Wellbeing Index Stockholm

Q3 (2509)



CENTER FOR WELLBEING, WELFARE AND HAPPINESS

Highlights

- Stockholm has a Wellbeing Index in the third quarter of 2025 of 6.75 (out of 10). A small but not statistically significant decrease from 6.87 in the previous quarter.
- Wellbeing in Stockholm continues to be relatively equally distributed, with a Wellbeing Equality Coefficient (WEC) of 15.2 (on a scale of 0–100, where 0 means total equality). A small but statistically significant increase from 14.4 in the previous quarter.
- The changes appear to be seasonal effects, where wellbeing decreases more for some people.
- Among the four TACK factors (which explain almost 75 percent of the wellbeing of the people of Stockholm), clear decreases can be seen in togetherness and balance, and an increase in perceived influence over one's own life situation.
- The value of an increase in wellbeing (VOWI) is 3,064 kronor per month per Stockholm resident. Calculated for 2 million residents, this amounts to 6,128,000,000 kronor per month.
- People in Stockholm have fika together with someone an average of 3.79 times per week, according to our unique measure, the fika factor.
- Stockholm residents quite often engage in everyday social behaviors: 94 percent usually greet their neighbors. Sixty-one percent have made small talk with a stranger in the past week. Twenty-six percent smiled at a stranger during the day.
- Fika is the social behavior with the greatest potential for improving the wellbeing of Stockholm residents, followed by "shallow" community-promoting activities (greeting neighbors and smiling at or talking to strangers), and thereafter deeper communitypromoting activities (turning to a close friend, asking for or offering help with something).
- The most common themes in residents' open responses to the question of how community can be increased in Stockholm are "shallow" human encounters, more events/activities, shared environments, increased (cheaper) access to culture, public transport and sports, and less stress.
- The most common themes in residents' open responses to the question of what would make life in Stockholm better are measures concerning traffic and public transport, reduced living costs, more green environments, more "shallow" human encounters, and increased safety.

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 of making Stockholm a region of wellbeing growth.

The wellbeing growth objective is intended to function in a similar way as economic growth — as a fundamental, direct, and measurable goal considered in economics and politics. Wellbeing growth means that wellbeing increases over time and that people's quality of life and overall state of being improves. The idea that all people should feel better is an end in itself, emphasized in an increasing number of international and national directives around the world¹, including UN Resolution 65/309 Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development.

But we also expect wellbeing growth to contribute to a stronger economy through lower societal costs, such as reduced need for health and medical care, work and school absenteeism, social services, crime, and democratic losses, and increased revenues in the form of productivity, innovation, entrepreneurship, employment, and societal and democratic functionality.

We further expect wellbeing growth to create a more favorable environment for businesses and international collaborations, and to make the region more attractive for people to live in and visit.

Wellbeing Growth as a measurement

For wellbeing growth to be set as a target similar to economic growth (through GDP), a metric is needed that is, first, simple to construct and use in measurements, and second, easy to interpret and follow over time.

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

We calculate the Wellbeing Index on a quarterly basis (as with GDP). Each quarter, approximately 1,000 randomly selected people in the Stockholm region are surveyed, using the same method as in the UN's World Happiness Report.

^{&#}x27; For a compilation, see CWWH's report *Att målsätta och mäta välmående på nationell nivå.*

² https://www.worldhappiness.report

About Report Wellbeing Index Stockholm

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 particularly topical.

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

About Report Wellbeing Index Stockholm Q3 2025

In this second report in the series, we focus on following up the Wellbeing Index from the previous quarter and analyzing changes in the wellbeing of the people of Stockholm.

We make closer comparisons of the Wellbeing Index with regard to socioeconomic factors and health.

The theme of the report is togetherness. We take a closer look at a number of social behaviors that influence togetherness and the wellbeing of Stockholm residents. We develop a unique measure of the monetary value of an increase in wellbeing, VOWI (Value of a Wellbeing Increase).

In addition, we analyze residents' open responses on how togetherness in Stockholm can be increased, as well as what would make life in Stockholm better.

