Wellbeing Index Stockholm

Q2 (2606)



CENTER FOR WELLBEING,
WELFARE AND HAPPINESS

Highlights

- Stockholm has a wellbeing index of 6.90 out of 10 during the second quarter of 2026. This is a slight increase from the previous quarter (6.79) and from the same quarter last year (6.82).
- Wellbeing in Stockholm continues to be relatively equally distributed, with a Wellbeing Equality Coefficient (WEC) of 14.6 (on a scale of 0–100, where 0 means total equality). This is not significantly different from the previous quarter (14.9) or compared to the same quarter last year (14.4). The marginal (but statistically non-significant) increase in inequality compared with last year is not unexpected in an election year, when happiness may become more polarised between those experiencing political “tailwinds” and those facing political “headwinds”.
- The four TACK factors (which this quarter explain just over 74 percent of Stockholm residents’ wellbeing) are marginally higher for togetherness, coherence, and positive outlook than the previous quarter. The factors are also significantly higher than the same period last year for togetherness and positive outlook.
- Stockholm residents believe in Stockholm's growth, but are more cautious about what it means for life in the city. Expectations are clearly positive that the city and population will grow, while views on the economy, jobs, and quality of life are considerably more reserved.
- Younger Stockholm residents have a more pessimistic view of future job opportunities than older residents.
- Views on the future also differ between employment groups, particularly regarding future job opportunities and the opportunities to live a happy, meaningful, and rich life.
- A more positive outlook on the future is associated with higher wellbeing, especially regarding the belief in the opportunity to live a meaningful, happy, and rich life.
- One in four Stockholm residents believes Stockholm could become the happiest city in the world, while six in ten believe the rest of the world already sees Stockholm as a happy city.
- Those who believe Stockholm could become the happiest city in the world have higher wellbeing than those who do not believe it.

About Wellbeing Index Stockholm

Wellbeing growth as a goal

CWWH, together with Stockholm Business Region, the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, and Region Stockholm, has launched the objective that Stockholm should become a region of wellbeing growth.

The wellbeing growth target is intended to function in a similar way to economic growth: as a fundamental, direct, and measurable goal that is taken into account in economics and politics.

Wellbeing growth means that wellbeing increases over time and that people's quality of life and mental state improve. That all people should feel better is an end in itself, which is highlighted in an increasing number of international and national policy frameworks around the world[1], including UN *Resolution 65/309, Happiness: towards a holistic approach to* development.

We also expect wellbeing growth to contribute to a stronger economy through lower societal costs, including healthcare, absenteeism from work and school, social interventions, crime, and democratic losses, as well as higher revenues in the form of productivity, innovation, new business creation, employment, and societal and democratic functioning.

In addition, we expect wellbeing growth to create a more favourable environment for businesses and international cooperation, and to make the region more attractive for people to live in and visit.

Wellbeing growth as a measure

For wellbeing growth to be targeted in a way similar to economic growth (through GDP), a measure is needed that is, first, easy to construct and use in measurements and, second, easy to interpret and track over time.

We call this measure the *Wellbeing Index*. It consists of four sub-questions that measure overall quality of life ("a good life") and three primary dimensions of wellbeing: happiness, meaning, and a rich life. The four questions are combined into an average index that can take a value between 1 (lowest possible wellbeing) and 10 (highest possible wellbeing).

We calculate the Wellbeing Index quarterly (like GDP). Each quarter, around 1,000 randomly selected people in the Stockholm region are surveyed, using the same methodology as in the UN's World Happiness Report[2].

[1] For an overview, see CWWH's report *Att målsätta och mäta välmående på nationell nivå*.
[2] https://www.worldhappiness.report

About the Wellbeing Index Stockholm Report

CWWH publishes a quarterly report for each measurement of the Wellbeing Index in Stockholm.

Each report presents and interprets changes in the index. The reports will also focus on different themes, which may be both general and of particular current relevance.

The reports also provide space to analyse correlations with events, initiatives, and priorities in the region.

About the Wellbeing Index Stockholm Report Q2 2026

In this fifth report in the series, we follow up on the wellbeing index from the previous quarter and compare the results with the corresponding quarter of the previous year, to analyse changes in Stockholm residents' wellbeing over time.

The report's theme is the outlook on Stockholm's future. Building on the K in the TACK framework, we examine how residents view the city's future development, and to what extent they believe Stockholm will offer opportunities to live a happy, meaningful, and rich life. We also take a closer look at residents' belief that Stockholm could become the happiest city in the world, as well as their perception of how the city is seen by the rest of the world.

About the Q2 2026 measurement

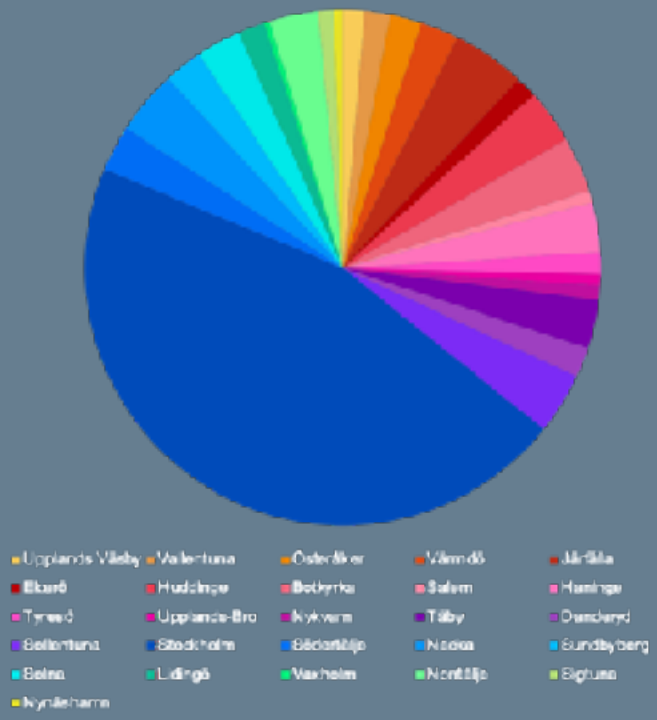
With the help of Norstat, we have posed questions to a representative sample of people in the Stockholm region. The sample is as follows.

