

# John Balding

## Young people in 1991: a preview

**W**hat was special about young teenagers in 1991?

To get the full story you will have to purchase our book entitled *Young People in 1991*, but here is some food for thought . . .

About 20% of girls, and fewer boys, regularly considered their health when choosing what to eat.

About half had visited their GP in the past three months.

About 20% of boys and 10% of girls brushed their teeth only once a day, or not at all.

As many as 40% used dental floss at least once a week.

About 25% did not always wash their hands after using the lavatory.

About 60% of boys and 70% of girls sometimes had trouble breathing when running.

About 20% of boys and 30% of girls aged 15-16 smoked occasionally or regularly.

Almost half the 15-16 year old boys had drunk some beer or lager during the previous week.

One-fifth of all 12-13 year olds had a regular paid job, rising to one half at 15-16.

One-fifth of 15-16 year old girls took no part in regular sports or other physical activities.

These and many other findings come out of our analysis of the responses of 23,928 teenagers, most of whom were attending mixed comprehensive schools in England. The data came from school surveys using the Health Related

Behaviour Questionnaire, which has been the basis for nationwide reports of children's health lifestyle since 1984. Data for the years 1984-1990 is being published in our *Young People into the Nineties* series of books, but the 1991 data is made available here for the first time as selected extracts from *Young People in 1991*, due to be published in July.

The number of pupils represented in this report is as follows:

Year 8 (12-13)	7078
Year 9 (13-14)	5491
Year 10 (14-15)	6999
Year 11 (15-16)	4360

In former annual reports we have always included data for year 7 (11-12 year old) pupils. Since the 1991 data is mainly based on large regional surveys from which this year group was deliberately omitted by the organisers, the final sample was considered to be too small to be set against the much larger representation of the other secondary years.

The introduction to the published book contains extensive information about the sample and the questionnaire methodology.

Beginning overleaf we reproduce one or two tables and commentary from each of the eight sections of the report, namely: Diet, Doctor & Dentist, Health & Safety, Home, Drugs, Money, Sport, and Social & Personal.

*Young People in 1991* costs £20.00, including postage, from the Unit.

### DIET: How often do you consume these foods? ('On most days')

Responses	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Ordinary milk	56.5	45.9	60.1	48.3	60.4	43.2	64.2	47.3
Low-fat milk	24.9	29.3	24.0	29.7	27.4	38.4	24.2	34.6
Soya milk	1.2	1.3	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.9
Yoghurt	19.6	20.8	19.2	18.5	16.0	18.9	17.2	18.6
Butter or margarine	52.9	51.8	53.8	55.2	58.8	52.5	58.5	51.7
Low-fat ~ ~	26.0	33.6	23.3	31.6	27.4	39.6	23.4	35.6
Ghee	1.6	1.2	1.8	1.0	1.2	0.7	2.5	1.4
Vegetable oil	10.6	12.6	12.4	12.1	13.4	13.9	15.1	13.8
Low-fat cheese	6.9	10.8	7.4	10.4	6.1	11.4	7.3	10.5
Other cheese	28.1	28.1	25.2	24.9	28.3	25.9	25.2	20.7

This list is part of a much longer list in the report, and refers only to dairy produce and substitutes.

These foods are far more popular *on most days* than the 'solid protein' foods given elsewhere in the same question checklist. Girls are more likely to show a preference for the health-type foods like low-fat milk and low-fat butter or margarine. With respect to yoghurt, the percentages are fairly equal for boys and girls. Approximately a quarter of boys and girls of all

ages consume cheese (other than low-fat cheese) on most days.

Some boy/girl contrasts are intriguing. Since the provision of spreads and milk at home is normally the 'quartermaster's' province, how are the differences in consumption of full-fat and reduced-fat milk to be explained, assuming that most families contain children of each sex? Where will youngsters find ordinary milk to drink, if the house 'runs' on semi-skimmed – or vice versa – without buying it themselves?

### DIET: When choosing what to eat, do you consider your health?

Responses	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Never	12.4	5.2	14.8	6.2	16.4	5.5	22.1	7.5
Sometimes	39.8	40.1	42.9	42.4	44.7	40.1	43.1	41.5
Quite often	28.8	32.1	27.2	30.8	24.9	31.7	21.3	29.4
Very often	12.1	15.2	9.6	14.9	9.7	17.1	9.5	14.4
Always	6.9	7.4	5.5	5.7	4.2	5.6	4.0	7.2
Valid responses	3452	3049	2537	2569	3264	3287	2004	2047

It is noticeable that older boys are less likely to consider healthy diets, although younger children will have less control over choices.