About the measurement Q3 2025

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

N = 1101

Botkyrka

55.7%, 44.3% Women vs men

18-93 Mean 48 Age

Municipalities:

■ Österåker

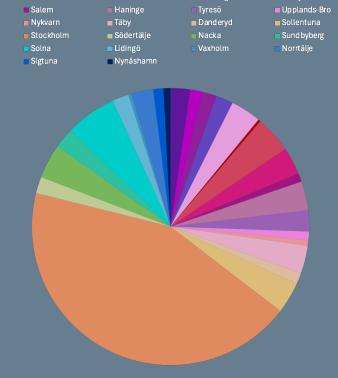
Huddinge

■ Vallentuna

Ekerö

■ Up plands Väsby

■ Salem ■ Nykvarn

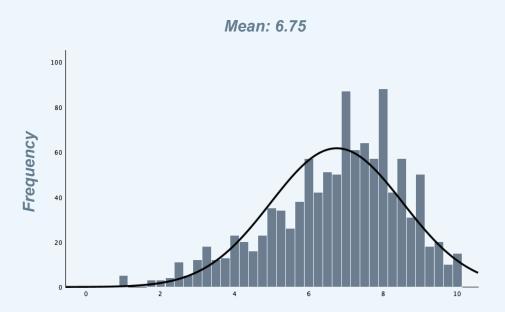


Geographic distribution:



Wellbeing Index

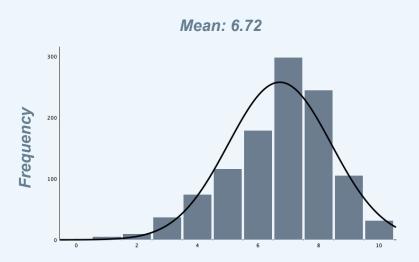
In the third quarter of 2025, Stockholm has a Wellbeing Index = 6.75.



This is a small decrease from the previous quarter, when the figure was 6.87. But the difference is not statistically significant.

The small decrease is explained when we look more closely at the four dimensions of wellbeing included in the index³:

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?

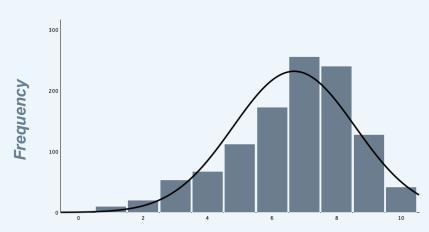


The average assessment of how good life is overall is 6.72. This does not differ significantly from the previous quarter (6.82).

2

How happy do you feel overall?



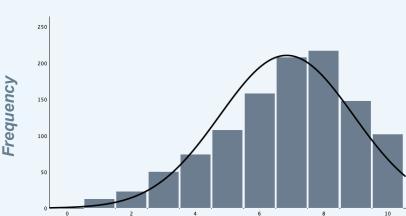


The average of 6.68 is significantly lower (at the 5 percent significance level) than last quarter's 6.83.

3

How meaningful does your life feel overall?



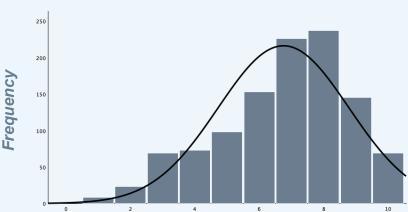


The average of 6.85 is not significantly lower than last quarter's 6.95.

4

How rich does your life feel overall?





The average of 6.75 is not significantly lower than last quarter's 6.86.

Of the four dimensions, only one — happiness — has decreased significantly. This supports a seasonal effect, since it is a well-documented fact⁴ that average happiness declines during the second half of the third quarter (especially in September, which is when the measurement was conducted), compared with the second quarter.

This measurement of the Wellbeing Index establishes a baseline value for Q3 that we can expect to be lower than for Q2, and which we can use for comparison with Q3 next year.

Distribution of Wellbeing

Just like economic developments can be positive overall but benefit either a few or many, changes in wellbeing (and our objective of growth) may reach fewer or more people. We want wellbeing growth to include as many as possible.

In the second quarter of 2025, the Wellbeing Equality Coefficient (WEC)⁵ for the Wellbeing Index is:

15.2

This is a small but significant increase (at the 5 percent significance level) since the previous quarter.

