

Ekaterina Oparina

CONTACT INFORMATION	Centre for Economic Performance London School of Economics Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK	Email: e.oparina@lse.ac.uk Website: ekaterinaoparina.com
RESEARCH INTERESTS ACADEMIC POSITIONS	Health Economics, Economics of Wellbeing, Policy Evaluation, Applied Econometrics Research Economist, Centre for Economic Performance (CEP), LSE Research Affiliate, Wellbeing Research Centre, University of Oxford	 2020–present 2021–present
EDUCATION	Ph.D. Economics, University of Surrey Thesis: “Econometric Analysis of Subjective Wellbeing Data” Supervisors: Sorawoot Srisuma and Jo Blanden M.P.A., Higher School of Economics, Perm B.Sc. Economics, Higher School of Economics, Perm	 2016–2020 2009–2011 2005–2009
WORKING PAPERS	Oparina, E., Krekel, C., & Srisuma, S. (2025). “Talking Therapy: Impacts of a Nationwide Mental Health Service.” CEP Discussion Paper 1982 , IZA Discussion Paper <i>Reject & Resubmit at American Economic Journal: Economic Policy</i> Media: IZA Opinion Piece Mental health problems impose significant costs, yet healthcare systems often overlook them. We provide the first causal evidence on the effectiveness of a nationwide mental health service in England for treating depression and anxiety using non-experimental data and methods. We exploit oversubscription and resulting exogenous variation in waiting times across areas and time for identification, based on a novel dataset of over one million patients. We find that treatment improves mental health and reduces impairment in work and social life. We provide suggestive evidence that it enhances employment. Impacts vary across patients and services. Nevertheless, the programme is highly cost-effective. Oparina, E., Krekel, C., Parkes, I., Srisuma, S., & Clark, D. (2025). “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Clinical Healthcare Services Using Population-Wide Patient Data: An Example of NHS Talking Therapies.” <i>Revise & Resubmit at Nature Mental Health, resubmitted</i> We propose a novel methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of healthcare services at the population level, with the aim and ambition to complement evidence produced by RCTs. Our methodology is particularly suitable in clinical settings where services are rolled out gradually or are oversubscribed, often resulting in waitlists for access to care. We illustrate it using an example from the NHS Talking Therapies programme, a nationwide service within the English National Health Service that provides treatment for common mental health conditions such as anxiety disorders. However, our approach is applicable to many other healthcare settings, including, for example, cancer treatment programmes. Kaiser, C., Oparina, E., & Oswald, A. (2024). “Is it Psychologically Dangerous to Live in a Rich Area? Evidence from Individual-Level Data on UK Suicides.” <i>Revise & Resubmit at The Review of Income and Wealth, resubmitted</i> This paper uses the first-ever release of individual-level data on UK suicides to understand how humans respond to economic advantage and disadvantage and to relative deprivation in their geographical area. Under strict confidentiality requirements, we link these data to the UK Census. We report a range of new findings. Of particular importance: this paper documents evidence consistent with the view that ceteris paribus it can be psychologically dangerous to live in a rich area. Feelings of relative deprivation may matter intensely—even in decisions about whether death is preferable to life. Cotofan, M., Krekel, C., & Oparina, E. (2025). “Exercise, Volunteering, and Mental Health: Evidence from a Nation-Wide Programme.”	

Revise & Resubmit at Social Science & Medicine, resubmitted

There is growing interest in how social prescribing, a therapeutic approach that refers individuals with unmet social or emotional needs to community activities, can improve mental health and revolutionize health care systems at cost. However, robust evidence on which interventions are effective is still scarce. We exploit a unique setting in the UK to measure the impacts of a lifestyle intervention that combines sports and volunteering on participant mental health. Using incentivised surveys linked to administrative data on participation, we compare individuals who participated with those who signed up but did not, including for exogenous reasons. We find that participation strongly reduces mental ill health and loneliness whilst raising feelings of belonging and connectedness. Impacts are sizeable and persistent. The programme is highly cost-effective.

Bhattacharya, D., Oparina, E., & Xu, Q. (2024). **“Empirical Welfare Analysis with Hedonic Budget Constraints.”**

[CEP Discussion Paper 2050](#)

Under Review

We analyze demand settings where heterogeneous consumers maximize utility for product attributes subject to a nonlinear budget constraint. We develop nonparametric methods for welfare analysis of interventions that change the constraint. Two new findings are Roy’s identity for smooth, nonlinear budgets, which yields a Partial Differential Equation system, and a Slutsky-like symmetry condition for demand. We illustrate our methods with welfare evaluation of a hypothetical change in relationship between property rent and neighbourhood school quality using British microdata.