It is worth reflecting on the increased freedom of movement and greater choice available to the more experienced and confident year 10 and 11 pupils. It was noticed, in answer to another question, that about half the year 11 pupils

went outside school for lunch, although fewer than half of these bought food, and 10% of all the girls ate no lunch at all. A quarter of all the year 11 girls also ate no breakfast.

We may thus have the situation where the ones who are most concerned about healthy choices have the lowest chance of converting ideals into action.

### DOCTOR & DENTIST: Were you at ease with the doctor on your last visit?

Responses	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
No — very uneasy	9.2	12.1	8.7	10.8	6.7	10.7	8.5	10.0
No — a little uneasy	26.6	39.9	29.1	39.6	28.3	42.6	24.6	40.2
Yes — at ease	64.2	48.0	62.1	49.6	65.0	46.7	67.0	49.9
Valid responses	3756	3171	2757	2647	3532	3421	2188	2134

Over 60% of the boys report being *at ease* compared with a lower figure (always less than 50%) for the girls. One in ten of the girls was *very uneasy* on her last visit to the doctor. How uneasy a young person may feel on visiting the doctor can be affected by whether the doctor is male or female, whether the person is accompanied or otherwise (this can work in both direc-

tions), and the nature of the complaint about which the young person has sought advice.

We have published other data showing that about 75% of the GPs seen by young people are male, but that both boys and girls, but especially girls, are more confident when seeing a female doctor.

### DOCTOR & DENTIST: What treatment did you have on your last visit to the dentist?

Responses	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Check-up	77.8	81.8	77.1	83.9	81.0	86.1	81.5	87.2
Fillings	17.5	16.0	20.4	18.0	18.9	17.6	23.3	21.7
Extraction	10.7	10.7	10.6	9.0	8.1	6.5	7.0	5.5
Polishing	30.7	29.5	31.1	30.3	33.4	33.0	36.5	35.5
Brace	11.1	15.8	12.0	17.0	12.9	17.6	7.6	11.2
Advice on brushing	27.7	21.8	25.9	20.2	24.6	18.3	23.5	16.8
Advice on flossing	6.0	4.4	6.0	5.0	5.7	5.9	5.4	5.8
Unspecified treatment	5.2	3.3	4.2	2.6	4.1	2.3	4.5	2.2

Around one in five of all pupils had teeth 'filled' on their last visit to the dentist. Extractions become less frequent with age; doubtless this has something to do with milk teeth. Polishing was carried out on nearly a third of boys and girls; girls are more likely to be using a brace, while boys are clearly more likely to record that they have been given advice on brushing teeth — other data shows that girls are more likely than boys to brush their teeth. A relatively small percentage received advice on flossing.

Regarding teeth cleaning, other 1991 data

shows that girls brush their teeth more frequently than boys do. In year 8, 18% of boys brushed their teeth only once on the previous day compared with 9% of girls, and in year 11 the figures were 21% and 9% respectively. Also in year 11, 29% of girls compared with 16% of boys brushed their teeth three times or more.

Further data shows that girls are slightly more regular visitors to the dentist than boys are.

### HEALTH & SAFETY: How often do you wash your hands after visiting the lavatory?

Responses	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Never or almost never	2.4	1.1	2.5	0.6	2.3	0.9	3.2	1.4
Sometimes	25.4	18.1	25.4	20.2	24.8	14.8	22.7	17.5
Whenever possible	72.3	80.9	72.1	79.1	72.9	84.3	74.1	81.1
Valid responses	3731	3170	2709	2657	3497	3413	2160	2121

It surprises many people that so many youngsters do not choose the *whenever possible* response to this question; indeed, discovering the 2-3% of boys who respond *never* or *almost never* comes as quite a shock. We know, from schools reporting back on the data after it has been discussed with pupils, that a major factor is to do with the local conditions — to what extent are washing facilities provided, and are they attractive? We also know from our own interview work that boys and girls feel strongly about the opportunity to practise good hygiene

in the school environment.

It is interesting to compare this aspect of hygiene with the number of baths or showers taken in a typical term-time week. Compared with over 25% of boys and up to 20% of girls who wash their hands never or sometimes after using the lavatory, approximately 20% of boys and 15% of girls had three or fewer baths or showers during the previous week. Are the 'reluctant washers' also reluctant bathers? How many baths per week is optimum for hygiene and skin care? Is it possible to have too many?