WEC can take on values between 100 and 0. The extreme value 100 means that 100 percent of the aggregated and total wellbeing in the region is concentrated within a single resident. The value 0 instead means that wellbeing in the region is distributed completely equally among all residents.

A small increase in WEC compared with the previous quarter means that wellbeing has become less equally distributed among residents. This also supports a seasonal effect, since research shows that the seasonal downturn in happiness affects some people more than others.

This measurement of WEC establishes a baseline value for Q3 that we can expect to be lower than for Q2, and which we can use for comparison with Q3 next year. But it also indicates that certain groups in the population may be in greater need of wellbeing-promoting measures during the quarter.

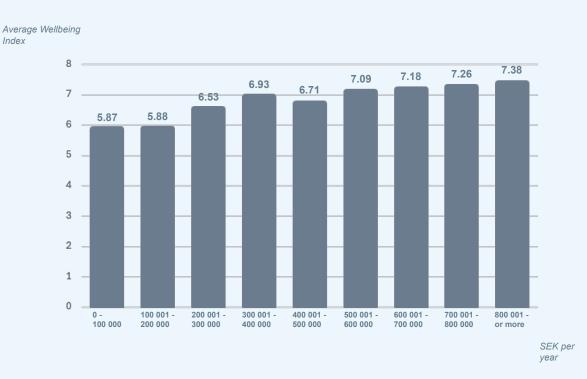
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How does the Wellbeing Index differ in Stockholm?

In the previous measurement, we analyzed differences between age groups and found an S-shaped relationship in which wellbeing is lowest among young residents. We compared women and men without finding any differences. We found small differences between the inner city, near suburbs, and outer suburbs. Comparisons based on Statistics Sweden's classification of socioeconomic areas showed no significant differences.

In this report, we make socioeconomic comparisons at the individual resident level.

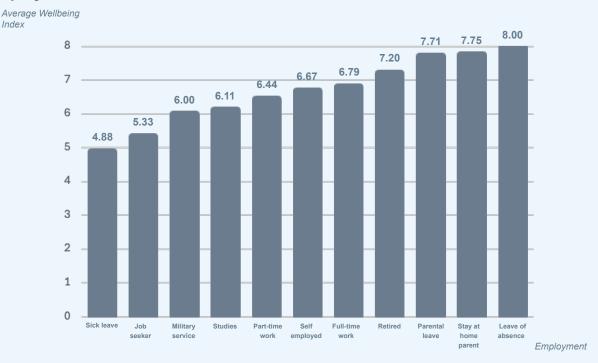
Income



Residents' personal income (in the form of annual income before tax) has a logarithmic relationship with their wellbeing. This means that income has a positive but diminishing relationship with wellbeing. The effect is strongest up to 500,000–600,000 kronor per year; beyond that, the increase in wellbeing is marginal.

Employment

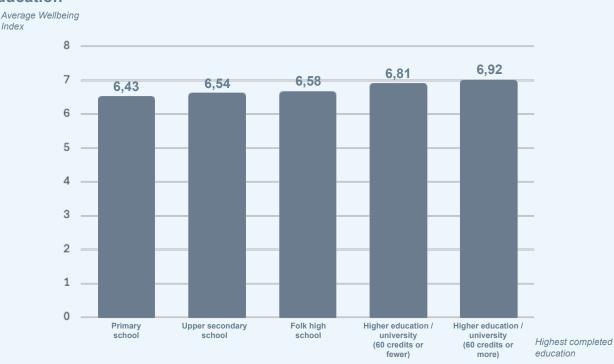
Index



We see a clear pattern in which those who have fallen outside, or have not yet entered, the labor market have the lowest average wellbeing and may need targeted wellbeingpromoting interventions. Those who are part of the labor market are close to the Stockholm average in wellbeing. The highest average wellbeing is found among those who, more or less voluntarily, are outside the labor market in the form of parental leave, "staying at home," retirement, or leave of absence. It may be of interest in the future to study the common factors behind their higher wellbeing.

