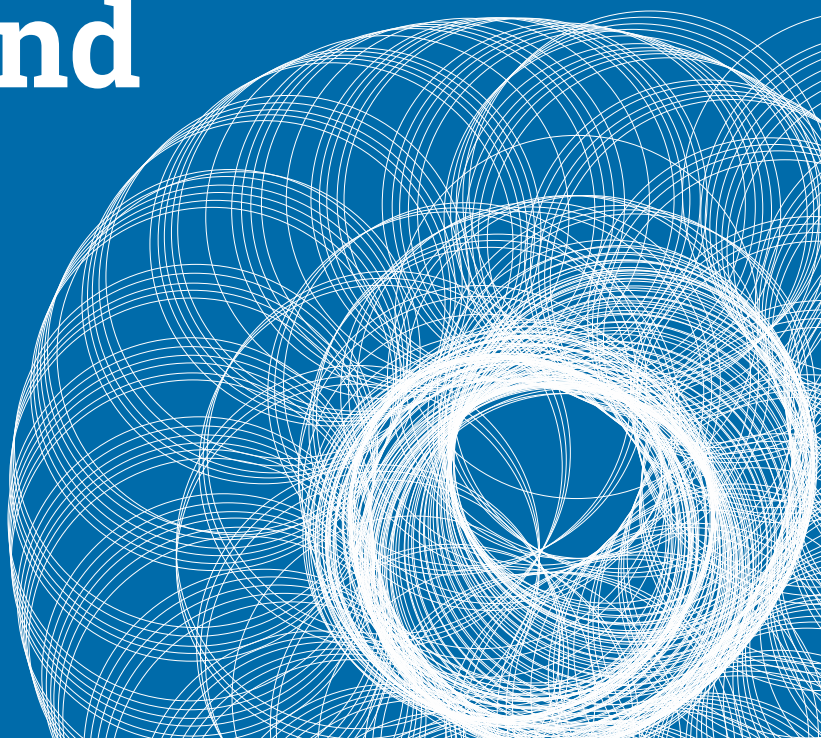


Survey of Public Opinion

Public Attitudes Toward Wellbeing Economics in Scotland



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About Scotianomics

In the 21st century data is everywhere but it is the analysis that transforms data into valuable, actionable knowledge that is the key to success.

Organisations, both in Scotland's private and public sectors, lack access to useful, reliable data and value-added analysis of the kind that most advanced countries take for granted. This creates a hidden but real disadvantage for Scottish business, limits public policy and disrupts the pursuit of shared prosperity.

Scotianomics aims to spark a knowledge revolution and inform the decision-makers on Scotland's economy. We provide cutting-edge intelligence and strategic planning resources so that stakeholders can gain a wide view of the threats and opportunities in the world through our geopolitical, economic and policy analysis, unique historical datasets, risk and opportunity forecasts, Geographic Information System mapping solutions and strategic planning services.

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Preface

We live in tumultuous economic times. The current health crisis shows no sign of abating in the near future and will impact our lives and economic behaviour for some time to come.

It may also provide the fulcrum for a major change in attitudes on how the economy should work and what the goals of economic policy should be. There has not really been a full system-based approach to economic change promoted by major political parties. However, there have been many calls to build back better and also growing support for the ideas surrounding a green new deal and adopting wellbeing as a core value in economic policy.

Despite growing references to wellbeing by politicians, the policy agenda remains in its infancy while the term itself lacks an agreed definition. In particular, while many scholars and political figures have offered their own definitions of a wellbeing approach, none have surveyed the population of a country to see how closely the values of a wellbeing approach matches public opinion on economic policy.

This is what the Scotianomics research team has set out to do, to better determine the likely future demand for wellbeing-based policies in Scotland. Our findings suggest that Scotland's population is significantly ahead of the major political parties in their openness to a wellbeing approach and that acceptance transcends all age groups, political allegiances (to a greater/lesser degree) and all socio-economic groups.

In this report, our first of several planned investigations into wellbeing-led economic policies, we find that public opinion in Scotland is highly in tune with the major principles of a wellbeing economic approach. This should encourage a broad shift in the policy systems that govern the Scottish economy toward that of a wellbeing agenda.

Gordon MacIntyre-Kemp

Director Scotianomics

Executive summary

- This report draws upon the analysis of a Panelbase survey commissioned by Scotianomics to evaluate the current public attitude towards the adoption of a wellbeing economic approach in Scotland.
- The survey focused on some of the key principles and policies associated with a wellbeing economy and throughout the report we have evaluated how accepting people in Scotland are of the values that are related to a wellbeing-led economic approach.
- We conclude that there is significant support for the adoption of a wellbeing economic approach in Scotland, with a majority of respondents endorsing many of the wellbeing values and policies.
- The report recognises that people who reside in Scotland are likely to consider the purpose of public policy and economics to be to serve the needs of society and its people and should have a greater emphasis on wellbeing, quality of life, equality, fairness, health and happiness. This is an important finding with regard to future policymaking and suggests there is a demand for a more thorough wellbeing approach which is not yet being fully utilised by policymakers in Scotland.
- Throughout the survey there was a clear desire amongst respondents to rebuild society and the economy by adopting a new economic approach after the coronavirus pandemic. It is evident that this period of unrest has acted as a catalyst for change and the general public would welcome a new system that is more resilient and therefore less susceptible to any future health or economic crises.
- This report also evaluated the acceptance of a wellbeing approach across various policy areas. With regard to work and education, a greater focus on wellbeing was widely supported, with investment in innovation, improved work practices and free education all being greatly endorsed.
- Some of the concepts surrounding social equality faced a mixed reaction from respondents, with the idea of economic success being more equally shared receiving less support. However, eradicating poverty and investing in personal development opportunities were widely supported.
- Other policies associated with a wellbeing economic approach, such as the introduction of a Universal Basic Income (UBI), decentralisation and tackling climate change were all supported by a majority of respondents.
- Our analysis of the level of acceptance within society of the general principles and values of the wellbeing approach covers age, gender, political party affiliation and occupation. Therefore, we are able to pinpoint the groups of society that are most likely to endorse a wellbeing agenda and identify any political barriers to the adoption of this system.
- The results of this survey offer a degree of guidance to the policymaking community as we experience a period of great change and radical policymaking decisions. That is, the overwhelming desire for a greater implementation of policies associated with a wellbeing approach amongst the population of Scotland.

Introduction

In fewer than 15 years, the global economy has experienced two major shocks. Those shocks are likely to have had a lasting effect on peoples' perceptions of the economy, how it works and what the overall goal of an economic system should be. The impact of COVID-19 has, in particular, highlighted the susceptibility of states to economic and health crises with the lack of preparation for such a pandemic being evident. This crisis has reinforced debates about the stability, resilience and fairness of the current global economic system, which has been in question since the 2008 financial crash destabilised political systems across the world.

Currently, there is growing concern about a second COVID-19 wave and what the consequences would mean for global politics and economics. Furthermore, this crisis has highlighted the possibility of similar events occurring in the future. This has resulted in a growing desire to reform an economic system that has failed to cope with major shocks and has facilitated inequality, climate change and personal insecurity. In Scotland for instance, the devolved government has established an expert advisory panel to investigate the possibility for reform in Scotland to encourage both an economic recovery and greater wellbeing among the local population.¹

This is part of a general trend over the last decade wherein the concept of wellbeing in economics, or within a combined socio-economic policy framework, has been gaining increasing public approval. Indeed, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the Scottish Government had already – alongside the New Zealand and Icelandic Governments – established the Wellbeing Economy Governments Intergovernmental Forum.²

However, the concept of wellbeing remains largely undefined and lacks a robust measurement process. Greater definition and an effective monitoring system would allow governments to implement a wellbeing economic approach. To do so, policymakers and other stakeholders must first define what they mean by a wellbeing approach, whilst also understanding the extent of public approval and priorities regarding specific areas of wellbeing.

Scotianomics aims to contribute to this process by conducting surveys to precisely understand the extent of public approval for wellbeing policies in Scotland, whilst also identifying specific areas of priority among respondents.

1 Scottish Government (2020) 'Advisory Group on Economic Recovery', Available Online: [[https://www.gov.scot/groups/advisory-group-on-economic-recovery/#:~:text=That%20is%20why%20we%20estab-lished,\(AGER\)%20in%20April%202020.&text=It%20is%20recognised%20that%20the,greener%2C%20net%2Dzero%20society.](https://www.gov.scot/groups/advisory-group-on-economic-recovery/#:~:text=That%20is%20why%20we%20estab-lished,(AGER)%20in%20April%202020.&text=It%20is%20recognised%20that%20the,greener%2C%20net%2Dzero%20society.)]

2 Scottish Government (2020) 'Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo)', Available Online: [<https://www.gov.scot/groups/wellbeing-economy-governments-wego/>].

Defining the wellbeing agenda

In order to survey public opinion on a wellbeing approach, it was important to define what this type of economic system would involve and the values that sit at the core of this approach. This definition can be located in policy trends and statements emerging across the global policymaking community. Firstly, we discuss trends on an international level and, secondly, trends within Scotland.

Trends across the international policymaking community

Angel Gurría, Secretary of the OECD, raised some of the following points during a talk on the “Economy of Well-Being”, on 16th September 2019, Reykjavik, Iceland.³

- The “Economy of Well-Being” will create a virtuous circle in which citizens’ wellbeing will drive economic prosperity, stability and resilience. This type of approach puts people at the centre of policy, moving away from the attitude that we must grow first and redistribute later. Instead, a wellbeing economy has an equitable and sustainable growth model from the outset.
- More than half of OECD countries have now developed dashboards of wellbeing indicators.
- These indicators are based around health, education, skills, gender equality, social protection and redistribution. Each of these measures can be fulfilled by improving childcare provision, parental leave, access to education, health for all, tax and transfer systems that improve pay for low wage earners and improving access to skills and training. Re-focusing climate change action policies through a wellbeing lens will also create jobs, produce income and improve health, education and environmental problems.

Lorenzo Fioramonti, the author of Wellbeing Economy, claimed that people will be more productive when performing activities that enhance the quality of life of their peers and their ecosystems.⁴

The importance of wellbeing is being increasingly recognised by national governments across the world, several of which have designed wellbeing frameworks similar to those of the OECD. Some OECD states, as well as their devolved regions, have also started to develop tools for the integration of wellbeing into their strategic objectives, agenda-setting, policy analysis and budgetary processes. Examples include:

- **Iceland** The country’s wellbeing agenda includes 39 wellbeing indicators that are closely monitored by Statistics Iceland. These indicators are in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Iceland also prioritises wellbeing, instead of

3 OECD (2019) ‘The Economy of Well-Being’, Available Online: [<https://www.oecd.org/about/secretary-general/the-economy-of-well-being-iceland-september-2019.htm>]

4 OECD (2019) ‘The Economy of Well-Being’, Available Online: [<https://www.oecd.org/about/secretary-general/the-economy-of-well-being-iceland-september-2019.htm>]

GDP, in its budget. Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir supported an alternative future based on wellbeing and inclusive growth, which requires new social indicators besides GDP data.⁵

- **Wales** The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) includes seven wellbeing goals and requires that all public bodies consider the long-term impact of decisions and address issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.⁶
- **New Zealand** The government is amending legislation to encourage wellbeing objective setting, developing wellbeing frameworks and indicators and using wellbeing research and evidence to influence budgets and decision-making. New Zealand's Wellbeing Budget 2019 implemented wellbeing targets within its economic planning.⁷
- **Finland** This country contributes to the UN Agenda 2030 which highlights the balance between economic, social and environmental policies and seeks sustainable solutions to society's challenges.⁸ Finland also claims to be focusing on understanding how investments in wellbeing can generate savings, efficiency, productivity and economic growth. For example, it is claimed that addressing gender gaps will boost GDP by 15-30% (OECD).⁹ It also suggests the benefits of focusing on inclusive growth and innovation (digitisation and new technologies) to promote public health and new medicines, social justice, fair treatment, social security and social inclusion.¹⁰

Central to this trend has been a shift away from the GDP indicator, currently the staple monitoring tool of governments and economists. This is due to the limitations of GDP in terms of conveying the social realities of inequality and environmental degradation, among others. A wellbeing approach requires, therefore, the creation or adoption of a more diverse set of economic measures and although GDP would be considered, it would not be the primary economic measure.

5 Wellbeing Economy Alliance (2019) 'Iceland Government unveils Wellbeing Framework', Available Online: [<https://wellbeingeconomy.org/iceland-government-unveils-wellbeing-framework>].

6 Welsh Government (2015) 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015', Available Online: [<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf>]

7 The New Zealand Government (2019) 'The Wellbeing Budget', Available Online: [<https://treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-05/b19-wellbeing-budget.pdf>]

8 KEPA (2017) 'Finland and the 2030 Agenda', Available Online: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/16941Kepa_Finlandandthe2030Agenda_Afollowupreport_of_CSOs_2017.pdf].

9 OECD (2018) 'Family-friendly policies a key driver of economic growth', Available Online: [<https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/family-friendly-policies-a-key-driver-of-economic-growth.htm#:~:text=14%2F05%2F2018%20%2D%20The,to%20a%20new%20OECD%20report.>]

10 United Nations (2019) 'Inequality Must Be Addressed through Social Protection Policies, Speakers Stress, as Commission for Social Development Opens 2019 Session', Available Online: [<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/soc4873.doc.htm>]

Trends within the Scottish policymaking community

The Scottish Government has demonstrated a gradual transition towards a more wellbeing focused economic approach. This has been displayed through the adoption of policies such as the National Performance Framework and its involvement in the Wellbeing Economy Governments' Partnership (WEGo).

COVID-19 has acted as a catalyst for change to the current economic system and has drawn attention to the fundamental issues within the existing approach. After this time of unrest, the Scottish Government has an opportunity to build upon the wellbeing focused policies that are already in place and implement a more thorough wellbeing economic approach.

National Performance Framework

The National Performance Framework offers a monitoring system for progress and wellbeing, similar to the OECD Framework. This type of framework allows us to consider issues, including quality of life and sustainability, that cannot be measured by indicators such as GDP.

The key aims of the National Performance Framework are to¹¹:

- create a more successful country;
- give opportunities to all people living in Scotland;
- increase the wellbeing of people living in Scotland;
- create sustainable and inclusive growth;
- reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress.

This framework has been implemented in order to tackle and measure the impact of issues and inequalities across a number of key areas, including the environment, fair work, business and poverty.

Environment By adopting this component of the framework, the government has demonstrated a commitment to a more sustainable economic approach and the introduction of environmentally focused policies. This includes the advocacy and implementation of carbon reduction efforts, renewable energy, sustainable technologies and biodiversity.¹² Improvements to transport infrastructure and the promotion of active modes of transport, such as walking and cycling, are also part of this greener vision. This is a key element of a wellbeing economic approach, with a sustainable environment being crucial to both a thriving society and economy.

11 Scottish Government (2020) 'What it is: An overview of the framework', Available Online: [<https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/what-it>]

12 Scottish Government (2020) 'Environment', Available Online: [<https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/index.php/national-outcomes/environment>]

Fair work and business The National Performance Framework aims to create a fairer, more inclusive business environment and this overall goal complements the values of a wellbeing economic approach. The key policy objectives within this area are to enforce a greater focus on research, innovation and personal development.¹³ Moreover, the importance of the wellbeing of employees, a fair working environment, training and employment support must be emphasised. These policy objectives are in alignment with the key principles of a wellbeing economic approach.

Poverty Eradicating poverty and inequalities are key policy objectives of the National Performance Framework and this complements some of the main goals of a wellbeing economy. The Scottish Government aims to find the root causes of poverty and disadvantage and set out solutions to eradicate such inequalities from society all together.¹⁴ The government's vision for the future is that financial security, employment, a home and a good life will no longer be a luxury but something that everyone can enjoy. This corresponds with the wellbeing approach which supports the idea of security and dignity being a human right, rather than something that must be earned.

Wellbeing Economy Governments

The Wellbeing Economy Governments partnership (WEGo) is a collaboration of governments that aims to share knowledge and transferrable policy practices surrounding a wellbeing economy.¹⁵ The ultimate goal of this group is to develop a greater understanding of, and to start creating, wellbeing economies. The current member countries of WEGo are Scotland, New Zealand, Iceland and Wales.