Number of participants:
N = 1115

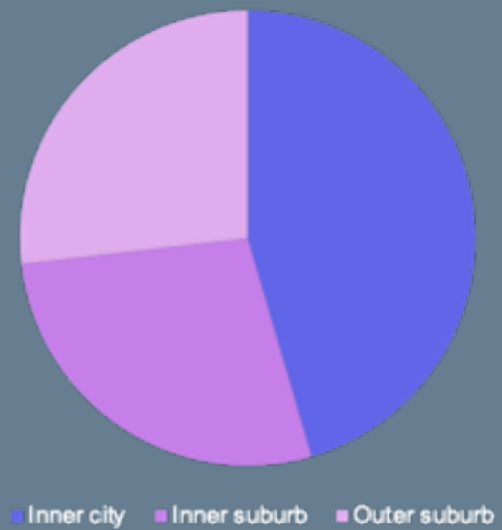
Gender:
50.7% Women
49.3% Men

Age:
18 - 91
Mean age: 51.8

Municipalities



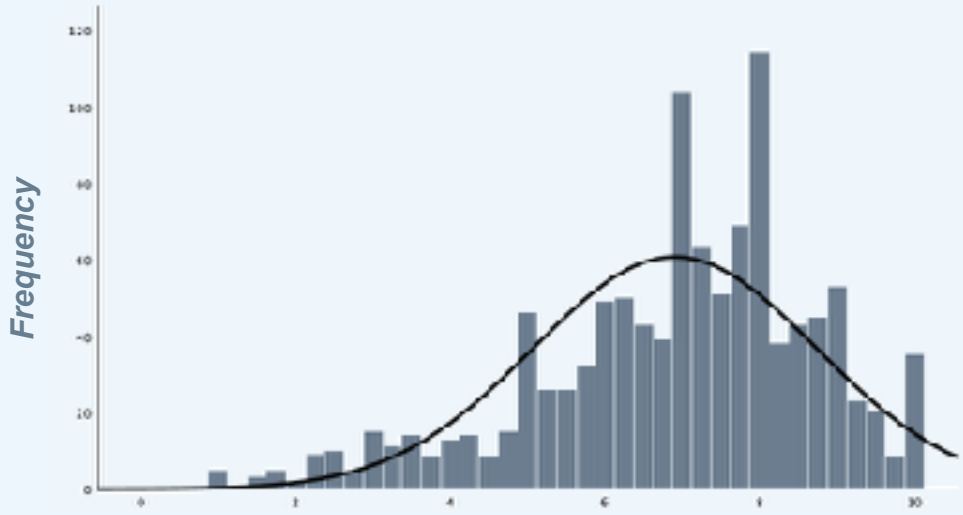
Geographic distribution



Wellbeing Index

Stockholm's wellbeing index in the second quarter of 2026 = 6.90.

Mean: 6.90



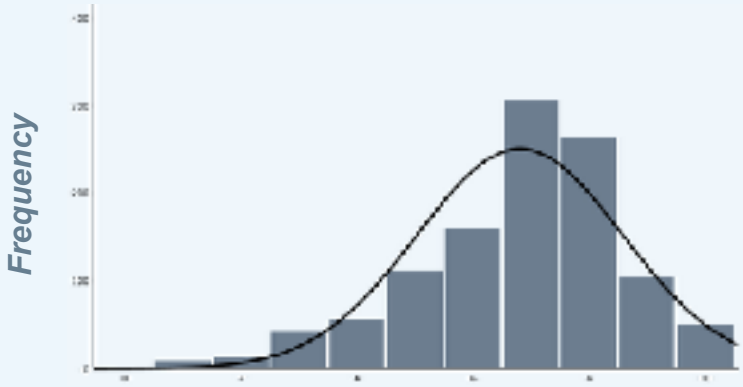
This is somewhat higher than the previous quarter (6.79), and also somewhat higher than the result for the corresponding quarter in 2025 (6.82).

This pattern is consistent across all four dimensions[3]:

1

Where would you place your life right now, on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 represents the best possible life and 1 the worst possible life?

Mean: 6.81

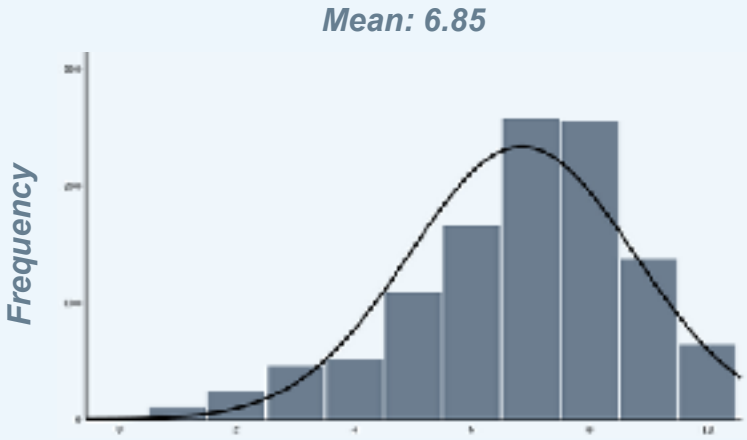


The average rating of how good life is overall amounts to 6.81. This is marginally higher than the previous quarter (6.67), but the difference is not statistically significant. The result is at the same level as during the corresponding quarter last year (6.82).

[3] For an overview, see Wellbeing Index Stockholm Q2 2025
https://www.hhs.se/contentassets/56c84a9e82d54cc09b8db688f02f3528/wellbeing-index-stockholm-report.-q2.pdf

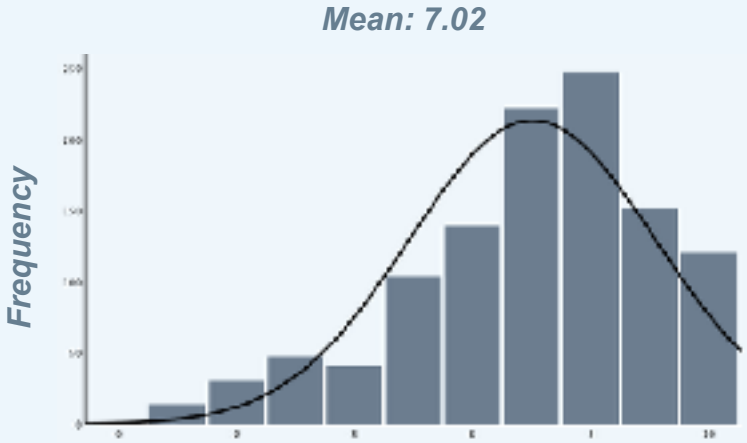
2

How happy do you feel overall?