### HEALTH & SAFETY: When you run, do you 'wheeze' and have trouble breathing?

Responses	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Never	41.3	32.4	40.8	28.6	45.1	28.0	47.4	30.7
Occasionally	40.3	44.5	41.8	49.8	42.6	52.9	40.0	49.2
Quite often	10.8	14.0	10.7	13.1	8.0	11.7	8.0	12.4
Very often	7.5	9.2	6.6	8.4	4.3	7.4	4.6	7.7
Valid responses	3781	3202	2771	2681	3540	3422	2196	2138

Concentrating on the categories *quite often* and *very often*, it is interesting to note that more girls than boys consistently have higher percentages. As part of an exercise with schools, we show the connection between responses to this question and to another addressing asthma medication. Most of the asthma medicators report wheezing after running, typically together with a similar percentage of those who also wheeze but who are not on asthma medication.

Asthma specialists suspect under-diagnosis, and it may be that this particular question, in addition to revealing those who have been diagnosed as having asthma, also records the percentage who may have asthma and who certainly are wheezing.

Coughing at night is the focus of another question. Around 30% of boys and 40% of girls responded from 'occasionally' to 'very often' when answering this question.

### HOME: How long did you spend doing each of these things after school yesterday? (Those answering that they spent some time)

Responses	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Watched TV	82.0	82.8	80.8	81.5	85.3	85.7	82.8	82.3
Watched video	20.4	14.3	20.6	16.0	18.7	13.6	19.6	14.9
Listened to music	46.7	58.9	49.3	66.0	62.3	76.1	65.0	76.7
Played indoor games	32.0	18.5	26.4	14.2	19.4	8.5	14.4	5.7
Played outdoors	48.7	31.9	48.2	27.3	39.5	18.1	35.5	12.6
Met friends	47.6	44.3	52.8	51.2	53.7	51.1	59.5	55.1
Drawing or writing	29.8	34.0	24.2	31.1	19.6	23.6	16.9	21.6
Played instrument	14.9	23.3	9.8	16.6	11.3	14.6	8.0	10.1
Used computer	47.4	21.0	43.5	19.0	39.7	13.6	34.6	10.6
Pets	46.2	58.3	37.7	50.9	38.1	51.0	30.6	44.0
Read a book	34.5	50.1	30.0	42.7	25.2	36.3	20.1	34.2
Read magazines	34.1	33.9	33.1	39.1	38.8	37.4	33.7	38.0
Scouts, guides, etc.	12.1	13.0	7.6	7.8	7.3	6.6	4.4	3.7
Homework	74.6	82.2	69.4	77.7	70.4	80.3	63.2	74.9
Hobbies	56.2	50.5	53.9	46.4	53.5	42.7	49.2	41.5
Other activities	5.7	3.8	6.1	4.4	4.7	2.8	5.0	2.9

If one totals any of these columns, the figure comes to five or six hundred percent. Therefore a variety of activities are being experienced by a lot of the youngsters, and the frequently-recorded ones, apart from homework and hobbies, include listening to music, meeting friends, and looking after pets; use of computers decreases with increasing age, and there is a likelihood here of boys being more involved than girls in this range of activities.

We have looked more closely at two of these activities — watching television and doing homework.

**Television** Between 10 and 15% of boys and girls of all years watched no television on the previous (weekday) evening, and about 50% watched for up to two hours. About 7% of all boys and 5% of all girls watched for more than four hours.

**Homework** The percentage doing none at all goes up across the year groups from 21% to 34% for the boys and from 14% to 23% for the

girls. The opposite trend might have been expected, or at least hoped for!

The following trends from year 8 to year 11 are apparent:

**Increasing**  
Listened to music  
Met friends

**Decreasing**  
Played indoor games  
Played outdoors  
Drawing or writing  
Played instrument  
Used computer  
Pets  
Read a book  
Scouts, guides, etc.  
Homework  
Hobbies

**DRUGS: Do these people smoke on most days? (Those answering 'yes')**

Responses	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Mother	28.5	28.4	32.4	32.0	27.9	28.0	29.6	34.0
Father	35.4	34.9	38.3	37.6	36.2	35.4	37.8	38.3
Brother	10.0	11.7	12.6	12.7	14.1	15.2	13.5	14.3
Sister	9.3	11.3	11.6	11.2	12.0	13.9	11.3	13.6
Relation	57.7	59.3	58.1	59.8	51.9	52.7	52.2	56.3
Best friend	12.0	14.5	18.0	20.2	28.7	32.6	31.6	35.6
None of these smoke	22.8	22.6	20.2	20.6	21.7	21.8	20.3	17.4

People who smoke and are close to the youngsters are listed here: there are substantial numbers of mothers, fathers, and siblings. The percentage of 'best friends' who smoke is actually higher than the percentage who are smokers, which would suggest that at least some of the smokers are particularly popular.

