

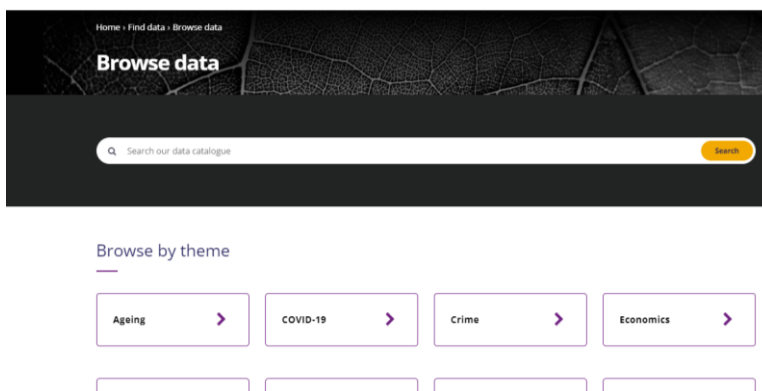
Activity: Searching the data catalogue

Follow this worksheet for tips on how to search the UK Data Service data catalogue. You can follow the steps for your own project or for the following example.

Example: You are researching mental health and well-being with an interest the impact of outdoor spaces such as gardens and parks.

Start at the UK Data Service homepage

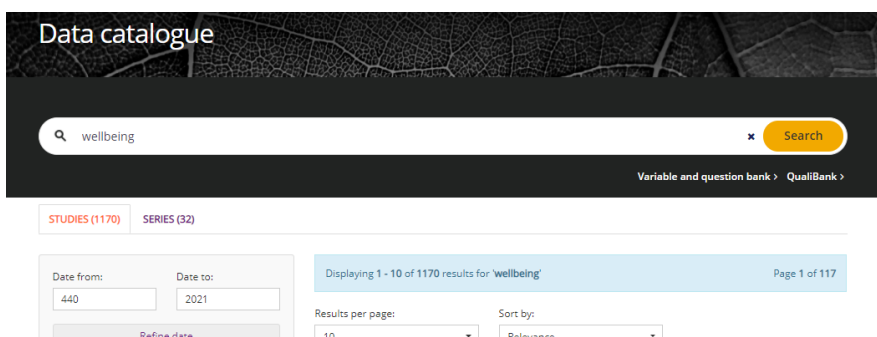
- From the home page ukdataservice.ac.uk go to [Find data > Browse data](#)
- Do any of our themes relate to your topic?
- Example: Health is a theme. Look at the list of popular datasets.



Searching the data catalogue

The catalogue search box is accessible from the homepage or within [Find data](#).

- Type a search term and press search.



The tool searches for the term in the title, description, and keywords. It does not search within the actual data, only how data has been described (metadata).

Results

Relevant results will then be listed. You may get many results (the data catalogue is large) or you may not get many relevant results. See below for things to try.

Filter and Sort

Filter (on the left) by date and data type (e.g. UK Survey data).

Sort by the most recent or most relevant.

Series

You can select the series tab to list by Series e.g. Health survey for England rather than individual studies e.g. Health Survey for England 2019.



Search terms

You usually need to try different search terms. Think about

- how relevant data might be indexed
- whether search terms are too specific e.g. data more likely to be indexed by broader (well-established) terms such as depression or well-being than specific sub-terms such as low mood
- of if too general, for example, searching using the broader term health will bring up a wider range of data than a search of mental health or depression.
- Consider how different topics can be used to index data e.g. wellbeing, mental health, depression – try as many as you can.
- It's better to try a few things then to miss something useful.

When you start typing a search term, you will get suggested terms and keywords (see image below). Keywords are used to index data.



You can use Boolean operators for more complex searches such as Health AND Housing.

Once you have found an interesting study click the result to access the catalogue record.

Variable and Question Bank (VQB) and Qualibank

There are also tools for searching within datasets.

- The Variable and Question Bank (VQB) allows you to search for specific variables.
- Qualibank allows you to search for terms within qualitative data.

It is important to note that these search tools do not cover all data available. The VQB contains variables from many of the larger surveys but not all and Qualibank only covers some key qualitative datasets.

Access

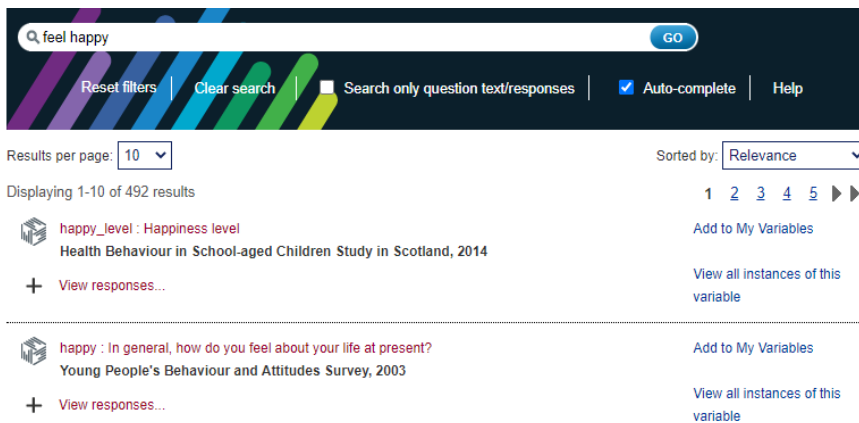
You can access both via the search box (see image below).



Searches

Search as you would with the main search tool. However, as you are now searching data you may need to alter your search terms. Terms used to index data may be more technical or abstract than terms used in survey questions or in interviews.

Example: questions examining mental well-being might use the term feel happy.



Search results for "feel happy":

- Results per page: 10 | Sorted by: Relevance
- Displaying 1-10 of 492 results
- 1 2 3 4 5 >>>
- happy_level : Happiness level
 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study in Scotland, 2014
 + View responses... | Add to My Variables | View all instances of this variable
- happy : In general, how do you feel about your life at present?
 Young People's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey, 2003
 + View responses... | Add to My Variables | View all instances of this variable