The average of 6.85 is marginally, but not significantly, higher than the previous quarter's 6.70. Compared with the corresponding quarter in 2025, the result is virtually unchanged (6.83).

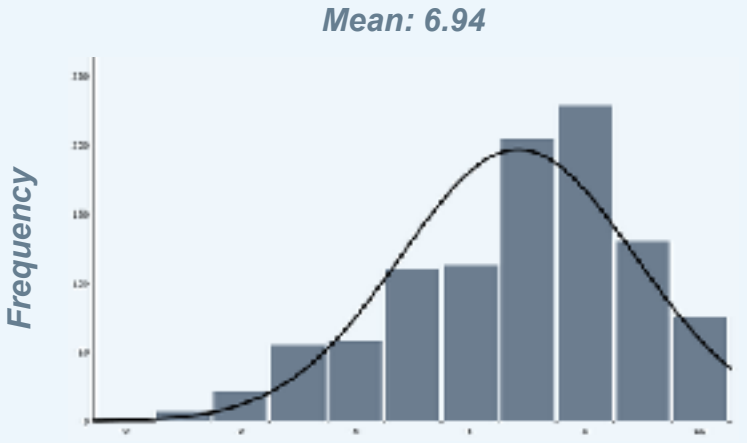
How meaningful does your life feel overall?



The average of 7.02 is slightly higher than the previous quarter (6.95) and compared with the corresponding quarter in 2025 (6.95), but the differences are not statistically significant.

4

How rich does your life feel overall?



The average of 6.94 is somewhat higher than the previous quarter's 6.83 and the corresponding quarter in 2025 (6.86), but the differences are not statistically significant.

This measurement of the wellbeing index for Q2 2026 is at roughly the same level as the corresponding measurement for Q2 2025. Together they establish a baseline for Q2, which can be expected to be higher than the levels during Q1.

Distribution of wellbeing

Just as economic developments can be positive overall but benefit only a few or many, changes in wellbeing (and our goal of growth) may benefit smaller or larger parts of the population. We want wellbeing growth to include as many people as possible and to gauge this we have created the Wellbeing Equality Coefficient (WEC).

The WEC can take values between 100 and 0. The extreme value of 100 means that 100 percent of the combined and total wellbeing in the region is concentrated in a single resident. A value of 0, by contrast, means that wellbeing in the region is completely equally distributed among all residents.

In the second quarter of 2026, the WEC[4] for the Wellbeing Index is:

14.6

This is not significantly lower than in Q1 2026 (14.9), but it points in a positive direction, with wellbeing becoming slightly more equally distributed across the population. Nor is there a significant difference compared with the same quarter last year (14.4). The marginal (but statistically non-significant) increase in inequality compared with last year is not unexpected in an election year, when happiness may become more polarised between those experiencing political “tailwinds” and those facing political “headwinds”[5]. In light of this, we expect a higher (and more unequal) WEC in the next quarter, which includes Election Day in Sweden.

[4] For an overview, see Wellbeing Index Stockholm Q2 2025
https://www.hhs.se/contentassets/56c84a9e82d54cc09b8db688f02f3528/wellbeing-index-stockholm-report.-q2.pdf
[5] Nilsson, A. H., Kajonius, P. J., Kjell, O., Dahlen, M., Schwartz, H. A., Case, B., ... & VanderWeele, T. J. (2026). Swedish Well-Being: The rising importance of age among demographic, personality, and social relationship factors. SSM-Population Health, 101913.

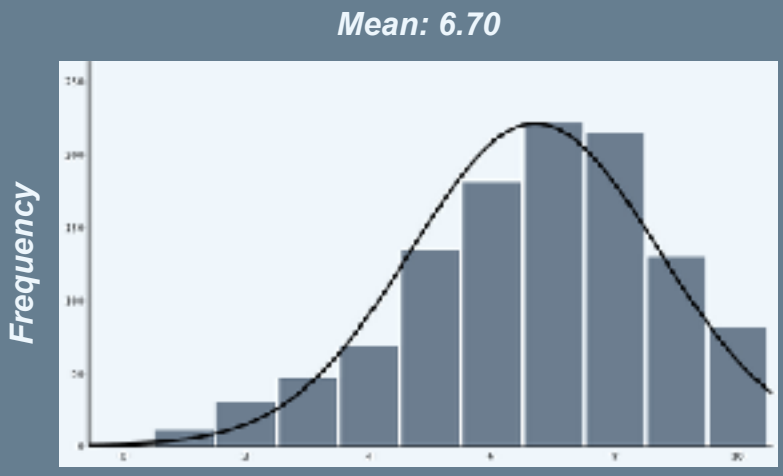
TACK: four fundamental factors for the wellbeing of the people of Stockholm

As in the previous measurements, the four factors in the TACK framework explain around 75 percent of the variation in Stockholm residents' wellbeing (74.7% in Q2 2026).

Togetherness: community. To what extent do people feel a sense of community with others?

1

How strong a sense of community do you feel with others?

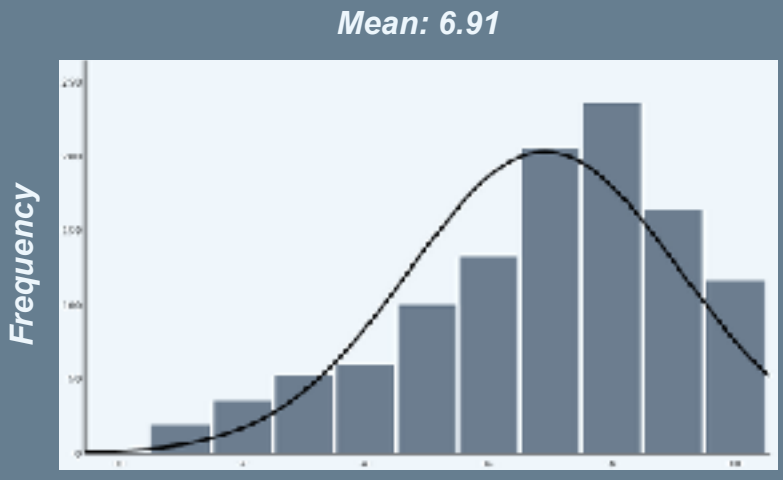


The average of 6.70 does not differ significantly from Q1 2026 (6.63), but represents a clear and statistically significant increase compared with the corresponding period in 2025 (6.52).