Education

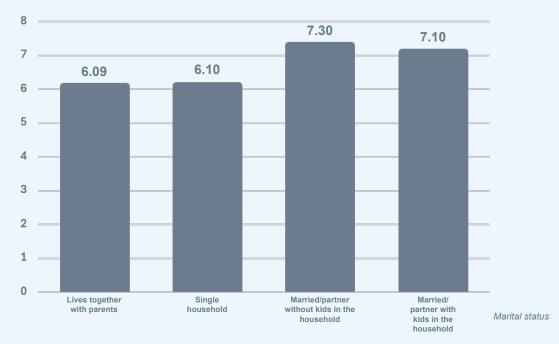
Index



We can see a weak pattern in which higher levels of education appear to be associated with higher wellbeing, but the differences are not statistically significant.

Marital status

Average Wellbeing



Marital status has a clear relationship with the wellbeing of the people of Stockholm, where cohabiting individuals (with or without children) have significantly higher wellbeing than those who are single and those who live with their parents (the latter category largely includes young residents, whom we noted in the previous report have the lowest average wellbeing in Stockholm).

That single individuals have lower average wellbeing is noteworthy given the large number of single-person households in Stockholm. We therefore want to emphasize the importance of community-promoting measures (which we return to later in the report).

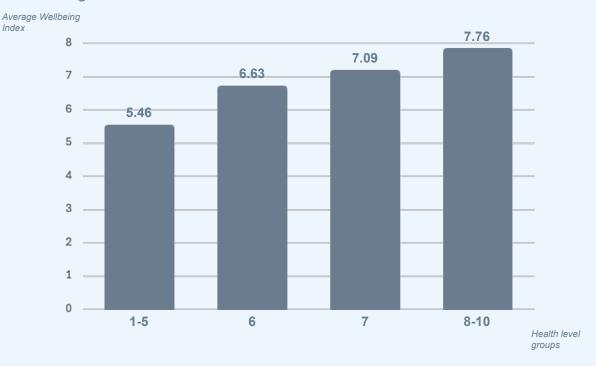
Health

The correlation between the Wellbeing Index and residents' assessment of their own physical health (1–10) is 0.54 (where 0 means no correlation and 1 means perfect correlation), which indicates a clear relationship between the two. An increase in wellbeing by one point on the scale is associated with an increase in health by 0.54 points on the scale, and vice versa.

The relationship can be assumed to be bidirectional, meaning that a change in physical health affects wellbeing, but also that a change in wellbeing affects physical health. It is reasonable to assume that the effect of physical health on wellbeing is more immediate.

When we divide residents into four groups based on their physical health, the following pattern emerges:

Index



As we can see, the pattern is a clear increase in wellbeing with physical health. Residents with the lowest physical health also have the lowest wellbeing, while those with the highest physical health also have the highest wellbeing. The conclusion is that physical health is a priority for promoting residents' wellbeing. A suitable goal would be for more people to reach level 7, which appears to be a clear breakpoint on the scale.

In a stepwise regression, the socioeconomic variables are ordered according to how much of the variation in residents' wellbeing they explain in relation to one another. Everything except education is shown to have a significant impact on wellbeing. Altogether, the socioeconomic variables explain 36 percent of the variation in the wellbeing of the people of Stockholm:

Physical health – strongest effect (
$$\beta$$
 = 0.49)

Marital status (β = 0.20)

Personal income (β = 0.15)

Employment (β = 0.11)

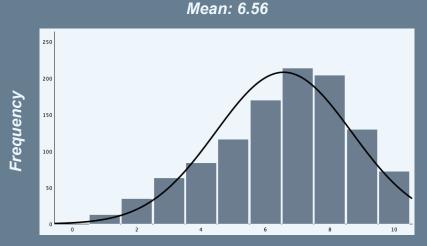
TACK: four fundamental factors for the wellbeing of the people of Stockholm

In the previous measurement, we noted that the four factors in the TACK framework explain 75 percent of the variation in the wellbeing of the people of Stockholm. The explanatory power remains at the same level (74.3%) in this measurement.

Togetherness: To what extent do people feel a sense of togetherness with one another?

How much today

How much togetherness do you feel with others?

