GoWell is a collaborative partnership between the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, the University of Glasgow and the MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, sponsored by Glasgow Housing Association, the Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde.
Regeneration & Positive Mental Health
What is GoWell?
GoWell Aims

• To investigate the health and wellbeing *impacts* of housing investment & regeneration.

• To understand the *processes* of change and implementation which contribute to those health impacts (+ve and –ve).

• To contribute to *community* awareness and understanding, so that residents are better able to engage.

• To *share* best practice and knowledge with policy-makers and practitioners.
Research objectives

• To investigate how regeneration affects individual and community health and wellbeing.
• To assess the degree to which places are transformed.
• To understand processes that support cohesive, sustainable communities.
• To monitor the effects of regeneration policy on area-based inequalities.
• To develop and test research methods.
Timescale

May 2006  1st survey  May 2008  2nd survey  Longitudinal studies (tracker & tracer)

Focus groups

Nested studies: janitors; youth; play areas

Empowerment and participation research

Ecological monitoring of city-wide changes

We are here  3rd survey  4th survey  2014
Regeneration

- Human Capital
- Social & Community Capital
- Residential & Cultural Capital
- Economic Capital
- Fixed Capital
- Environmental Capital

Community & Neighbourhood Context

Physical Health

Social Health

Mental Health & Wellbeing

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What is Positive Mental Health?
Mental Wellbeing

- Different to mental illness.
- Consists of two dimensions:
  - Hedonic wellbeing:
    - Subjective experience of happiness and life satisfaction.
  - Eudamonic wellbeing:
    - Positive psychological functioning, good relationships with others, and self-realisation.
WEMWBS Scale

- The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale for the UK, developed with NHS Health Scotland.
- Consists of 14 items covering things such as confidence, optimism, happiness, clear thinking, closeness to others etc.
- Closely correlated with other emotional and psychological scales.
- Being used in the Scottish Health Survey and the Scottish Prison Survey.
Scoring

• Respondents are asked to assess how they have been feeling over the past two weeks.

• People can say, for each item, that they have ‘never’ felt positive up to feeling positive ‘All of the time’.

• The items are combined into a score that ranges from 14 to 70.

• In 2006, the mean scores for the Scottish population were found to be 51.3 (or 66.6%) for men and 50.3 (64.8%) for women.
GoWell Findings
GoWell Wave 2

• Survey in summer 2008.
• Includes 3,911 respondents in 15 study areas.
  – Excluding asylum seekers and refugees.
• Mean scores are very similar to national norms.
• We have examined associations between mean scores and various ‘capital’ components.
• These are very preliminary findings. We need to do some statistical modelling of the data to see whether relationships hold up when a range of factors are controlled for simultaneously.
More & Less Positive About What?

- Items with the most positive responses:
  - Deciding on things.
  - Feeling loved.
  - Thinking clearly.
  - Feeling good about oneself.
  - Feeling confident.

= Feelings about self; thinking things through

- Items with the most negative responses:
  - Having energy to spare.
  - Feeling useful.
  - Feeling optimistic.
  - Being interested in others.

= Being able to do things; the future; relations to others.
Associations with Mental Wellbeing

• We have examined trends and relationships between mental wellbeing scores and variables which measure...
• Human Capital (and empowerment).
• Environmental Capital (and fixed capital).
• Social Capital.
• Residential (Cultural) Capital.
Human Capital

• *Being active is crucial to mental wellbeing.*
• *People living alone may need support.*
• Younger adults have more positive mental health, with the divide being around age 30.
• Single adults (below or above retirement age) have lower mental wellbeing than people in other types of household.
• People who are occupied full time, either with a job or in further or higher education, have the highest mental wellbeing.
• People who are long-term sick or disabled and without a job have very low mental wellbeing.
Q14f1. Which of these best describes your current position?
Human Capital: Housing Empowerment

• *Providing services in ways which help people feel empowered is important to their human capital and mental wellbeing.*

• People who feel they are kept informed about things by their landlord or factor, and people who think that their landlord or factor takes account of residents’ views when making decisions, report more positive mental wellbeing than people who do not feel this way.

• The least empowered had a mean score of 46.6 and the most empowered a mean score of 53.4, some 12% higher on the scale.
Human Capital: Local Empowerment

• *Feeling empowered locally is strongly associated with mental wellbeing.*

• We asked people three questions about local empowerment:
  – Could they influence decisions affecting their local area, on their own or with others;
  – Were people in the area able to find ways to improve things they want;
  – Were the council and local service providers responsive to people’s views.

• We created a local empowerment score from all three answers.

• This showed a linear relationship with mental wellbeing scores, with a range of 10 points or 18%.
Empowerment in Regeneration

- Community Engagement may support positive mental health in areas where mental wellbeing is relatively low.
- Mental wellbeing was lower in Transformation Areas and Local Regeneration Areas than elsewhere.
- Within these areas, mental wellbeing was higher among those people who...
  - Felt they were kept well informed about proposals for redevelopment of the area (+8%)
  - Felt they had opportunities to have a say in the regeneration (+10%).
- Sense of empowerment is low in regeneration areas: around a third of people in Transformation Areas feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area compared with nearly 60% of people living in the surrounding areas.
Environmental Capital: Housing

• *Providing houses with gardens could contribute to mental wellbeing, but even more important appears to be the provision of good maintenance and other services.*

• Residents of houses have higher mental wellbeing than residents of flats.

• High-rise occupants have a lower mental wellbeing average score than occupants of all other types of flats.