Agency: influence. To what extent do people feel that they can influence their own life situation?

2

How much do you feel that you can influence your own life situation?

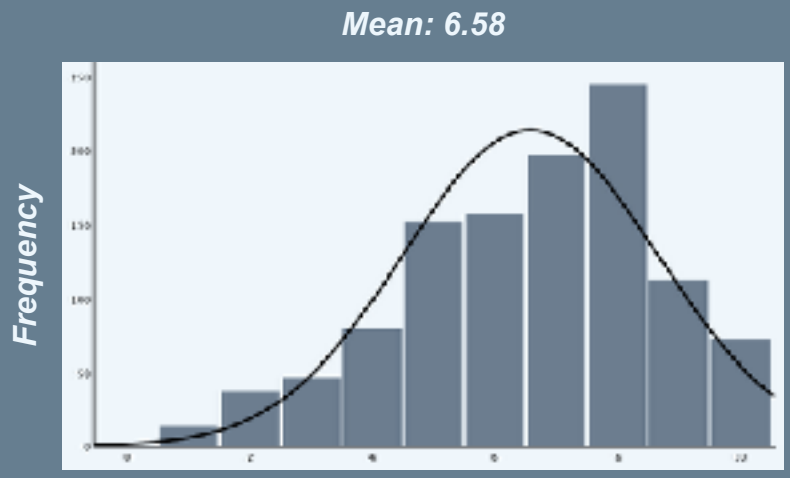


The average for the perceived ability to influence one's own life situation (6.91) is at the same level as in Q1 2026 (6.91) and is somewhat higher than during the corresponding period last year (6.88), although the difference is not statistically significant.

Coherence: coherence. To what extent do people feel that the different parts of their lives fit together in a functional and positive way?

3

How much balance do you feel in your life?

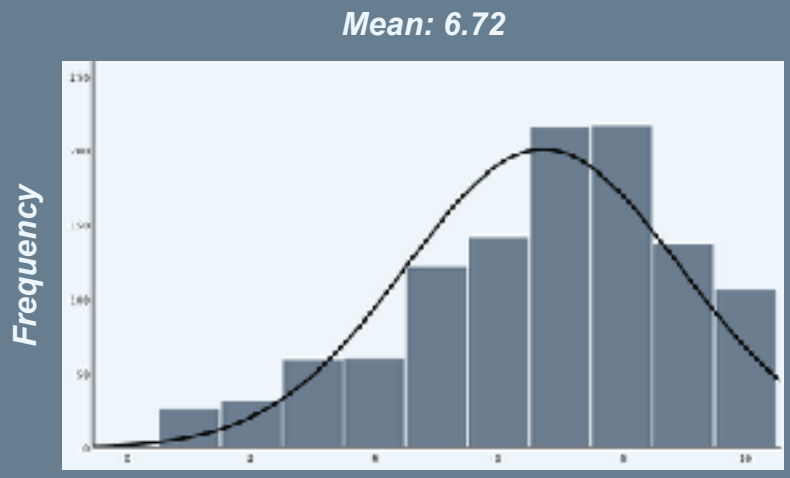


The average experience of balance in life (6.58) is somewhat higher than in Q1 2026 (6.46) and Q2 2025 (6.45), but the differences are not statistically significant.

Kinetics: forward movement. To what extent do people feel that their lives are moving in a positive direction?

4

How positively do you view the future?

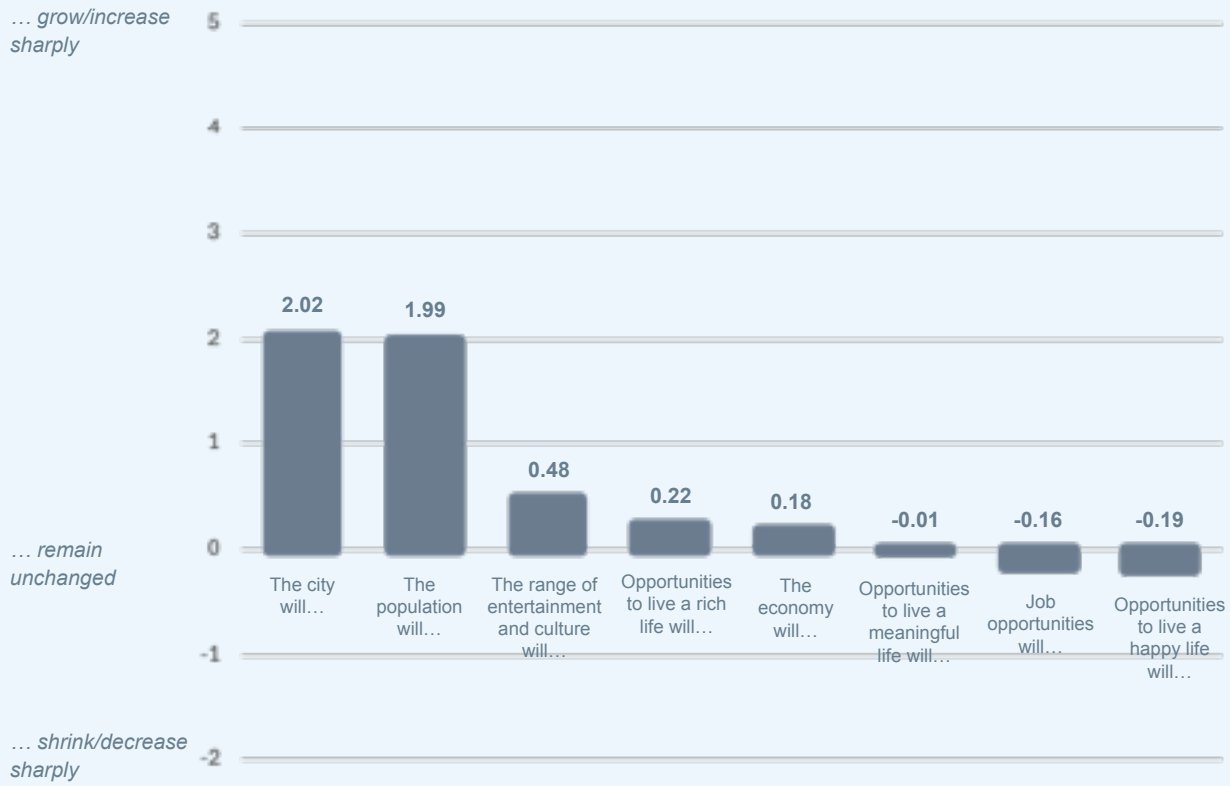


The average of 6.72 is marginally higher than in Q1 2026 (6.62), but the difference is not statistically significant. Compared with the corresponding period in 2025 (6.54), it is, however, a statistically significant increase.

