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CEP wellbeing coefficient database: A credibility-rated evidence compendium for wellbeing appraisal

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Abstract
Wellbeing cost-benefit analysis requires credible estimates of how much specific life circumstances change subjective wellbeing. This paper documents and contextualises a compendium of 123 such estimates, drawn from 19 domains of life and standardised, wherever possible, onto a common 0–10 life-satisfaction scale. Each estimate is rated for causal credibility using the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale, recorded alongside the identification strategy, the controls included evidence on adaptation, and the full reference. The compendium is intended as a practical resource for analysts conducting WELLBY-based appraisal and social value measurement, and as a map of where the evidence is strong and where it is thin. The full dataset is provided as an accompanying spreadsheet.

Keywords: subjective wellbeing; life satisfaction; WELLBY; cost-benefit analysis; non-market valuation; policy appraisal
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1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, subjective wellbeing has moved from the margins of economics to the centre of policy appraisal. The adoption of the WELLBY — a one-point change in life satisfaction on a 0–10 scale, for one person, for one year — in HM Treasury's Green Book supplementary guidance, and its use by the New Zealand Treasury, means that analysts are increasingly asked to express the effects of policies and interventions in wellbeing units and, where appropriate, to monetise them.

Doing so requires a credible answer to a deceptively simple question: by how much does a given change in someone's circumstances — losing a job, moving to a greener neighbourhood, becoming a carer — change their life satisfaction? The empirical literature contains many such estimates, but they are scattered across journals, use different wellbeing scales, rest on very different identification strategies, and are of widely varying credibility. Analysts often have neither the time nor the specialist knowledge to locate the best available estimate for the circumstance they are valuing.

This paper addresses that gap. It documents a compendium of 123 estimates of the effect of life circumstances on life satisfaction, organised into 19 domains, standardised onto a common 0–10 scale wherever possible, and rated for causal credibility. The aim is not to supersede formal meta-analysis but to provide a transparent, practical, and continuously extendable reference for wellbeing appraisal — and, equally, to make visible where the evidence is strong and where it is dangerously thin.

The compendium complements rather than duplicates existing CEP work on wellbeing valuation, including the development of mapping functions for wellbeing measures and of child-specific wellbeing metrics. It is offered in the same spirit: lowering the practical barriers to rigorous wellbeing-based decision-making. The remainder of the paper sets out the scope and methodology (Section 2), explains how the coefficients can be used in appraisal (Section 3), presents the evidence domain by domain (Section 4), and discusses limitations and priorities for extension (Section 5).

2. Scope and methodology

2.1 What is included

The compendium covers studies that estimate the effect of a life circumstance on subjective wellbeing, with a primary focus on life satisfaction measured on, or interpretable on, a cardinal 0–10 scale. Estimates based directly on life satisfaction are treated as the main coefficients for WELLBY appraisal. Estimates based on other wellbeing-related outcomes, including mental health and affect, are retained only as supplementary evidence and should not be treated as direct WELLBY coefficients unless a defensible mapping to life satisfaction is available.

Studies that estimate only changes in the probability of being satisfied, or that strictly assume ordinality and therefore cannot be interpreted cardinally, are not used as direct WELLBY

coefficients. Where such studies are methodologically informative, they may be noted as background evidence, but they are outside the main set of directly usable coefficients.

The database was assembled as a practical evidence compendium rather than as a formal systematic review. Candidate studies were identified from existing CEP wellbeing valuation work, key review papers and targeted searches within major wellbeing domains. Inclusion was prioritised where a study reported an estimate linking a clearly defined life circumstance to life satisfaction or a closely related wellbeing outcome and clearly specified both the population studied and the empirical strategy used to estimate the relationship.

Where a study reports multiple estimates, the database records the estimate or estimates most relevant to the policy circumstance, giving weight to both policy fit and causal credibility. Where these do not align — for example, where the most credible estimate is from a less relevant population or context — multiple estimates may be retained, and users should consider both the credibility rating and contextual fit when selecting a coefficient. Estimates that are not statistically significant are retained where they are substantively relevant.

2.2 Standardisation onto the 0–10 scale

Original studies use a variety of wellbeing scales. Where an estimate is based on life satisfaction but reported on a different numerical scale, it is rescaled linearly onto the 0–10 life-satisfaction scale so that effects are easier to compare across studies.[2] The rescaling factor used is recorded in each study's row in the accompanying dataset.

2.3 Credibility rating

Each estimate is rated for causal credibility using the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale (MSMS), a five-point scale widely used in evaluation. In broad terms, Level 1 denotes simple cross-sectional correlations; Level 2, panel models with individual fixed effects that remove time-invariant confounders; Level 3, designs with a credible comparison group; and Levels 4–5, quasi-experimental designs exploiting exogenous variation and randomised controlled trials. Most estimates in the compendium sit at Level 2, reflecting the dominance of fixed-effects panel methods in this literature; the most credible estimates — for example those exploiting plant closures for unemployment or lottery wins for income — reach Levels 4–5.

2.4 Adaptation

For each estimate, the compendium records what the study finds about adaptation: whether the wellbeing effect fades over time and, if so, over what horizon. This matters greatly for appraisal, because a one-off estimate of an immediate effect can substantially overstate the lifetime wellbeing consequences of a circumstance to which people adapt — and understate those to which they do not.

2.5 Caveats

[2]Where original studies use a different scale (for example 1–7, 1–5 or the 0–36 GHQ-12), effects are rescaled linearly to the 0–10 life-satisfaction metric, following the convention recorded in each study's row. Linear rescaling is an approximation and should be treated with caution near scale endpoints.

- Most estimates are conditional associations net of fixed effects, not experimental treatment effects; the credibility rating should always be consulted before use.
- Effect sizes are frequently context-specific — to a country, period, sub-population or income band — and may not transfer to other settings.
- Linear rescaling across wellbeing scales is approximate, particularly near scale endpoints.
- Several circumstances are correlated and share causal channels (for example income, employment and home ownership); naive aggregation risks double-counting.

3. Using the coefficients in wellbeing appraisal

3.1 From coefficient to WELLBY

A WELLBY is one point of life satisfaction (0–10), for one person, for one year. The coefficients in this compendium express the change in life satisfaction associated with a change in circumstance and so translate directly into WELLBYs once the number of people affected and the duration of the effect are specified. The basic calculation is:

WELLBYs = Δ life satisfaction × people affected × years affected

The duration term should reflect the evidence on adaptation recorded for the relevant estimate: where effects fade, the stream of annual wellbeing changes should be tapered accordingly and discounted to present value using the Green Book discount rate.

Estimates based on other wellbeing-related outcomes should be treated as supporting evidence for appraisal unless a defensible mapping to life satisfaction is available.

3.2 A worked illustration

Consider an employment-support programme that moves 1,000 people from unemployment into work. Taking a mid-range non-pecuniary estimate of 0.7 points of life satisfaction (Section 4.1), and assuming the effect persists undiminished for three years before tapering, the first-year gain is approximately 0.7 × 1,000 = 700 WELLBYs. Monetising at an illustrative value of £13,000 per WELLBY gives roughly £9.1 million in first-year wellbeing benefits.

