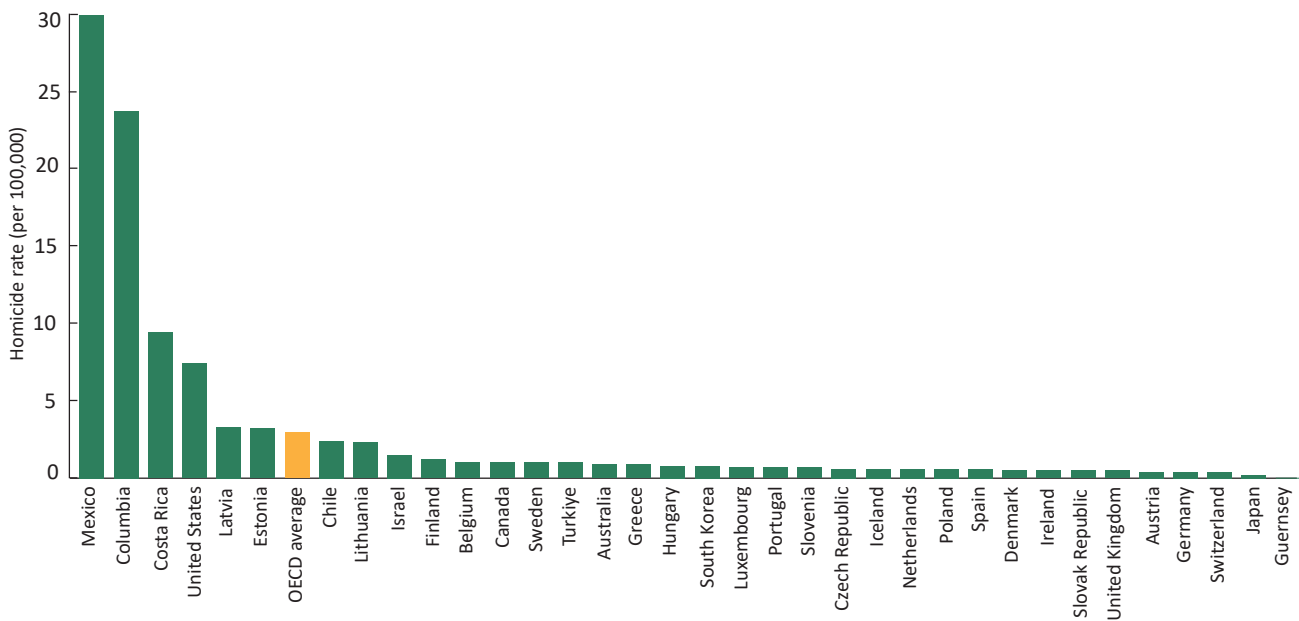
Table 2.10.3 Bathing water quality

Indicator	2013-16	2014-17	2015-18	2016-19	2017-20	2018-21
Percentage of tested beaches with rating of 'sufficient' or higher	92	77	77	85	100	100

2.11 Better Life Index dimensions - personal safety

The homicide rate is one of the official measures used in the Better Life Index but homicides are rare in Guernsey.

Figure 2.11.1 Homicide rate (per 100,000 population) - comparison with OECD member countries (latest available years)



Source: OECD.Stat

The Better Life Index also looks at the number of adults who feel safe walking home at night. This information is not available in Guernsey at the moment.

2.12 Better Life Index dimensions - life satisfaction

The Guernsey and Alderney Wellbeing Survey 2018 (www.gov.gg/wellbeingsurveys) surveyed more than 2,600 people and the results were published in December 2019.

One of the questions in the survey asked people to evaluate their life satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 8. This self-reported indicator of wellbeing shows how people feel about their lives. The OECD index ranges from 0 to 10 so the figures are not directly comparable. In addition, the OECD survey includes respondents aged 15 and older whereas the Guernsey survey included ages 16 and older.