Outlook on Stockholm's Future

In this measurement, we examine residents' outlook on Stockholm's future, focusing on the K in the TACK framework. We analyse the extent to which residents expect Stockholm to grow and develop in various ways, as well as what opportunities they believe the city will offer for living a happy, meaningful, and rich life.

Future expectations



Stockholm residents generally have a positive outlook on the city's future growth, but are more cautious in their assessment of what this growth might mean for life in the city. Expectations that both the city and the population will grow are clearly positive, while views on economic development, the labour market, and the opportunities to live a happy, meaningful, and rich life are closer to unchanged levels.

There is thus a clear difference between expectations for Stockholm's growth and expectations that this growth will translate into better conditions for a good life.

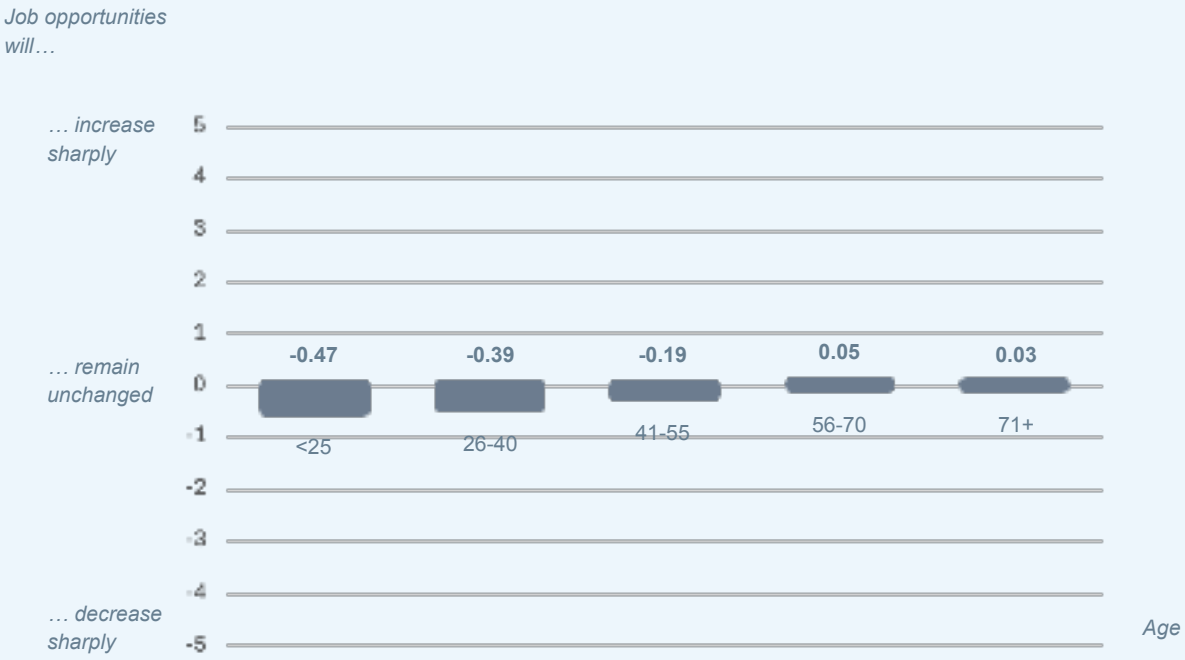
A correlation analysis shows that all questions about the future outlook for Stockholm have significant relationships with one another. The relationships vary in strength, from r = 0.143 to r = 0.819. The correlation coefficient r ranges from −1 to +1, where 0 indicates no linear relationship and ±1 indicates a perfect linear relationship.. The strongest relationships are found between expectations regarding the opportunities to live a happy, meaningful, and rich life. This indicates that residents' vision of the future is, to a large extent, shaped by a shared perception of what life opportunities Stockholm will offer. Expectations regarding the economy, the labour market, and the cultural scene are also linked to this picture, but the relationships are weaker.

	The city will…	The population will…	The economy will…	The range of entertainment and culture will…	Job opportunities will…	Opportunities to live a happy life will…	Opportunities to live a meaningful life will…	Opportunities to live a rich life will…
The city will…		0.713	0.324	0.359	0.254	0.262	0.247	0.298
The population will…			0.188	0.284	0.186	0.158	0.143	0.197
The economy will…				0.548	0.574	0.554	0.536	0.537
The range of entertainment and culture will…					0.544	0.528	0.506	0.557
Job opportunities will…						0.610	0.575	0.555
Opportunities to live a happy life will…							0.814	0.763
Opportunities to live a meaningful life will…								0.819