The key objectives of this group are to:

- collaborate in pursuit of policy approaches that focus on wellbeing and the role of economics;
- work with other countries to share ideas on what works and what does not in order to inform policymaking;
- work in line with Goal 17 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals – fostering partnership and cooperation to identify approaches to delivering wellbeing;
- address the major economic, social and environmental challenges of our time.

The Scottish Government has taken a leading role within this partnership, hosting the first meeting at Scotland's Inclusive Growth conference in 2017 and holding the first economic policy lab in Edinburgh in 2019.¹⁶ Scotland's position in this group highlights

13 Scottish Government (2020) 'Fair Work and Business', Available Online: [<https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/fair-work-and-business>]

14 Scottish Government (2020) 'Poverty', Available Online: [<https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/poverty>]

15 Wellbeing Economy Alliance (2020) 'Wellbeing Economy Governments', Available Online: [<https://wellbeingeconomy.org/wego>]

16 Scottish Government (2020) 'Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo)', Available Online: [<https://www.gov.scot/groups/wellbeing-economy-governments-wego/>]

the government's desire to implement further wellbeing focused policies and eventually adopt a wellbeing economic approach.

Advisory Group on Economic Recovery

In April 2020, the Scottish Government established the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery (AGER) to gain expert advice and support on how to respond to the long-term effects of the coronavirus pandemic.¹⁷ After the immediate consequences of COVID-19 have subsided the group will offer guidance on long-term economic recovery.

The expert group aims to guide the government in rebuilding the economy swiftly, whilst also ensuring that it is stronger and more resilient to any future economic or health crises.

In order to do this the group considered how the economy could incorporate a more thorough focus on wellbeing, fairness and inclusivity, while also focusing on tackling environmental issues and introducing sustainable policies.

Some of the suggestions and advice noted throughout the report correspond with the main principles of a wellbeing economy. These key findings and recommendations include:¹⁸

- Increased support for young people in Scotland in finding employment and training;
- The group suggested that Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council should work alongside colleges, universities and businesses to offer greater access to apprenticeship training, graduate apprenticeships and online learning;
- The development of a business-led Scottish Jobs Guarantee Scheme. This would allow businesses to work with local authorities to offer work placements to young individuals. This is particularly crucial during this time of severe unemployment;
- Improvements to business and workplace practices;
- The group suggested that the business community and Scottish Government work together to implement Fair Work principles. This may encourage flexible work patterns and home working;
- Support for those in education and educational institutions;
- The report states that the government must consider the impact of any learning

17 Scottish Government (2020) 'Advisory Group on Economic Recovery', Available Online: [<https://www.gov.scot/groups/advisory-group-on-economic-recovery/#:~:text=That%20is%20why%20we%20established,created%20by%20coronavirus%2C%20has%20subsided.>]

18 Scottish Government (2020) 'Towards a Robust, Resilient Wellbeing Economy for Scotland: Report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery', Available Online: [<https://www.gov.scot/publications/towards-robust-resilient-wellbeing-economy-scotland-report-advisory-group-economic-recovery/pages/6/>]

loss due to the period of lockdown. There must also be additional support for those returning to school, particularly amongst disadvantaged groups;

- The Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government should prioritise the protection of universities and colleges from financial hardship during the crisis. Such institutions are vital to research, businesses and rebuilding the economy;
- Greater focus and investment towards creating a greener Scotland;
- The COVID-19 crisis has required a radical and immediate policy response and now a similar level of urgency must be displayed with regard to the climate crisis;
- As the economy rebuilds and businesses rethink existing models, it is a real opportunity to promote new ways of travelling, working and reducing our use of natural resources;
- Investing in tackling climate change is also an investment in the economic recovery and new jobs. A sustainable future must be at the core of the economic recovery and all future policies, across all sectors.

Methodology

In this study, having identified key principles associated with a wellbeing approach, we evaluate whether such values match those of the Scottish population. Scotianomics has done so by commissioning a survey through the market research firm, Panelbase. 1,070 respondents who reside in Scotland were polled.

Public opinion is a crucial, yet missing, part of the wellbeing policymaking process, as it is important to understand the priorities of the population in order for the process to be democratic.

Our questions fell into three broad categories. Firstly, identifying what people living in Scotland believe the purpose of public policy and economics to be. Secondly, identifying the policy initiatives that people believe are required to facilitate an economic recovery after the pandemic. Thirdly, identifying the policy areas and system-level changes that the population would prioritise in the future.

The survey focused on concepts such as investing in innovation and creativity, ending poverty and inequalities within society, introducing a Universal Basic Income and increasing efforts to tackle the climate crisis. Respondents were asked to read a set of economic statements and then choose from a range of responses: “Strongly matches my beliefs” to “Does not match my beliefs at all”.

Responses have been examined at a population-wide level as well as broken down into various sub-groups to represent sections of the population. These sub-groups are age, gender and political affiliation (that is, which party a respondent voted for). Political party affiliation was based on remembered December 2019 Scottish General Election voting statements and therefore excludes Scottish Green Party voters as that party did not stand sufficient candidates to create a measurable and consistent sample.

Analysis of responses

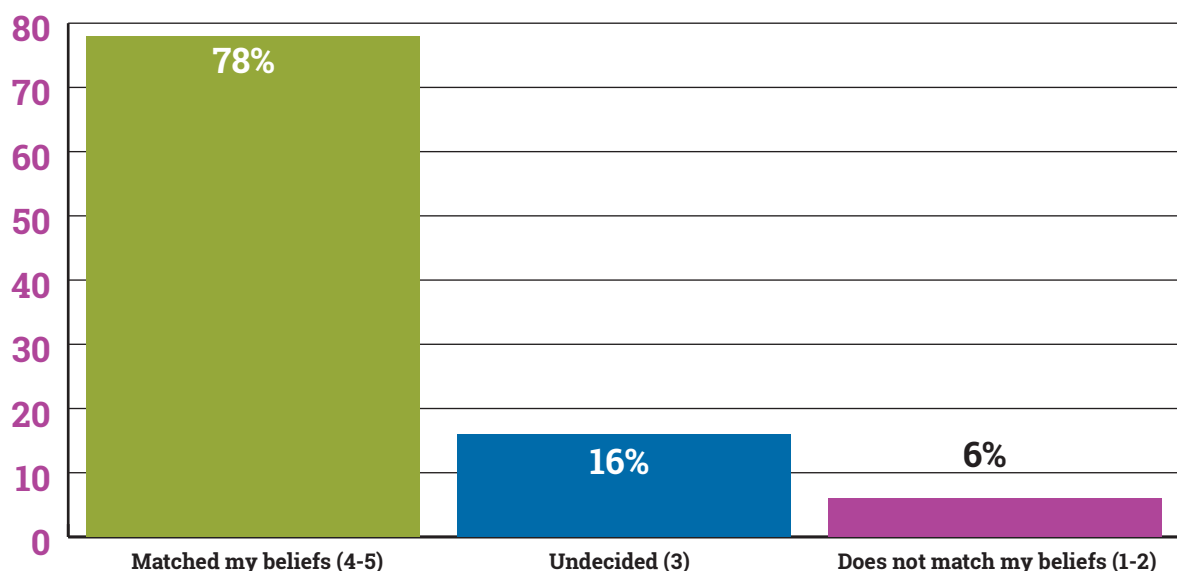
The purpose of public policy and economics

How closely does the following statement match your own personal beliefs?

- Quality of life, equality, fairness, happiness and health are all economic outcomes that should be given equal weight to economic growth.

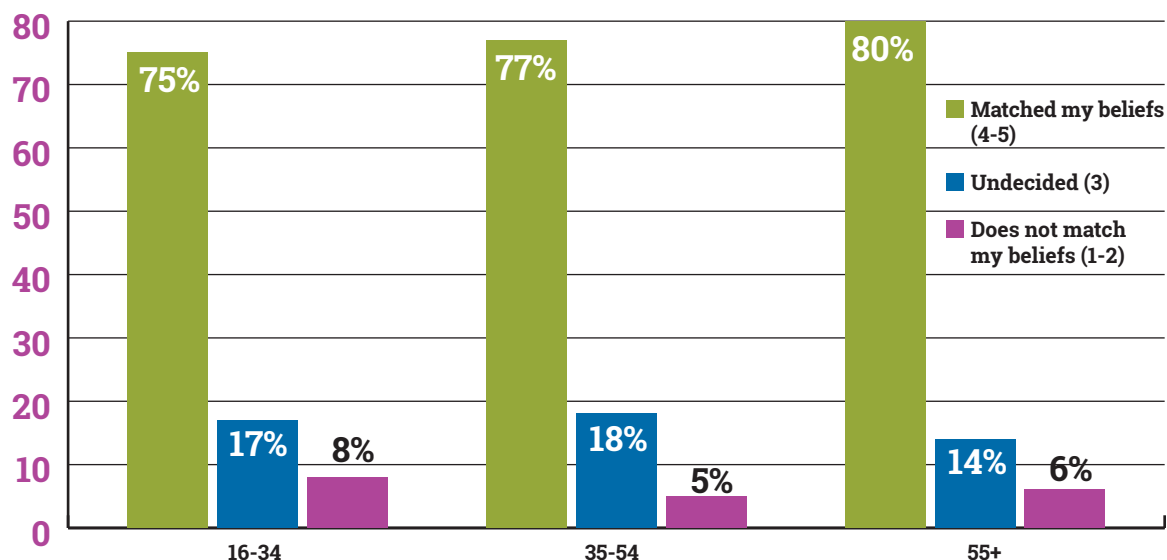
The response to this question highlighted clear support for some of the key values associated with a wellbeing approach. 78% of respondents stated that they believe quality of life, equality, fairness, happiness and health are all economic outcomes that should be given equal weight to economic growth.

Figure 1. Overall attitude towards “Quality of life, equality, fairness, happiness and health are all economic outcomes that should be given equal weight to economic growth.”



Respondents above the age of 55 demonstrated the greatest support for this wellbeing principle, with 80% of respondents from this age category stating that this idea matches their beliefs. The youngest participants of this survey, aged 16-34, displayed the least support. However, there was still a large majority of respondents from this age group that endorsed the idea, suggesting that this principle was largely welcomed by individuals of all ages.

Figure 2. Attitude towards “Quality of life, equality, fairness, happiness and health are all economic outcomes that should be given equal weight to economic growth” by age.



A large majority of male respondents (78%) endorsed this idea. A slightly smaller percentage of female respondents expressed support for this statement (76%), with only 31% strongly disagreeing compared to 38% of males.

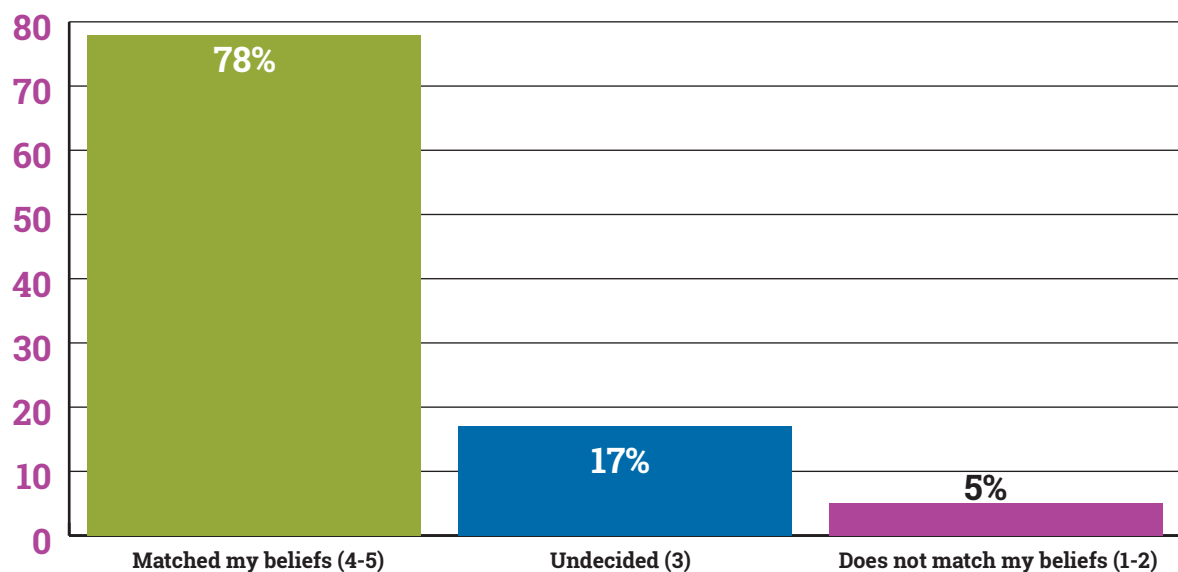
Respondents who align themselves with the Conservative Party showed the least support for this wellbeing concept, with only 18% strongly agreeing. However, 63% of Conservative voters did agree overall. This should be regarded as overwhelming support from Conservative voters, as this number only appears low when compared to the results of Labour (87%), SNP (83%) and Liberal Democrat supporters (79%).

How closely does the following statement match your own personal beliefs?

- The focus of the economy should be more to serve the needs of the people and society than the needs of big business and finance.

Overall, there was great support demonstrated for this change in focus of the economy, with 78% of respondents agreeing with the idea and only 5% opposing it.

Figure 3. Overall attitude towards “The focus of the economy should be more to serve the needs of the people and society than the needs of big business and finance.”



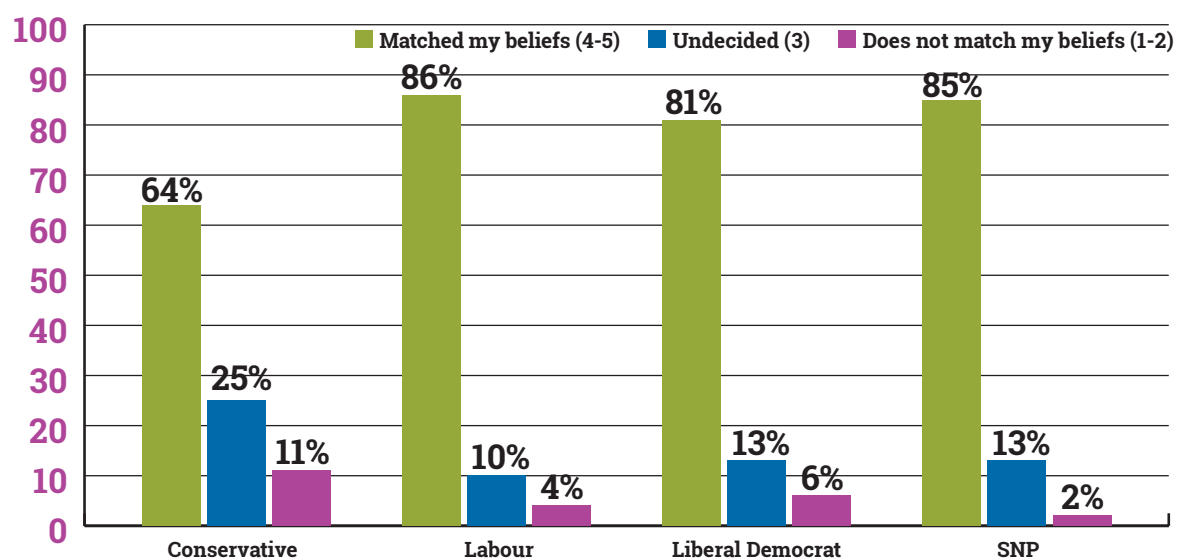
The results of this question did not vary hugely dependent on age. However, younger participants were the most likely to strongly agree with this concept, with 39% of those aged 16-34 stating that this idea strongly matches their beliefs.

There was greater endorsement of the idea that the economy should focus on the needs of the people among male respondents (79%). Female respondents also showed great support for this idea, however (77%). Males aged 35-54, who may be more likely to work in big business, showed the greatest support for shifting the focus of the economy away from large corporates and finance.

11% of Conservative Party voters disagreed with the idea that the focus of the economy should be more to serve the needs of the people and society than the needs of big business and finance. In comparison, only 4% of those who support the Labour Party, 6% of those who support the Liberal Democrats and just 2% of SNP voters disagreed with this statement.

Conservative voters, however, still registered 64% in agreement with this idea and on this question, the Liberal Democrats at 81%, were more aligned to Labour and SNP supporters, at 83% and 80% respectively.

