# Understanding Society User Support - Support #2329

## UKHLS variables event1–event4, impevents, and scghq1_dv: underlying questions and derivation

02/12/2026 05:26 AM - Peijie Ju

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| **Status:** | Feedback | | **Start date:** | 02/12/2026 |
| **Priority:** | Normal | | **% Done:** | 50% |
| **Assignee:** | Understanding Society  User Support Team | | | |
| **Category:** | Derived variables | | | |

**Description**

Dear UKHLS Support Team,

I am using the UKHLS Main Survey data and have a couple of questions about variable definitions and derivations.

1. **Life events variables (event1–event4; impevents)**
In the Main Survey, I found variables named event1, event2, event3, event4 (available in waves 2 and 5) and impevents (available in wave 1). However, I have not been able to locate the corresponding life-event question(s) in the questionnaires/documentation (including question text and routing).

Could you please clarify:

- What is the exact underlying questionnaire item (question text, response options, and universe/routing) that generates event1(and, if applicable, event2–event4 and impevents)?
- The "Don't know" response option: for event1/2/3/4, what does selecting "Don't know" mean in substantive terms?
  - For example, does it indicate the respondent does not know whether a particular life event occurred, does not know which event to choose, is it linked to a filter question, or is it a system-generated value from derivation/routing?

If there is a specific questionnaire module name, question number, or a technical note that documents these variables, I would be very grateful if you could point me to it.

2. **Derived wellbeing/GHQ variable (scghq1_dv)**
I would also like to confirm what scghq1_dv (labelled "Subjective wellbeing (GHQ): Likert") is derived from. Could you please provide:

- The **source item(s)** used to construct scghq1_dv (questionnaire item names/numbers),
- The **coding/recode rules** (including any reverse-coding).

Many thanks in advance for your help.

Kind regards,
Peijie

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**History**

**#1 - 02/13/2026 11:35 AM - Understanding Society  User Support Team**

*- Status changed from New to Feedback*

*- % Done changed from 0 to 50*

*- Private changed from Yes to No*

Hello Peijie,

**1) Life events variables (event1–event4; impevent1–impevent4)**

Variables event1 to event4 are part of the Positive and Negative Events module.

The question wording is:
Our final question asks you to say, in your own words, anything that has happened to you over the past year that has been of particular importance to you. This could include anything we have just been talking about or something which has not been mentioned. Please tell me about both positive and negative events — just whatever comes to mind as having been important to you in your own life over the past year.

This question is asked of all respondents.

You can locate it in the pdf questionnaires for both Wave 2 and Wave 5. For example, in Wave 2, it appears on page 315 (317 in the pdf viewer):
https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/documentation/main-survey/questionnaires/6614-main-survey-questionnaire-w02.pdf

For each event variable (event1–event4), there is a corresponding event variable that identifies the event's subject. For example, event1s identifies the subject of the first mentioned event (event1).

Variables impevent1–impevent4 are included in the Environmental Behaviour module, although they capture general life events and are not limited to environmental issues.

The question wording is:
We've asked you a lot of questions but we also want to know what has happened in your own life that has been especially important to you. Can you please tell me anything that has happened to you, or your family, over the past year that has stood out as important?

The universe condition is: If month = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 (i.e., sample month January 2009 to June 2009).

You can find this in the Wave 1 questionnaire PDF on page 244:
https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/documentation/main-survey/questionnaires/6614-main-survey-questionnaire-w01.pdf

For each event you also have a corresponding variable identifying the event's subject impevent1s – impevent4s.

The value -1 "Don't know" is used when the respondent does not know the answer. For further details on non-valid codes, please refer to the "Missing values" section of the Main Survey User Guide:
https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/mainstage/user-guides/main-survey-user-guide/missing-values/

**2) Derived wellbeing/GHQ variable (scghq1_dv)**

For more information on derived variables, please see the variable search section called "Main Survey variables" at
https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/mainstage/variables/

You can search by variable name or concept. Specifically, for scghq1_dv, you will find details on the construction of the variable, the source variables used, and the syntax applied in the "Derived variable note" section.

I hope this information is helpful

Best wishes,
Roberto Cavazos
Understanding Society User Support Team