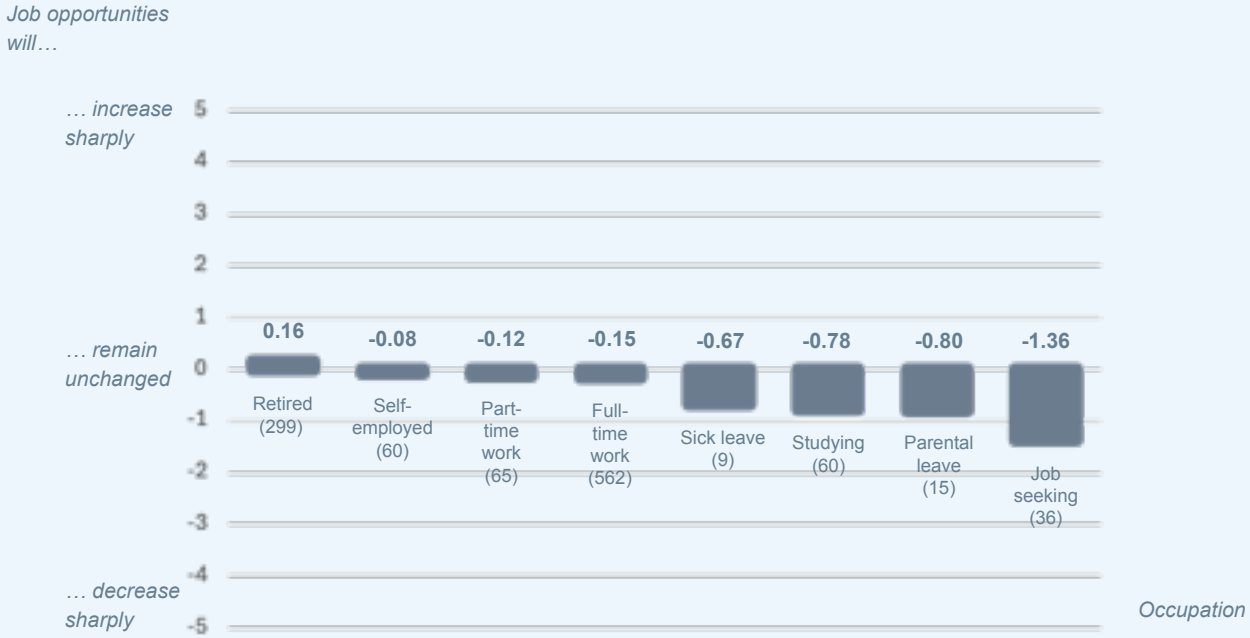
Differing expectations

Views on the future differ in certain respects between different groups of Stockholm residents, but the differences are not consistent across the board. The clearest differences are found between different occupational groups, particularly regarding future job opportunities and the opportunities to live a happy, meaningful, and rich life. Age has a weaker association with future outlook, while no significant differences have been identified based on income or geographic residence.

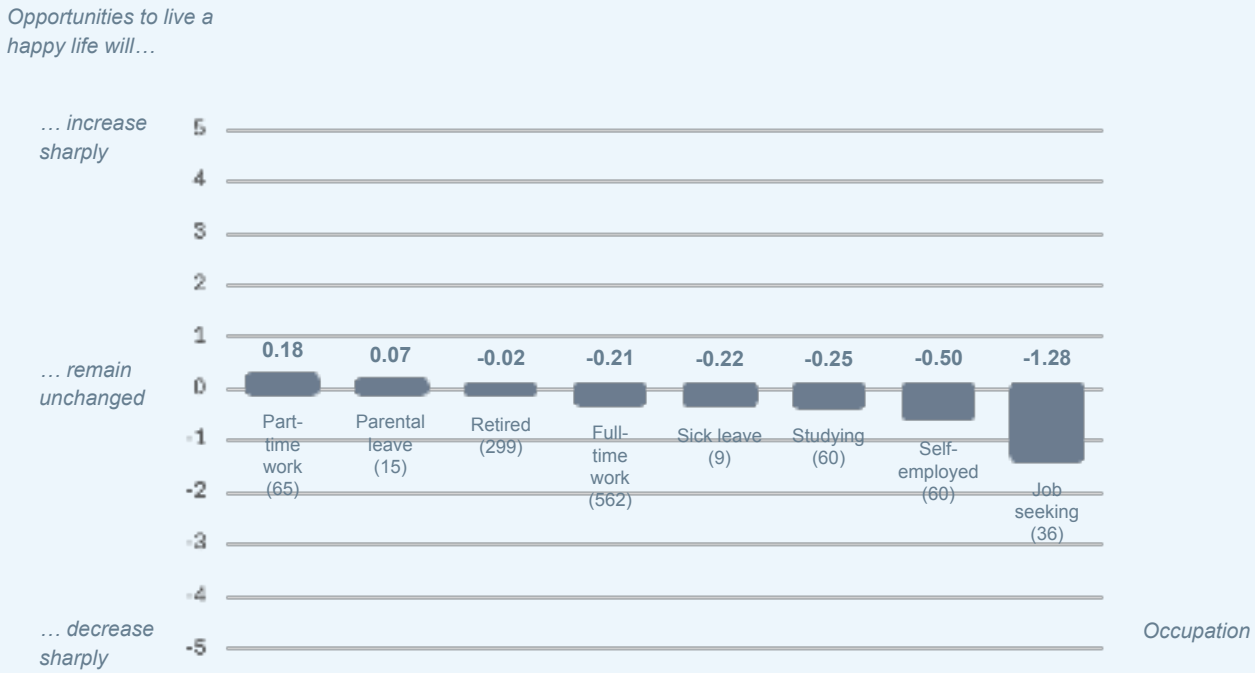
Views on future job opportunities differ significantly between age groups. People under 25 are the most negative (−0.47), meaning they are more likely to believe job opportunities will decrease. The outlook becomes generally more positive with increasing age and is most positive among those aged 56–70 (0.05), followed by those aged 71 and older (0.03).



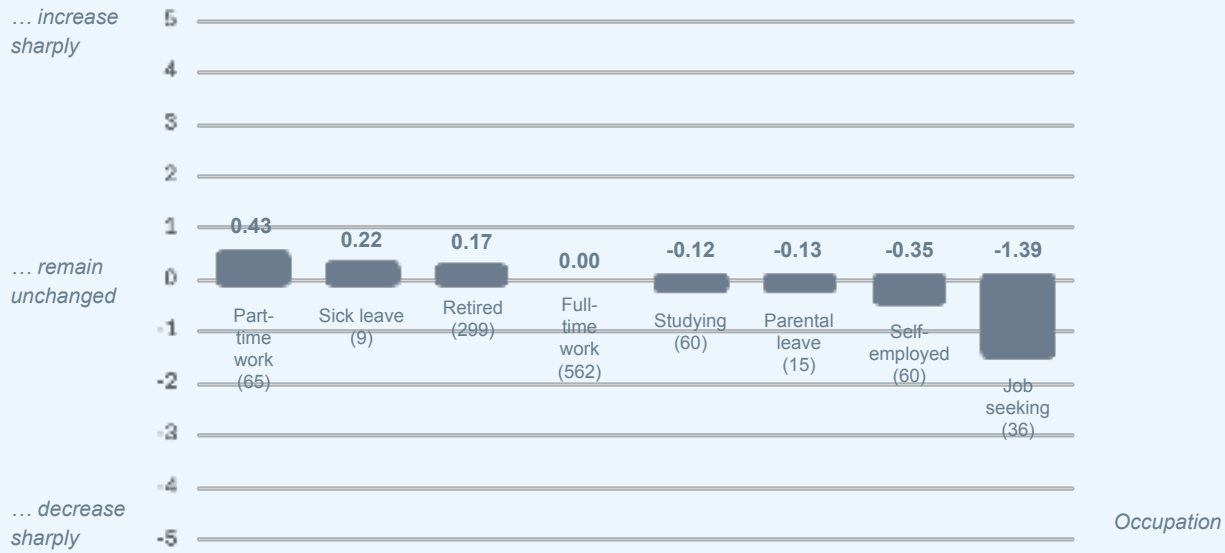
Views on future job opportunities also differ significantly between occupational groups. Job seekers are the most negative, followed by parental leave and students, meaning they are more likely to believe job opportunities will decrease. The outlook is most positive among retirees, who on average believe job opportunities will remain relatively unchanged.