On average, since almost all the schools in the sample are mixed comprehensives, it would

seem natural for boys and girls to have a similar percentage of parents and relations who smoke, and this is what the table shows. There is, however, a systematic difference under 'best friend' showing that more girls than boys (the difference increasing with age) have a best friend who smokes.

It is a well-known fact that more girls than boys, of whatever age, smoke.

**DRUGS: Do you know anyone who you think takes any 'illegal' drugs?**

Responses	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
No	69.0	63.2	53.4	50.0	41.8	32.3	29.8	27.2
Not sure	11.4	15.7	12.9	17.4	12.7	13.5	11.7	12.2
Fairly sure	6.8	8.8	11.5	12.4	13.4	15.2	16.1	16.4
Certain	12.8	12.3	22.2	20.2	32.2	39.0	42.3	44.2
Valid responses	3300	2850	2372	2438	3183	3199	1958	1985

The question is a very interesting one, but we need to recognise that a large number of people could know the same one person, and hence the percentages of *fairly sure* and *certain* may not reflect the actual number of current drug users. The question is nevertheless important, because when results are returned to the school they provide an indication of how close the young people may be to sources of drugs.

This table may be relevant to the answers to another question which asks if the respondent

has been offered drugs or encouraged to try them. The number responding positively increases from 10% in year 8 to almost 40% in year 11, matching very well the 'certain' value above.

The percentage stating that they have taken drugs rises from about 6% in year 8 to 22% in year 11, with very little difference between the sexes. Cannabis (about 10% in year 11) was the most widely recorded, followed by solvents and hallucinogens.

**MONEY: When do you do your regular paid work?**

Responses	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Evenings	5.6	4.6	9.6	8.8	8.8	8.3	8.1	7.7
Mornings	4.5	1.5	6.5	1.8	10.4	3.0	6.8	0.9
Weekends	5.2	4.9	7.1	8.0	11.0	15.8	12.0	19.4
Mornings & evenings	1.7	1.2	3.5	1.6	3.5	1.7	3.6	1.7
Evenings & weekends	3.4	3.7	6.1	8.5	8.6	13.0	11.6	18.5
Mornings & weekends	1.7	0.5	2.3	0.7	3.1	1.3	3.5	0.9
All times	2.4	1.6	3.1	2.9	3.1	2.4	3.6	3.0
No regular paid work	74.2	81.5	60.9	66.8	50.6	53.9	49.8	47.1

These percentages show the number of all boys and girls in each year group who work for money at the different times.

To simplify interpretation of this table, the table below collects the categories into evening, morning, and weekend work. For example, evening working is contained within three categories (*evenings, mornings & evenings, and*

*evenings & weekends*).

This table shows that boys outnumber girls with respect to morning work, but that older girls slightly outnumber boys in evening work, and considerably more older girls than boys work at weekends. About a quarter of year 10 and 11 boys, and a third of the girls, have some sort of paid weekend job.

Type of work	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Evening work	10.7	9.5	19.2	18.9	20.9	23.0	23.3	27.9
Morning work	8.9	3.2	12.3	4.1	17.0	6.0	13.9	3.5
Weekend work	10.3	9.1	15.5	17.2	22.7	30.1	27.1	38.7

**PARENTS AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

When we carried out the research leading to the major report on *Health education priorities for the primary school curriculum*, we invited parents taking part to comment freely on any aspect of health education that concerned them. A total of 3,507 did so, and we have collected a representative sample together under various headings, such as...

- *Approval of health education*
- *Disapproval of health education*
- *The '3 Rs' most important*
- *Certain topics do more harm than good*
- *'Hidden curriculum' the best place*
- *Concern for how the topic is taught*
- *Shock-horror method needed*
- *Special teacher preparation necessary*

... and many more. Open it anywhere and you will find it hard to put down!

Price £7.50, including postage, from the Unit.

