

Developing measures of societal wellbeing in the UK

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Outline

- “Societal wellbeing”
 - What statistics are required?
 - What official statistics already exist?
 - How are we taking this forward?
- Measuring the impact of the recession
- Diagnostic statistics
- Developments in on-line dissemination

What is societal wellbeing?

- An overall (multi-dimensional) measure of the progress of a country
- Measuring economic performance and social progress (and impact on environment)
- Implementing Stiglitz et al recommendations
- Difficult to theorise, define and measure
- Beyond GDP (per head)
- More than aggregate subjective wellbeing
- More than social capital

What statistics are required?

- An overall (multi-dimensional) measure of the progress of a country.
- Key figures about our society should be readily accessible.
- Drawing together some of the more significant statistical series relating to social policies and conditions.
- Better understanding of distributions and inequality.
- Broader-based policy evaluation

What is already available in the UK ...

Consumer Trends
UK Time Use Survey
DCMS Taking Part Survey
Experimental household accounts

Family Resources Survey
(low income households)
Article on distribution of
income, taxes and benefits

Beyond GDP

Social capital work
Equalities data review
ONS dedicated wellbeing branch

Cohort and longitudinal surveys
Workless households
Social Trends

Quality
of life

Defra sustainable development indicators
Environmental satellite accounts

Sustainability

Knowledge bank – bringing clarity

Web based knowledge bank – single repository of societal wellbeing links and information

external links, e.g. OECD papers

downloads, e.g. articles, work plans

analysis – analytical outputs

news – press articles of interest

events – key wellbeing events

- <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/wellbeing>
- Look out for regular newsletter

Measuring societal wellbeing – 1st phase

- Audit and evaluation of existing measures, using Stiglitz domains as framework
- More analysis of existing ‘classical GDP’ measures (eg net national product)
- Working across government
- Public engagement
- Collaboration with academics (eg on subjective measures and on time, utility and national product)

Measuring societal wellbeing - longer term outlook

- Toolkit for measuring progress (or for self-assessment of national progress)
- Analytical work programme defined
- Review of the role of satellite accounts
- Towards a headline measure?
- From national measures to internationally agreed standards

Working together in the EU (eg ESAC)

c) Temporary working party on "GDP and beyond" and Stiglitz-Sen

Chair (tbc): Brendan Walsh will initiate the work

Members: Hans-Joachim Haß, Lea Kauppi, Bernard Chane Kune and Ulrike Oschischnig.

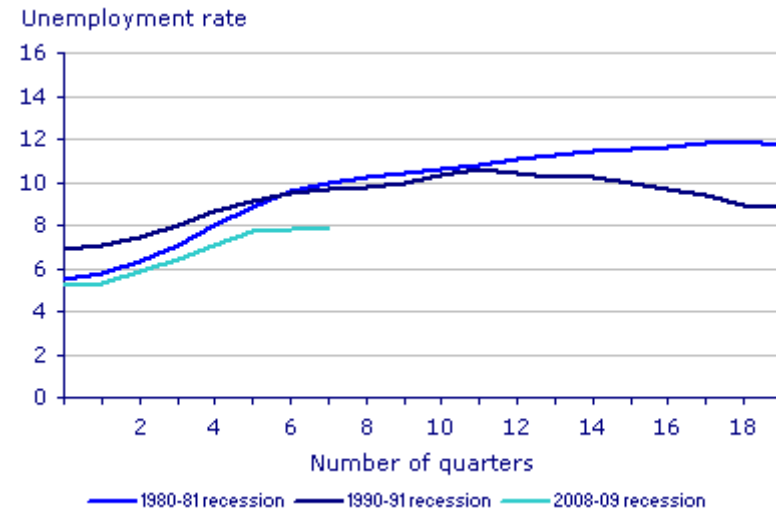
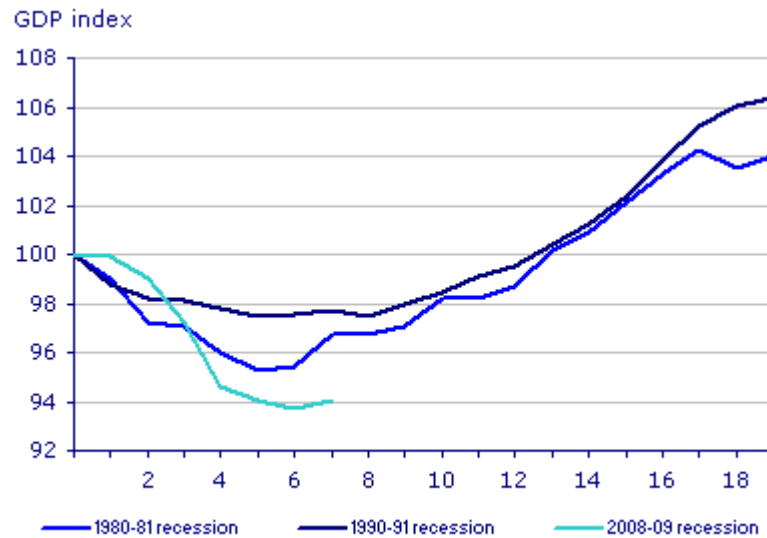
All other ESAC members were invited to express their interest in participating in one of the Working Parties before the next meeting.

What is role of official statistics here?

- Should we be defining progress?
- or give people the tools to define progress themselves?
- Do we need a statistical framework for a set of national wellbeing accounts?

