

The primary and secondary school HRBQ has been used in Dudley for almost ten years and now pupils have piloted an online version of the questionnaire which has received positive feedback.

Heather Jenkins

Heather Jenkins is a Project Co-ordinator for the Dudley Health Promoting Schools Project.

You can do it when you HRBQ it!

The Dudley success story.

Dudley, a small Borough in the heart of the Black Country, shot to fame and became the butt of many jokes, on September 2002 when the earth moved, rather violently, for its 311,000 residents.

"Dudley earthquake causes £1m worth of improvements" read one such jibe. "The Red Cross, currently transporting crates of Sunny Delight to the grief stricken area, are launching an appeal - a 50p donation will ensure each child receives a much needed bag of chips....." and so on.

The perceptions of some of our neighbours from the rest of the country paint a rather unkind and unhealthy picture of this region - and it is also somewhat untrue.

Health Promoting Schools

The birth of the Health Promoting Schools Project began as a result of Dudley NHS and the Local Education Authority working in partnership for almost ten years to develop activities for young people that promote their health and well being. A key contributor to this work has been the extensive use of the Schools Health Education Unit's Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire (HRBQ).

The 'umbrella' project for these activities is the local Health Promoting Schools (HPS) initiative which began in 1994 and received National accreditation from the National Healthy Schools Standard in 2000. It currently boasts a membership of 96 primary, secondary and special schools - that's 86% of the Dudley total.

A major aspect of the Dudley project is our philosophy of giving young people a 'voice'.

The HRBQ is an important tool in helping ascertain their starting points.

Starting in 1994 with a pilot survey of 16 secondaries and 3 primaries, we have over the subsequent years established a regular cycle for the consultation, which now occurs biennially.

Success

The success of the Dudley schools' survey is reflected in the numbers of schools who regularly get involved.

Most recently 94% of primaries, 100% of secondaries and almost half of special schools supported the 2002 survey. Almost 12,000 pupils from years 5, 6, 8 and 10 were given the opportunity to take part.

The success of the survey can also be related to the explicit structure we have now established.

Developing activities

As part of the requirements for schools to access support from the HPS project team, a formal service level agreement is put in place. This requires the schools Head and Lead Governor to sign a commitment statement, which details the schools undertaking to develop health promoting activities with the school and the wider community.

Integral to that commitment statement is a requirement to take part in regular HRBQ surveys of pupils. In return, the project provides extensive training, resources and materials without charge; this includes preparatory work for the organisation and delivery of the survey, as well as follow up training for handling the data when it is returned to school.

Almost 12,000 pupils were given the opportunity to take part in the recent HRBQ survey.

An online HRBQ has been developed and tested with positive feedback from pupils.

Agency Use of Dudley Data

In addition to schools using their individual data to forward their Health Promoting Schools work, it has always been a project aim to support agencies and organisations in their planning and delivery. Multi agency use of the data is evident in a plethora of local plans and strategies, where it has been used to set the context and to help in target setting. Plans include amongst others:-

- ▷ Community Plan
- ▷ Council Plan
- ▷ Community Safety
- ▷ Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
- ▷ Young Person's Substance Misuse Plan
- ▷ Accident Prevention Strategy
- ▷ Mental Health Promotion Plan
- ▷ NSF - CHD/Stroke
- ▷ P.E./Physical Activity and Schools Sports Strategy
- ▷ Health Improvement and Modernisation Programme

Dissemination

A dissemination event was held in December 2001, to share the Borough data with a range of local agencies. Sixty representatives from both voluntary and statutory organisations attended. They include key personnel from the Police, Social Services, Connexions, Race Equality Council, Mencap, the School Nursing Service and local PCTs. The programme involved presenting the Borough overview as well as highlighting ways in which the HPS team used the data. It also included workshops that explored ways in which agencies themselves could utilise the results to identify needs and support planning.

Partnership working with SHEU

In addition to core support for schools and inter-agency working, the project team are also keen to progress the survey work into new and exciting areas. Working in close partnership with SHEU, we have piloted two major developments - the evolution of the paper HRBQ to an ICT solution, based on the SHEU online 'Fit to Succeed' survey and secondly, the formation of an amended questionnaire for children and young people without a school place.

HRBQ online

Dudley's recent Pathfinder status for the

Youngsters not in mainstream schools... have used the HRBQ... with over 100 young people currently receiving their education from alternative providers.

NGfL with the computer giant RM, has afforded us many opportunities to look at new and innovative ways to use the technology in our work. SHEU have also been forward thinking in this area and we have become willing partners in the progression of this work, having piloted a full secondary version with Windsor High School in Halesowen with the very able assistance of staff and pupils.