## MONEY: Since this time last week, have you spent your own money on any of these items?

Year 10 Boys	%	Year 10 Girls	%
1 Sweets	72.3	1 Sweets	73.4
2 Soft drinks	68.6	2 Crisps, etc.	59.5
3 Crisps, etc.	59.0	3 Soft drinks	59.0
4 Hot fast food	39.8	4 Cosmetics or toiletries	45.5
5 Magazines	37.1	5 Magazines	42.6
6 Fares	33.0	6 Fares	40.7
7 Savings	29.7	7 Presents	40.6
8 Records, CDs, or tapes	29.6	8 Clothes or footwear	32.9
9 Clothes or footwear	27.8	9 Hot fast food	31.5
10 Arcade games	26.4	10 Discos or parties	26.8
11 Leisure centre	25.7	11 Savings	25.2
12 Presents	25.6	12 School items	25.0
13 Sports equipment	24.1	13 Pets	22.9
14 School items	23.3	14 Records, CDs, or tapes	21.9
15 Video hire	21.3	15 Cigarettes	19.9
16 Discos or parties	19.4	16 Leisure centre	16.3
17 Alcoholic drinks	17.8	17 Alcoholic drinks	16.2
18 Computers	17.2	18 Cinema	15.3
19 Pets	16.7	19 Jewellery	15.3
20 Cinema	16.2	20 Video hire	13.0
21 Cigarettes	14.4	21 Books	8.2
22 Cosmetics or toiletries	13.8	22 Arcade games	7.8
23 Arcade gambling	12.6	23 Sports equipment	7.0
24 Books	9.7	24 Arcade gambling	4.2
25 Jewellery	4.4	25 Computers	2.6

To simplify a very complicated table, it was decided to rank-order the responses for year 10 pupils only.

It should be noted that this list does not take actual expenditure into account, but only whether any money at all was spent on these items.

Seven of the 'top ten' items are found in both the boys' and girls' lists. Some of the largest rank-order differences occur for arcade games (10th, 22nd), cosmetics or toiletries (22nd, 4th) and sports equipment (13th, 23rd).

Looking at the original table, the following trends are noticed across the year groups:

### Increasing

Alcohol  
Cigarettes  
Clothes or footwear  
Cosmetics

Fares  
Decreasing  
Presents  
Computers  
Pets  
Books

From other questions on paid work, pocket money and allowance, it is discovered that about 20% of boys and 13% of girls in year 8 received £10 or more per week. This rose to 54% and 56% respectively for year 11 pupils.

Some general comments from the full published tables for years 8–11 are that boys and girls are equally likely to spend money on school items, a percentage that reduces with age; that girls are more likely to spend money on presents, and that boys are more likely to spend money at leisure centres and on video hire.

## SPORT: Sports and activities outside lesson time in the past 12 months (Those answering weekly or more often)

Year 10 Boys	%	Year 10 Girls	%
1 Riding a bicycle	65.8	1 Riding a bicycle	36.5
2 Soccer	49.4	2 Dancing	23.2
3 Swimming	21.6	3 Swimming	22.4
4 Basketball	19.7	4 Fitness exercises	20.0
5 Weight training	19.4	5 Tennis	18.2
6 Jogging	18.8	No activities recorded	17.2
7 Tennis	18.4	6 Netball	15.7
8 5-a-side football	15.9		
9 Rugby	15.4	7 Badminton	14.3
10 Badminton	14.7	8 Hockey	14.2
11 Cricket	13.8	9 Jogging	13.5
12 Fishing	11.7	10 Rounders	12.3
13 Table tennis	10.3	11 Horse-riding	11.6
14 Track/field events	10.1	12 Track/field events	10.4
15 Hockey	9.5	13 Basketball	9.9
16 Judo	9.0	14 Roller/ice skating	6.5
17 Golf	8.3	15 Table tennis	5.0
18 Skateboarding	7.7	16 Volleyball	5.0
No activities recorded	6.0	17 Weight training	4.8
19 Fitness exercises	5.7	18 Soccer	4.7
20 Roller/ice skating	5.6	19 Gymnastics	4.5
21 Squash	5.5	20 Cross-country	3.4
22 Volleyball	5.2	21 Ballet	3.3
23 Cross-country	5.0	22 Judo	3.2
24 American football	4.2	23 Squash	2.9
25 Scrambling	4.0	24 Sailing	2.6
26 Canoeing	3.8	25 5-a-side football	2.6
27 Sailing	3.5	26 Canoeing	2.4
28 Dancing	2.9	27 Hiking	2.0
29 Hiking	2.8	28 Cricket	1.7
30 Rounders	2.7	29 Skateboarding	1.6
31 Competitive cycling	2.3	30 Rowing	1.5
32 Rowing	2.3	31 Fishing	0.9
33 Gymnastics	1.8	32 Golf	0.8
34 Horse-riding	1.7	33 Scrambling	0.6
35 Ballet	0.5	34 American football	0.5
36 Netball	0.5	35 Competitive cycling	0.5

The question refers to participation when the sports are in season. The gender difference is apparent, boys being more likely than girls to be involved — the girls' percentage figures for *no activities* is much higher than the boys'.