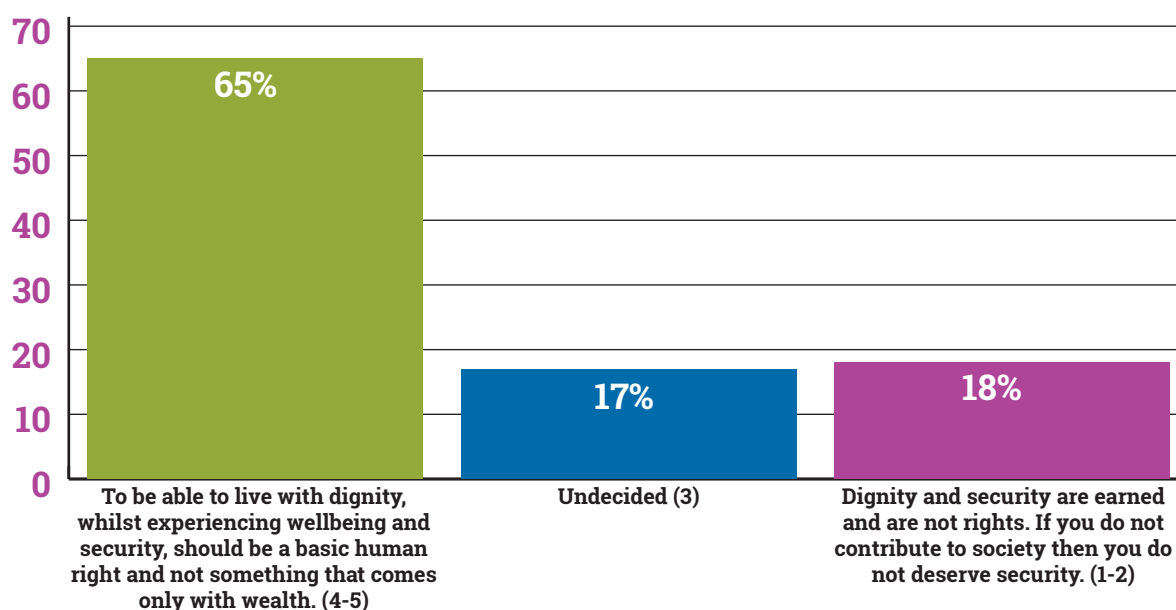
Figure 4. Attitude towards “The focus of the economy should be more to serve the needs of the people and society than the needs of big business and finance” by political allegiance.



Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- To be able to live with dignity, whilst experiencing wellbeing and security, should be a basic human right and not something that comes only with wealth.
- Dignity and security are earned and are not rights. If you do not contribute to society then you do not deserve security.

Figure 5. Overall attitude towards “To be able to live with dignity, whilst experiencing wellbeing and security, should be a basic human right and not something that comes only with wealth.”



Overall, 65% of respondents supported the idea that living with dignity, whilst experiencing wellbeing and security, should be a basic human right and not something that comes only with wealth.

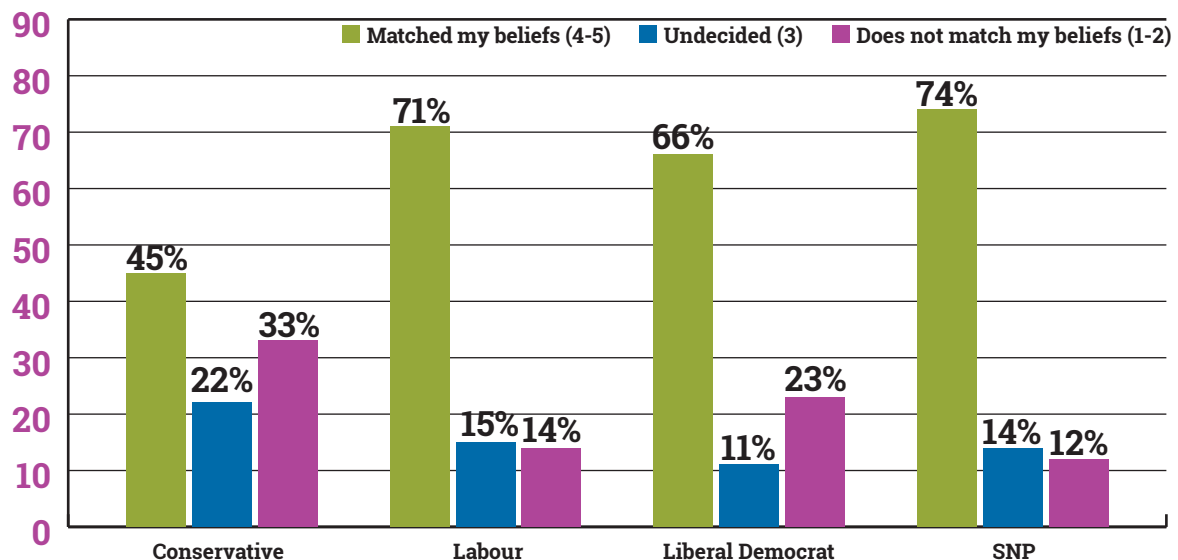
Respondents aged 35-54 demonstrated the most support for this idea, with 68% favouring the wellbeing statement.

Overall, females endorsed this wellbeing concept more than male participants, with 69% of female respondents supporting the idea of dignity as a human right. However, the greatest support for this concept, when referring to age and gender, was displayed by 71% of young females, aged 16-34.

74% of SNP voters agreed that dignity, wellbeing and security were a basic human right. Meanwhile, only 45% of Conservatives showed similar support for this idea. SNP voting respondents displayed a level of passion towards this matter, with 50% choosing to strongly agree with the statement. Labour voting respondents showed similar levels of support (71%), as did those who align themselves with the Liberal Democrat Party (66%).

33% of Conservative respondents rejecting this wellbeing statement highlights the traditional, economy-focused values of such individuals, in that welfare and security must be earned through work.

Figure 6. Attitude towards being able to live with dignity, whilst experiencing wellbeing and security as a human right and not something that comes only with wealth by political allegiance.

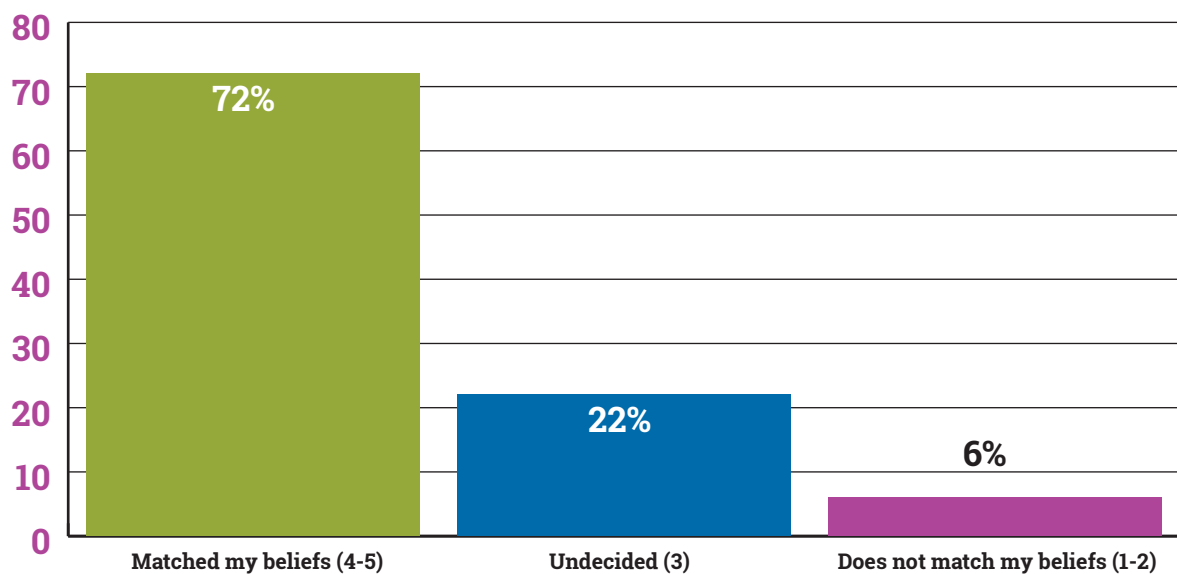


How closely does the following statement match your own personal beliefs?

- You cannot have a thriving economy without a thriving society, and you cannot have a thriving society without a thriving economy.

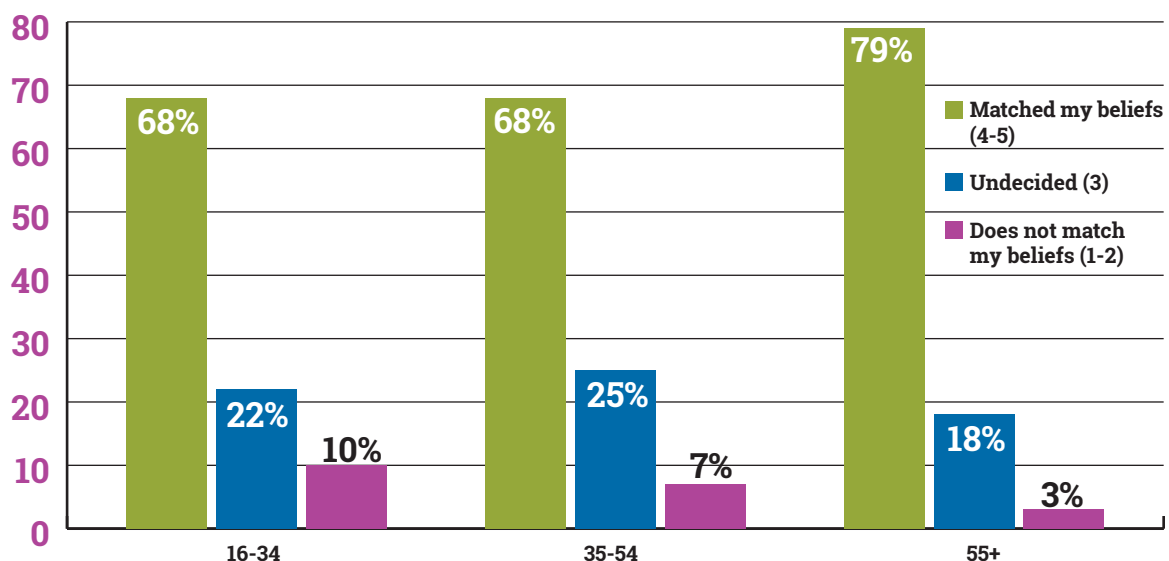
This statement was designed to represent the symbiotic relationship between societal wellbeing and economic wellbeing. Overall, 72% of respondents agreed with the idea that both society and the economy can thrive in harmony, with only 6% stating that it does not match their beliefs.

Figure 7. Overall attitude towards “You cannot have a thriving economy without a thriving society, and you cannot have a thriving society without a thriving economy.”



This wellbeing concept was shown overwhelming support from respondents over the age of 55, with 79% in favour of this idea.

Figure 8. Attitude towards “You cannot have a thriving economy without a thriving society, and you cannot have a thriving society without a thriving economy” by age.



There was little gender divide within the results of this question, with both males and females showing a majority of support for the principle (72%). However, males aged 16-34 were more likely to strongly agree with this statement (27%), compared to females in the same age category (19%).

A factor that truly stands out within the results of this question is that Conservative and Liberal Democrat voting respondents registered 78% agreement with this statement. Meanwhile, Labour and SNP voting respondents displayed 72% and 71% agreement respectively. This demonstrates that Conservative voters, despite not fully rejecting the traditional economic approach, do value society's contribution to the economy and are more supportive of a balanced approach to economics than often assumed.

Given the high levels of support demonstrated by Conservative and Liberal Democrat voters, it was expected that this concept would be more heavily endorsed by those who voted No (74%) in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum than by those who voted Yes (72%).

This suggests that a wellbeing approach matches the values of a range of people across Scotland, regardless of political party and constitutional beliefs.

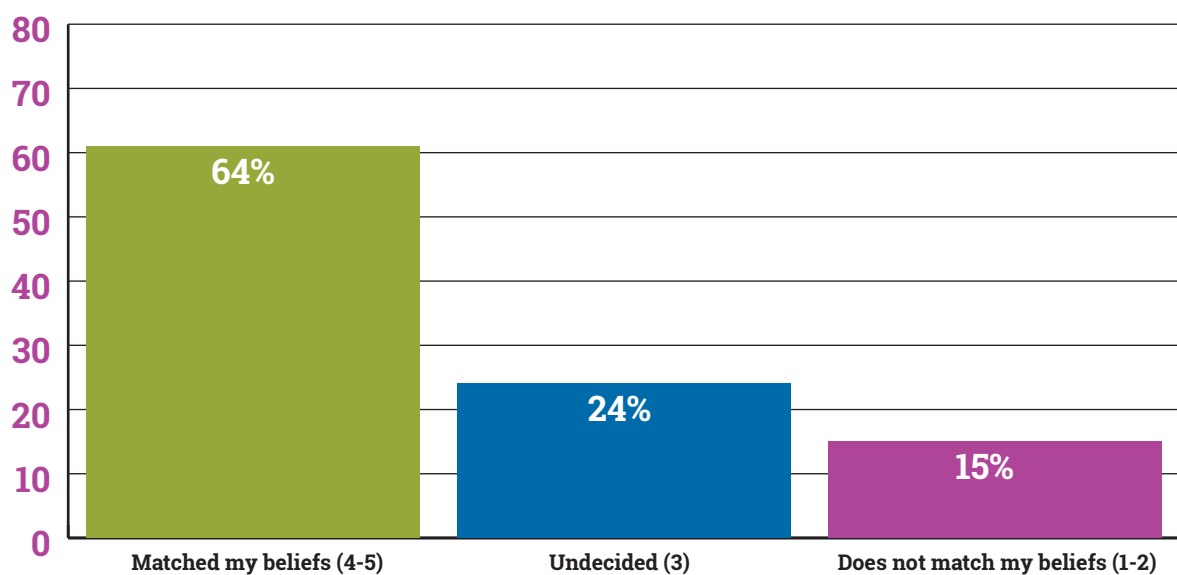
Policymaking after the pandemic

How closely does the following statement match your own personal beliefs?

- Austerity has failed, slowed economic growth, harmed people and society and made the country more susceptible to economic and health crises.

61% of respondents felt that austerity had failed and damaged the economy. Meanwhile only 15% of respondents overall rejected this narrative, with 24% undecided.

Figure 9. Overall attitude towards “Austerity has failed, slowed economic growth, harmed people and society and made the country more susceptible to economic and health crises.”



Respondents aged 35-54 demonstrated the greatest opposition to austerity, with 64% believing that it had failed as a policy. Such individuals may have been the most likely to be progressing in their careers, buying houses or starting a family when austerity was introduced and therefore may have faced some of the most severe consequences.

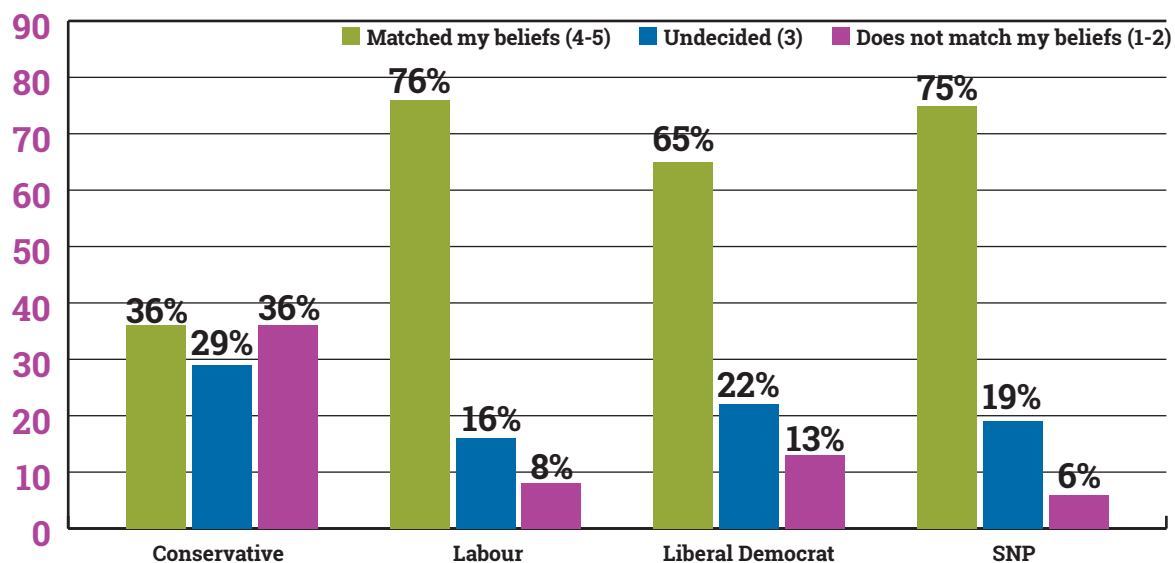
Male respondents displayed greater contempt towards austerity than females, with 66% of male participants believing it had failed compared to 57% of female participants.

