

A Study: Wellbeing in Welsh Museums

QUANTITATIVE DATA CAPTURE USING
UCL'S POSITIVE WELLBEING UMBRELLA -
GENERIC

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Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government

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Introduction

This Wellbeing Study was undertaken to collect quantitative data around visitor wellbeing in local Welsh Museums. The relevance of doing so centres around researching and evidencing the Welsh Government's priorities, in particular, components of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which seek to improve economic, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing. In addition, some of the Welsh Government's 10 Wellbeing Measures outlined in the Programme for Government are also pertinent, for example:

- Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work.
- Push forward towards a million Welsh speakers and enable our tourism, sports & arts industries to thrive.

The fieldwork consisted of using University College London's (UCL) Creative Wellbeing Measures Toolkit relating to the Positive Generic Wellbeing Umbrella.² The Toolkit was designed to enable audiences to self-report on changes in mood and emotion before and after engaging with a museum or gallery. The Positive Wellbeing Umbrella therefore enables an evaluation of the psychological wellbeing of audiences.

An independent consultant³ was commissioned by the Welsh Government Culture Division in January 2024 to undertake wellbeing research in local museums. The key requirements were to provide a representative sample of museum types, locations, governance and collections for the study. In addition, the scope included offering training and support to enable museum staff and volunteers to use the Positive Wellbeing Umbrella to collect data.

The data was analysed and interpreted with key findings then disseminated within the museum sector through a bilingual digital publication.

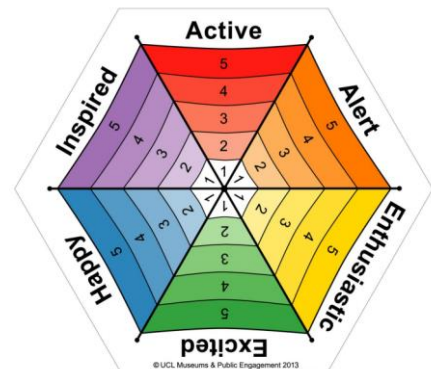
¹ The toolkit was produced by researchers from University College London (UCL) Museums and Public Engagement

² Ibid. The Positive Wellbeing Umbrella shown on page 15 of the toolkit was utilised

³ Lynn Podmore, Museum and Heritage Consultant - L Podmore Consultancy

About the Positive Wellbeing Umbrella – Generic

The Positive Wellbeing Umbrella – Generic has six adjectives associated to wellbeing printed around the edge. These are: active, alert, enthusiastic, excited, happy and inspired. Museum visitors were provided with an umbrella and asked to rate how they felt under each category as they entered the gallery and then to rate again on the reverse how they felt as they left. Visitors were asked to circle a number from 1-5 using the scoring guidance below.



The Positive Wellbeing Umbrella – Generic. Designed by UCL

Scoring Guidance

1. I don't feel
2. I feel a little bit
3. I feel fairly
4. I feel quite a lot
5. I feel extremely

Example:

If a person felt fairly enthusiastic, they would circle 3 under that segment. The before and after data is then compared to capture wellbeing changes (comparing the average or range). This can then be analysed to reveal other data e.g. a percentage change.

During the development of the UCL toolkit, it was found that there were many positive reasons to use this methodology, such as:

<i>A robust measure</i>	It helps to evaluate the psychological wellbeing of audiences before and after a museum or art gallery visit
<i>Adaptable</i>	It can be used to evaluate the impact of a one-off museum activity, a programme of events, a general visitor experience or an outreach activity
<i>Intuitive design</i>	A set of scales from 1-5 is easy to use
<i>Quick to complete</i>	It requires minimal effort for the visitor to complete compared to other survey methods



Rating the Positive Wellbeing Umbrella – Generic. Image courtesy of The Egypt Centre, Swansea

Research Methodology

Timetable

Data collection took place between 7th February and 19th March 2024 by participating museums. Analysis of findings was completed by 31st March.