The Guernsey survey showed that 63% of the respondents rated their life satisfaction as 6 or more on a scale of 1 to 8. The mean score in 2018 was 5.7 out of a possible 8 - the OECD average was 6.5 on a scale of 1 to 10.

The question was asked again in the Community Surveys held in 2020 and 2021. It was found, in the 2020 survey, that 55% of the respondents rated their life satisfaction as 6 or more on scale of 1 to 8. In the 2021 survey this was 50%. The mean score in 2020 was 5.5 and in 2021, 5.3.

More results from the Community Surveys can be found at www.gov.gg/covid19data.

3.1 Regional wellbeing

In this section, Guernsey's wellbeing indicators are presented in the context of the regions included in the OECD figures wherever methodologies are comparable. Not all of the indicators are comparable within each sector, or include all regions, and some may be relating to different years (the latest available is used), so care should be taken when using these comparisons.

Some of the measures in this section have been covered in the previous section. Measures not previously referred to are: household disposable income (this measure is net of taxes and social security contributions and is also before housing costs but, unlike the measure presented earlier in this report, is not net of social transfers in kind) and unemployment rate (not long term).

Detailed household income statistics are published on www.gov.gg/household. These figures are converted to Purchasing Power Parity, which adjusts for differences in currency exchange rates and differences in the cost of non-housing goods and services in different jurisdictions, using a UK conversion factor to allow comparison with other jurisdictions. Guernsey's household disposable income is shown in **Table 3.1.1** below. Please note that the 2021 figure was not available at the time of publication.

Table 3.1.1 Household disposable income per capita

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Household disposable income per capita (US\$ PPP*)	34,657	35,383	35,301	36,154	36,042	34,445	na

* purchasing power parity

Unemployment is closely associated with poor wellbeing. **Table 3.1.2** below shows that Guernsey's unemployment rate is low and varied between 0.9% and 1.3% from 2015 to 2019. The impact of restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic was seen in the 2020 data, when the rate increased to 2.2%.

Table 3.1.2 Unemployment

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Unemployment rate (% of workforce)	1.3%	1.3%	1.0%	0.9%	1.1%	2.2%	1.6%

3.1 Regional wellbeing (continued)

The comparable information can be used to give a summarised view of how Guernsey performs in relation to the other OECD regions. Ten is the score given to the highest performing region and zero is the score allocated to the lowest.

The Regional wellbeing index comprises thirteen measures in eleven dimensions: income; jobs; safety; health; civic engagement; access to services; environment; education; governance; community; and life satisfaction. Guernsey has fully comparable data for six measures from five different dimensions and these are shown in **Figure 3.1.1** below.