This statement highlighted a split in opinion among Conservative Party respondents regarding austerity. The austerity programme was introduced by the Conservative Party in 2010 and involved cuts to various budgets such as for policing, housing and welfare. Despite this, 36% of Conservative supporting respondents stated that austerity had failed. On the other hand, 36% rejected the idea that austerity produced negative effects.

Both SNP (75%) and Labour (76%) supporting respondents demonstrated huge discontent with the impact of austerity and agreed with the idea that it had made the country more susceptible to economic and health crises. 65% of Liberal Democrat

supporters also believed austerity had failed and again, this is despite the fact that their party was part of the coalition government that introduced the policy. These findings are significant for the future direction of political economic policy. Austerity is driven by the belief that government debt over a certain level will damage the economy. If the population no longer believes that to be the case, it becomes more open to alternative ways of thinking, such as a wellbeing approach.

Figure 10. Attitude towards “Austerity has failed, slowed economic growth, harmed people and society and made the country more susceptible to economic and health crises” by political allegiance.



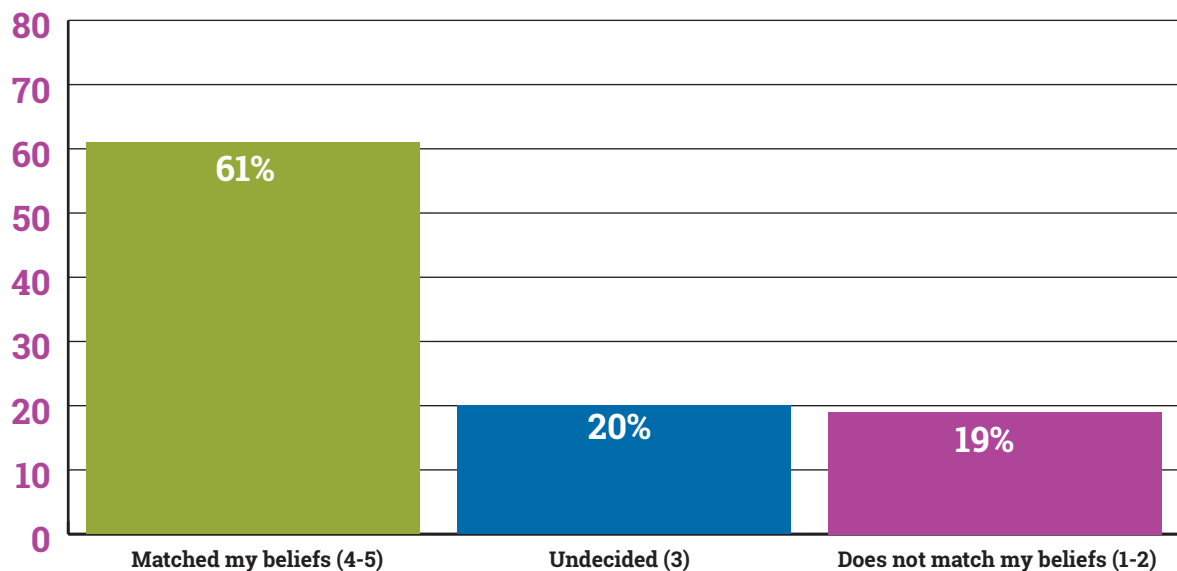
Those who do not work due to ill health or a disability, as well as those who hold the role of a housewife or husband, agreed with the idea that austerity had failed. With austerity involving cuts to welfare and housing, for example, these individuals are likely to have been directly and negatively impacted by this policy.

Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- Post coronavirus, our economic policies need to be re-engineered to generate higher levels of equality in health, wealth, wellbeing and access to opportunity.
- Our current economic approach provides wellbeing and access to opportunity. However, some choose not to make use of it.

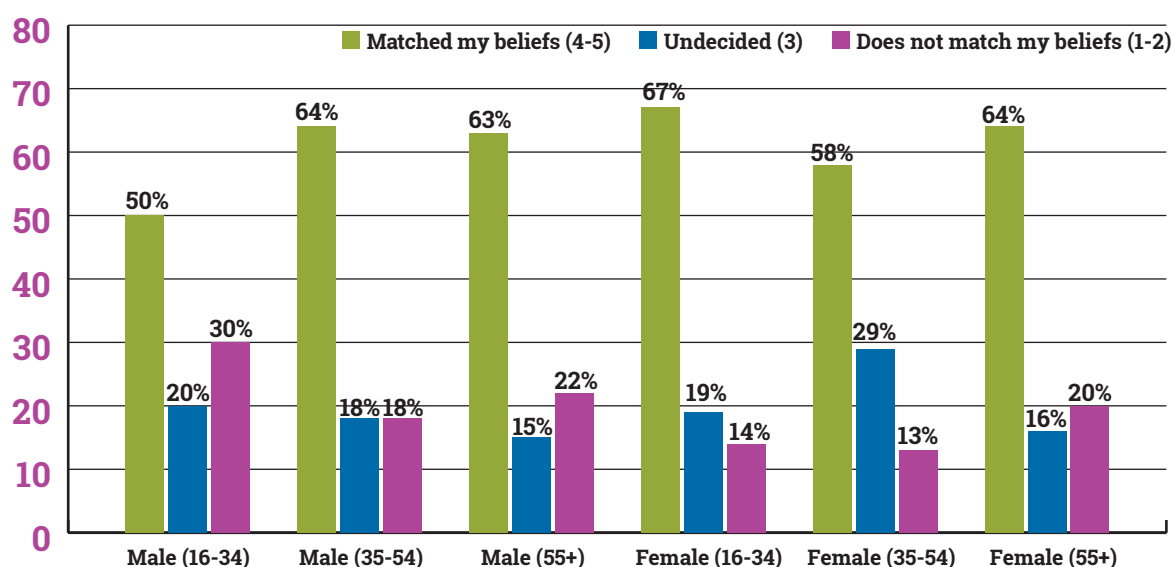
61% of all respondents suggested that after the coronavirus crisis, economic policies must be re-engineered to emphasise the importance of wellbeing. On the other hand, only 19% disagreed with this concept.

Figure 11. Overall attitude towards “Post coronavirus, our economic policies need to be reengineered to generate higher levels of equality in health, wealth, wellbeing and access to opportunity.”



Respondents over the age of 55 showed the greatest support for re-engineering our existing economic policies, with 64% endorsing this change. The other participants, aged between 16 and 54, all showed a majority of support as well with approximately 60% agreeing with this idea. The results highlighted that young males, aged 16-34, were the most content with the current economic approach, with 30% stating that the existing system provides wellbeing and access to opportunity.

Figure 12. Attitude towards “Post coronavirus, our economic policies need to be re-engineered to generate higher levels of equality in health, wealth, wellbeing and access to opportunity” by age and gender.



Overall, female respondents (63%) demonstrated greater support for this move towards a wellbeing economic approach than male participants (59%).

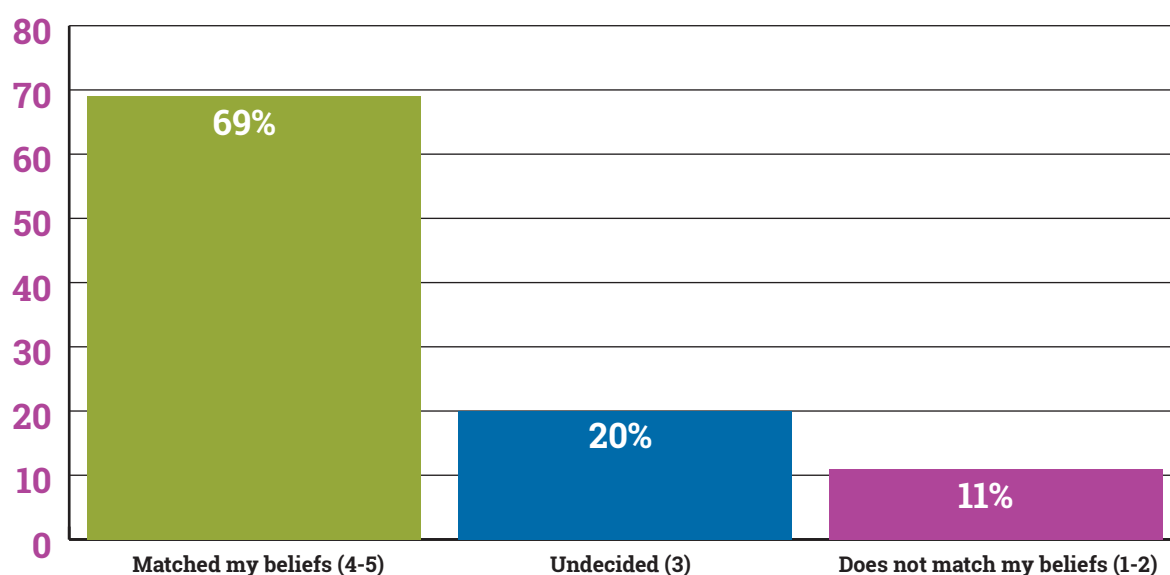
41% of SNP respondents strongly support the idea of re-engineering economic policies after COVID-19. In comparison, only 11% of participants who support the Conservative Party strongly agree with this change to economic policy.

Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- If we build society and our economy more successfully after coronavirus we can create a new economic approach that will allow both our economy and our society to thrive and be more resilient in the face of economic crises.
- The current economic approach works well, is already resilient and does not require improvement.

This question revealed a key finding of this report. The COVID-19 crisis has resulted in people considering and questioning the goals of the current economic system. In light of this, there appears to be a strong desire for positive change and a greater acceptance of a wellbeing economic approach that has become increasingly supported within society. This was made evident with another core principle of the wellbeing approach being welcomed within the results of this question. 69% of respondents demonstrated support for the idea of rebuilding society and the economy more successfully after coronavirus and creating a new economic approach.

Figure 13. Overall attitude towards “If we build society and our economy more successfully after coronavirus we can create a new economic approach that will allow both our economy and our society to thrive and be more resilient in the face of economic crises.”



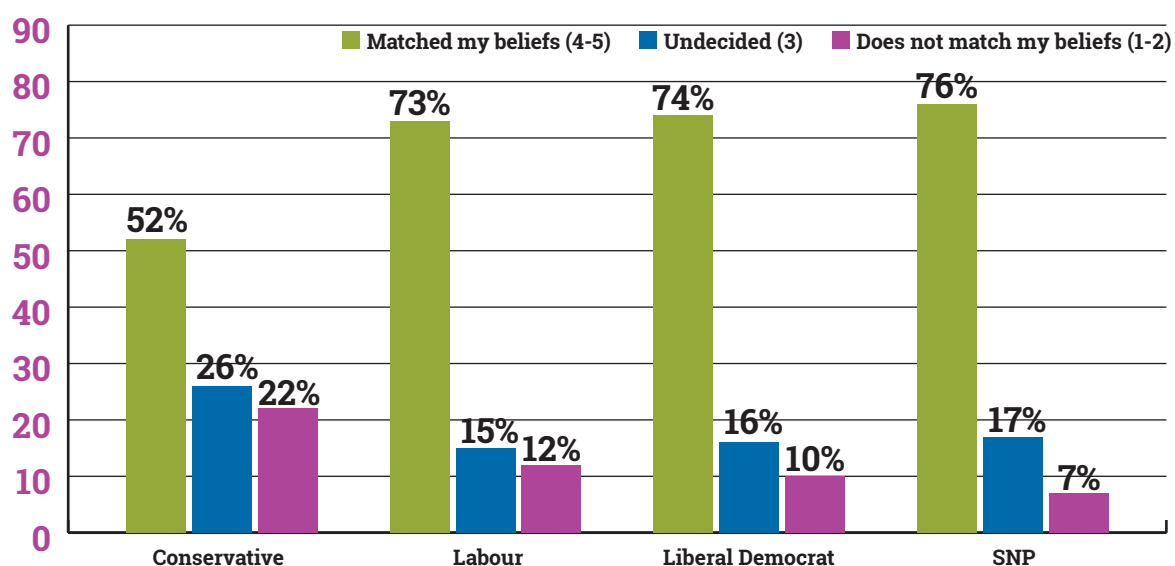
Support for this concept was spread across all age groups. However, young females (73%), aged 16 to 34, showed the greatest desire to build society and our economy more successfully after coronavirus. This highlights a changing attitude, particularly among young people, from the old economic approach.

Overall, female respondents (70%) displayed slightly greater support for this principle than male participants (68%). However, there was a clear majority of support shown by all.

In terms of political party support, this concept was most popular amongst SNP voters (76%), Liberal Democrat voters (74%) and Labour voters (73%) which represents an overwhelming support for this concept across Scotland.

22% of Conservative supporters favoured the status quo. However, it must be noted that 52% of Conservative respondents showed support for this wellbeing principle, which can be considered a radical outcome and demonstrates the widespread appeal of the wellbeing economic approach.

Figure 14. Attitude towards “If we build society and our economy more successfully after coronavirus we can create a new economic approach that will allow both our economy and our society to thrive and be more resilient in the face of economic crises” by political allegiance.



Policy areas and systems

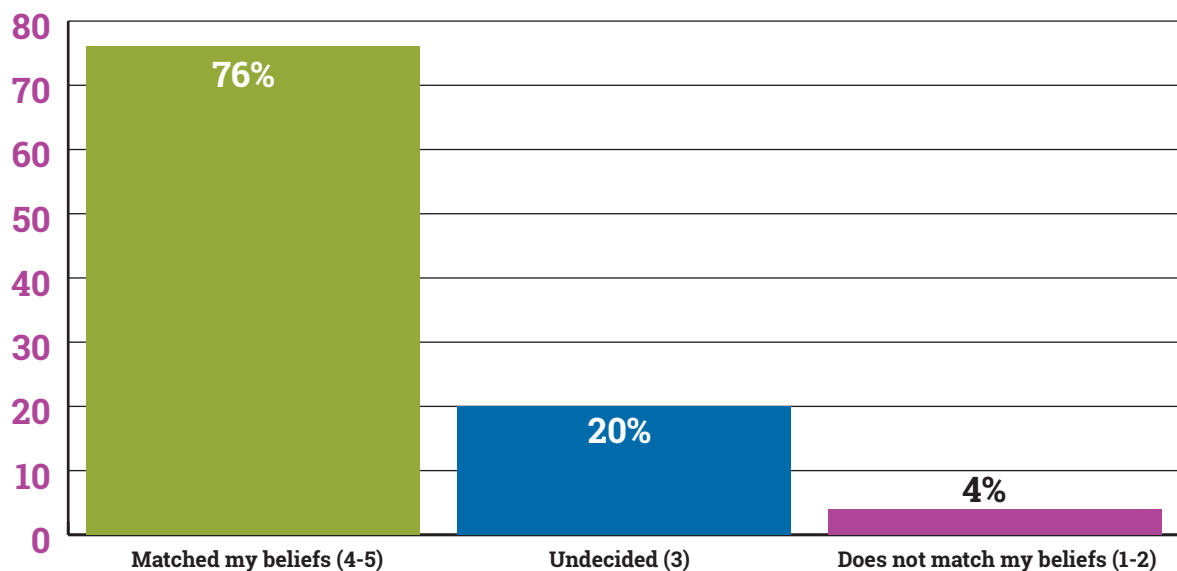
Work and skills

How closely does the following statement match your own personal beliefs?

- The nature of work is changing, and we need to invest more heavily in innovation, encouraging better business practices and preparing for the future of work.