Survey Launch

On 31st January 2024, a bilingual email was sent via Jiscmail to Welsh Museums with an invitation for local museums to register their expressions of interest (EOI) in collecting wellbeing data from visitors. The communication was also shared by the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales and the Welsh Government's Culture Division. The consultant used their existing network to promote the opportunity.

Support for the Research

Two forty-minute virtual presentations were provided, on 7th February and 19th February 2024, via Zoom. In these sessions the aims and objectives were communicated. This included delivering a PowerPoint presentation explaining the Positive Wellbeing Umbrella – Generic cited in the UCL's Creative Wellbeing Measures Toolkit. Logistics and guidance on capturing the data was also communicated and the session concluded with a question and answer session. A third presentation was provided to an organisation unable to attend either date. In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards, the offer of a Welsh to English interpreter was made if anyone wished to contribute in Welsh but this was not taken up by the participants.

A PDF of the bilingual PowerPoint, along with a template of the Excel spreadsheet to use for recording purposes, were provided. Feedback from the session indicated that the participating museums would prefer a bilingual statement for display explaining how to complete the Positive Wellbeing Umbrella, along with an explanation of why the data was being collected. This was actioned. Additional support for participants was provided by email and telephone. For participating independent museums, a small bursary was offered to cover volunteer expenses, stationery and ink. This was to ensure that contributing to the research was not prohibitive in terms of financial outlay. For one museum, an in-person visit by the consultant was provided to ensure representation from the geographical area and type of institution. A small number of museums were contacted directly on the basis of wellbeing initiatives being known to have taken place, with various degrees of response.

Welsh Language

All public communications and supporting documents were provided bilingually. A simultaneous interpretation service, in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards with which public sector organisations in Wales comply was offered to participants but declined. Translation work was sourced from a reputable translation firm (an existing supplier to the Welsh Government) with full membership of the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters. The Welsh terminology used by the University College London in describing the Positive Wellbeing Umbrella has been adopted.

Uptake Rate

Sixteen museums with twenty representatives attended the briefing workshops, expressing an interest in contributing to wellbeing data. As there are 99 accredited museums within Wales, this equates to 16% response rate. Seven museums participated in this study, which equates to 7% response rate.

Data Records

Each museum representative populated a predesigned table in an Excel spreadsheet. This recorded visitors' rating scores at the beginning and end of their visit which automatically populated the average for each umbrella. The data has been shown to one decimal place.

Research Scope

The quantitative research centred on the Positive Wellbeing Umbrellas for general visitors. It did not include any other type of wellbeing umbrella or focus on group visits or outreach. No qualitative data ran alongside this survey.

Some uncontrolled variables in the collection of responses could have had some influence on scoring, e.g. individuals may have been reluctant to say they considered themselves inactive; the level of engagement museums gained in encouraging visitors to complete the survey is unknown.

Museum Participants

Seven museums volunteered to participate in the Wellbeing study, covering a range of counties and types of institutions. This featured two independent museums; three Local Authority museums; one University Museum and one National Trust site. Museums were located in city centres, towns, on the coast, in rural areas and on an island. In total, 379 responses were obtained, representing several different counties from across Wales.

Welsh Museum	Type	County	Region	Responses
Llandudno Museum and Gallery	Independent	Conwy	North Wales	100
Tredeggar House	National Trust	Monmouthshire	South Wales	82
The Egypt Centre	University	Swansea	South Wales	54
Museum of Cardiff	Local Authority	Cardiff	South Wales	54
Nantgarw China Works Museum	Independent	Rhondda Cynon Taf	South Wales	33
Carmarthenshire County Museum	Local Authority	Carmarthenshire	South Wales	30
Oriel Môn	Local Authority	Anglesey	North Wales	26

The narratives, range of collections and outside spaces within each museum were wide-ranging. Specialisms included antiquities, art, fossils, archaeology and ceramics. These were presented at traditional museum buildings or via historic properties, e.g. an industrial heritage site, a former palace and a historic mansion with gardens.