Oparina, E., Clark, A.E., & Layard, R. (2024). **“The Easterlin Paradox at 50.”**

[CEP Discussion Paper 2048](#)

Revise & Resubmit at The Review of Income and Wealth, resubmitted

Media: Financial Times, Vox, Alternatives Économiques, LSE Inequalities, Economics Observatory

We use Gallup World Poll data from over 150 countries from 2009-2019 at both the individual and country levels to revisit the relationship between income and subjective wellbeing. Our inspiration is the paradox first proposed by Easterlin (1974), according to which higher incomes are associated with greater happiness in cross-sections, yet increases in a country’s GDP per head do not increase its average wellbeing. Across individuals one unit of log income raises subjective wellbeing by 0.4 points on a 0-10 scale. Across countries, the picture is different. In rich countries, income no longer has a significant effect, either in country cross-sections or in time series once social variables like health and social support are controlled for. For low-income countries, income raises happiness in both cross-section and time series, whether the social variables are controlled for or not.

Layard, R. & Oparina, E. (2026). **“What is the Public’s Social Welfare Function?”**

[CEP Discussion Paper 2190](#)

Under Review

Optimal public policy requires a social welfare function defined over individual utilities. While there is substantial research on income-based social welfare functions, no published study has directly elicited public preferences over utility when measured by subjective wellbeing. Using a novel survey instrument with a representative UK sample (N=2,068), we estimate the public’s social welfare function for life satisfaction. We find significant aversion to wellbeing inequality, with a median isoelastic parameter $\alpha=0.48$. This implies a social welfare function approximately equal to the sum of square roots of individual utilities. The median respondent values improving the wellbeing of the least satisfied by one unit roughly twice as much as improving the most satisfied by one unit. Our findings provide ethically grounded distributional weights for wellbeing policy evaluation and cost-benefit analysis.

Kirchmaier, T. & Oparina, E. (2026). **“Under Pressure: Victim Withdrawal and Police Officer Workload.”**

[CEP Discussion Paper 1985](#)

Under Review

Media: LSE British Politics and Policy, CentrePiece, CEP Policy Brief

Domestic abuse is one of the most common forms of violence against women. To deliver justice, the police must create the conditions for victims to engage safely. Yet many victims withdraw from legal action. We ask whether these withdrawals are related to police workload. Using detailed administrative data on over 15,000 high-risk domestic abuse cases from a major English police force with quasi-random case assignment, we exploit within-officer variation in monthly caseloads. Adding ten cases to an officer's workload—the average increase over the budget cuts period—raises the probability that the victim withdraws by three percentage points, implying around 3,300 additional withdrawals each year in England and Wales. The effect is concentrated in high-risk cases, where sustained officer-victim contact matters most, and is absent for lower-risk cases and for outcomes not dependent on the victim's cooperation. Balance tests, placebo outcomes, and pre-determined workload measures support a causal interpretation. Caseload is set by staffing and budgets, making it both a hidden cost of austerity and a policy lever.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS	Rzepnicka, K., Sharland, E., Rossa, M., Dolby, T., Oparina, E., Saunders, R., Ayoubkhani, D., & Nafilyan, V. (2026). "The Effect of Adult Psychological Therapies on Employment and Earnings: Evidence from England." <i>Psychological Medicine</i> , 56, e33. [Link] Media: LSE Business Review, CentrePiece
	Cooper, K.B., Heffetz, O., Ifcher, J., Oparina, E., & Wu, S. (2026). "Teaching Happiness (Economics) in Your Dismal-Science Courses." <i>The Journal of Economic Education</i> , 1–15. [Link]
	Oparina, E., Kaiser, C., Gentile, N., Tkatchenko, A., Clark, A., De Neve, J.-E., & D'Ambrosio, C. (2025). "Human Wellbeing and Machine Learning." <i>Scientific Reports</i> , 15(1632). [Link]
	Oparina, E. & Srisuma, S. (2022). "Analyzing Subjective Wellbeing Data with Misclassification." <i>Journal of Business & Economic Statistics</i> , 40(2), 730–743. [Link]
	Chen, L.-Y., Oparina, E., Powdthavee, N., & Srisuma, S. (2022). "Robust Ranking of Happiness Outcomes: A Median Regression Perspective." <i>Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization</i> , 200, 672–686. [Link] Media: VoxEU
WORK IN PROGRESS	Comparing Effectiveness of CBT and Counselling for Depression in Routine Practice: Evidence from Population-Wide NHS Talking Therapies Data (with D. Clark, C. Krekel, I. Parkes, and S. Srisuma)
	The Effects of the Nation-Wide NHS and Care Volunteer Responders Programme (with C. Krekel, A. Boler, and A. Smith)
	Evaluating a Lay-Led Interpersonal Counselling Intervention for Depression in Brazilian Primary Care: A Randomised Controlled Trial (with D. Frayman, B. Baron, and C. Krekel)
POLICY REPORTS AND BOOK CHAPTERS	Layard, R. & Oparina, E. (2021). "Living Long and Living Well: The WELLBY Approach." In <i>World Happiness Report 2021</i> . Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
	Layard, R., Oparina, E., De Neve, J.-E., & Kaats, M. (2023). "Exercises." In R. Layard & J.-E. De Neve (Eds.), <i>Wellbeing: Science and Policy</i> . Cambridge University Press.
GRANTS	100x Impact Accelerator Grant, "Closing the Gap: Evaluating a Lay-led Intervention to Support People with Depressive Symptoms in Brazilian Primary Health Care," with C. Krekel, D. Frayman, and ImpulsoGov. £82,000 . Co-I. 2025
	LSE Cohesive Capitalism Programme Grant, data collection for "What is the Public's Social Welfare Function?", with R. Layard. £5,500 . PI. 2025
	Labour Markets Evaluation and Pilots (LMEP) Fund Grant, "Labour Market Outcomes of NHS Talking Therapies," joint with ONS. £480,075 . Co-I. 2024