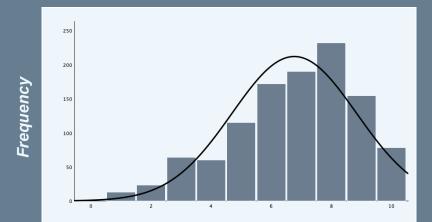


The mean value of 6.56 is a very clear and statistically significant decrease (at the most conservative significance level) from last quarter's level of 7.09. As in the previous analyses, it is reasonable to assume a seasonal effect in which the beginning of autumn stands in clear contrast to summer with regard to shared activities and social interaction. We can expect a consistently lower baseline in Q3 than in Q2. But above all, we can conclude that community-promoting interventions are particularly important during early autumn in Q3.

Agency: 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?



Mean: 6.77

The mean value for perceived ability to influence one's own life situation shows a statistically significant increase that is just as pronounced as the decrease in

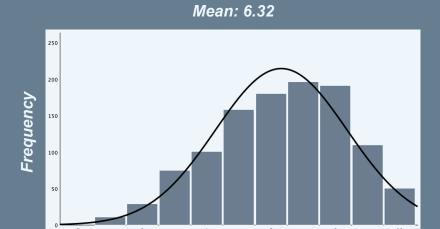
togetherness: up to 6.77 from last quarter's 6.52. This may be a positive seasonal effect, as residents return from holidays and regain more control over everyday life in work, school, and other areas.

We expect a consistently higher baseline for Q3 compared with Q2 moving forward. We also see opportunities to build on this increased level in the future by making people more aware of, and encouraging them to act on, their increased possibilities to influence their own situation.

Coherence: To what extent do people feel that the different parts of their lives are connected in a functional and positive way?

3

How much balance do you feel in your life?

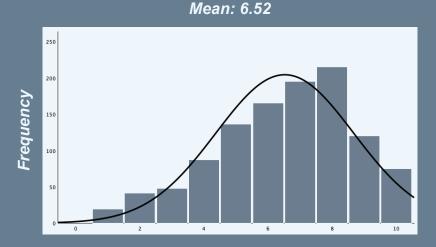


The average level of balance decreases substantially compared with Q2, from 6.88 to 6.32. Once again, this is a reasonable seasonal effect compared with summer and time off, which we can expect going forward. We can conclude that balance-promoting interventions are particularly important during early autumn in Q3.

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

4

How positively do you view the future?



The mean value of 6.52 is a marginal increase from 6.45 in Q2, which is not statistically significant, and we cannot draw any conclusions about or expect differences between Q3 and Q2 with regard to residents' outlook on the future.

The Value of a Wellbeing Increase (VOWI)

We have developed a unique measure to calculate the monetary value of an increase in wellbeing, VOWI (Value Of a Wellbeing Increase). It can be used to make assessments regarding different wellbeing-promoting interventions: what should be prioritized, what the expected values are, and how costs can be related to gains in economic terms.

We base VOWI on established methods in welfare economics and policy for calculating the value of a human life (Value of Statistical Life, VSL⁶) and the value of improved physical health (Quality-Adjusted Life Year, QALY⁷). These share a common feature: they calculate monetary values by, for example, asking people how much they would be willing to pay to reduce risks to their lives (VSL) or to live with improved physical health (QALY).

To calculate the monetary value of an increase in the Wellbeing Index, we ask residents the question: How many kronor would you be willing to reduce your monthly income by in order to move one step higher on the wellbeing scale?





A comparison shows that people assign the highest monetary value to happiness, followed by meaning, and then by richness. The differences are statistically significant.

On average, residents would be willing to reduce their monthly income by 3,064 kronor in order to move one step higher in any of the three wellbeing dimensions.

For an overview, see for example Banzhaf, H. S. (2022). The value of statistical life: a meta-analysis of meta-analyses. Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis, 13(2), 182–197

⁷ For an overview, see for example Kouakou, C. R., & Poder, T. G. (2022). Willingness to pay for a quality-adjusted life year: a systematic review with meta-regression. The European Journal of Health Economics, 23(2), 277–299.

For all three wellbeing dimensions, the monetary value increases with income — that is, those with higher income are willing to pay more (although this effect is weak, explaining under five percent). However, the monetary value has no relationship with residents' existing levels, which means that, on average, people assign the same value to increasing their wellbeing regardless of where on the scale they currently are.