Welsh Museum	Brief Description
Llandudno Museum and Gallery	The exhibits span from the prehistoric age and feature natural history, geology, fine art and social and military history.
Tredeggar House	One of the finest examples of a Restoration mansion in Britain and the Morgan family's ancestral home.
The Egypt Centre	The University Museum has the largest collection of Egyptian Antiquities in Wales (c.6,000 artefacts).
Museum of Cardiff	The museum collection tells the story of Cardiff and the people who have lived, worked and played in the city, over the centuries.
Nantgarw China Works Museum	The only surviving early 19 th Century porcelain works in the United Kingdom, featuring three bottle ovens.
Carmarthenshire County Museum	The 700-year-old former Palace for the Bishops of Saint David's tells stories of people, power and protest.
Oriel Môn	The largest collection of works by Welsh artist Sir Kyffin Williams is housed here along with wildlife artwork by Charles Tunnicliffe.

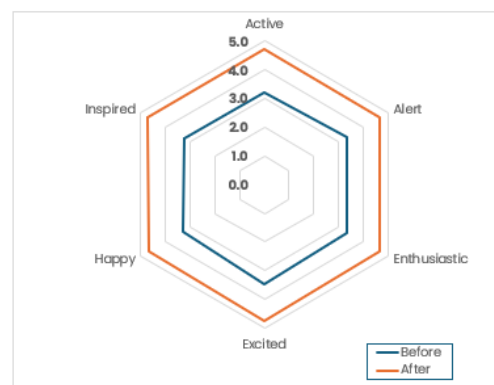
Wellbeing Findings

The following information provides an overview of quantitative data from each participating museum, followed by collective wellbeing results. The average result for each of the six indicators of wellbeing is provided for each umbrella header as well as the percentage difference. Indicators with the lowest and highest scores are also presented. A table and diagram provide a visual reference.

Llandudno Museum and Gallery

100 visitors completed the survey. The percentage changes at the museum reveal a substantial increase in all wellbeing areas. The indicators with the largest changes were 'Active', with a 49% improvement and 'Inspired' at 46%. 'Excited' came out lowest with a 37% improvement even though it had the highest after score, of 4.8. The reason for this is that visitors scored this emotion higher than all the others to begin with, at 3.5, which provided less scope for increase. As a collective average, the wellbeing of visitors improved by 42%.

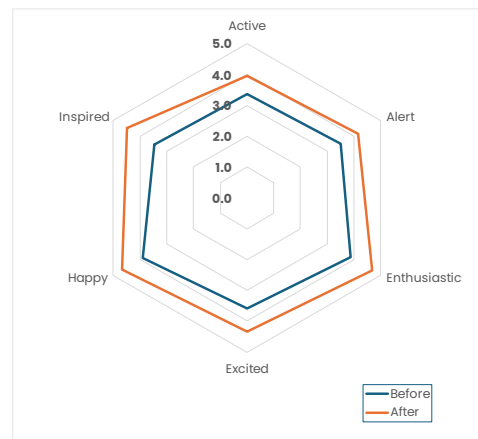
Emotion	Before	After	% Change
Active	3.2	4.7	49%
Alert	3.3	4.6	40%
Enthusiastic	3.3	4.7	39%
Excited	3.5	4.8	37%
Happy	3.3	4.7	43%
Inspired	3.2	4.7	46%
Average	3.3	4.7	42%



Tredegar House

82 visitors completed the museum survey. The percentage changes reveal a very good increase in all wellbeing areas, with five scores ranging between 18–21% (3% range). The sixth indicator, which saw the largest change, was ‘Inspired’, with a 29% improvement. The lowest percentage change was ‘Active’, at 19%, but this was still a good increase. At the start of their museum visit, people rated ‘Enthusiastic’ and ‘Happy’ higher than other categories so there was less scope for increase. As a collective average, visitors’ wellbeing improved by 21%.