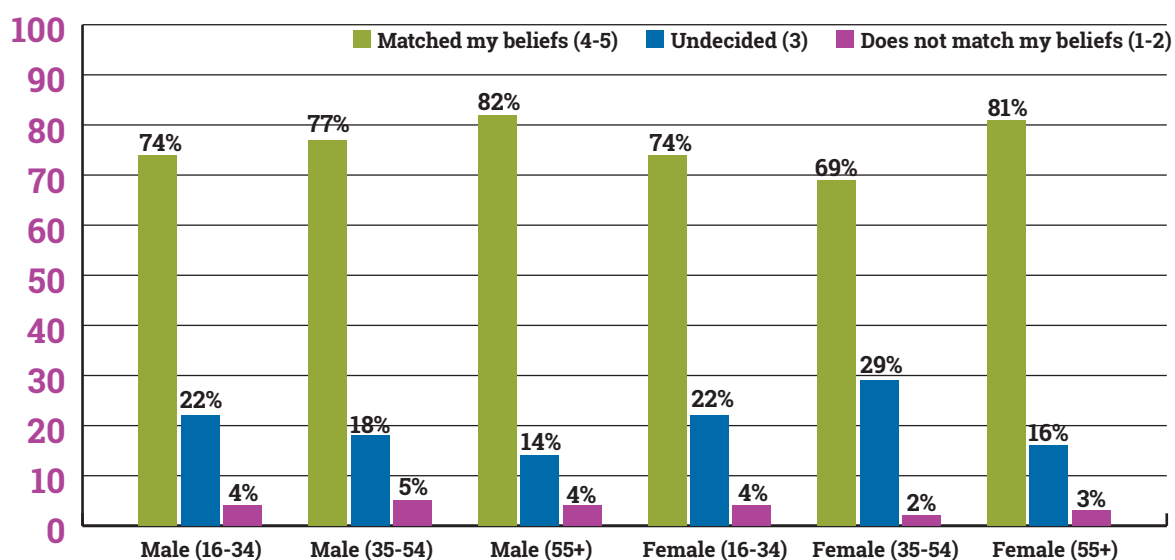
The survey found that 76% of all respondents agreed with this statement and only 4% of participants stated that this idea does not match their beliefs.

Figure 15. Overall attitude towards “The nature of work is changing, and we need to invest more heavily in innovation, encouraging better business practices and preparing for the future of work.”



Men (82%) and women (81%) above the age of 55 displayed significant support for this concept. Older voters are often thought to be less open to change and new ways of thinking, making this a significant finding.

Figure 16. Attitude towards “The nature of work is changing, and we need to invest more heavily in innovation, encouraging better business practices and preparing for the future of work” by age and gender.



The results of this question did not vary hugely dependent on gender. This wellbeing principle was slightly favoured by male respondents (78%) over female respondents (75%). However, males and females aged 35-54 showed the greatest differences in their responses. 77% of males aged 35-54 supported this investment in new business practices, whereas only 69% of females from this age category showed support for this idea.

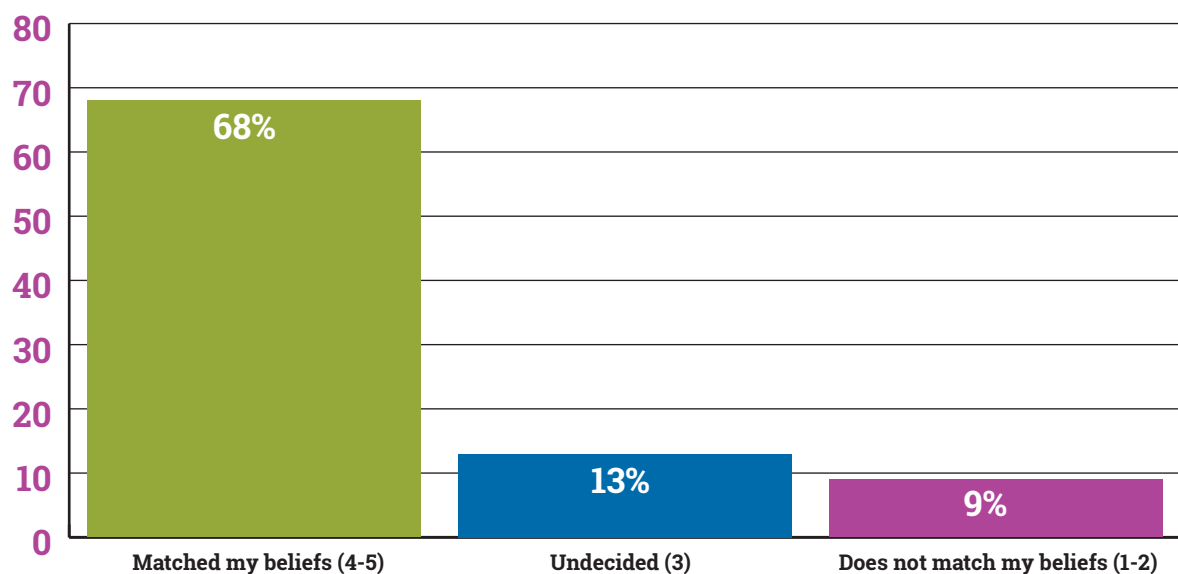
Most noticeably this idea appealed to the more conservative and more centrally positioned respondents, with Liberal Democrat supporters agreeing at a net rate of 84% and Conservatives voters at 80%. Both of these groups of respondents showed greater support for this idea than SNP voters (77%) and Labour supporters (73%). This demonstrates that different elements of the wellbeing approach appeal to different voters. Meanwhile, the overall acceptance of the approach remains strong throughout.

Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- Education is an investment in our children and young people and should be free and open to everyone.
- Those that can afford to pay for higher and further education should do so.

This question offered a clear response, with 68% agreeing that education is a worthwhile investment and only 19% believing that wealthier people should have to pay.

Figure 17. Overall attitude towards “Education is an investment in our children and young people and should be free and open to everyone.”

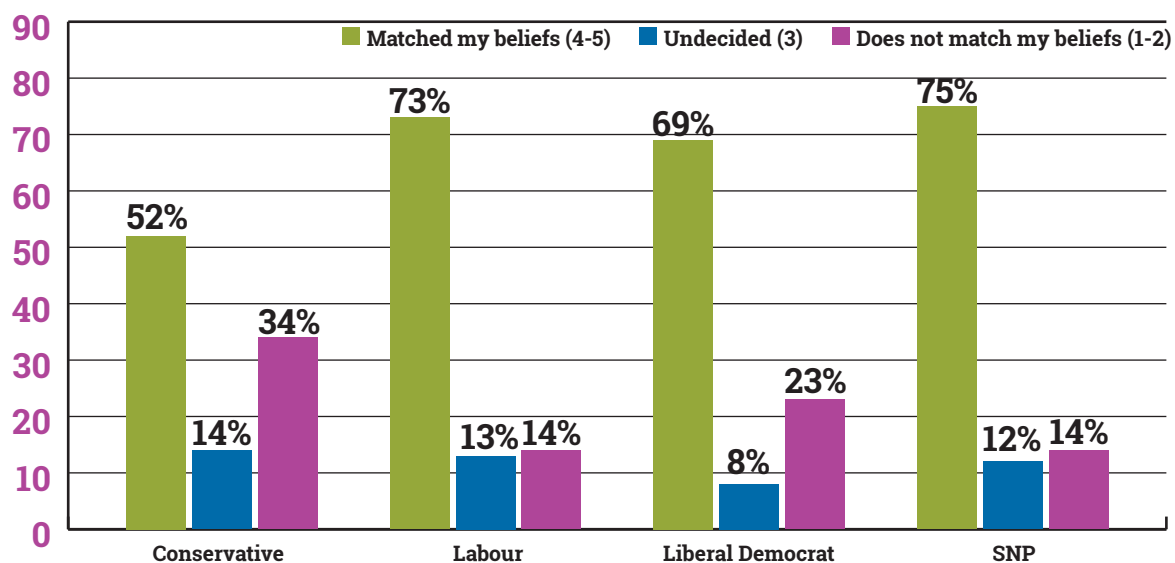


Young people, aged 16-34, strongly supported the belief that education is an investment in our children and young people and that it should be free and open to everyone. This idea is clearly very relevant and crucial to this age group, with some still completing their education. Therefore, the opinion of this age group should be considered with great importance. This attitude was particularly prevalent among young females, with 74% supporting free education for all.

In general females of all ages endorsed this idea more than male respondents, with 71% of female respondents believing that education should be free and open to all.

In terms of divides in opinion based on political beliefs, 34% of Conservative voters stated that those that can afford education should pay. However, middle class respondents, who support Labour and the SNP, were significantly in favour of universal and free education. Therefore, we can conclude that conservatism, rather than social status, is the driving factor in the higher (but still minority) level of support for higher education tuition fees amongst Conservative voters. SNP supporting respondents (75%) showed an overwhelming support for offering free education to all.

Figure 18. Attitude towards “Education is an investment in our children and young people and should be free and open to everyone” by political allegiance.

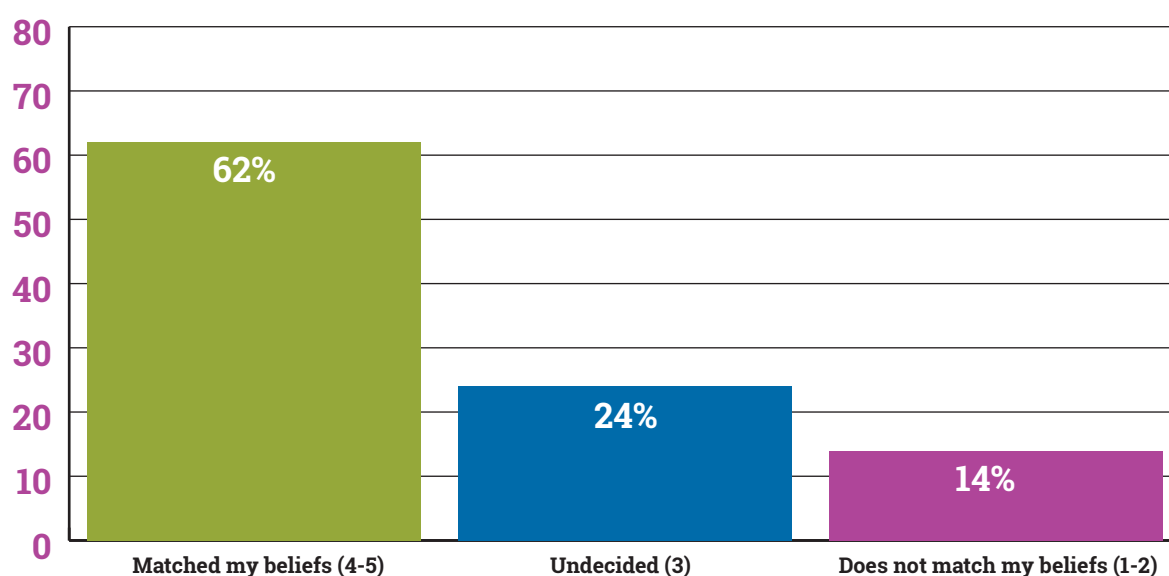


Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- Small business is the backbone of our economy. Greater government investment in creativity and innovation is necessary to help them grow and create better quality jobs.
- It is easier to boost the economy working alongside bigger companies as they employ more people.

62% of respondents endorsed the idea of boosting support for SMEs, whilst only 14% believe that working with larger companies is more effective. In fact, only 3% of respondents overall strongly believe that larger businesses hold the key to economic success. There are more than 350,000 SMEs across Scotland providing approximately 1.2 million jobs¹⁹. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the results highlighted a general desire across Scotland for investment in such businesses.

Figure 19. Overall attitude towards “Small business is the backbone of our economy. Greater government investment in creativity and innovation is necessary to help them grow and create better quality jobs.”



Older people (67%), above the age of 55, valued the importance of small business the most. Younger respondents, aged 16-34, showed less interest (but still a clear majority) in investment in SMEs, with 58% supporting the idea.

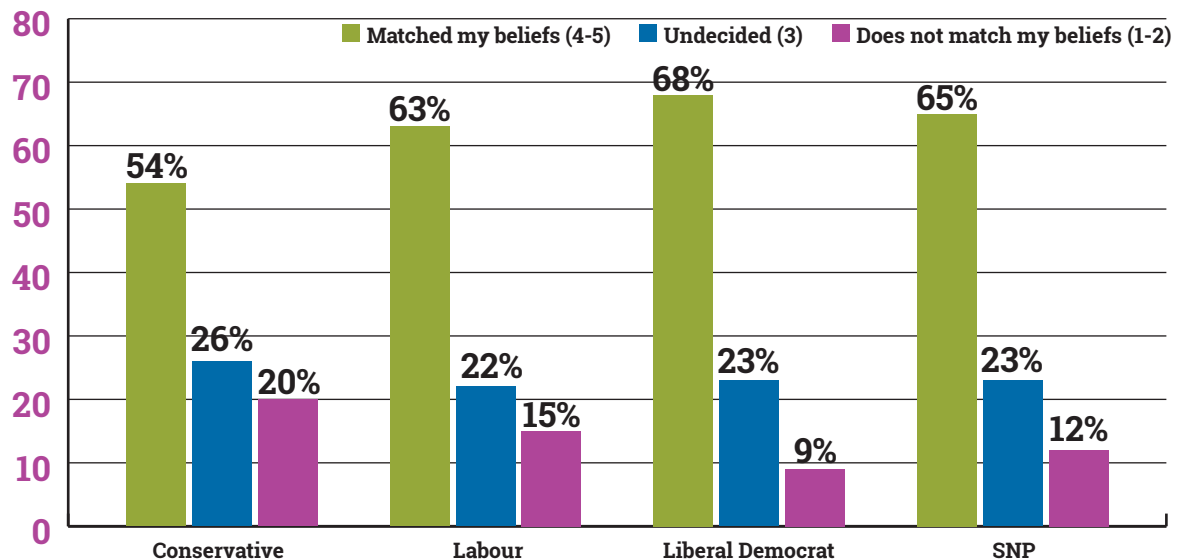
Females (65%) demonstrated greater support than men (59%) for this statement overall. Older females, above the age of 55, in particular, welcomed this wellbeing principle, with 70% believing that greater government investment in SMEs is needed.

In terms of political divides in opinion, Liberal Democrat supporters (68%) showed the greatest support for investing in small business. However, even Conservative supporting respondents, who showed the greatest support for an approach that focuses

19 Scottish Government (2020) 'Business Statistics 2019', Available Online: [<https://www.gov.scot/news/business-survey-2019/>]

on big business (20%), still demonstrated a majority of support (54%) for enhancing SME performance.

Figure 20. Attitude towards “Small business is the backbone of our economy. Greater government investment in creativity and innovation is necessary to help them grow and create better quality jobs” by political allegiance.



It was also significant that when responses were considered based on recalled independence referendum votes that respondents who voted Yes (65%) and No (60%) both overwhelmingly agreed with the need for a focus on, and greater investment in, SMEs.

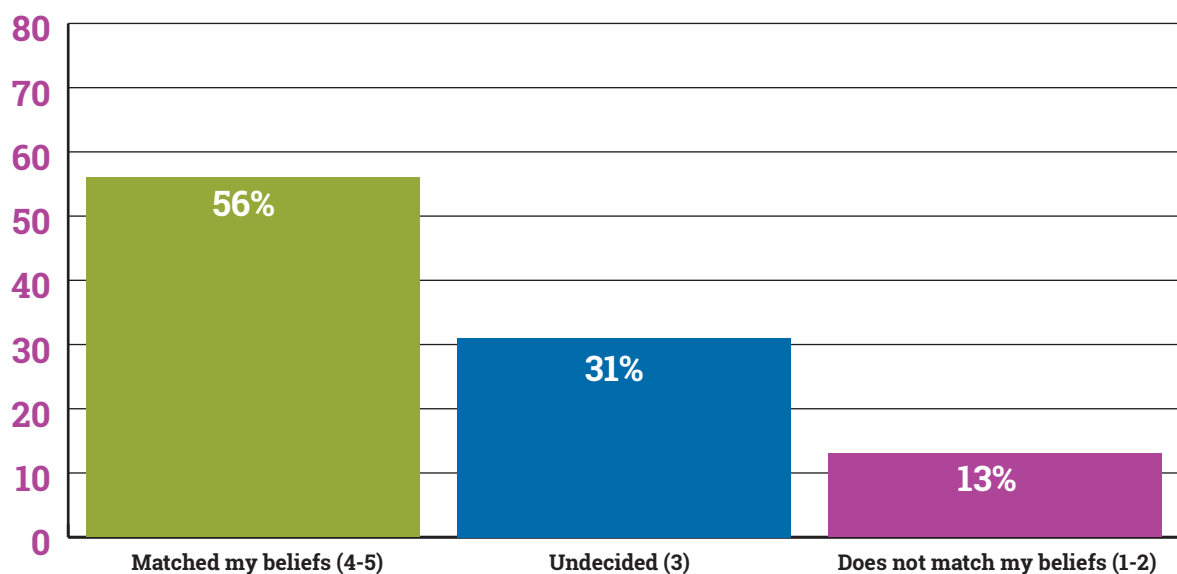
Social equality

How closely does the following statement match your own personal beliefs?