• But housing conditions and housing services appear to have a stronger relationship with mental wellbeing than dwelling type…
• Respondents measured housing conditions across 19 items on five-point scales, e.g. dampness, space, heating, repair, security etc..

• Landlord/factor’s housing services was assessed on a single five point scale.

• Those people rating housing conditions the best (top quartile) and housing services the best (very satisfied) both recorded mental wellbeing scores around 13% higher than people giving the worst ratings to these items.

• This is reflected in the relationship between mental wellbeing and housing satisfaction…
• Mental wellbeing scores were not significantly associated with:
  – Length of residence in the home.
  – Whether or not someone had moved home in the past two years.

• People who had improvement works done to their home in the past 2 yrs had a lower average level of mental wellbeing than people who had no works done, but the difference, whilst significant, was not great.
Environmental & Fixed Capital: Neighbourhood

• Safety is the key important characteristic of the neighbourhood, but the appearance of the area may partly underpin this. Neighbourhood management and maintenance form an important combination.

• As with housing, neighbourhood satisfaction has a positive linear relationship with mental wellbeing.

• The prevalence of anti-social behaviour locally was not as strongly associated with mental wellbeing as feelings of safety:
  – People who say they feel ‘very safe’ walking alone after dark have mental wellbeing scores on average 12% higher than those who feel ‘very unsafe’ and 14% higher than those who say they ‘never walk alone after dark’.

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• Respondents assessed their local neighbourhood environment according to its attractiveness (of buildings and environment) and peace & quiet.

• Local fixed capital was assessed by 9 items relating to different amenities and services (e.g. shops; community venues; play areas).

• Both had a positive relationship with mental wellbeing, but the environment more strongly so.
Social & Community Capital

• Local social capital is positively related to mental wellbeing. Community interaction, and activities that make people feel they belong may be important for mental wellbeing.

• We asked about people’s sense of belonging, feeling part of the community, and enjoyment of living in the area.

• We also asked about interactions with neighbours: knowing them; talking to them; visiting them; exchanging things with them.

• Both of these dimensions of social capital were associated with mental wellbeing, but sense of community slightly more so.
Residential Capital: Choice

• *Choice within housing systems is important. People don’t want to feel ‘stuck’ in places they don’t want to be.*

• We asked people who had moved home in the past two years whether they had much choice over the area and home they moved into.

• In both cases, those people who reported that they had ‘a lot’ of choice recorded mental wellbeing scores some 12% higher than those who said they had no choice and 6% higher than those who had ‘some’ choice.
Residential Capital: Reputations

- **Change in an area’s situation matters more than its relative position at a point in time. Progress is important.**

- People who thought that their area had got better to live in over the past two years and/or who thought that the area’s reputation within the city had got better, reported mental wellbeing scores 8% higher than people who thought the area itself, or its reputation, had got worse.
But the internal reputation of an area may matter slightly more than its external, relative position.

- Residents who were strongly of the view that *local* people thought highly of the area had mental wellbeing scores 10% higher than those people who thought the opposite.

- What people you meet everyday think could be more important to your state of mind than what outsiders think.
Sense of Progress

- Where you live is a barometer of how well you are doing in life. Feeling good about your area contributes to feeling good about yourself, and this supports mental wellbeing.

- Mental wellbeing scores were strongly associated with whether or not people thought that ‘Living in this neighbourhood makes me feel that I’m doing well in life’, ranging by 19% across the responses to this statement.
nhd makes me feel I'm doing well in life
The fact that regeneration is a physical, psychological and a social challenge is brought home by the following findings:

- In Housing Improvement Areas (like Riddrie) and in the areas surrounding high-rise estates (like Scotstoun), 7 out of 10 people (72%) can say that where they live helps make them feel they are doing well in life.
- In Transformation Areas it is half this number (36%).
- Three times as many people in Transformation Areas (36%) disagree with this statement compared with people in Housing Improvement Areas.
Conclusions

Some key messages that flow from these findings for regeneration include…

• **Activity** is crucial. Mental wellbeing is boosted by having things to do and feeling useful; this can come from a job, education or community and voluntary service.

• **Economic regeneration** and jobs is an important route to this, but not the only one, and perhaps not suitable for large sections of the population of deprived areas.

• Feeling part of a community and having sociable and helpful relations with those around you (outside the home) is also supportive of mental wellbeing.
• **Social Regeneration** therefore is an important third leg of the regeneration tripod, and should combine three things:
  – Personal support for isolated and vulnerable people such as those living alone or with long-term health issues.
  – Help to generate voluntary and community groups (self-help; learning; creative; leisure) which attract involvement from residents.
  – Community development work which builds residents’ capacity to influence decisions and events in their area: knowledge; skills; connections. This should be provided independently of any regeneration agency.
• **Physical renewal** of areas continues to be important: the built form, quality, aesthetics, amenities all matter for mental wellbeing.

• But **services** are equally if not more important: how housing & neighbourhoods are managed and maintained with sufficient intensity, responsiveness and customer care so that people feel respected, valued and empowered.
Empowerment and Progress are key watchwords for regeneration. Feeling empowered locally supports mental wellbeing - and yet many people don’t have this sense of individual or collective empowerment. Regeneration constitutes an even tougher environment for this.

The ideal combination is progress in an area and progress in people’s lives. Can people feel positive about their area (supported by the views of those around them) and, partly through this, positive about themselves?

Deprived areas need to be ‘transformed’ in many ways – economically, physically, socially and politically – to make this possible.

People need to see progress, feel progress and hear about progress. Regeneration needs a multi-sensory strategy!