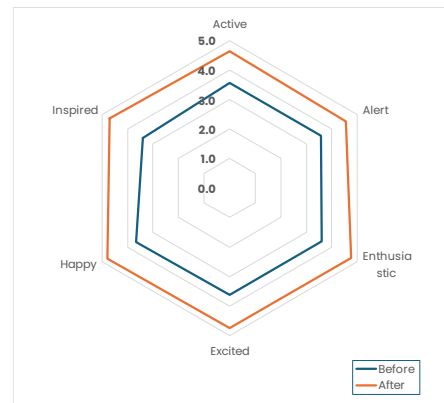
Emotion	Before	After	% Change
Active	3.4	4.0	18%
Alert	3.5	4.1	19%
Enthusiastic	3.9	4.7	21%
Excited	3.6	4.3	21%
Happy	3.9	4.7	20%
Inspired	3.5	4.5	29%
Average	3.6	4.4	21%



The Egypt Centre

54 visitors completed the survey. The percentage changes at the museum reveal that there is an even increase in all wellbeing areas. The indicator that saw the largest improvement was ‘Inspired’, at 39%. The lowest percentage change was ‘Alert’ at 27% but this was still a very good increase. As a collective average, visitors’ wellbeing improved by 32%.

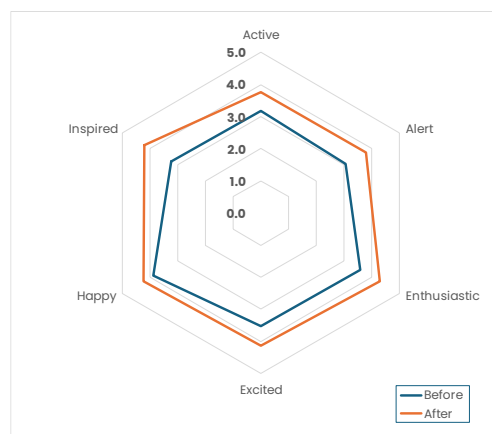
Emotion	Before	After	% Change
Active	3.6	4.6	30%
Alert	3.6	4.5	27%
Enthusiastic	3.6	4.8	32%
Excited	3.6	4.7	31%
Happy	3.6	4.8	31%
Inspired	3.4	4.7	39%
Average	3.6	4.7	32%



Museum of Cardiff

54 visitors completed the survey. The percentage changes at the museum reveal a good increase in all wellbeing areas. The indicator with the largest improvement was 'Inspired' with an increase of 30%. The lowest percentage change was 'Happy', at 9%, largely because this was rated highest at 3.9 by visitors at the start, hence there was less scope to increase this score. As a collective average, visitors' wellbeing improved by 20%.

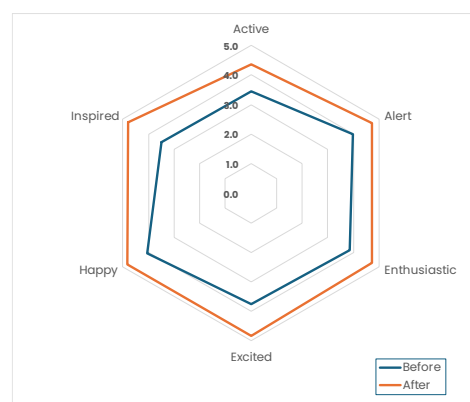
Emotion	Before	After	% Change
Active	3.2	3.8	19%
Alert	3.1	3.8	24%
Enthusiastic	3.6	4.3	20%
Excited	3.5	4.1	18%
Happy	3.9	4.2	9%
Inspired	3.2	4.2	30%
Average	3.4	4.1	20%



Nantgarw China Works Museum

33 visitors completed the survey. The percentage changes at the museum reveal a good increase in all wellbeing areas. The indicator with the largest improvement was 'Inspired', at 37%. Two categories which increased at a lower rate were 'Alert' and 'Happy', both improving by 19%. This was still a positive improvement considering both were originally rated high (over 4) by visitors at the beginning of their museum visit. As a collective average, visitors' wellbeing improved by 25%.