Totalling all the participation percentages for boys and girls in years 8 and 11 demonstrates how participation lessens with increasing age over this age range, and that the girls' level of participation is the lower of the two. The percentage values exceed 100 because some individuals participate in numerous different activities.

	Year 8	Year 11
Boys	461%	363%
Girls	340%	246%

The popularity of badminton and weight training (and fitness exercises, for girls) increases with age, and in the case of a few other listed items (notably hiking, competitive cycling and table tennis) the level of participation holds steady, though at a low level. These are mostly individual or single-partner pursuits, perhaps the kind that schools should promote alongside traditional team games.

## SOCIAL & PERSONAL: Have you a steady boyfriend or girlfriend at the moment?

<i>Responses</i>	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Never had one	18.1	19.9	14.6	18.5	12.1	15.7	11.6	12.5
Not at present	53.7	54.9	62.3	56.2	63.0	54.4	60.9	49.4
Yes — a few weeks	13.2	12.3	11.4	13.9	12.7	13.6	13.4	13.5
Yes — up to 6 months	5.7	5.4	4.6	5.4	5.3	7.3	6.8	10.7
Yes — up to 1 year	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	2.0	3.2	1.8	5.3
Yes — a year or more	7.4	5.7	5.2	4.1	4.9	5.7	5.5	8.5
<i>Valid responses</i>	<i>3722</i>	<i>3150</i>	<i>2728</i>	<i>2643</i>	<i>3515</i>	<i>3418</i>	<i>2162</i>	<i>2134</i>

In validation work across the years, the concept held amongst young people is that this question implies a heterosexual relationship. Typically, for all ages and both sexes, around 70% of boys and girls have either never had a boyfriend or girlfriend or have not got one at present. At the time of the questionnaire en-

quiry, around 30% of respondents currently had a boyfriend or girlfriend.

About 80% of year 8 pupils have already had a boyfriend or girlfriend, and the 50-60% without a partner is steady across all year groups, so it looks as if patterns for 'sexual' relationships across this age range are set very early.

## SOCIAL & PERSONAL: When you have a problem, what do you do about it?

<i>Responses</i>	Year 8 (12-13)		Year 9 (13-14)		Year 10 (14-15)		Year 11 (15-16)	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Talk to someone	69.9	81.3	65.5	82.5	66.9	83.7	64.3	83.8
Rest more	29.2	21.0	30.0	19.7	28.8	20.6	28.6	20.9
Smoke	5.0	6.4	7.4	9.7	12.7	19.8	13.2	21.0
Think about it	73.0	72.0	75.8	73.9	78.7	76.1	79.3	76.8
Have a drink	27.2	14.7	29.1	16.2	28.7	21.2	29.4	19.4
Keep busy	52.9	52.4	53.2	54.8	49.1	53.2	46.1	52.5
Watch TV	30.9	27.9	31.0	27.4	31.3	26.5	26.3	22.3
Consult magazines	13.7	26.8	13.7	29.6	13.9	28.3	12.6	27.1
Listen to music	42.1	55.1	44.9	61.0	56.3	73.0	57.1	74.2
Eat more	18.3	21.4	18.4	25.9	20.7	35.6	18.7	32.0
Do nothing	20.2	16.5	22.3	15.5	20.8	13.9	20.3	14.4

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*Young People in 1991*, on which this article is based, can be purchased from the Unit for £20.00 including postage.

In the list, some of the activities actually address the problem whereas others try and calm the emotions aroused by the problem. Many pupils report talking and thinking about it. Many others report indulging in other activities, perhaps to hide from the problem. There are noticeably high percentages, particularly amongst the

girls, indicating that they smoke to help resolve the problem or the emotions.

With increasing age, smoking and listening to music become more popular strategies for coping with problems, although the particular type of problem is not specified in the question.