- Government expenditure on welfare and health is higher due to the inequalities in the current economic system and a wellbeing approach would reduce those costs.

The overall response to this statement was less unified with just above half (56%) of respondents agreeing with the belief that government expenditure on welfare and health is higher due to the inequalities in the current economic system.

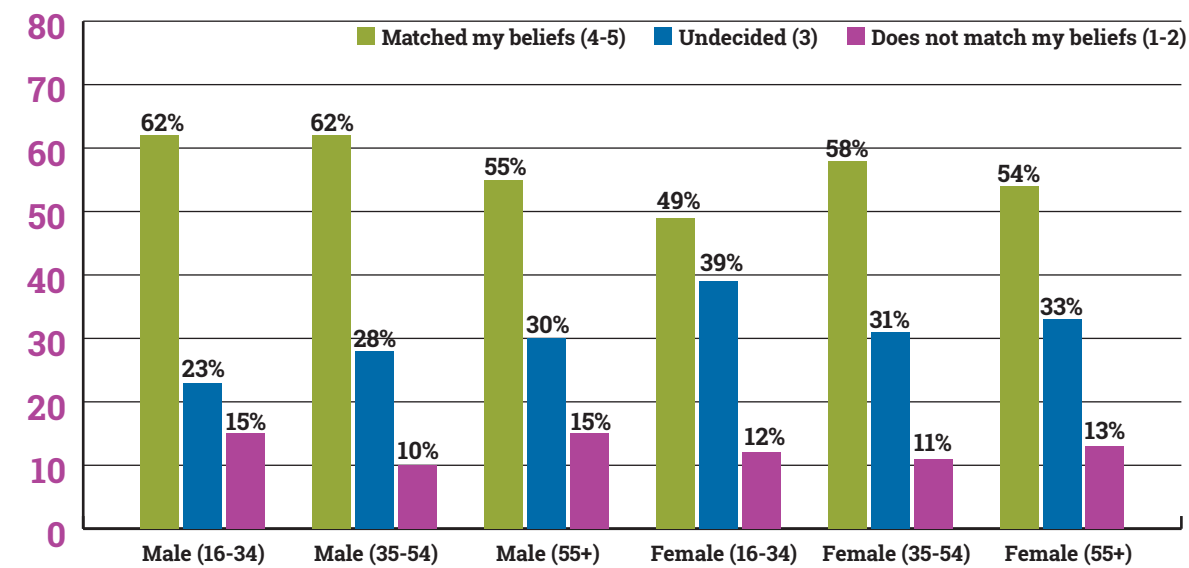
Figure 21. Overall attitude towards “Government expenditure on welfare and health is higher due to the inequalities in the current economic system and a wellbeing approach would reduce those costs.”



Those who showed the least support for this idea were above the age of 55, with 14% of respondents in this age category stating that this opinion does not match their beliefs.

Male respondents demonstrated the greatest support for this wellbeing concept (59%), whereas female respondents showed slightly less support (54%). In particular, young females, aged 16-34, demonstrated the least support for this principle, with only 49% stating that the idea matched their beliefs.

Figure 22. Attitude towards “Government expenditure on welfare and health is higher due to the inequalities in the current economic system and a wellbeing approach would reduce those costs” by age and gender.



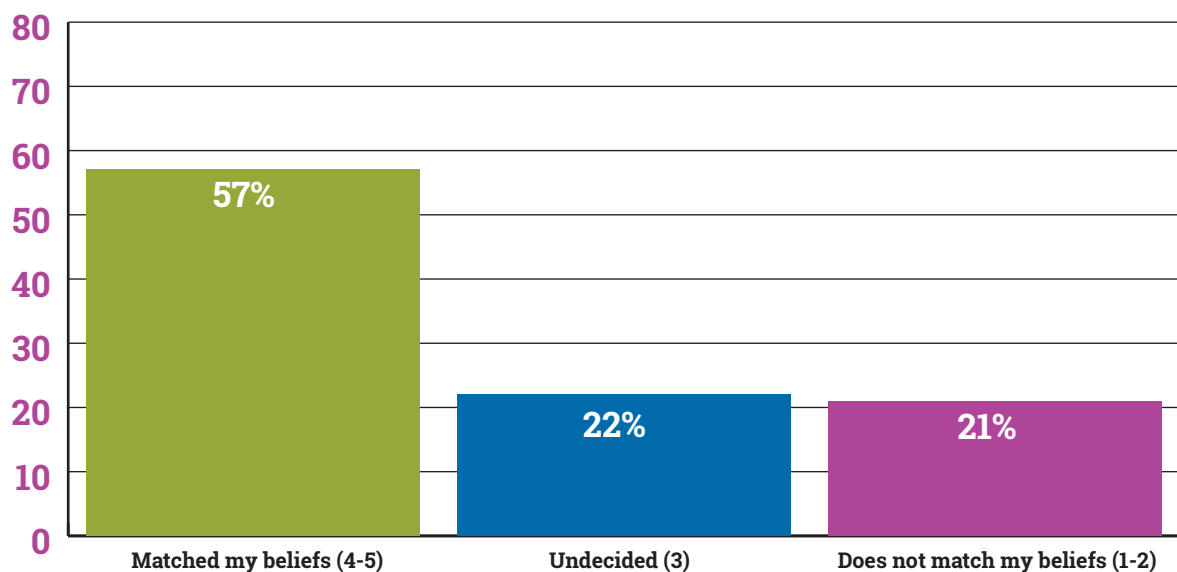
Only 39% of Conservative respondents expressed support, highlighting that such voters do not blame the political system for inequalities and issues within the health and social care system. On the other hand, Labour Party voters demonstrated the greatest support for the idea that a wellbeing approach would reduce costs of welfare and health care, with 73% stating that this principle matched their views. 64% of SNP voters and 58% of Liberal Democrat respondents supported this idea.

Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- Economic success being more equally shared amongst society would result in better growth.
- Economic success means that everyone in society eventually benefits, even if the initial profits are earned by only a few.

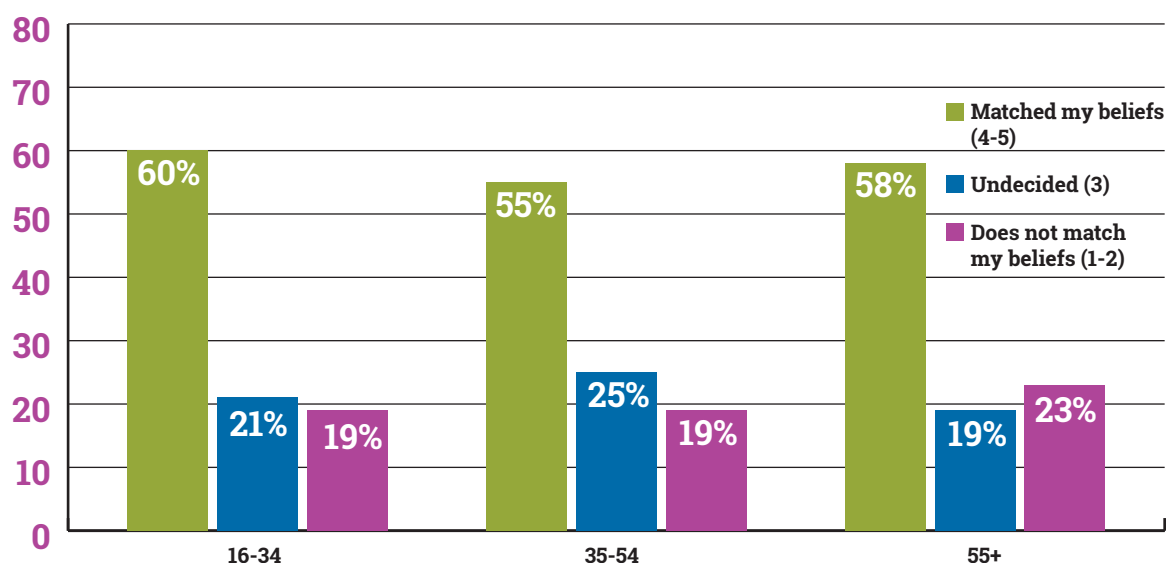
The results of this question again highlighted a significant level of agreement with one of the core economic ideas surrounding the wellbeing approach, with 57% agreeing that the benefits of economic growth have to be more equally shared.

Figure 23. Overall attitude towards “Economic success being more equally shared amongst society would result in better growth.”



The results of this question were largely split by age. 60% of those aged between 16 and 34 supported the idea of economic success being equally shared, whereas 23% of those above the age of 55 believed that everyone in society will eventually benefit, even if initially only a few individuals experience some form of economic success.

Figure 24. Attitude towards “Economic success being more equally shared amongst society would result in better growth” by age.



Males (25%), in particular, suggested that economic success means that everyone in society eventually benefits, even if the initial profits are earned by only a few. This contrasts with only 17% of female respondents who felt similarly. The difference was most notable between young males, aged 16-34, of whom 25% disagreed with this more equal approach, and young females in the same age category, of whom only 13% held this belief.

Although there was a majority of support for this idea overall, this concept was not as widely supported as many of the other values mentioned within the survey and this question resulted in the largest difference in political allegiance. The SNP and Labour supporting respondents showed the same level of support (68%) for the idea that a more equal society is good for the economy overall. However, Conservative voters rejected this wellbeing principle, with 40% opposing the idea that economic success should be shared more equally. Despite agreeing with many of the basic wellbeing principles, when the core values of the neo-classical economic approach are examined Conservative respondents demonstrate a different level of support for the current economic system than those who support other political parties.

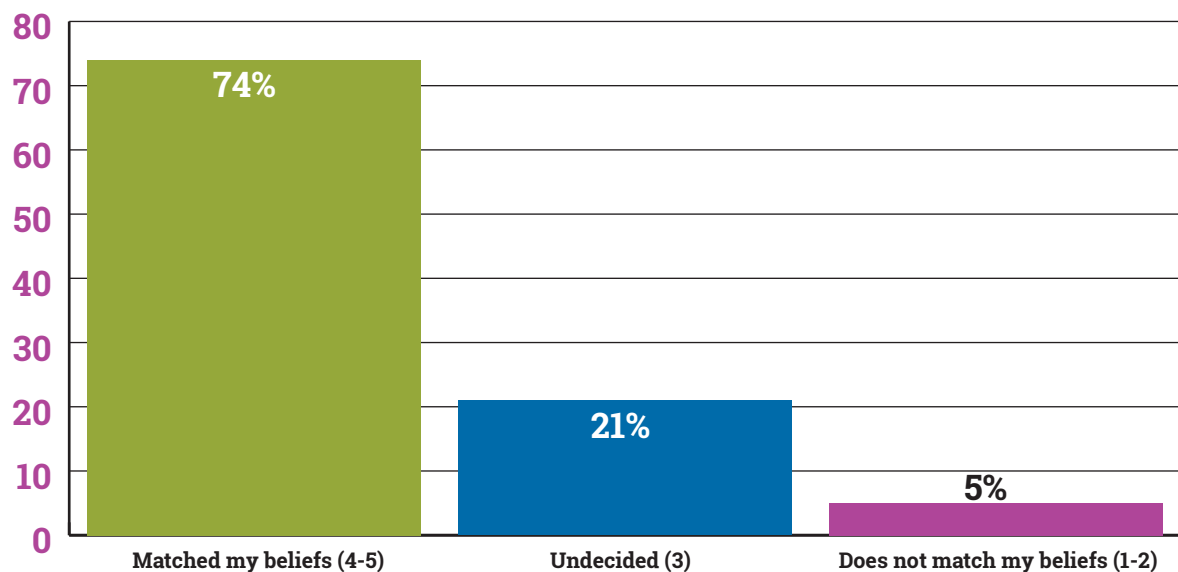
A majority of respondents currently not working, such as 63% of unemployed participants, 61% of housewives or husbands and 62% of those with ill health or a disability supported the idea of economic success being more equally shared. These respondents choosing to support this idea suggests that they currently feel disadvantaged and may be more likely to face hardship due to their financial circumstances and employment status.

How closely does the following statement match your own personal beliefs?

- Greater access to personal development opportunities for all will increase social mobility and benefit the economy in the long term.

74% of respondents agreed with this statement. The popularity of this wellbeing principle was expected as it is a common belief that personal development (training and education) brings great benefits to the economy.

Figure 25. Overall attitude towards “Greater access to personal development opportunities for all will increase social mobility and benefit the economy in the long term.”

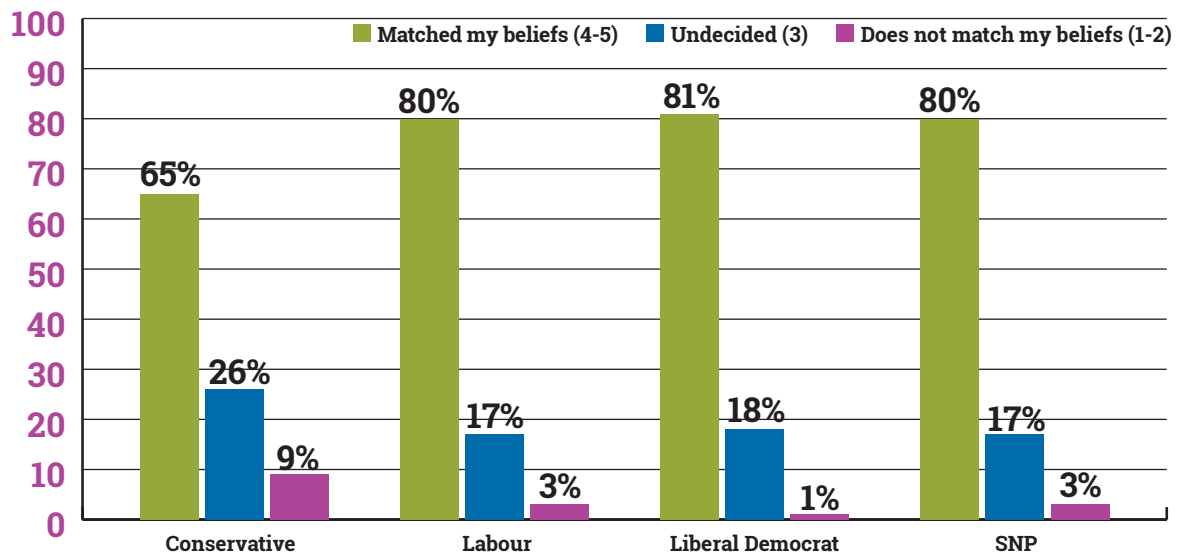


Older respondents above the age of 55 presented the most support for this idea, with 76% believing that personal development was key to a thriving economy.

Male respondents (76%) endorsed this wellbeing concept more so than female participants (72%). In particular, older male respondents above the age of 55 valued this idea hugely, with 78% supporting this approach and welcoming the idea of increased social mobility.

65% of Conservative voters demonstrated support for this idea, although in comparison to the support shown by respondents who align themselves with other political parties it is markedly lower. For example, 81% of Liberal Democrat respondents, 80% of Labour respondents and 80% of SNP respondents all supported this concept.

Figure 26. Attitude towards “Greater access to personal development opportunities for all will increase social mobility and benefit the economy in the long term” by political allegiance.