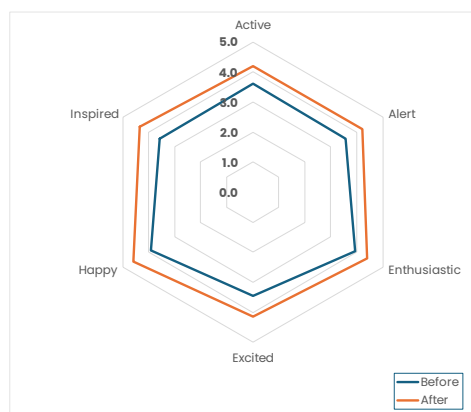
Emotion	Before	After	% Change
Active	3.5	4.4	26%
Alert	4.0	4.7	19%
Enthusiastic	3.8	4.7	23%
Excited	3.8	4.8	28%
Happy	4.1	4.8	19%
Inspired	3.5	4.8	37%
Average	3.8	4.7	25%



Carmarthenshire County Museum

30 visitors completed the survey. The percentage changes at the museum reveal a good increase in all wellbeing areas. The indicator with the largest improvement was 'Inspired' with an increase of 21%. The lowest percentage change was 'Enthusiastic' at 12%, because this scored highest at the beginning with 3.9. As a collective average, visitors' wellbeing improved by 17%.

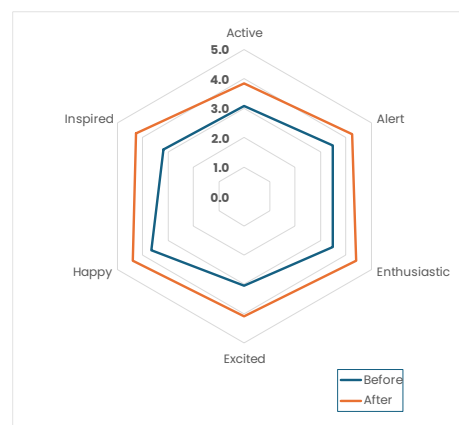
Emotion	Before	After	% Change
Active	3.6	4.2	17%
Alert	3.6	4.2	18%
Enthusiastic	3.9	4.4	12%
Excited	3.5	4.1	19%
Happy	3.9	4.6	18%
Inspired	3.6	4.3	21%
Average	3.7	4.3	17%



Oriel Môn

26 visitors completed the survey. The percentage changes at the museum reveal a substantial increase in all wellbeing areas. The indicators with the largest improvements were 'Excited' and 'Inspired', with an increase of 34%. The category which increased the least was 'Happy', improving by 20%, largely because visitors rated this higher (3.7) at the start of their museum visit. As a collective average, visitors' wellbeing improved by 27%.

Emotion	Before	After	% Change
Active	3.1	3.8	25%
Alert	3.5	4.2	22%
Enthusiastic	3.5	4.4	27%
Excited	3.0	4.1	34%
Happy	3.7	4.4	20%
Inspired	3.2	4.3	34%
Average	3.3	4.2	27%



Collective Data

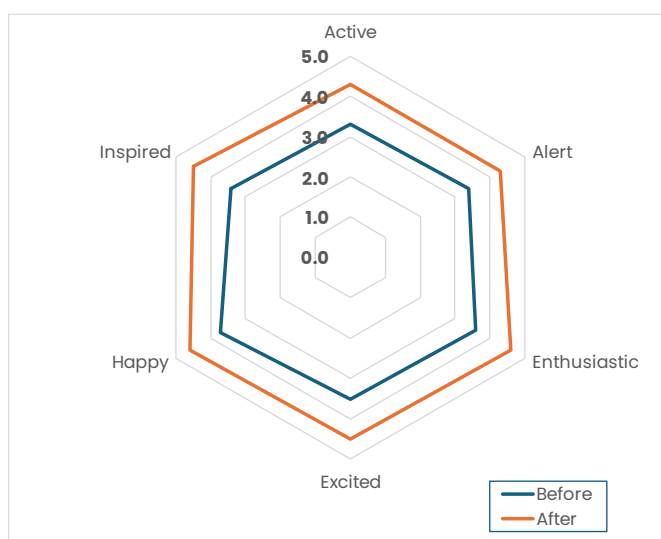
The table below shows the collective results of 379 entries from all seven museums that participated in this study. All positive wellbeing categories improved between 24%-32% (an 8% range). The lowest and highest data mirrors the museums' individual scores.