Tracking the labour market and recession

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=2294>



Measuring the impact of the recession

For example

The labour market across the UK in the current recession

Authors: Jamie Jenkins, Debra Leaker

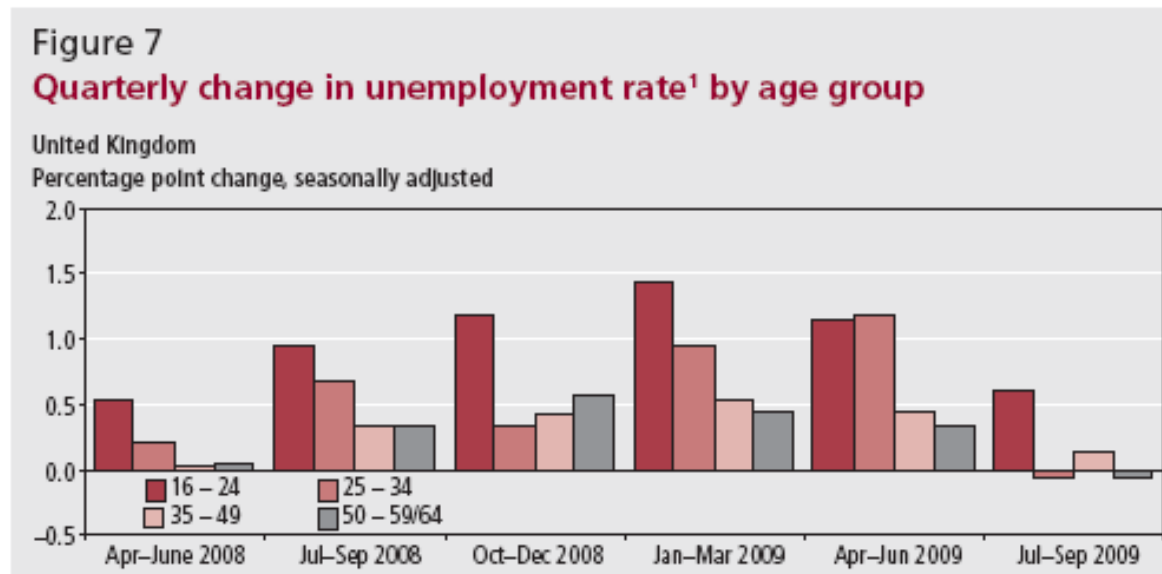
Economic & Labour Market

Review, vol 4, no 01, pp 38-48.

ISSN: 1751-8334

www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=2348

Measuring the impact of the recession



Note:

1 Men aged 16 to 64 and Women aged 16 to 59.

Source: Labour Force Survey

Better statistical diagnostics

Figure 1

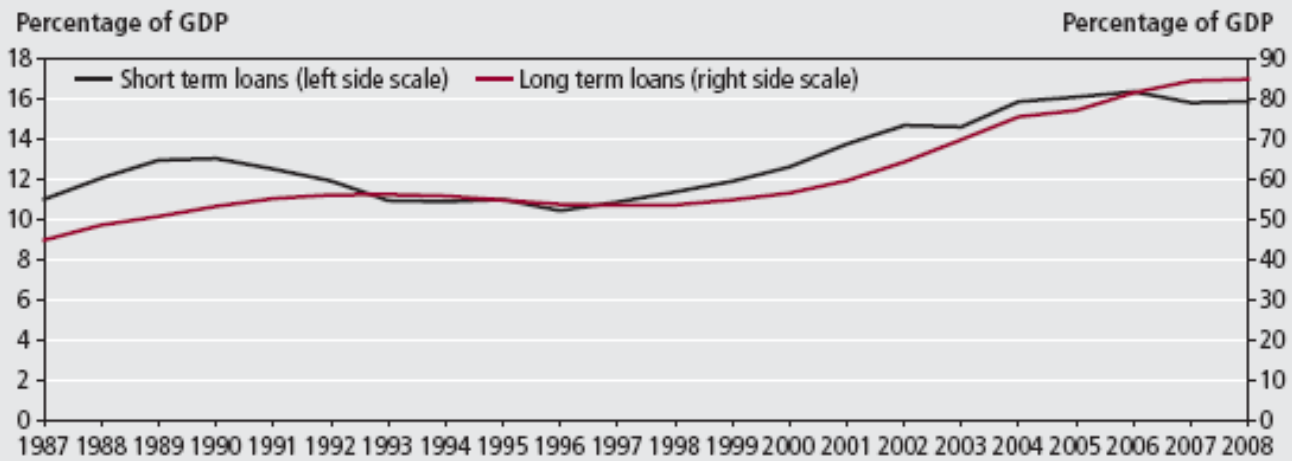
Household saving ratio

Per cent



Source: ONS Quarterly National Accounts

Figure 2
Household sector financial liabilities (debt)



Source: ONS Quarterly National Accounts

Reference

Improving measurement of household savings and wealth

(Describes recent trends leading up to the financial crisis and potential improvements in measuring household saving and wealth)

Authors: Chris Daffin, Sarah Levy, Andrew Walton
Economic & Labour Market
Review, vol 3, no 7, pp 33-36.
ISSN: 1751-8334

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/article.asp?ID=2249&Pos=1&ColRank=2&Rank=224>

Developments in on-line dissemination

- Social Trends on-line
- Rolling updates
- Spotlight On ...
- More targeted media releases
- Better website (next year)

Concluding remarks – societal wellbeing

- We have a wealth of statistical information and relevant work on which to build.
- Are we clear on the requirement and what we need to do?
- Do we need to bring together into a coherent whole and try and answer the question, ‘so what does it all add up to?’
- Welcome your feedback!