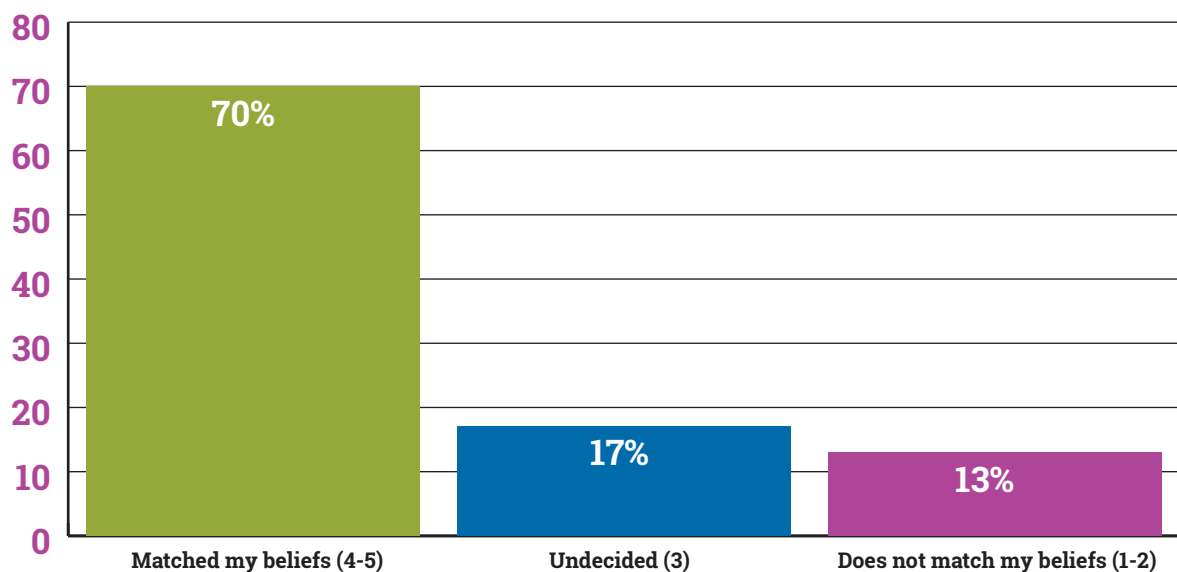


Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- Ending poverty, inequality and unfairness, while increasing minimum wage and job security, will boost the economy.
- There must always be poor people. To make society more equal will impoverish everyone.

Overall, there was a clear desire amongst respondents to end poverty, inequality and unfairness in order to boost the economy, with 70% of participants supporting the idea and only 13% disagreeing.

Figure 27. Overall attitude towards “Ending poverty, inequality and unfairness, while increasing minimum wage and job security, will boost the economy.”

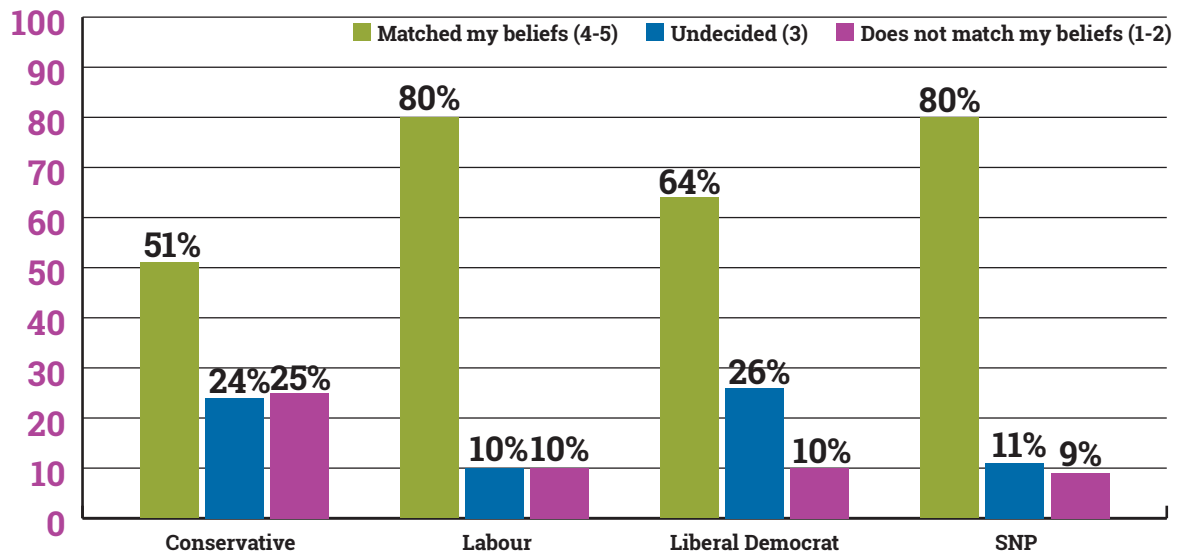


Those above the age of 55 showed the greatest support for this wellbeing principle, with 74% agreeing that ending poverty and inequality will in fact boost the economy.

Females, in particular, backed this wellbeing focused statement, with 74% agreement from female respondents. In particular young females aged 16-34 showed the most support for this concept, with an overwhelming 77% endorsing this idea.

Labour and SNP voters agreed with the wellbeing position (80%), with only 10% of Labour respondents and 9% of SNP respondents disagreeing. The Liberal Democrat respondents were also significantly in agreement (64%) with this wellbeing principle. Conservative respondents supported the principle overall but were far more divided on the matter, with 51% agreeing, 25% disagreeing and 24% undecided.

Figure 28. Attitude towards “Ending poverty, inequality and unfairness, while increasing minimum wage and job security, will boost the economy” by political allegiance.



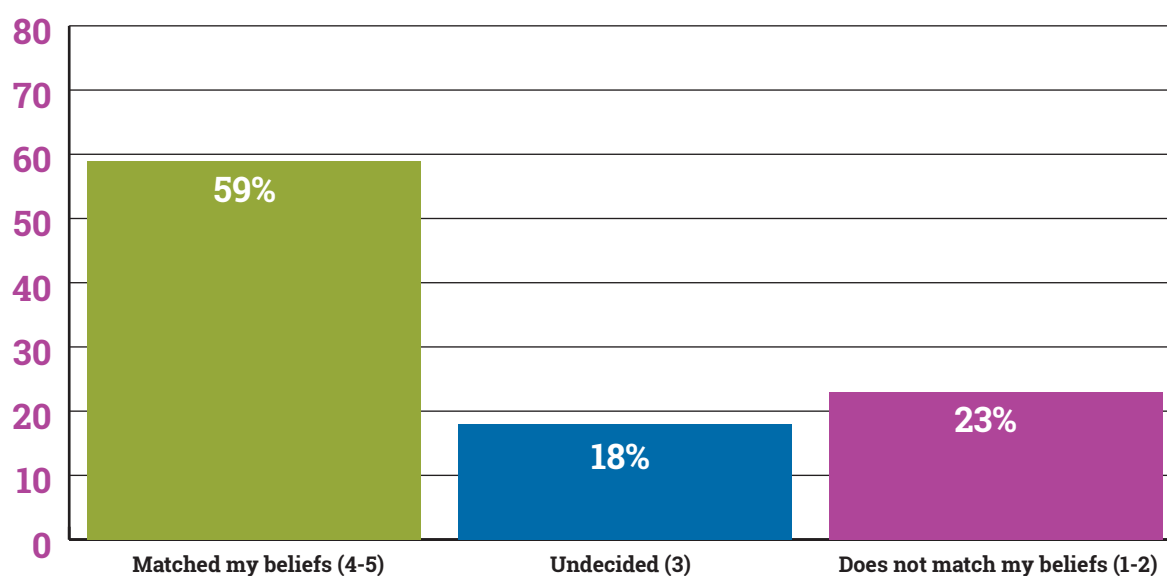
Other areas of public policy

Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- People need to feel more secure in their livelihoods. A universal basic income for every adult citizen would provide that security and end in-work and pensioner poverty.
- A universal basic income is unaffordable and would slow economic growth and create greater insecurity and poverty.

As this question focuses on a contentious policy, as well as values associated with a wellbeing economic approach, we offered a choice of alternative statements to the respondents of this survey. Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a policy may not be fully defined or tested, yet with 59% of respondents supporting the policy and only 23% believing that it is unaffordable, it appears that UBI has gained a majority of support in less than a decade.

Figure 29. Overall attitude towards “People need to feel more secure in their livelihoods. A universal basic income for every adult citizen would provide that security and end in-work and pensioner poverty.”



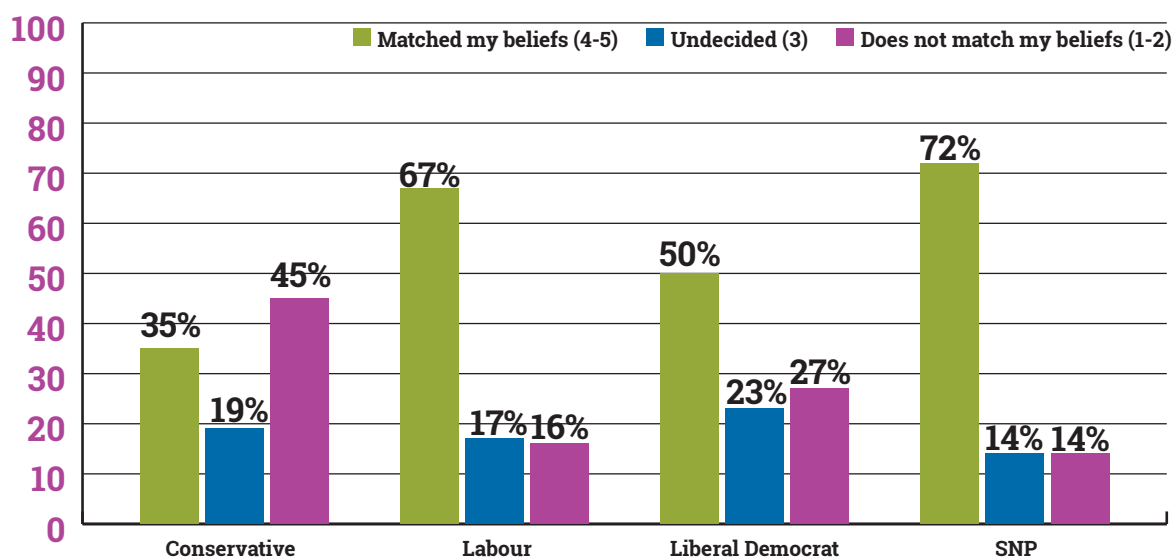
Participants above the age of 55 showed the greatest support for Universal Basic Income (61%). While the concept was not as widely supported amongst younger participants, there was still 57% of those aged 16-34 that endorsed the idea.

The idea of introducing a UBI was welcomed more so by female respondents, with 61% supporting the idea. On the other hand, 28% of male respondents believe the policy is unaffordable.

The SNP Government has shown great enthusiasm for Universal Basic Income and is aiming to field test the policy after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. The party believes that introducing a UBI will help to stabilise the economy and encourage

local spending²⁰. Therefore, it is unsurprising that 72% of respondents who align themselves with the SNP believe a UBI should be available to every adult citizen. Conservative respondents showed the most concern regarding the expenses of a UBI, with 45% stating that it is unaffordable and would slow economic growth. However, it is worth noting that more than one-third of Conservative supporters are accepting of a UBI.

Figure 30. Attitude towards “People need to feel more secure in their livelihoods. A universal basic income for every adult citizen would provide that security and end in-work and pensioner poverty” by political allegiance.



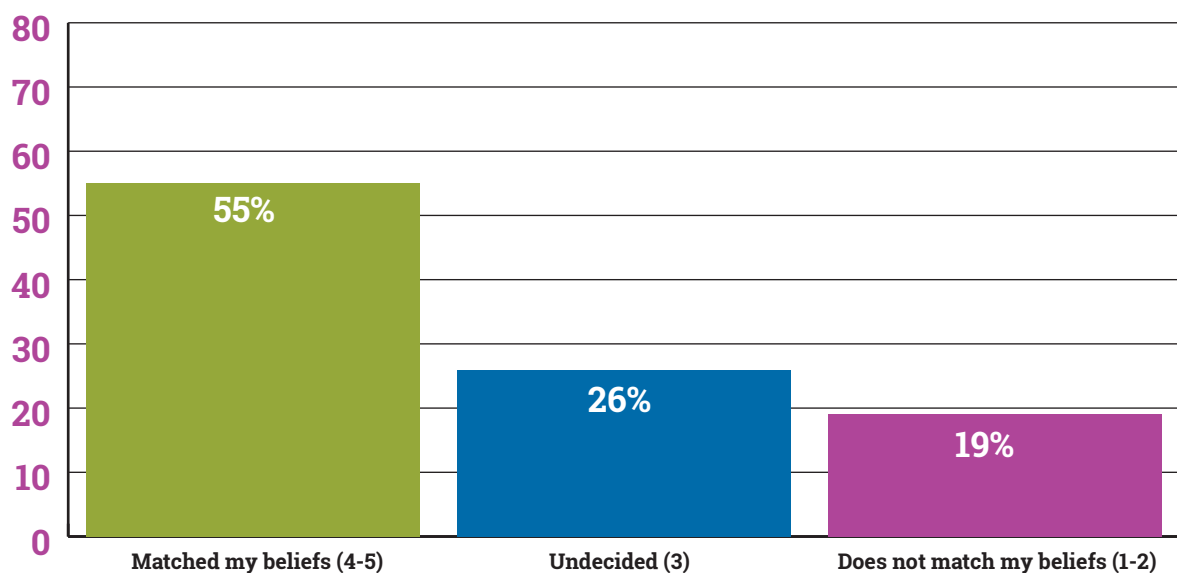
20 SNP (2020) ‘Universal Credit has never been enough to support families — we need a universal basic income’, Available Online: [https://www.snp.org/universal-credit-has-never-been-enough-to-support-families-we-need-a-universal-basic-income/?fbclid=IwAR3wYv6_oZPyZz6u2GsDkg4peK2d2WBaClV0Jaf-heUXpEivPdrIDPLsORek]

Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- Decision making should be less centralised in order for local people to have a greater democratic voice in local issues.
- Centralised decision-making works more effectively in our society. It is efficient and easy to control.

Decentralising decision-making and trusting local people to take responsibility for local decisions is an important component of a wellbeing economic approach. The concept was welcomed by respondents overall, with 55% believing that decentralisation is a good idea and only 19% of respondents opposing it.

Figure 31. Overall attitude towards “Decision making should be less centralised in order for local people to have a greater democratic voice in local issues.”

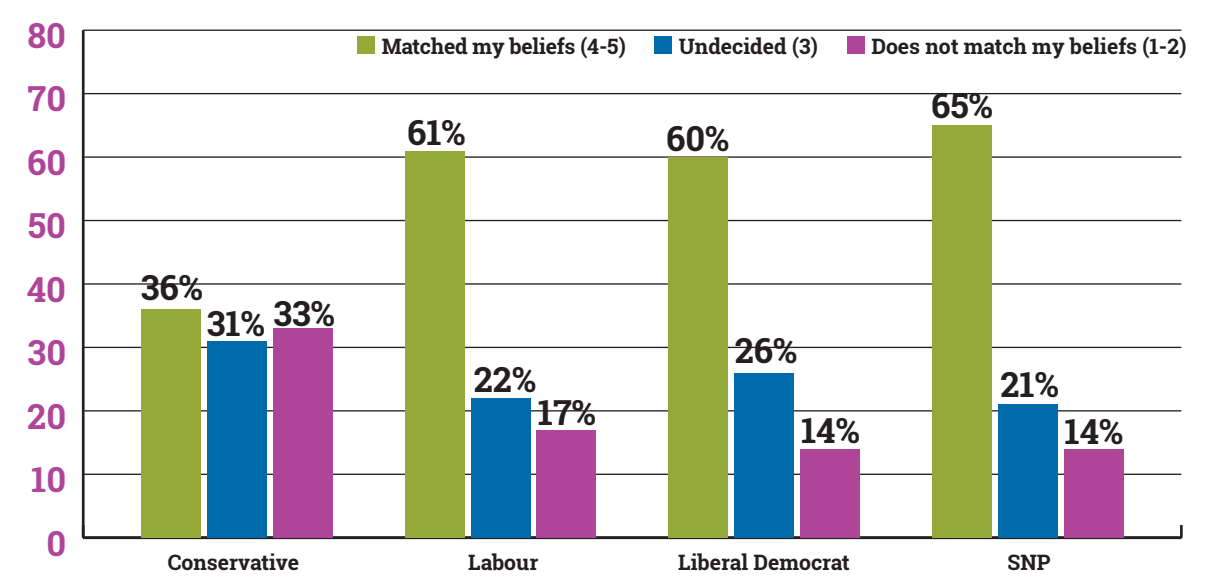


Younger participants, aged 16-34, demonstrated the most support for centralisation, particularly young males, with 11% strongly believing that this is the best approach to decision-making.

The results of this question did not highlight any major gender divides. However, in general male respondents were more likely to strongly support the idea of localised decision-making.

There was almost uniform support for localisation amongst the SNP, Labour and Liberal Democrat supporting ranks, with 65%, 61% and 60% of respondents supporting the idea respectively. SNP voters were, however, the most in favour of localisation (65%) despite the SNP often being accused of over centralisation. Conservative voter attitude was evenly split on the principle, with 36% supporting the idea, 33% being in favour of centralised decision-making and 31% undecided on the matter.