'Inspired' showed the greatest improvement in 6 of the 7 museums and was second highest in the seventh. The average improvement for this category was 32%.

The score which increased the least was 'Happy' at 24% but as previously mentioned, this was rated the highest to begin with, at 3.7. This percentage in its own right is high.

As a collective average, visitors' wellbeing improved by 28%.

Emotion	Before	After	% Change
Active	3.3	4.3	30%
Alert	3.4	4.3	26%
Enthusiastic	3.6	4.6	28%
Excited	3.5	4.5	29%
Happy	3.7	4.6	24%
Inspired	3.4	4.5	32%
Average	3.5	4.5	28%



Hierarchy of Results

1. Inspired
2. Active
3. Excited
4. Enthusiastic
5. Alert
6. Happy

Conclusion

This study provides an initial indication that museums greatly improve visitor wellbeing across all positive wellbeing categories, regardless of the type of museum, geographical location and collection type. Alongside demonstrating economic and learning benefits, museums could also consider using wellbeing measures as a means of evaluation and measuring impact. This may influence further research, new learning and access to funding.

A proportion of museum personnel, including those who did not participate in this research, provided positive verbal feedback as they had a better understanding of the UCL Positive Wellbeing Umbrella - Generic. Although outside the scope of this research, some Learning and Visitor Service Officers felt encouraged to try and use the UCL measures with school and community groups; many felt confident that the wellbeing evaluation would be a good measure to illustrate impact with senior management and would look to include it as part of their future evaluations. There was an interest in contributing to further research should this be a future option.

Feedback from museum professionals was complimentary about the design of the UCL umbrella and the ease of use for the visitor and for museum personnel promoting the research. Cutting around the hexagon shape was less favoured.

The museum landscape in Wales is variable with a range of museums and a larger volume of independent museums with limited resources. While there was interest from Welsh museums in learning about all the UCL's Wellbeing Umbrellas and how they could be utilised, some museums felt they were unable to contribute due to:

- Seasonal opening times, commencing from March.
- One museum was closed due to redevelopment works.
- Several lacked staffing or volunteer capacity to support public interactions.
- One cited that some volunteers lacked confidence in communicating with the public.
- Existing work priorities took precedence e.g. grant reports or end of year accounts.
- In-person support was limited due to the geographical locations.

No qualitative data ran alongside this survey to ascertain why, for example, people felt inspired or enthusiastic. This, for instance, could be influenced by social

interactions with museum staff or family members, access to open spaces or a particular exhibit. The findings of the study are very encouraging.

Acknowledgements

The Wellbeing toolkit was produced by researchers from University College London (UCL) Museums & Public Engagement and funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

The author would like to thank Nerys Hurford for proofing and translation services and all those who contributed to the content of this report.

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Further reading

- UCL Wellbeing Measures Toolkit
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/biosciences/sites/biosciences/files/ucl_creative_wellbeing_measures_toolkit_sept22.pdf
- UCL Wellbeing Measures Toolkit Cymru
[mesurau-llesiant-amgueddfeydd-yr-ucl.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/biosciences/sites/biosciences/files/ucl_creative_wellbeing_measures_toolkit_sept22.pdf)
- The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>
- Programme for Government's Wellbeing Measures
[Programme for government 2021 to 2026: Well-being statement \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](https://www.gov.wales/government/programmes/2021-2026/well-being-statement)



This Wellbeing Case Study Report has been written by
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