Let us take a closer look at increasing togetherness in Stockholm, which is the theme of this report and which we have also noted may need to be prioritized given that the baseline level declines during Q3.

If, for example, an initiative were made to increase togetherness (corresponding to one step on that scale) in a part of the region comprising 500,000 people, it would be worth:

0.132 (the effect of togetherness on the Wellbeing Index in Q3) \times 500,000 (number of people) \times 3,064 kronor (VOWI) \times 3 (number of months of duration) = 606,672,000 kronor.

How social are people in Stockholm?

With togetherness as the theme of this report, we have taken a closer look at a number of different social and potentially togetherness-promoting activities among Stockholm residents.

We conducted a factor analysis to determine how the different activities relate to one another. Three factors emerged, confirming our headings:

Factor 1 (Deeper togetherness-promoting activities): Having a close friend to turn to + asking someone for help + offering someone help

Factor 2 (Shared meals): Eating dinner together with someone + having fika together with someone

Factor 3 ("Shallow" togetherness-promoting interactions): Saying hello to neighbors, talking to strangers, smiling at strangers

We included the three factors together with demographic and socioeconomic variables in a stepwise regression, where they are placed in order based on how much of the variance they explain. All three factors show significant effects (which are greater than those of residents' demography and socioeconomic characteristics) and together explain 41 percent of the variation in the wellbeing of Stockholm residents:

Shared meals – strongest effect (β = 0.414)

"Shallow" togetherness-promoting interactions ($\beta = 0.276$)

Deeper togetherness-promoting interactions ($\beta = 0.210$)

$$R^2 = 0.41 (F = 126,373)$$

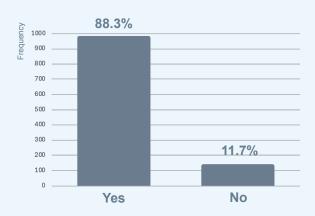
The first conclusion we can draw is that shared and togetherness-promoting activities have a strong relationship with the wellbeing of Stockholm residents.

When it comes to togetherness-promoting interactions, the "shallow" ones have particularly large potential — both because of their slightly greater relative effect and because they offer opportunities for everyone to participate on a daily basis, with neighbors and people around them.

Let us take a closer look at the activities in order of increasing effect.

Deeper togetherness-promoting activities

Do you have a close friend you can turn to if you need to?



This question is used in the World Happiness Report (WHR) as a measure of social support and has a strong relationship with average happiness across the world's countries. Sweden ranked 27th globally on this question in the most recent WHR⁸. The proportion of Stockholm residents who answer yes is therefore encouragingly high. We also see a clear relationship with wellbeing:

Do you have a close friend you can turn to if you need to?



However, the question used in the World Happiness Report about having someone to turn to is hypothetical — it does not reveal whether people actually do turn to one another, nor what significance this truly has for wellbeing. Therefore, we asked these questions to the people of Stockholm.

When was the last time you asked someone for help with something?





Actually turning to someone and asking for help has a clear relationship with wellbeing.

When was the last time you offered someone help with something?



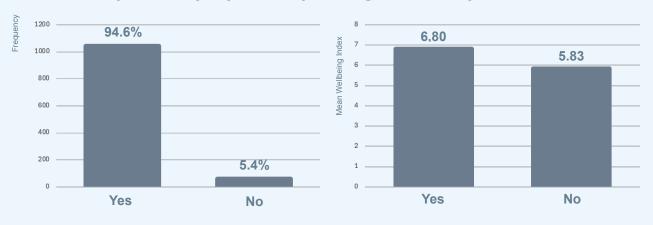


Offering someone help yourself also shows a relationship with wellbeing.

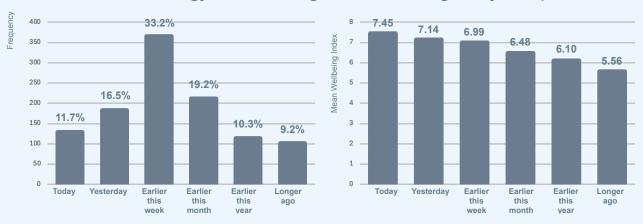
"Shallow" togetherness-promoting activities

Since large cities are characterized by having many people around without necessarily having close relationships with them, we asked Stockholm residents about what we might call shallow social exchanges with others in their surroundings.