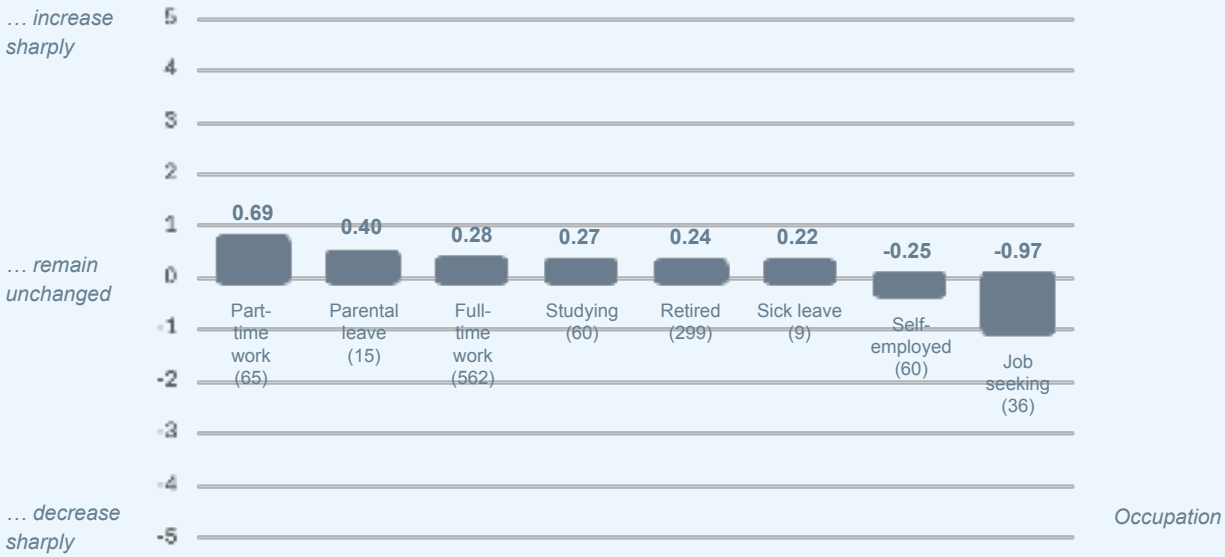
The negative outlook among job seekers also recurs in views on the opportunities to live a happy, meaningful, and rich life. Job seekers have the most negative outlook, while part-time workers have the most positive.



Opportunities to live a meaningful life will…



Opportunities to live a rich life will…



Future outlook and wellbeing

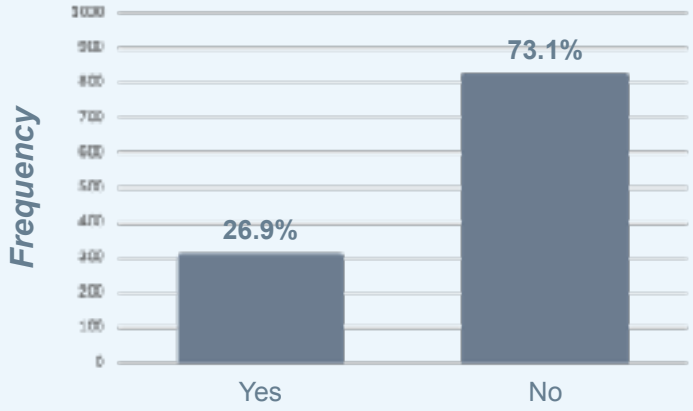
A more positive outlook on the future is associated with higher wellbeing. The relationships are consistently positive and strongest for expectations regarding future opportunities to live a meaningful, happy, and rich life. The strongest relationship is between wellbeing and expectations for the opportunity to live a meaningful life (r = 0.268), followed by the opportunity to live a happy life (r = 0.252) and a rich life (r = 0.237). It is thus primarily the quality of future life, rather than expectations that Stockholm as a city will grow, that is associated with residents' wellbeing.

	Correlation with the wellbeing index
The city will…	0.062
The population will…	0.013
The economy will…	0.162
The range of entertainment and culture will…	0.152
Job opportunities will…	0.170
Opportunities to live a happy life will…	0.252
Opportunities to live a meaningful life will…	0.268
Opportunities to live a rich life will…	0.237

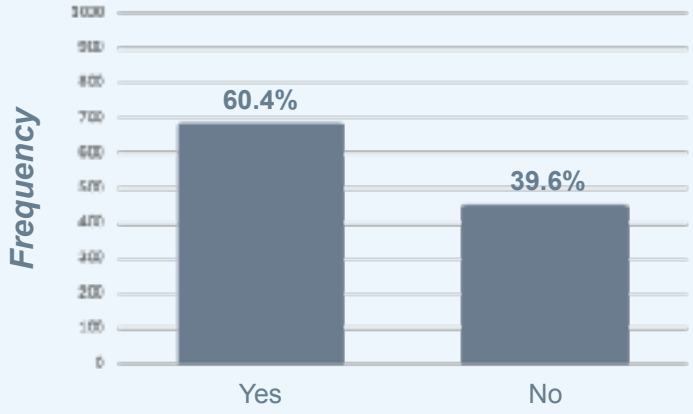
Stockholm as a happy city

Another aspect of Stockholm residents' outlook on the future is the question of whether Stockholm could become the happiest city in the world. Here, residents are considerably more cautious. Only just over a quarter (26.9%) believe Stockholm could reach this position in the future. In contrast, considerably more (60.4%) believe the rest of the world already regards Stockholm as a happy city.

Do you think Stockholm could become the happiest city in the world in the future?



Do you think the rest of the world outside Sweden perceives Stockholm as a happy city?

