

Publication

Understanding Life in Ireland: 2023 Analysis

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1. [How is Ireland doing Overall?](#)
2. [Understanding equality](#)
3. [Understanding sustainability](#)
4. [Previous Reports](#)

Ireland's Well-being Framework allows consideration of progress in Ireland across economic, environmental and social issues together, rather than sequentially or in isolation. The Framework includes 11 dimensions, which is represented by 35 indicators on the CSO Well-being Information Hub. The annual analysis is intended to provide an overall picture of the country's progress, using data that facilitates a longer-term view of quality of life. It will form a complementary input to the Budget process. The analysis reviews trends over approximately 5-year periods and international comparisons.

The purpose of this Report is to provide a medium-term view of the country, and therefore the data chosen is often annual, and frequently with long lead-in times. The reference periods that the analysis considers vary across the indicators from 2018 to 2023. Some data (e.g. in the work and job quality dimension) covers the period where inflation and cost of living issues arose, whereas the most recent indicators for other dimensions (e.g. subjective well-being) are from 2018. As a result, care should be taken in interpreting and comparing the performance of the dimensions.

The infographic below shows the insights discussed by dimension, showing average performance (as measured by trend of approximately 5 years, and comparisons with other countries), the performance of the sustainability indicators separately, and equality results of the average.

How is Ireland doing Overall?

Overall performance is positive across the indicators in 10 of the 11 dimensions. Only one dimension, the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity, shows a negative performance. Mental and Physical Health was the second worst performing dimension. Dimensions that performed well include Housing and the Built Environment (driven by performance in new dwelling completions; A or B domestic dwelling energy rating, and; housing cost overburden rate), Subjective Well-being (driven by performance in overall life satisfaction, and; population who did not feel depressed or downhearted) and Safety and Security (driven by Ireland’s performance in comparison with other countries in the murder rate per 100,000 people; and the population who worry they could be a victim of a crime; alongside reductions in the number of persons killed or injured on roads).

Of the 35 indicators, 8 show negative performance (based on time trend and/or international comparison):

Dimension	Indicator
Subjective Well-Being	School-aged children who report being happy with their life overall
Knowledge, Skills and Innovation	Research and development personnel
Environment, Climate and Biodiversity	Pollution, grime or other environmental problems
	Water body quality
	Greenhouse gas emissions
	Waste Generated

Time Use	Long working hours in main job
Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression	Persons who experienced discrimination in the last two years

Understanding equality

The introduction of a comparable figure for equality across indicators allows for the assessment of each dimension for equality outcomes. Particular cohorts that perform less well than other comparable groups across multiple dimensions can be identified.

An examination of this data shows that several groups experience inequality across a high proportion of indicators. These are women, single-parent households, people living alone, immigrants/non-Irish, unemployed people, households with lower incomes, households in rented accommodation, and people with long-term illness or disability. Note that the groups featured here are based on research, relevance and data availability. There may be other groups that experience inequality that the available data does not show.

Of the eleven dimensions, two show particularly large average differences between groups. These were Housing and the Built Environment; and Income and Wealth. The most equal dimensions were Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression; and Subjective Well-being.

Understanding sustainability

Fourteen of the thirty-five indicators have been identified as particularly important for sustainable well-being. There is only one dimension that has overall negative performance of the sustainability indicators – the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity. The best performing are Housing and the Built Environment; Work and Job Quality; and Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression.

Of the fourteen sustainability indicators, four have a negative performance overall. These are research and development personnel, water body quality, greenhouse gas emissions and waste generated.

The sustainable indicators perform better than the overall average performance for only two dimensions. These are Knowledge, Skills and Innovation; and Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression. This may indicate a prioritisation of current well-being issues in favour of sustainability.

Previous Reports



Understanding Life in Ireland - Well-being Dashboard Analysis (2022)

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