This is deliberately schematic: a full appraisal would taper the effect over time, discount future years, net out any income channel already captured elsewhere, and use the credibility rating to choose the most defensible coefficient.[3]

3.3 Choosing a coefficient well

- Prefer the highest-credibility estimate (MSMS level) available for the circumstance being valued.
- Match the estimate to context — country, period and population — as closely as possible, and prefer conservative values where transferability is uncertain.
- Incorporate adaptation explicitly rather than applying a single-year effect indefinitely.
- Guard against double-counting where circumstances share causal channels.

[3]Users should apply the current value of a WELLBY published in HM Treasury Green Book supplementary guidance; the illustrative figure here is not a recommended value.

4. Evidence by domain

Each domain below opens with a short synthesis of what the evidence shows, followed by a table of the individual estimates. The tables give the standardised effect on the 0–10 life-satisfaction scale, the study's finding on adaptation, and the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale credibility rating. The full identification strategy, the controls included and the complete references are provided for every estimate in the accompanying dataset.

4.1 Unemployment *(15 studies, Level 2–4)*

Effects are identified almost exclusively from panel regressions with individual fixed effects. Studies find large non-pecuniary costs of unemployment that typically outweigh the pecuniary loss, with estimates falling between roughly −0.4 and −1 on a 0–10 life-satisfaction scale. Designs exploiting exogenous job loss through company or plant closure (Kassenboehmer & Haisken-DeNew; Hetschko) sit at the upper end and carry the strongest causal credibility. Effects tend to be larger for men than women, and the evidence points to little or no adaptation over the duration of an unemployment spell.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Gerlach and Stephan (1996)	0 to -0.483 for women; -0.458 to -1.023 for men (depending on age group)	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Frijters et al. (2004)	Approximate effect being in full-time employment on expected life sat: +0.451 for men and +0.574 women	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Clark et al. (2008)	Entry to unemployment: -0.763 for men and -0.527 for women relative to being out of the labour force. Becoming employed: +0.231 for men and no effect for women. Total for men moving from employment into unemployment of -1 and -0.5 for women. See paper for further year coefficients.	No evidence of diminishing effects. There also appear to be negative effects from anticipation of unemployment.	Level 2
Germany	Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew (2008, 2009)	Unemployment causes -0.555 with additional effect of -0.468 when caused by company closure (summing to -1 for exogenous unemployment). Both coefficients significant. Overall result for men and women together taken from table 2 in 2008 (working paper) version.	Not addressed	Level 3-4
Germany	De Neve and Ward (2017)	Entry to unemployment: -0.910 (-1.116 for German men and -0.712 for German women). See paper for further year coefficients.	Evidence that neither men nor women adapt. Negative effect of anticipation for unemployment (which	Level 2; but no control for health/disability (potential confounder)

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
			may indicate selection bias).	
Germany	Hetschko (2016)	Full effect of exogenous unemployment -0.835 within the first year (-0.808 in the second year). Non-pecuniary effect of -0.761 (-0.722 in second year). For self-employed, full effects of -1.465 (-0.998) and non-pecuniary effects of -1.308 (-0.860). For endogenous (resigned): full effects of -0.636 (-0.853) and non-pecuniary effects of -0.561 (-0.771).	No evidence of adaptation within 2 years.	Level 3-4
Germany	Clark et al. 2018	Being unemployed has average effect of -0.71. Adaptation estimates show effect of onset of approximately -1 with no adaptation.	Workers do not adapt.	Level 2
United Kingdom	Clark and Oswald (2002)	Employment has +1.9 effect on 0-36 scale based on the GHQ-12 survey relative to being unemployed, equivalent to +0.4 on a 0-10 life satisfaction scale. For households with yearly equivalent income < £30,000. Effects are well identified with small standard errors.	Not addressed	Level 2
United Kingdom	Clark and Georgellis (2013)	Immediate effect of -0.35 on a 1-7 scale for men and -0.28 for women (equivalent to -0.55 and -0.44 on a 0-10 scale using 11/7 coefficients). See paper for all year coefficients.	Evidence against adaptation, especially for men, for whom the effects seem to worsen, if anything, in the long run.	Level 2
United Kingdom	Powdthavee and Vernoit (2013)	On average, the effect of parental unemployment on child happiness in the short run is non-significant (1-7 how happy do you feel with life as a whole). But timing matters: younger children may benefit (paternal unemployment at age 11 has an effect of +0.335 on 1-7 scale, significant at 5% level) while older children are adversely affected (at ages 12,14,15 overall effect comes out negative for paternal unemployment, although the magnitude is not that large). Maternal unemployment has an effect of 0.226 (not significant) but becomes significant and very negative by age 15 (more than paternal). Effects of long-term paternal unemployment (from age 11 to 15) are large, negative and significant. Effects are negative for maternal unemployment but not significant – likely because many women drop out of labour force after multiple years unemployment). Estimates not controlling for income that therefore incorporate pecuniary costs (but also omit other controls) are very similar.	Long-run effects on the child of parental unemployment are not addressed, but continued parental unemployment results in a build-up of negative effects on child life satisfaction between ages 11-15.	Level 2 (no exogenous shock, but potential confounders well controlled for)
United Kingdom	Clark et al. (2018)	Being unemployed has average effect of -0.46. Entry into unemployment for men causes a decline of around -1, with no subsequent adaptation. See paper for all year coefficients.	Workers do not adapt.	Level 2
United Kingdom	Clark et al. (2018)	Being unemployed has average effect of -0.3.	Not addressed	Level 2

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
South Korea	Rudolf and Kang (2015)	First year of unemployment has -0.19 effect for women (on 1-5 scale, equivalent to -0.418 on 0-10 scale) significant at 1% level, but this is not significant for 1+ years (although sign negative). For men, effect of -0.278 (-0.612 on 0-10 scale) which continues at -0.249 (-0.548) 1-2 years after, both significant at 1% level. After 2 years, effect remains significant at 10% level. Evidence of anticipation for both. Similar results found when using a wider definition that includes workers who become economically inactive.	Only addressed short term, but no evidence of adaptation.	Level 2
Australia	Clark et al. (2018)	Unemployment has average effect of -0.18. See year coefficients on figure 4.1.	Workers do not adapt.	Level 2
Germany	Nikolova and Nikolaev (2018)	Long-term scarring effect of about 0.34 points (on a 0–10) scale of unemployment experienced at ages 11 to 15, when life satisfaction is measured at age 18-31.	Evidence suggests persistent long-run negative effects rather than full adaptation	Level 2