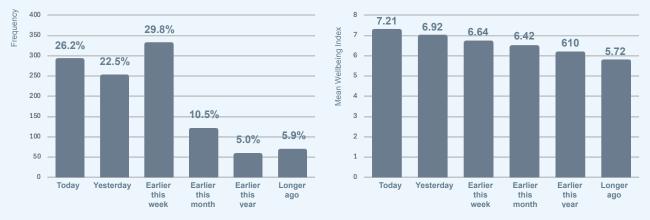
Do you usually say hello to your neighbors when you see them?



When was the last time you made small talk with a stranger (e.g., someone on the bus, at the gym, in a waiting room, or at the grocery store)?



When was the last time you smiled at a stranger (e.g., someone on the street or on the bus)?



We see clear linear relationships between how often Stockholm residents are "shallowly" social with one another and their wellbeing. Saying hello, smiling, and making small talk are behaviors with great potential and worth encouraging. It is also encouraging to see that people in Stockholm actually are social with one another to such a high degree;

- 94 percent usually greet their neighbors.
- 61 percent have made small talk with a stranger in the past week.
- 26 percent smiled at a stranger during the day.

Shared meals

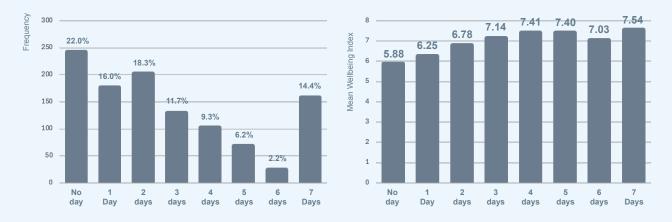
In the past week, on how many days did you eat dinner together with someone else?



We can see that shared dinners have a strong relationship with wellbeing. This aligns well with the UN's measurements in the World Happiness Report. There, a global pattern emerges in which shared dinners have a strong impact on people's wellbeing. The latest report also describes an alarming trend in which people are eating dinner together increasingly rarely.

One explanation for this is that more and more people live alone, especially in growing cities. Dinners are most likely to be shared among cohabitants, family, and a close circle. Stockholm is an example of a growing city where we live close to many people but not together with them. Therefore, we also asked about a meal that is more likely to be shared outside the home and beyond one's closest circle.

In the past week, on how many days did you have fika together with someone



As expected, the frequency of fika in Stockholm is relatively high, and it has a clear relationship with residents' wellbeing.

The Fika Factor

Our analyses show that shared dinners have a large effect on wellbeing, but also that they have a strong relationship with marital status and age. It is primarily cohabitants who share dinners with others, and people in middle age. Residents in other age groups, and those who do not live with others, are significantly less likely to eat shared dinners. In other words, shared dinners are a phenomenon that divides rather than unites the people of Stockholm

We have therefore developed what we call the Fika Factor. Fika has very large potential for togetherness and wellbeing in a city, because unlike dinners (which are most often shared with family members or cohabitants), fika can be shared with a much broader range of people — friends, colleagues, neighbors, and many others!

Fika is strongly associated with Sweden. Stockholm is also one of the cities in the world with the highest number of single-person households, which makes fika even more relevant.

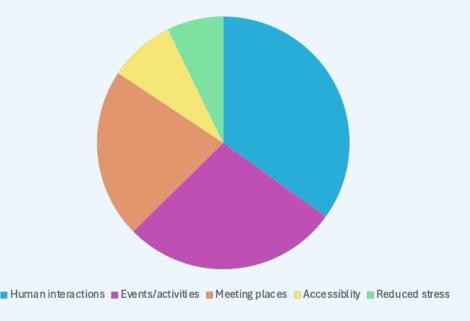
In our measurement, Stockholm residents reported that they had fika together with someone on average 3.79 days in the past week.

The Fika Factor for Stockholm is therefore 3.79 for Q3 2025.

We will follow up on the Fika Factor in future measurements.

How can togetherness be increased in Stockholm?