	ESRC SDAI Grant, “Analysing Heterogeneous Effects of the IAPT Programme,” with C. Krekel and S. Srisuma. £240,000 . Co-I.	2022
	Research for ClimateXchange on Climate Journalism, with C. Krekel, via LSE Consulting. \$25,000 .	2025
	Peer Review of Research on Life Satisfaction and Housing Quality, DLUHC, via LSE Consulting. £10,000 .	2024
AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS	LSE Excellence in Education Award	2023, 2024, 2025
	LSE Teaching Award	2023
	Doctoral Scholarship, University of Surrey	2016–2020
TEACHING	PP424: Happiness and Public Policy, School of Public Policy, LSE (postgraduate, MPA/MPP), co-teaching with R. Layard. Evaluations: 4.8/5, 4.8/5, 5/5	2023–2025
	Master Dissertation Supervision, Dept. of Psychological and Behavioural Science, LSE (37 dissertations)	2023–2025
	PB421: Happiness, Dept. of Psychological and Behavioural Science, LSE (postgraduate). Evaluations: 4.7/5	2024
	Module on Happiness and Public Policy, The Urban95 Academy, Van Leer Foundation × LSE (executive)	2024
	Guest Lecturer, PB421: Happiness, PBS, LSE (postgraduate)	2022–2023
SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES	2025: City St George’s University, Welfare & Policy Conference (Bordeaux), Measuring Progress Seminar Series (Luxembourg), ISQOLS Conference, Easterlin Memorial Workshop (Paris School of Economics), UK Government Economic Service (GES)	
	2024: ASSA Annual Meeting, LSE Mental Health Workshop, City University, CEP Annual Conference, Office for National Statistics, Highland Health Economics Symposium, Van Leer Foundation, Warwick Business School, IFS-CAGE Workshop on the Economics of Mental Health, EEA-ESEM Congress	
	2023: Royal Economic Society and Scottish Economic Society Annual Meeting, Canadian Economic Association, Measuring Progress Annual Workshop (Luxembourg), LSE Wellbeing Seminar	
	2022: LSE Wellbeing Seminar, Loughborough University, Mental Health and Economic Status Workshop (University of Warwick)	
	2021: Global Wellbeing Summit (Gallup)	
	2019: LSE Wellbeing Seminar, European Meeting of the Econometric Society, IAAE Annual Conference, Royal Economic Society Symposium of Junior Researchers	
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE	Associate Editor, Applied Research in Quality of Life (ARQOL)	2025–
	Co-Organizer, LSE Wellbeing Seminar	2021–
	Fellow, Higher Education Academy	2019–
	Referee for journals: <i>Economica</i> , <i>The Economic Journal</i> , <i>Empirical Economics</i> , <i>Health Economics</i> , <i>Journal of Applied Econometrics</i> , <i>Journal of Behavioral & Experimental Economics</i> , <i>Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization</i> , <i>Journal of Happiness Studies</i> , <i>Journal of Population Economics</i> , <i>Labour Economics</i> , <i>Nature Communications</i> , <i>Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics</i> , <i>Review of Income and Wealth</i> , the <i>Unjournal</i>	
	Referee for conferences: European Association of Young Economists 2024, 2025	
	Grant reviewer: UK Research and Innovation, Colt	
PERSONAL	Citizenship: United Kingdom, Russia. One child (born 2025).	

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