4.2 Income *(20 studies, Level 2–5)*

Higher household income is consistently associated with higher life satisfaction, but coefficients on log income are modest (broadly 0.2–0.55 per log unit) and point to sharply diminishing marginal utility. The most credible evidence comes from lottery designs: Lindqvist, Östling and Cesarini (2020) recover a causal effect of around 0.38 per log unit with no fade-out 5–22 years on. Evidence on adaptation is mixed across contexts and groups. One-off cash and wealth transfers generally raise wellbeing in the short run, with gains often dissipating unless the transfer lifts a household out of a poverty trap.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Gerlach and Stephan (1996)	Effect of a 1 unit change in log household income per capita of 0.223 and 0.149 for women under 30 and between 30-49 (significant at 1% level). No significant effect for women over 49. Effect of 0.114 and 0.208 for men under 30 and between 30-49 (significant at 1% level). No significant effect for men above 49.	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Frijters et al. (2004)	Approximate effect of a 1 unit increase in log household income on expected life satisfaction is +0.55 for both men and women. Clearly statistically significant.	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Clark et al. (2008)	A €1,000 increase in household income is associated with a small increase in life satisfaction: +0.003 for men and +0.002 for women, both statistically significant at the 1% level. The study also finds larger increases in life satisfaction before the income rise occurs, suggesting caution in interpreting this as a straightforward causal income effect.	Not addressed	Level 2

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew (2008, 2009)	Increase of 1 unit log net real household income causes +0.427/0.497 for East German women/men and +0.271/ 0.238 West German women/men. All coefficients significant.	Not addressed	Level 2 (selection only exogenous for unemployment)
Germany	Hetschko (2016)	Increase of 1 unit of log equivalised income (2006 prices) yields an increase in life satisfaction of 0.346.	Not addressed	Level 2 (no exogenous shock, but potential confounders well controlled for)
Sweden	Lindqvist, Östling and Cesarini (2020)	The effect of an after-tax prize of $100,000 (equivalent to increase in net annual household income of ~$6,000) is an improvement in life satisfaction of 0.037 SD units, with no evidence of variation according to years since win. When considering lottery prizes as changes to permanent income in logs, find a causal effect of a 1 unit increase in log of income of 0.38 on a 0-10 life satisfaction scale.	Evidence against adaptation to a one-time wealth/permanent income shock. Effects are detected 5-22 years after win and there is no evidence of adaptation when testing for fade-out with time.	Level 5
Sweden	Lindahl (2005)	A 10 percent increase in disposable family income (adult equivalent) increases health by 4-5 percent of an SD	Not addressed	Level 4
United Kingdom	Clark and Oswald (2002)	Increase in 1 unit log household equivalent income produces effect of 0.035 on 0-36 scale based on the GHQ-12 survey (albeit with large standard errors) for household with yearly equivalent income below £30,000. Equivalent to 0.0074 on life sat 0-10 scale. For household with yearly equivalent income below £20,000, the effect is larger (0.136, 0.029 on 0-10 life sat scale) and better identified. Indicates that even log form may not fully account for declining marginal utility.	Not addressed	Level 2
United Kingdom	Apouey and Clark (2015) (update and extension of Gardner and Oswald 2007)	Wealth gains from lottery wins are associated with large, positive and statistically significant effects on life satisfaction two years after the event. Estimates are reported for winning status and log prize size, rather than as income coefficients.	Only short-run effects are studied.	Level 4
Netherlands	Kuhn et al. (2011)	Non-significant effects. The study also finds no evidence of negative spillovers on neighbours of winners. Use unequivalised household income.	Not addressed	Level 4
South Korea	Rudolf and Kang (2015)	100% increase in household per capita income raises happiness by 0.048 on 1-5 scale (0.106 on 0-10 scale).	Not addressed	Level 2

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Di Tella, Haisken-DeNew & MacCulloch (2010)	A one-unit increase in log household income increases life satisfaction by about 0.09 standard deviations in the short run.	Yes, substantial income adaptation; wellbeing returns close to baseline in the long run. The rich appear to adapt more strongly than the poor to higher levels of income. Leftists adapt to income within 4 years. By comparison rightists exhibit no adaptation to income. Employees adapt to income leading to no significant long-run effect. By comparison the self-employed obtain long-run happiness gains from more income.	Level 2
Australia	Mervin and Frijters (2014)	Promotion increases mental health by +4.824 points on the SF-36 mental-health scale in the first 6 months after the event, with effects declining and becoming statistically insignificant over time.	Yes. There is adaptation within 24 months for a major improvement in finances. However, after this same time period, there is only partial adaptation (75%) for a worsening in finances.	Level 2
Switzerland & Germany	Luo (2022)	Higher log household income is associated with higher life satisfaction (e.g., coefficient ≈ 0.178 in Swiss data and 0.389 in German data).	Life satisfaction shows full long-run adaptation to poverty in Switzerland but limited or no adaptation in Germany. Financial satisfaction shows little or no adaptation in both countries.	Level 2

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Clark et al (2016)	Being just below the poverty line reduces life satisfaction by about 0.138 points (0-10 scale); greater poverty intensity further lowers life satisfaction (e.g., income at half the poverty line = 0.352-point lower life satisfaction than when not poor)	Little or no adaptation to poverty: life satisfaction remains persistently lower throughout poverty spells	Level 2
United States	Kim and Koh (2022)	Health insurance reform increased life satisfaction by 0.041 points on a 1-4 scale following the Massachusetts reform. Medicaid expansion increased life satisfaction by 0.20 points on a 1-5 scale among low-income adults	Increased wellbeing significantly and permanently, by more than one point of life satisfaction per year per additional person covered. Data from the US: Massachusetts in 2007. When a similar health insurance cover was taken away, there was a roughly equal decline: Tennessee.	Level 3
Canada	Dwyer et al. (2023)	One-time unconditional cash transfer (CAD$7,500) did not significantly improve satisfaction with life overall; pooled effect = 0.12 SD, with point estimates 0.17 (1m), 0.14 (3m), −0.05 (6m), −0.04 (9m), and 0.21 (12m).	Not clearly addressed for life satisfaction; no significant overall life satisfaction effect, so no clear adaptation pattern can be inferred.	Level 5
United States	Vivalt et al. (2024)	Unconditional cash transfer led to short-term increases in subjective wellbeing in year 1, but effects dissipated and were no longer detectable in later years	Yes, strong adaptation: initial wellbeing gains in the first year disappear in subsequent years (years 2-3)	Level 5
Multiple low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)	McGuire et al. (2022)	Larger transfer amounts are associated with stronger wellbeing improvements, with the meta-regression indicating an increase of about 0.08 standard deviations for each additional $100 (PPP) in transfer value.	Yes, a lumpsum $1,000 cash transfer's effect on wellbeing, on average, decayed linearly to 0 by 8.62 years	Level 4-5

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
India	Banerjee et al. (2021)	The treatment effect on the mental health index was 0.115 SD at 18 months, 0.012 SD at 3 years, 0.249 SD at 7 years, and 0.203 SD at 10 years.	Yes, where the transfer enables the families to exit a poverty trap, the impact on wellbeing is maintained at 10 years.	Level 5

Note: this domain includes estimates from cash and wealth transfer studies as well as observational income studies; see the dataset for the sub-grouping.