Figure 32. Attitude towards “Decision making should be less centralised in order for local people to have a greater democratic voice in local issues” by political allegiance.

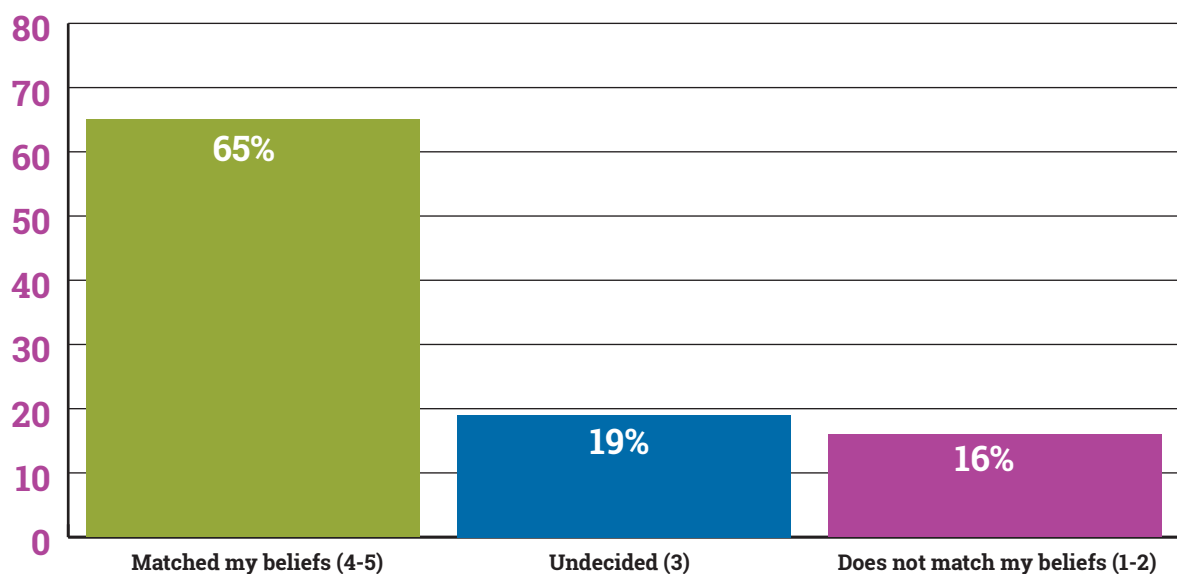


Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

- We need to reduce our economy's carbon outputs, reduce waste, make transport more sustainable and make recycling and repairing far more prominent in our economy.
- We already do enough to tackle the climate crisis. Climate change is natural, and the economy needs to grow more quickly than sustainable policies will allow.

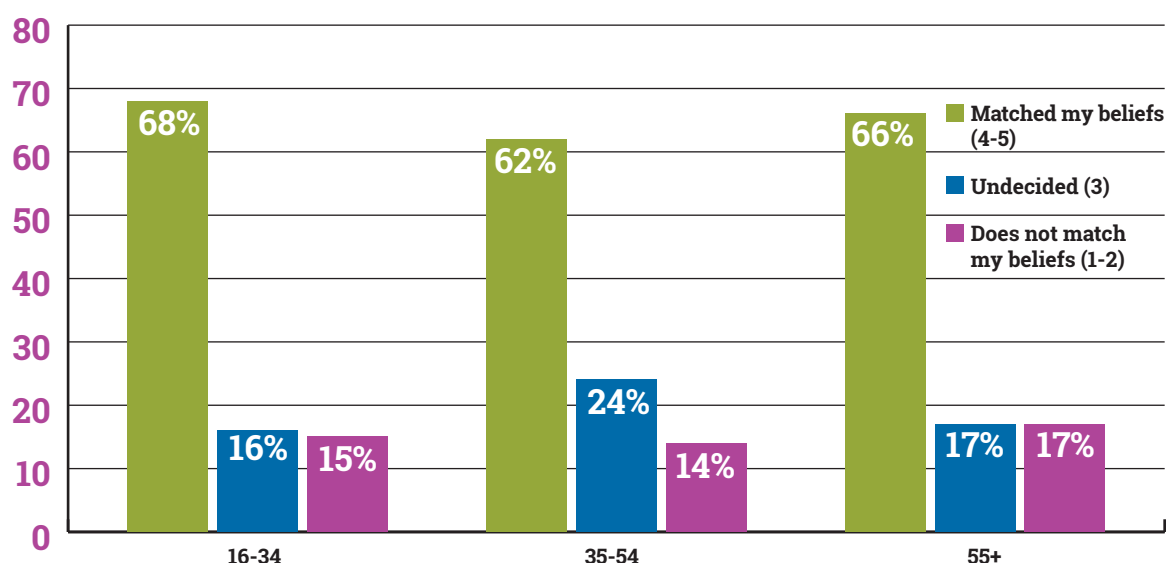
There is significant support for a more sustainable approach to economics in Scotland, with 65% of respondents calling for greater emphasis on environmental policies.

Figure 33. Overall attitude towards "We need to reduce our economy's carbon outputs, reduce waste, make transport more sustainable and make recycling and repairing far more prominent in our economy."



Younger people, aged 16 to 34, showed the most support (68%) for making greater changes to help tackle the climate crisis. Young females, in particular (74%), expressed a desire to reduce our economy's carbon outputs, reduce waste, make transport more sustainable and make recycling and repairing far more prominent in our economy.

Figure 34. Attitude towards “We need to reduce our economy’s carbon outputs, reduce waste, make transport more sustainable and make recycling and repairing far more prominent in our economy.”



Overall, female respondents demonstrated greater support for making environmental policies more prominent in our economy, with 68% favouring this idea. On the other hand, male respondents displayed less enthusiasm for this principle, with 63% supporting a sustainable approach to economics.

Liberal Democrat supporters are the most environmentally aligned, with 79% showing support for such policies and only 16% believing that we already do enough to tackle the climate crisis.

It is important to consider here that the Green party did not stand enough candidates in the December 2019 General Election to be calculated in this survey.

73% of SNP respondents supported a greater focus on environmental policies and only 8% disagreed with this idea. Labour respondents also showed a majority of support, with 66% supporting this wellbeing value and only 13% opposing the idea.

The supporters of the Conservative Party demonstrated less support for the principle of sustainable development, with 47% supporting such policies and 35% opposing a greater focus on tackling the climate crisis. 18% of such respondents were undecided on the matter. However, when the undecided Conservative voters are removed from the results, there is still a majority of 57% in favour.

Key conclusions and policy implications for Scotland

Overall, this report has highlighted a significant match between the values associated with a wellbeing economic approach and the principles held by those who reside in Scotland. This is a significant finding and one that should be considered by policymakers in Scotland. The results of this report suggest that most of the values and policies mentioned throughout this survey would be widely supported and welcomed by the general public in Scotland and this is important in guiding future government policy as Scotland shifts further towards a wellbeing economy.

It is important for further surveys to be undertaken in the future to identify any trends of growing support for particular policies or values. Such surveys will offer a guide to the policymaking community in Scotland and we advise that this remains an ongoing feature of the wellbeing policy agenda.

The purpose of public policy and economics

A significant level of support was displayed for a greater focus on wellbeing when the survey questions considered the purpose of public policy and economics. This overall result is important for future policymaking decisions as this general point of view is held by those who experience the consequences of public policy and the type of economic approach the government chooses to adopt.

The results analysed throughout this report demonstrate that people living in Scotland believe the purpose of public policy and economics should be to serve the needs of society and its people. This suggests that public policy and the economy must focus more so on people, quality of life, equality, fairness, health and happiness.

Responses to what the purpose of public policy and economics should be did vary depending on individuals' political beliefs. For example, the question regarding whether dignity, wellbeing and security should be earned, highlighted divides in opinion based on political beliefs. Conservative voting respondents presented the least support for this wellbeing principle. However, the statement that suggests a thriving economy can only exist alongside a thriving society was shown the greatest support by Conservative and Liberal Democrat voting participants.

This suggests that certain elements of the wellbeing approach would appeal to different individuals who hold various political beliefs. Therefore, it is important for a wellbeing agenda to be defined accurately and demonstrates the importance of surveying public opinion on wellbeing values and policies.

Policymaking after the pandemic

This global health crisis, which caused the economy to experience a sudden and extreme slowdown in March 2020, has also drawn attention to areas of concern within the existing economic approach. As a result, individuals have become more welcoming towards a focus on wellbeing and an economy that is less susceptible to any future economic or health crises.

This report has discovered a dramatic divergence in opinion from the established status quo amongst those who reside in Scotland. Understanding public opinion on this matter is vital for the policymaking community and such surveys can offer a degree of guidance when concerning future policymaking decisions on wellbeing.

This desire for change was displayed in the response of participants when questioned about previous policies such as austerity. A majority of respondents stated that austerity had failed and made the country more susceptible to health and economic crises. In particular, those aged 35-54 and participants who cannot work due to ill health or a disability and are likely to have faced the most severe consequences of austerity, opposed the policy the most. Even those who align themselves with the Conservative Party, which implemented austerity, demonstrated a level of discontent and uncertainty on the matter. This highlights a level of discontent with previous policymaking trends and suggests the need for a shift towards policy that focuses more on individuals and their wellbeing.

The idea that the coronavirus pandemic has acted as a catalyst for this type of change was supported by the results of several questions throughout the survey. For example, a majority of respondents supported the idea of reengineering economic policies to generate higher levels of health, wealth, wellbeing and access to opportunity after the pandemic.

Similarly, a clear majority of participants supported the idea of building society and the economy more successfully after the coronavirus pandemic and favoured adopting a new economic approach in doing so. This idea was particularly supported by young females, showing a desire for change amongst young people in Scotland.

Although Conservative supporting respondents showed the greatest support for the status quo, there was still a resounding majority in favour of rebuilding and adopting a new economic approach after the pandemic. Meanwhile, more than 73% of respondents who align themselves with other political parties supported this change to society and the economy, demonstrating the widespread appeal of a wellbeing economic approach across Scotland.

Policy areas and systems

Within this chapter, there was a focus on various policy areas and it was evaluated whether an emphasis on wellbeing would be endorsed across these different fields and industries. Overall, the principles and policy ideas associated with a wellbeing economic approach were widely accepted and supported across all public policy areas and throughout various systems.

Work and skills

Firstly, regarding education, the results highlighted a clear desire for education to be free and open to everyone. This belief was particularly prevalent amongst young people, many of whom are likely to still be in school or higher education. 34% of Conservative voting respondents stated that those that can afford education should pay, however, the results highlighted that conservatism rather than social status was the driving factor in this higher level of support for tuition fees.

With regards to work, a greater focus on wellbeing is clearly desired by those living in Scotland. A majority of respondents supported greater investment in innovation and improved business practices. This statement was favoured by respondents above the age of 55, with some older individuals perhaps desiring more support with modern technologies, new working practices and required skills.

A greater focus on small business is a core principle of a wellbeing economy and one that was widely accepted across Scotland. With SMEs providing nearly 1.2 million jobs, the support for this idea was expected. However, even Conservative supporting respondents, who demonstrated the greatest endorsement of an approach that focuses on big business, still displayed a majority of support for enhancing SME performance.

Social equality

Some of the policy suggestions and wellbeing-focused principles regarding social equality faced a slightly mixed response.

For example, the concept of economic success being more equally shared was supported by 57% of respondents. The idea was favoured more so by younger respondents than those over the age of 55. This wellbeing concept was rejected by Conservative voting respondents. Those who may be likely to face financial hardship, such as the unemployed or those with ill health or disability, showed the most support for this principle.

The statement regarding government expenditure on welfare and health being higher due to the inequalities in the current system also faced a less unified response than some of the other wellbeing principles. Older respondents, above the age of 55, as well as those who align themselves with the Conservative Party demonstrated the

least support for this statement and showed the greatest contentment with the current economic system.

When respondents were questioned on other social equality issues such as personal development opportunities and poverty, greater and more widespread support was demonstrated.

Other areas of public policy

Within this section we focused on other policies, such as the introduction of a UBI, decentralisation and sustainability, that may be involved as part of a wellbeing economic approach. Most of these policies are fairly new and not fully established, therefore, for all of these concepts to have been welcomed with a majority of support is significant.

A Universal Basic Income was, unsurprisingly, heavily supported by those who align themselves with the SNP. However, more than one-third of Conservative voting respondents also accepted the idea of a UBI. This portrays the widespread acceptance of many policies associated with a wellbeing approach, despite political beliefs.

Decentralisation was shown slightly less support, but still with a majority in favour of the concept. In particular, younger participants, aged 16-34, demonstrated the most support for centralised governance.

Tackling the climate crisis and introducing further environmental policies was a part of the wellbeing approach that was hugely endorsed. Liberal Democrat supporting respondents were the most environmentally aligned of the political parties that we could include in this report. However, overall younger respondents showed the greatest support for creating a greener and more sustainable future for Scotland.

Next steps

Scotianomics is dedicated to developing the wellbeing approach to economic, social and environmental development. To that end, this report has been distributed to key opinion formers and policymakers.

We will publish further investigations and seek to engage the leaders of civic Scotland and Scotland's business community to discuss and develop a new balanced and enlightened approach to building back better after the current health crisis.

Appendix

Survey questions

Q1 How closely do each of the following statements match your own personal beliefs?

Quality of life, equality, fairness, happiness, and health are all economic outcomes that should be given equal weight to economic growth.

Q2 How closely do each of the following statements match your own personal beliefs?

The focus of the economy should be more to serve the needs of the people and society than the needs of big business and finance.

Q3 Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

To be able to live with dignity, whilst experiencing wellbeing and security, should be a basic human right and not something that comes only with wealth

Dignity and security are earned and are not rights. If you do not contribute to society then you do not deserve security.

Q4 How closely do each of the following statements match your own personal beliefs?

You cannot have a thriving economy without a thriving society, and you cannot have a thriving society without a thriving economy.

Q5 How closely do each of the following statements match your own personal beliefs?

Austerity has failed, slowed economic growth, harmed people and society, and made the country more susceptible to economic and health crises.

Q6 Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Post coronavirus, our economic policies need to be reengineered to generate higher levels of equality in health, wealth, wellbeing, and access to opportunity.

Our current economic approach provides wellbeing and access to opportunity. However, some choose not to make use of it.

Q7 Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

If we build society and our economy more successfully after coronavirus, we can create a new economic approach that will allow both our economy and our society to thrive and be more resilient in the face of economic crises.

The current economic approach works well, is already resilient, and does not require improvement.

Q8 How closely do each of the following statements match your own personal beliefs?

The nature of work is changing and we need to invest more heavily in innovation, encouraging better business practices and preparing for the future of work.

Q9 Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Education is an investment in our children and young people and should be free and open to everyone.

Those that can afford to pay for higher and further education should do so.

Q10 Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Small business is the backbone of our economy. Greater government investment in creativity and innovation is necessary to help them grow and create better quality jobs.

It is easier to boost the economy working alongside bigger companies as they employ more people.

Q11 How closely do each of the following statements match your own personal beliefs?

Government expenditure on welfare and health is higher due to the inequalities in the current economic system and a wellbeing approach would reduce those costs.

Q12 Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Economic success being more equally shared amongst society would result in better growth.

Economic success means that everyone in society eventually benefits, even if the initial profits are earned by only a few.

Q13 How closely do each of the following statements match your own personal beliefs?

Greater access to personal development opportunities for all will increase social mobility and benefit the economy in the long term.

Q14 Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Ending poverty, inequality and unfairness, while increasing minimum wage and job security will boost the economy.

There must always be poor people. To make society more equal will impoverish everyone.

Q15 Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

People need to feel more secure in their livelihoods. A universal basic income for every adult citizen would provide that security and end in-work and pensioner poverty.

A universal basic income is unaffordable and would slow economic growth and create greater insecurity and poverty.

Q16 Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Decision making should be less centralised in order for local people to have a greater democratic voice in local issues.; Centralised decision-making works more effectively in our society. It is efficient and easy to control.

Q17 Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

We need to reduce our economy's carbon outputs, reduce waste, make transport more sustainable and make recycling and repairing far more prominent in our economy.

We already do enough to tackle the climate crisis. Climate change is natural and the economy needs to grow more quickly than sustainable policies will allow.