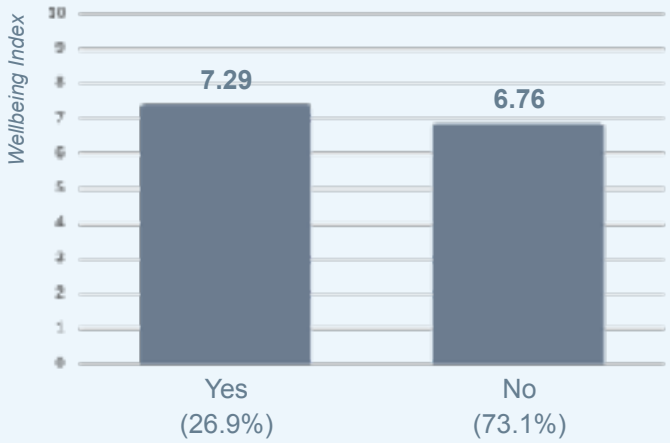


The most common combination (38.5%) is not believing Stockholm can become the happiest city in the world, yet still believing the rest of the world already sees the city as happy. Close behind (34.6%) are those who believe neither one nor the other.

		Do you think the rest of the world outside Sweden perceives Stockholm as a happy city?	
		Yes	No
Do you think Stockholm could become the happiest city in the world in the future?	Yes	22.0 %	4.9 %
	No	38.5 %	34.6 %

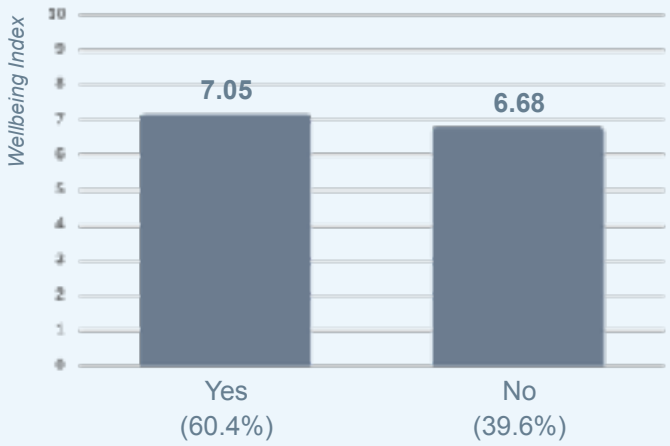
The belief in Stockholm as a happy city has no association with age, income, residence area of Stockholm, or employment. It is, however, associated with higher wellbeing. Residents who believe Stockholm could become the happiest city in the world have an average wellbeing of 7.29, compared with 6.76 among those who do not believe it.

Do you think Stockholm could become the happiest city in the world in the future?



The perception of how the rest of the world views Stockholm is also associated with wellbeing: those who believe the rest of the world sees Stockholm as a happy city have an average wellbeing of 7.05, compared with 6.68 among the rest.

Do you think the rest of the world outside Sweden perceives Stockholm as a happy city?



Open-ended responses on Stockholm’s opportunities and challenges

Residents were given the opportunity to explain, in open-ended responses, why they answered as they did to the questions about Stockholm's chances of becoming the happiest city in the world and how they believe the rest of the world sees Stockholm. Here we go through the biggest themes among the responses.

Do you think Stockholm could become the happiest city in the world in the future?

The figures in parentheses in the themes below indicate the proportion of yes and no responses that cited each respective theme as the reason for their answer.

Yes (26.9%):

1. **Nature, greenery, and beauty (27.1%):** Nature, the archipelago, and the city's beauty are cited as signs that good conditions already exist.
2. **Economy, jobs, and welfare (14.9%):** Residents point to good welfare and plenty of job opportunities as a strength the city has.
3. **Culture and entertainment (12.5%):** Residents highlight a rich cultural and entertainment scene as an asset.
4. **Infrastructure and public transit (8.1%):** Transit connections are mostly described as a functioning strength, though some see room for improvement.
5. **Safety and security (4.4%):** Some experience the city as already safe, while others see safety as a condition for the city to be able to become happy.

No (73.1%):

1. **Mentality and social climate (10.6%):** Stockholm residents are described as reserved or stressed, which is seen as a social barrier.
2. **Economy, jobs, and unemployment (9.6%):** Residents express concern about the economic situation, unemployment, and reduced growth.
3. **Housing and living costs (9.1%):** Residents point to housing shortages, high rents, and it becoming too expensive to stay.
4. **Crime and insecurity (8.4%):** Gang crime and violence are seen as a direct obstacle to becoming the happiest city.
5. **Infrastructure and public transit (6.6%):** Traffic problems and insufficient public transit are cited as limiting factors.

Do you think the rest of the world outside Sweden perceives Stockholm as a happy city?

Yes (60.4%):

1. **Nature, greenery, and beauty (22.7%):** Residents believe the rest of the world sees Stockholm's beautiful location by the water and nature, and conclude the city is perceived as happy.
2. **Economy and jobs (4.6%):** Residents point out that Stockholm may be perceived as wealthy.
3. **Safety and security (3.2%):** The city is believed to be perceived as safe and stable.

No (39.6%):

1. **Crime and insecurity (16.9%):** Stockholmers believe international media coverage of gang crime and shootings has shaped the image abroad.
2. **Mentality and social climate (7.7%):** Residents believe Swedes may be perceived as reserved or hard to get to know, which gives a cold impression abroad.
3. **Weather, climate, and darkness (3.5%):** The darkness and cold are believed to give a gloomy impression abroad.

Final remarks

This is the fifth report on the Wellbeing Index in Stockholm, based on the quarterly measurement for Q2 2026.

The primary purpose of this report has been to follow up on the measurement from the previous quarter. We have found overall stable levels in the wellbeing index and the four TACK factors compared with Q1. Compared with the corresponding quarter last year, however, there is a clear increase in togetherness and forward outlook, while agency and coherence remain at roughly the same levels. This is also the first time we have been able to make this comparison, and it will become an important tool for tracking seasonal patterns in Stockholmers' wellbeing year over year.

The report has explored in depth the theme of *the outlook on Stockholm's future*. We have looked closely at the extent to which residents believe the city, the population, the economy, and the opportunities to live a good life will grow, and found that optimism is considerably greater regarding the city's and population's growth than regarding what that growth will actually mean for quality of life.

Views on the future also differ between groups, particularly based on employment, and a more positive outlook on the future is clearly associated with higher wellbeing.

We have also asked residents whether they believe Stockholm can become the happiest city in the world, and whether they believe the rest of the world already sees Stockholm as a happy city. One in four believes the former, six in ten the latter, and both perceptions are associated with higher wellbeing.

Micael Dahlen
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WELFARE AND HAPPINESS