4.3 Debt *(1 study, Level 2)*

Evidence is very thin, resting on a single study. Hetschko (2016) finds that a €1,000 increase in debt redemption is associated with a fall in life satisfaction of about −0.088, conditional on income and home ownership. This domain is a clear candidate for further primary research.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Hetschko (2016)	A €1000 increase in redemption of debt (2006 prices) decreases life satisfaction by -0.088.	Not addressed	Level 2 (selection only exogenous for unemployment)

4.4 Home ownership *(3 studies, Level 2)*

Home ownership is generally used as a proxy for wealth and is associated with small positive effects on life satisfaction (roughly +0.05 to +0.18 on a 0–10 scale), while renting carries a small negative association. Standard errors are typically large relative to the coefficients, so estimates are imprecisely identified.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Hetschko (2016)	Used as proxy for wealth. Home ownership associated with a 0.052 increase in life satisfaction.	Not addressed	Level 2 (selection only exogenous for unemployment)
South Korea	Rudolf and Kang (2015)	Effects of +0.083 of living in own home on 1-5 scale (+0.183 on 0-10)	Not addressed	Level 2

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
United Kingdom	Clark and Oswald (2002)	Living in one's own home has an effect of +0.144 on 0-36 scale based on the GHQ-12 survey (0.03 on 0-10 life sat scale) while being a renter has an effect of -0.166 (-0.035). Standard errors are sizeable relative to coefficients, so not precisely identified. For households with yearly equivalent income less than £30,000.	Not addressed	Level 2

4.5 Widowhood *(8 studies, Level 2)*

The death of a spouse produces one of the largest negative wellbeing shocks recorded, with declines of roughly −1.0 to −1.7 in the year of loss. Adaptation is substantial but slow and incomplete, with Lucas et al. (2003) estimating recovery over around eight years on average and marked heterogeneity. The speed of adaptation differs by sex, and the direction of that difference varies across cultural contexts.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
United Kingdom	Clark and Oswald (2002)	Effect of being a widower -1.845 on 0-36 scale based on the GHQ-12 survey, equivalent to -0.39 on 0-10 life satisfaction scale. Standard error relatively small relative to coefficient. It does not seem to vary across income thresholds.	Not addressed	Level 2
United Kingdom	Clark and Georgellis (2013)	Immediate effect of -0.398 on a 1-7 scale for men and -0.555 for women (equivalent to -0.625 and -0.872 on a 0-10 scale). Men adapt after 1 year, but women suffer a loss of wellbeing of -0.393 1-2 years after and -0.416 2-3 years after (-0.618 and -0.654 on 0-10 scale) before adapting. Effects significant at 1% level.	Both men and women adapt, with men adapting faster (after 1 year vs after 3 years).	Level 2
Germany	Gerlach and Stephan (1996)	For women coefficients not significant, but large and negative for under 30 and between 30-49. For men, coefficient of -0.484 at ages 30-49 is significant at 10% level.	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Frijters et al. (2004)	Widowhood leads to an approximate effect on expected life satisfaction of +0.30 for men and +0.15 for women relative to having never been married. The effect implies that being widowed is better than being married, which raises concerns about identification of this effect.	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Clark et al. (2008)	Effect of -0.274 for men and -0.248 for women (significant at 5% and 1% level, respectively), relative to being never married.	Lags coefficients (see Table A2) show evidence of full adaptation of both men and women. Initial effect very negative.	Level 2

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew (2008, 2009)	Death of spouse causes -0.919 for East German women (negative but not significant for men), and -1.357/-1.705 for West German women/men (both coefficients significant). All coefficients for first year (not average across all post periods).	Not addressed	Level 2 (selection only exogenous for unemployment)
South Korea	Rudolf and Kang (2015)	Women experience no effect in first year and effects of +0.098, +0.113 and + 0.106 in 2nd, 3rd and 4th years (0.0216, 0.249 and 0.233 on 0-10), although only significant at 10% level. After the 4th year, no significant effects. Men on the other hand experience a large decline in the first year of -0.264 (-0.581) significant at 1% level with another significant (1% level) effect in the third year of -0.274 (-0.603). No other effects significant but signs all negative.	Korean women adapt (cultural differences are suggested to be important), while there is no evidence of adaptation for men.	Level 2
Germany	Lucas et al. (2003)	Life satisfaction drops sharply (≈ −1.0 to −1.5 points on a 0–10 scale) in the year of widowhood, with substantial but incomplete long-term adaptation.	Slow adaptation (8 years) on average, masking wide variation	Level 2

4.6 Marriage *(7 studies, Level 2)*

Marriage is associated with a modest positive effect at onset, frequently preceded by anticipation effects. In Western panels the effect largely adapts away within about four years, while evidence from Korea suggests more persistent gains for men. Coefficients are often imprecisely estimated once individual fixed effects are included.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
United Kingdom	Clark and Oswald (2002)	Effect of being married +0.150 on 0-36 scale based on the GHQ-12 survey, equivalent to +0.032 on 0-10 life satisfaction scale. However, the standard error is large relative to the coefficient, so the result is not well identified.	Results from marriage timing analysis show partial adaptation after 1 year (large effect in first year). Size of coefficients for first and second years relative to that using all periods suggests further adaptation.	Level 2
United Kingdom	Clark and Georgellis (2013)	Anticipation for both men and women. Immediate effect of +0.235 on a 1-7 scale for men and +0.321 for women (equivalent to 0.369 and 0.504 on a 0-10 scale). Significant at 1% level. See table 3 paper for all year coefficients.	Both men and women seem to have fully	Level 2

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
			adapted around 4 years after marriage	
Germany	Gerlach and Stephan (1996)	Marriage is associated with positive coefficients for women across age groups, statistically significant for those under 30 (+0.253) and over 49 (+0.648). For men, the coefficient is statistically significant only for those under 30 (+0.210). Other male age-group estimates are not statistically significant.	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Frijters et al. (2004)	Approximate effect on expected life satisfaction of +0.17 for men relative to never having been married. No effect found for women.	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Clark et al. (2008)	Effect of +0.185 for men and +0.187 for women (significant at 1% level). Relative to being never married.	Evidence of full adaptation for both (see Table A2). Large effect in first year and substantial anticipation effects.	Level 2
Germany	Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew (2008, 2009)	Marriage has no significant effect for either East/West German women or men, although all signs are positive. Coefficients are based on all years married and not just the first year.	Not addressed	Level 2 (selection only exogenous for unemployment)
South Korea	Rudolf and Kang (2015)	Women experience a +0.267 on 1-5 scale in first year (+0.587 on 0-10 scale) falling to +0.14 (+0.308 on 0-10 scale), both significant at 1% level. However, in third, fourth, fifth years and beyond there are no significant effects. Men on the other hand have corresponding effects of +0.332 (0.7304), +0.121 (0.2662) and +0.120 (0.264), all significant at 1% level. No evidence of adaptation beyond three years for men with coefficients still significant (unlike in Western context, find different dynamics for men and women - they link to stronger gender norms). Findings do not change significantly when running analysis simultaneously with birth of first child.	Women adapt, while men do not and continue to experience positive effects.	Level 2