We asked residents an open-ended question about how togetherness can be increased in Stockholm. The most common themes in their responses were:



Human interactions are the theme mentioned by the largest share of residents (29%). Common suggestions include smiling at one another, saying hello more often, being kind, and helping each other. In line with what we have noted earlier in the report, there is great potential in "shallow" togetherness-promoting activities.

Events/activities are mentioned by 23% of Stockholm residents. Suggestions include large cultural and sporting events in the city that bring together both residents and visitors, as well as more local events and activities such as park theatre, street festivals, markets, and neighborhood days.

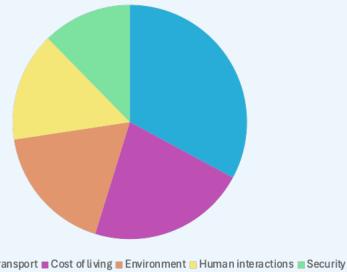
Meeting places are the third most common theme (18%). Residents call for more shared public spaces both outdoors and indoors—for example parks, squares, gardens, activity areas, and combinations of activity and community halls.

Accessibility is mentioned by 7% of residents. The most common suggestions concern lower prices—primarily for culture (theatres and museums), public transportation, and sports, such as entrance fees to gyms and participation in clubs.

Less stress is the fifth most common theme (6%). Stockholmers need to reduce the pace and feel less stressed. Suggestions include shorter working and school hours and less commuting.

What would make life in Stockholm better?

We asked residents an open-ended question about what would make life in Stockholm better. The most common themes in their responses were:



■ Traffic/public transport ■ Cost of living ■ Environment ■ Human interactions ■ Security

Traffic/public transport is mentioned by nearly one quarter of Stockholm residents (24%). They call for improvements in accessibility for both private and public transport and for less crowding.

Cost of living is the second most common theme (16%). Residents primarily call for lower housing and transport costs, but also for more affordable food prices and leisure activities that improve quality of life.

Environment is the third most common theme mentioned (13%). Above all, Stockholm residents want to see more green areas in the form of parks, plantings, and trees.

Human interactions (11%) are a frequently recurring response here as well, highlighting how fundamental togetherness among residents is for quality of life and wellbeing in Stockholm.

Safety is the fifth most common theme (9%). Residents call for urban planning and measures that increase safety in shared public spaces.

Conclusion

This is the second report on the Wellbeing Index in Stockholm, based on the quarterly measurement for Q3 2025.

The primary purpose of this report has been to follow up on the measurement from the previous quarter. We have observed a small decrease in happiness and a small increase in WEC, which we can assume are seasonal effects. This establishes baseline levels for Q3 that we can use in future years. We can also conclude that certain groups of residents may have greater seasonal need for wellbeing-promoting measures.

We have analyzed the development of the four fundamental TACK factors that explain 75 percent of the variation in the wellbeing of Stockholm residents. Perceived togetherness and balance have decreased significantly compared with the previous quarter, while the perceived ability to influence one's life situation has increased. Here, too, we can assume seasonal effects. We can also draw conclusions about how these basic factors may require seasonally targeted interventions to promote wellbeing.

In this report, we have also examined differences in the Wellbeing Index based on residents' socioeconomic situation and physical health. Physical health has a clear relationship with wellbeing and should be a priority.

The report has explored the theme of togetherness in depth. We have looked more closely at residents' deeper togetherness-promoting activities, "shallow" togetherness-promoting activities, and shared dinners and fika. Overall, these togetherness-promoting activities showed stronger relationships with residents' wellbeing than demographic and socioeconomic factors.

We found particularly large potential for increasing residents' wellbeing in shared fika occasions. We have therefore developed a unique measure for Stockholm that we call the Fika Factor.

The report also introduces a unique measure of the monetary value of increases in wellbeing, VOWI (Value of a Wellbeing Increase).

Finally, we asked residents open-ended questions about how they believe togetherness in Stockholm can be strengthened and what would make life in Stockholm better.

The next report will present the quarterly measurement of the Wellbeing Index in Stockholm for Q4 2025. It will follow up the previous measurements and establish seasonal baseline levels for Q4. The report will examine how wellbeing co-varies with additional dimensions in Stockholm and will also place extra focus on one or more new themes.

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