Figure 3.1.1 Summary of scores

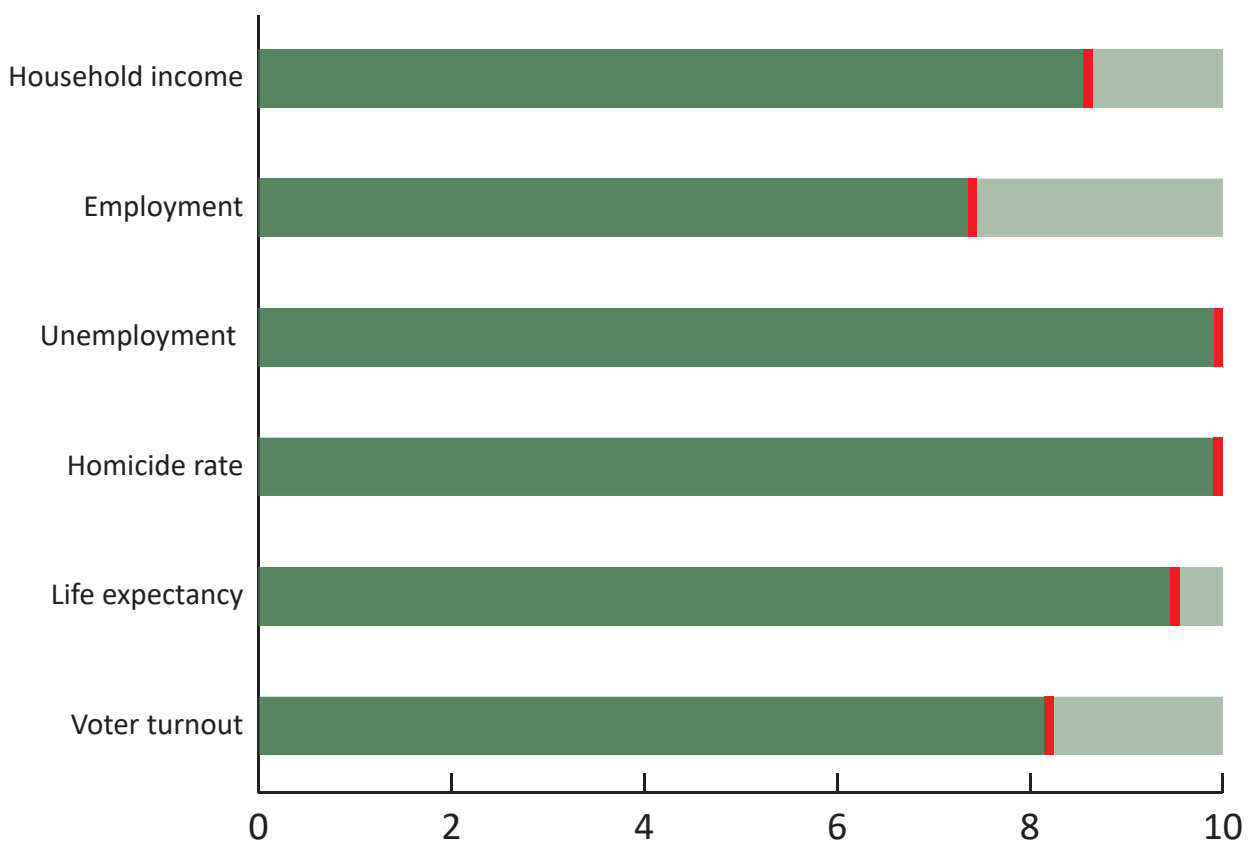


Table 3.1.3 Scores relative to OECD regions (latest available data)

Indicator	Score out of ten	Position relative to OECD regions	Position relative to UK regions
Household disposable income	8.6	63 rd out of 436	2 nd out of 13
Employment	7.4	112 th out of 433	5 th out of 13
Unemployment	10.0	1 st out of 432	1 st out of 13
Homicide rate	10.0	joint 1 st out of 445	1 st out of 13
Life expectancy	9.5	23 rd out of 440	1 st out of 13
Voter turnout	8.2	83 rd out of 447	1 st out of 13

Source: OECD.Stat

Note: Many figures from the OECD regions are more than a year out of date, so care should be taken with these comparisons

4.1 Other areas being considered

As part of the Better Life Initiative, the OECD produces a report entitled “How’s Life?”. It contains eleven dimensions of current wellbeing, comprising more than 40 individual measures, and four areas relating to future wellbeing, comprising thirty individual measures. The Guernsey report may be adapted to encompass these measures in future.

Table 4.1.1 OECD How’s Life framework

Current wellbeing dimensions
Income and wealth
Work and job quality
Housing
Health
Knowledge and skills
Environmental quality
Subjective wellbeing
Safety
Work-life balance
Social connections
Civic engagement

Future wellbeing dimensions
Natural capital
Economic capital
Human capital
Social capital

5.1 Further information

This report continues to be refined each year, with steps being taken to fill data gaps where practical. It is hoped that transparent and objective measurement, such as this, will add to the policy development and prioritisation process, even if it is presented as a continual work in progress.

5.2 Contact details

You may also be interested in other States of Guernsey Data and Analysis publications, which are all available online at www.gov.gg/data. Please contact us for further information.

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