4.7 Childbirth *(5 studies, Level 2)*

Effects of childbirth on life satisfaction are small and short-lived, commonly positive in the run-up and the year of birth before adapting, and they differ by sex. Some apparent negative effects for women disappear once marriage and birth are modelled jointly, suggesting confounding between the two events.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
United Kingdom	Clark and Georgellis (2013)	No significant effects for men. Life satisfaction (1-7) improves for women in the run-up to childbirth and is positive in the year after (0.216, 0.339 on 0-10 scale) before adapting.	Women adapt after 1 year. Men do not exhibit statistically significant effects at any point.	Level 2
Germany	Frijters et al. (2004)	Additional child leads to approximate effect on expected life satisfaction of +0.071 for men and +0.051 for women.	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Clark et al. (2008)	An additional child has an effect of -0.024 for men and -0.059 for women (significant at 1% level). The lead coefficient is also negative and significant.	The initial effect is positive and significant for women, but effect becomes negative for both after 1 year. Positive anticipation in period immediately before.	Level 2
Germany	Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew (2008, 2009)	The first year after childbirth has an effect of +0.240 for West females but no effect for East females. The effect is +0.148 for West males, but no effect for East males. Coefficients for number of children (1,2,3+) are -0.007/-0.138**/-0.066 for West females, 0.076/ 0.213**/0.094 for East females, -0.008/-0.043/0.006 for West males, and 0.137**/0.235**/0.141 for East males (stars for significance).	Not addressed, but suggested by difference between first year and coefficients covering all periods	Level 2 (selection only exogenous for unemployment)
South Korea	Rudolf and Kang (2015)	Women experience no effect in first year but declines of -0.138 and -0.159 in 2nd and third years (1-5 scale, -0.304 and -0.350 on 0-10), significant at 1% level. They do not then adapt. Men, on the other hand, show no significant effects after the event, but positive anticipation. However, running analysis simultaneously with marriage as event means the negative effects for women are no longer apparent. This indicates negative effects could be due to coincidence of marriage and birth of the first child.	Adaptation is addressed, but there is no strong evidence of initial effects from which to adapt	Level 2

4.8 Divorce *(8 studies, Level 2)*

Estimated effects of divorce are mixed and often statistically insignificant; where a clear negative effect appears it tends to attach to separation rather than to legal divorce, plausibly because separation precedes and pre-empts the recorded divorce. Several studies even report small positive coefficients on being divorced relative to never having married.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
United Kingdom	Clark and Oswald (2002)	Being divorced is associated with a small positive but imprecisely estimated effect on GHQ-12 wellbeing: +0.284 on the 0–36 scale, equivalent to approximately +0.060 on a 0–10 scale. By contrast, separation is associated with a negative effect of −0.982 on the 0–36 scale, equivalent to approximately −0.206 on a 0–10 scale. This suggests that the overall wellbeing effect of marital breakdown is likely negative, even if the coefficient on legal divorce alone is not.	Not addressed	Level 2
United Kingdom	Clark and Georgellis (2013)	Anticipation for both men and women. Effects negative for both but not significant.	Effects are not significant, so adaptation is unclear.	Level 2
United Kingdom	Powdthavee and Vernoit (2013)	Effects of parents being divorced, separated or living as a couple are not statistically significant; coefficient signs are mixed.	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Gerlach and Stephan (1996)	For women, coefficients have varying signs across age groups. Only significant (10% level) for 30-49, where coefficient is +0.38. For men, signs also vary and only the coefficient for 30-49 is significant (10% level, +0.227).	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Frijters et al. (2004)	Approximate effect on expected life satisfaction of +0.20 for men of being divorced (no substantive effect of being separated). For women, +0.16 for being divorced and +0.10 for being separated. All relative to never having been married.	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Clark et al. (2008)	Divorce has +0.099 (significant at 10% level) for men and no significant effect for women (+0.027). Individual year coefficients are mixed.	Pattern unclear, but if anything seems to become larger and positive with time (see Table A2). Lead coefficients are negative.	Level 2
Germany	Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew (2008, 2009)	No significant effects of divorce are found for East/West German women or men. Separation, by contrast, is associated in the first period with declines of −0.328/−0.345 for East/West German women and −0.318/−0.434 for East/West German men, all statistically significant. This suggests that the wellbeing loss may be concentrated around separation rather than legal divorce.	Not addressed	Level 2 (selection only exogenous for unemployment)
South Korea	Rudolf and Kang (2015)	Women experience a negative effect in first year of -0.285 (1-5 scale, and -0.627 on a 0-10 scale) significant at the 1% level, but with only one marginally (at 10% level) significant effect after that in the fourth year. Men experience a larger decline in the first year of -0.507 (-1.115), which falls to -0.228 in the second year (-0.502) (both significant at 1% level). However, there is no evidence that they then adapt at any point.	Korean women seem to fully adapt after 4 years, but men do not fully adapt back to baseline.	Level 2

4.9 Caring responsibilities *(1 study, Level 2)*

Coverage is minimal, with the database currently holding a single entry. Given the policy salience of informal care, this is a priority gap for future evidence synthesis.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Frijters et al. (2004)	Approximate effect on expected life satisfaction of -0.20 for men and -0.46 for women of having an invalid in the household.	Not addressed	Level 2

4.10 Disability *(11 studies, Level 1–2)*

The onset of disability or a serious health problem reduces life satisfaction, with estimates ranging from about −0.3 for moderate problems to −0.8–−0.9 for major ones on a 0–10 scale. Adaptation is substantial but generally incomplete, and subjective health ratings are among the strongest positive correlates of life satisfaction in the wider literature.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Frijters et al. (2004)	Approximate effect on expected life satisfaction of -0.17 for men and no effect for women. Small effect of additional level of disability. But coefficients not significant so effects are imprecisely determined.	Not addressed	Level 2
Germany	Clark et al. (2008)	Major health problems have an effect of -0.817 for men and -0.876 for women (sig at 1% level). The lead coefficient is large and significant for both. Medium health problems have an effect of -0.261 for men and -0.284 for women (significant at 1% level). Lead coefficients are of similar magnitude.	Not addressed (no year coefficients)	Level 2
Germany	Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew (2008, 2009)	Having no medical handicap has an effect of +0.296/+0.454 for East/West females and + 0.314/+0.424 for East/West males (all significant). Having a work disability has an effect of -0.215/-0.167 for East/West females and -0.115/-0.130 for East/West males (significant, except for East males). An additional night stayed in hospital has an effect of -0.007/0.008 for East/West females and -0.009/-0.010 for East/West males (all significant)	Not addressed	Level 2 (selection only exogenous for unemployment)
United Kingdom	Clark and Oswald (2002)	Having "excellent" health (subjective rating) has an effect of +2.199 on 0-36 scale based on the GHQ-12 survey (equivalent to 0.46 on 0-10 life sat scale), while good health has an effect of +1.630 (equivalent to 0.34 on 0-10 life sat scale), both precisely identified with small standard errors. This does not seem to differ across different wealth thresholds.	Not addressed	Level 2, but subjective measure of health opens possible reverse causation

