

Understanding Society User Support - Support #2279

inquiry about "change in spending" variable in the COVID survey

09/09/2025 03:02 PM - Z He

Status:	Feedback	Start date:	09/09/2025
Priority:	Normal	% Done:	50%
Assignee:	Understanding Society User Support Team		
Category:	COVID-19		
Description			
Hi,			
I am writing to inquire about a specific variable in the Understanding Society UKHLS COVID-19 survey.			
According to Table A.1 in the paper written by Albuquerque and Green (2023) (attached), a variable named "spend" should exist. It is described as measuring the change in household spending over the last four weeks compared to the same period the previous year, excluding housing costs. The response categories include various levels of "increase/decrease", "stayed the same," "don't know," and "prefer not to answer."			
However, after reviewing the dataset and the questionnaire documentation, I have been unable to locate this specific variable.			
Could you please confirm:			
Whether this variable exists in the dataset?			
If so, under what name it is stored and whether it is available under the standard End User License?			
Thank you for your time and assistance.			

History

#1 - 09/10/2025 08:23 AM - Understanding Society User Support Team

- Category set to COVID-19
- Status changed from New to Feedback
- % Done changed from 0 to 50
- Private changed from Yes to No

Hello Z He

The variable you are interested in is called "mpc1 – Marginal Propensity to Consume". You may also want to look at the following related variables: mpc2, mpc2b, mpc3_oth, mpc35, mpc32, mpc33, mpc34, mpc31, mpc3b1, mpc3b2, mpc3b3, mpc3b4 and mpc1b.

These variables are available in the COVID-19 Survey from Waves 4 to 9. For more details, you can check the COVID-19 Variables search tool here <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/covid-19/variables/>
You can also review the questionnaires here <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/covid-19/questionnaires/>

I hope this information is helpful.

Best wishes,
Roberto Cavazos
Understanding Society User Support Team

#2 - 09/10/2025 11:14 AM - Z He

Hi Roberto,

Thank you very much for your reply. But my inquiry was not about the MPC variables.

To clarify, the variable of interest is defined in Table A.1 of the attached paper, with variable name "spend" and description as "Thinking about your household spending (e.g. on food and household goods, products and services, on commuting, bills, etc.) but excluding housing costs (e.g. mortgage payments, rent). Over the last 4 weeks, has your household spending increased, decreased, or stayed the same relative to the same four week period last year? (Increased by more than a quarter; increased by up to a quarter; stayed the same; decreased by up to a quarter; decreased by more than a quarter; don't know; prefer not to answer). "

Could you please provide some guidance on the "spend" variable?

Best regards,
Z He

#3 - 09/10/2025 01:43 PM - Understanding Society User Support Team

Hello Z He

Apologies for my misunderstanding.

The variable "spend" has been removed from the dataset. You can review the changes to the previously deposited data here
https://doc.ukdataservice.ac.uk/doc/8644/mrdoc/pdf/8644_ukhls_covid19_data_changes_v9.0.pdf

I hope this information is helpful.

Best wishes,
Roberto Cavazos
Understanding Society User Support Team

Files

Albuquerque, B. and Green, G., 2023. Financial concerns and the marginal propensity to consume in COVID times_Evidence from UK survey data. *Journal of Macroeconomics*, 109, 103922. [View full text](#)