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
United Kingdom	Powdthavee and Vernoit (2013)	Subjective rating of parental health is not significant. Parental mental distress is negative but not significant in the main specification. Neither maternal nor paternal disability is significant.	Not addressed	Level 2
United Kingdom	Powdthavee (2009)	Life satisfaction falls by 0.268 points (1-7 scale; 0.421 on a 0-10 scale) in the year of disability onset.	No adaptation to severe disability	Level 2
United Kingdom	Oswald and Powdthavee (2008)	Life satisfaction falls by 0.321 points (1-7 scale; 0.504 on a 0-10 scale) in the year of disability onset.	The long-run effect after adaptation falls to −0.130 after three years, indicating substantial partial hedonic adaptation.	Level 2
United States	Silver (1982)	In the first 8 weeks after sudden disabling injury, anxiety was the predominant affect at 1 week, while happiness became the predominant affect by 3 weeks and remained so at 8 weeks; severity/permanence of condition did not explain this variability	Short-run emotional recovery observed, but no formal adaptation estimate (affect tracked only over 8 weeks).	Level 1 (qualitative)
Australia	Mervin and Frijters (2014)	Serious illness reduces SF-36 mental health by about 31.97 points in the short run and by about 4.50 points in the long run.	Individuals adapt to most life shocks but serious illness still has long-run negative effects, about 85% adaptation	Level 2
United States	Riis et al., (2005)	Hemodialysis patients were not significantly less happy than matched healthy controls in EMA mood reports (0.70 vs 0.83 on a −2 to +2 scale, non-significant),, suggesting substantial hedonic adaptation.	Substantial / near-complete hedonic adaptation suggested	Level 1
Australia	Mujcic and Oswald (2016)	An increase in fruit and vegetable consumption predicts higher life satisfaction; coefficient = +0.03 per daily portion, implying up to +0.24 life-satisfaction points for an increase of 8 portions per day (0–10 scale).	Effect of 0.2 lasts while treatment lasts.	Level 2

4.11 Commuting time *(7 studies, Level 2)*

Within-person fixed-effects estimates of the effect of commuting time are typically small or statistically insignificant, whereas between-person comparisons show a negative association (of the order of −0.001 to −0.015 per additional minutes or ten-minute increment, depending on scale). The contrast highlights how sensitive this domain is to identification, and findings remain contested.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Stutzer and Frey (2008)	Based on results for income from Lindqvist et al. (2020), the long-run effects of a reduction in daily commute time of 25-40 minutes are equivalent to a $100,000 increase in permanent income. Commuting time in minutes: -0.0054; commuting time in minutes squared: 0.000035 (10 mins: -0.0505).	—	Level 2
UK	Roberts et al. (2011)	Additional 10 minutes reduces GHQ-12 by 0.055 (sig at 1%) (LS change = -0.027), no evidence for a quadratic model	—	Level 2
UK	Dickerson et al. (2014)	No relationship between commute time and LS or GHQ-12 in a linear or ordered FE model	—	Level 2
Germany	Lorenz (2018)	The study finds no evidence that commuting in general is associated with lower life satisfaction. In a linear relationship, Ingenfeld et al. propose that Lorenz's 'long commute' category (>50 km) is too wide to capture the effects (which Ingenfeld finds at 80 km+).	—	Level 2
Germany	Ingenfeld et al. (2019)	Commuting distance used as an independent variable; a 10 km increase reduces LS by 0.014 ($p<0.01$). When including additional controls, the effect is still significant at 0.011 ($p<0.05$). However, the study states that the linear relationship is driven only by distances over 80 km (all other effects are either insignificant or especially insubstantial in size).	—	Level 2 (strong)
UK	Clark et al. (2020)	Within individuals, increases in commuting time do not significantly reduce life satisfaction (-0.0001), whereas between individuals, longer commuting time is significantly associated with lower life satisfaction (−0.0014)	—	Level 2 (strong)
UK	Chatterjee et al. (2017) (report)	When comparing individuals, we found that longer duration commutes are associated with lower life satisfaction after accounting for other differences between individuals (by 0.015 points on the 7-point scale for every extra ten minutes each way).	—	Level 2

4.12 Education *(4 studies, Level 2–5)*

Direct effects of education on life satisfaction are small and the causal evidence is sparse, partly because education operates largely through income, health and employment. Targeted adult-learning and wellbeing programmes (for example Healthy Minds) show positive, if modestly significant, effects.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew (2008, 2009)	An additional year of education has an effect for East/West females of +0.061/+ 0.031 (both significant). No effect for males.	Not addressed	Level 2 (selection only

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
				exogenous for unemployment)
United Kingdom	Powdthavee and Vernoit (2013)	The coefficient for parents having a degree is positive for the child's life satisfaction but not significant in main specification (after controlling for income).	Not addressed	Level 2
United Kingdom	Dolan, Fujiwara and Metcalfe (2012) report for BIS	Participation in adult learning is positively associated with life satisfaction and other wellbeing outcomes, but no precise effect size is reported.	Not addressed	Level 2
United Kingdom	Lordan and McGuire (2019). Healthy Minds evaluation report	The life-satisfaction score improvement is positive and significant at the 10% level, relating to participation in Healthy Minds programme. Estimated effect size of 0.182. (95% CI: 0.001 to 0.735).	Not addressed	Level 5

4.13 Social life *(5 studies, Level 2–3)*

Volunteering shows positive and reasonably robust effects, with Krekel et al. (2024) estimating +0.21 on a 0–10 scale and smaller effects in propensity-score and fixed-effects studies. Adverse social experiences such as bullying and the loss of a close friend carry meaningful negative effects.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
United Kingdom	Powdthavee and Vernoit (2013)	High fear of being bullied has a negative effect on children's life satisfaction: −0.199 on a 1–7 scale, equivalent to −0.31 on a 0–10 scale, significant at the 1% level. Moderate fear of being bullied has a smaller negative effect: −0.0577, equivalent to −0.09, significant at the 5% level. Fighting several times a month is negatively associated with wellbeing. Satisfaction with friends, family, appearance and schoolwork is positively associated with wellbeing. Talking to parents is positive, with statistical significance only for talking to one's father about things that matter on most days. Having 6–10 close friends is positive and significant at the 5% level.	Not addressed	Level 2
Australia	Mervin and Frijters (2014)	Death of a close friend is associated with a short-run decline in life satisfaction, smaller than widowhood, with gradual recovery over time.	May follow similar trajectory to widowhood. Available evidence estimates that significant impacts remain at 24 months	Level 2
United Kingdom	Krekel et al (2024)	Volunteering increased life satisfaction by 0.2092 points on a 0-10 scale (SE = 0.0726, $p < 0.01$).	Wellbeing gains from volunteering increase	Level 3

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
			with the number of tasks but show diminishing returns, and sometimes even an inverse-U pattern	
United Kingdom	Binder and Freytag, (2013)	Starting to volunteer at least monthly increased life satisfaction by 0.113 after 2 years and 0.146 after 4 years in propensity score matching; nearest-neighbour estimates were 0.091 and 0.176. In FE models, weekly volunteering was associated with 0.0726 higher life satisfaction.	No hedonic adaptation; the paper says sustained frequent volunteering "does not seem to be subject to hedonic adaptation" and may even show increasing returns in happiness.	Level 3
United Kingdom	Lawton et al. (2021)	Volunteering is associated with a positive effect of 0.034 on life satisfaction (1–7 scale), significant at the 1% level. This is equivalent to approximately +0.057 on a 0–10 scale. More frequent volunteering (e.g. weekly or monthly) is associated with larger and statistically significant improvements in life satisfaction, while very infrequent volunteering shows no significant effect	Not addressed	Level 2

4.14 Environmental quality *(6 studies, Level 2–4)*

Air pollution, aircraft and traffic noise, wind-turbine construction and local flooding are all associated with lower life satisfaction. Per-unit effects are often small but become material at realistic changes in exposure, and several studies (for example wind turbines) find short-run effects that recover over a few years.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Luechinger (2009)	SO2 concentration at county level is associated with a −0.005*** to −0.008*** change in life satisfaction (Table 4, column 2).	Not addressed	Level 4
El Salvador, Mexico, Uruguay	Galiani et al (2018)	Improved housing increased the probability of being satisfied/very satisfied with quality of life by 0.20 after about 16 months	Yes, strong partial adaptation in life satisfaction. About 60% of the gain dissipated after an additional 8 months; structural model	Level 4

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
			estimates a hedonic adaptation rate of about 20% per month, with life-satisfaction effects fading to zero by around 28 months. Housing satisfaction adapted much less and showed more persistent gains	
Germany	Krekel & Zerrahn (2017)	Wind turbine construction within 4 km reduces life satisfaction by around 0.1-0.2 points (short-run), with effects disappearing after about five years.	Seems temporary: effect disappears after 5 years	Level 3
United Kingdom	Lawton & Fujiwara (2016)	Living in daytime aircraft noise areas (≥55 dB) is associated with a −0.147 decrease in life satisfaction (0–10 scale), significant at the 0.1% level. Each additional 1 dB of daytime aircraft noise is associated with a −0.003 decrease in life satisfaction (0–10 scale), significant at the 0.1% level.	Not addressed	Level 2
United Kingdom (Anglian Water region)	Fujiwara et al. (2022)	Living within 500m of a flooding incident within the past 6 months is associated with a −0.04 decrease in life satisfaction (0-10 scale), statistically significant at the 1% level. Living within 500m of roadworks within the past 1 month is associated with a −0.03 decrease in life satisfaction (0-10 scale), statistically significant at the 10% level. Living within 50m of an internal sewer flooding incident within the past 6 months is associated with a −0.51 decrease in life satisfaction (0-10 scale), statistically significant at the 5% level.	No explicit analysis of adaptation; effects are based on short time windows (e.g., within 1–6 months).	Level 2
United States	Levinson (2012)	A 1 μg/m³ increase in PM10 is associated with a −0.00136 decrease in happiness (1–3 scale); equivalent to a willingness to pay of about $35 for a one standard deviation improvement in air quality for one day	Evidence suggests possible adaptation: long-term pollution levels (monthly averages) are not significant, while short-term deviations are significant.	Level 2

4.15 Agglomeration *(8 studies, Level 2–3)*

There is no consensus on the wellbeing effect of urban scale. Living in larger or more urban areas is associated with lower life satisfaction in many high-income countries but higher life satisfaction in many less-developed ones, with a recurring rural premium in rich settings. Results are highly sensitive to specification and to the wellbeing distribution.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
USA	Glaeser et al. (2016)	Log population has a -0.0085** effect on life satisfaction (controlling for endogenously determined education and marital status), no significant effect (-0.0066) when controls excluded	Not addressed	Level 2
Austria, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Europe-wide analysis	Morrison (2021)	No clear effect, in 17/29 countries average life satisfaction is lower in agglomeration, in the other 12/29 life satisfaction is higher. Also use quantile regression, showing there is a large difference in outcomes along the wellbeing distribution	Not addressed	Level 2
29 EU countries	Requena (2016)	Rural-Urban divide: (GDP>20,000): Countryside residents 0.453*** higher LS than 'Big City', (GDP<20,000): Countryside residents -0.602** lower than 'Big City'	Not addressed	Level 2
80 countries, global	Easterlin et al. (2011)	45/48 less developed countries show a significant positive LS effect of living in an urban area (0.1-0.8+), 9/20 developed countries show a significant negative LS effect of living in an urban area	Not addressed	Level 2
80 countries, global	Berry and Okulicz-Kozaryn (2009)	High-income countries: Rural: 0.15***, Urban: -0.07*. Low-income countries: Rural: -0.04, Urban: 0.01	Not addressed	Level 2
USA	Okulicz-Kozaryn (2017)	Unhappiness increases with size of place and reaches a significant level when population exceeds several hundred thousand	Not addressed	Level 2
UK	Hand (2020)	Rural-Urban gap: 0.051 at 10% significance	Not addressed	Level 2
United Kingdom	Dolan et al (2019)	Temporary urban agglomeration shock from hosting the Olympics produced a short-run positive increase in life satisfaction but no lasting post-event legacy effect.	Yes, wellbeing gains were short-lived and returned to baseline soon after the event.	Level 3

4.16 Crime *(6 studies, Level 2–3)*

Higher local crime rates and, in particular, direct victimisation reduce life satisfaction; violent-crime victimisation effects are sizeable (around −0.3 to −0.4 on a 0–10 scale). Exposure to nearby terrorist attacks carries a smaller but detectable negative effect.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Krekel and Poprawe (2014)	LS: 1% fall in crime frequency ratio results in a 0.043 SD decrease in LS. Use crime per 100,000 in population - leads to average crime rate of 750 per 10,000	Not addressed	Level 2

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
UK	Dustmann and Fasani (2016)	GHQ-12 only: log crime rate: Effect at Police Force Area (PFA): 0.014 (sig at 1%), Effect at Local Authority: 0.008 (sig at 5%). Use crime per 10,000 in population - average crime rate is 226 (refer to this as quarterly crime rate)	Not addressed	Level 2
Australia	Johnston et al. (2018)	Violent crime victimisation decreases life satisfaction by 0.398 (females) and 0.300 (males) on a 0-10 scale	Yes. Strong adaptation, effects largely disappear after 1 year	Level 2
Germany	Hanslmaier (2013)	County street crime rate: OR = 0.833 (significant) in Model 1; becomes non-significant after controlling for victimization and fear (OR = 0.845). Life satisfaction measured as binary outcome, not 0–10 scale.	Not addressed	Level 2
UK	Pickard, Bove and Efthyvoulou (2026)	A 1-unit increase in exposure to nearby terrorist attacks reduces life satisfaction by about 0.012 points (significant at 5%).	Yes, short-run effect that dissipates over time, with no detectable effect beyond 30 days	Level 3
Australia	Mervin and Frijters (2014)	Victim of property crime is associated with a contemporaneous 2.351-point decline in SF-36 mental health (0–400)	Yes. Strong adaptation: contemporaneous drop in mental health, but no significant long-run effect; victim-of-crime effect is no longer significant after 24 months.	Level 2

4.17 Neighbourhood interaction *(2 studies, Level 2)*

More frequent contact with neighbours is positively associated with life satisfaction, with effects of roughly +0.05 to +0.27 depending on the scale and estimation approach. The evidence base is small and largely cross-sectional.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
UK	Powdthavee (2008)	(Effect of talking to neighbours, baseline is never) Once or twice a week: 0.045**, On most days: 0.074***, findings are robust to inclusion of neighbourhood specific controls	Not addressed	Level 2

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Ireland	Howley et al. (2015)	Ordered logit: Neighbourly interaction 0.204***, 2SRI: Neighbourly interaction 0.27** (7-point scale) Neighbourly interaction is frequency with which respondent speaks with neighbours	Not addressed	Level 2 (Weak, unusual causal identification method with arguably weak instruments)

4.18 Physical activity *(2 studies, Level 2–5)*

Active travel and walking are associated with modest positive effects on wellbeing (around +0.04 on a 0–10 scale), with some null findings and limited causal identification. Diet-related evidence (fruit and vegetable consumption) points in a similar positive direction.

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
UK	Martin et al. (2014)	0.08 improvement in GHQ-12 per 10 minutes of walking, translated to life satisfaction = 0.04, significant at 5% level. The reference group is driving; similar benefits are seen with public transport, so it is not clear that this is the positive effect of active travel	Not addressed	Level 2
Portugal	Cruz-Ferreira et al. (2011)	Insignificant effect on life satisfaction	Not addressed	Level 5

4.19 Green space *(4 studies, Level 2–5)*

Proximity to, and the quantity of, local green space is positively associated with life satisfaction, and longitudinal evidence shows that moving to a greener urban area improves mental health with effects sustained for at least three years (Alcock et al., 2014).

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
Germany	Krekel et al. (2016)	Distance to Green Urban Areas: -0.0409 on LS, significant at 1% level	Not addressed	Level 2
Multi-country: mainly US, Japan, Europe	McMahan & Estes (2015)	Exposure to natural environments is associated with a moderate increase in positive affect (r = 0.31) and a small decrease in negative affect (r = −0.12) relative to comparison conditions.	Not addressed	Level 5

Country	Study	Reported effect (0–10 life-satisfaction equivalent unless stated)	Adaptation	Credibility (MSMS)
United Kingdom	White et al. (2013)	A 1% increase in local green space is associated with a 0.002 increase in life satisfaction (1–7 scale), significant at the 1% level, equivalent to approximately +0.0033 on a 0–10 scale. Moving from low to high green space (approximately one standard deviation increase) is associated with a 0.07 increase in life satisfaction (1–7 scale), equivalent to about +0.12 on a 0–10 scale.	Not addressed	Level 2
United Kingdom	Alcock et al. (2014)	Moving to a greener urban area is associated with an improvement in mental health of approximately +0.37 to +0.43 GHQ points (0–12 scale), significant at the 5% level or better, with effects sustained for at least three years post-move	Not addressed	Level 2

5. Discussion and limitations

The compendium's central contribution is to bring scattered wellbeing estimates into one transparent, credibility-rated resource keyed to the domains analysts actually need to value. Three limitations bound its use.

First, coverage is uneven. Long-studied domains such as unemployment (15 studies) and income are well populated and supported by quasi-experimental evidence, whereas debt and caring responsibilities currently rest on a single study each, and several environmental and social domains are thin. These gaps are themselves a finding: they mark where primary research and replication would most improve appraisal.

Second, the evidence is geographically and temporally skewed, drawing heavily on a handful of long-running panels (notably the German SOEP, the British BHPS and Korea's KLIPS) and on high-income countries. Transferring estimates to other settings requires judgement, and the compendium deliberately preserves the original context of each estimate so that users can exercise it.

Third, this is a living document. New estimates appear continually, and the credibility frontier moves as more exogenous-variation designs are published. The accompanying dataset is structured so that estimates can be added and re-rated over time, and we intend to update it periodically. As a work in progress, the paper benefits from external scrutiny: readers are encouraged to flag any errors or omissions by emailing c.krekel@lse.ac.uk.

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The list below consolidates the 73 unique sources cited across the compendium.

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Appendix A. Coverage summary

The table below summarises coverage across the 19 domains: the number of estimates, the number of distinct country settings, the range of credibility ratings, and the principal data sources. The complete dataset — including identification strategy, controls, adaptation findings and full references for every estimate — is provided as an accompanying spreadsheet.

Domain	Studies	Countries	Evidence strength	Main data sources
Unemployment	15	4	Level 2–4	BCS, BHPS, GSOEP, HILDA, KLIPS
Income	20	12	Level 2–5	BHPS, BRFSS, Collected from 115 shelter participants, Dutch Postcode Lottery players, GSOEP, HILDA, KLIPS, Meta-analysis of 37 studies
Debt	1	1	Level 2	GSOEP
Home ownership	3	3	Level 2	BHPS, GSOEP, KLIPS
Widowhood	8	3	Level 2	BHPS, GSOEP, KLIPS
Marriage	7	3	Level 2	BHPS, GSOEP, KLIPS
Childbirth	5	3	Level 2	BHPS, GSOEP, KLIPS
Divorce	8	3	Level 2	BHPS, GSOEP, KLIPS
Caring responsibilities	1	1	Level 2	GSOEP
Disability	11	4	Level 1–2	BHPS, Ecological Momentary Assessment, GSOEP, HILDA survey
Commuting time	7	1	Level 2	BHPS wave 1-14, BHPS wave 6-18, GSOEP, GSOEP 1998-2013, GSOEP 2007-2013, UKHLS
Education	4	2	Level 2–5	BHPS, GSOEP, RCT data from Healthy Minds trial
Social life	5	2	Level 2–3	BHPS, BHPS & UKHLS, HILDA Survey
Environmental quality	6	7	Level 2–4	APS, GSOEP, GSS, German Socio-Economic Panel Study
Agglomeration	8	9	Level 2–3	BRFSS, ESS 2012, ESS 2018, GSS, Gallup World Poll 2005-2008, UKHLS, WVS
Crime	6	2	Level 2–3	BHPS, GSOEP and local crime statistics, HILDA Survey, Waves 2–10, HILDA and JH survey, Nationwide German victimization survey
Neighbourhood interaction	2	1	Level 2	BHPS, Ireland, 2012, own data
Physical activity	2	1	Level 2–5	BHPS, RCT sample
Green space	4	5	Level 2–5	BHPS, GSOEP, Meta-analysis of 32 studies