The pilot involved Year 9 pupils, initially trying their hand at the 'Fit to Succeed' survey before testing the full HRBQ questionnaire in the same format. Feedback from pupils has been positive; they were consulted on a range of issues from user friendliness to matters of confidentiality. We are now looking to continue this groundbreaking work with a trial of a primary school HRBQ online.

Inclusion

The Government's plans on inclusion are high on LEA's agenda's and Dudley are looking to young people to help plan a way forward. Finding out about concerns relating to the youngsters not in mainstream schools using the HRBQ was the plan.

The reality meant some changes had to be made. Again working with Exeter team, a revised questionnaire that also includes pertinent questions for this group of young people emerged from two days of productive discussion.

It was run successfully in November 2002 with over 100 young people currently receiving their education from alternative providers. Initial fears that the group could potentially be difficult to manage proved unfounded, and again feedback from staff and young people has been positive.

The Future

The HRBQ as part of consultation with young people in Dudley will remain central to our work. The more we share the data, the more people get enthused. Our Health Promoting School Project plan in the next 3 years is to expand into non-school settings.

The concept of Health Promoting Youth Clubs and Colleges is already in its initial stages of development; as is a feasibility study looking at a similar project within Nurseries and other early years settings.

We will need to develop ways of conferring with youngsters in these areas, using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Don't tell SHEU yet - but we are really excited about the thought of consulting with 3 year olds! The rumblings you hear from Dudley may be very different from that of an earthquake in future!

The unique databank is an unrivalled resource of youngster's health-related behaviour and is used by those planning services for young people.

HRBQ - providing baseline data

If teachers could be more accurately and reliably informed of their pupils' behaviours, they would be better equipped to support them in their classes.

The Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire (HRBQ) was first developed, by John Balding, in 1976 as an outcome of researches within the Department of Community Medicine at Nottingham University.

The Health Related Behaviour method arose through John's belief that if teachers could be more accurately and reliably informed of their pupils' behaviours, they would be better equipped to support them in their classes. What is now 'knowledge' is that from the earliest surveys in the late 70s and early 80s, the data returned affected timing, content, and even existence of health-related lessons.

Today the HRBQ is used widely across the UK and provides baseline data to identify priorities for health education planning, assessments and intervention programmes. The funders of the surveys are usually Health or Local Education Authorities and involve Primary Care Trusts. Survey results are returned to the funding authority as well as individual schools receiving their own report.

'Pyramids'

One approach that funders can make to their application of the survey is to use the 'pyramid' model. This approach involves co-ordinating HRBQ surveys in secondary schools with HRBQ surveys in their 'partner' primary schools.

Each secondary school, together with its cluster of partner primary schools' is termed one 'pyramid'. Much of the resulting data may be linked, revealing patterns in health related behaviours of young people between the ages of 9 and 16 within their shared communities. Schools can reach out for help with health issues, and the opportunity is provided for out-side agencies to offer support.

The pyramid model provides a detailed evaluation of current health related behaviour of pupils in primary and secondary schools, placed in the context of their social environment. Survey data can also be separated into

PCT or ward boundaries for analysis at local level. Pyramid surveys provide opportunities for linked schools to work collaboratively, and enable the tracking of pupils from primary school into secondary school.

Repeat surveys

Another way that funders plan their surveys is to use a strategic planning approach which involves repeated HRBQ surveys. This approach provides information whereby potential partners may monitor changes in health related behaviour patterns for their area. A sampling strategy which anticipates a repeat survey after an interval of two years requires that alternative year groups are sampled, so that the repeat survey will catch the same groups at a later stage of their development.

Unique databank

To date, the HRBQ has been used in over 4,800 primary and secondary school surveys in the UK. It has also been used overseas. Information from nearly 610,000 young people is stored in our unique databank. This is an unrivalled resource of young people's health-related behaviour.

Developments

Further developments include the Early Primary HRBQ and the Further Education HRBQ. We have already seen, in the previous article, that an online version is being developed with the Dudley Health Promoting Schools Project.

The HRBQ remains a robust research instrument. It continues to be used by a wide range of people, resulting in a greater understanding of young peoples' health-related behaviour. Many positive outcomes have also been achieved including the establishment of behaviour levels of defined groups of young people at any particular time, and effective intervention programmes. The continued use of the HRBQ ensures that this important work carries on.

First developed in 1976 in Nottingham.

To date, the HRBQ has been used in over 4,800 school surveys and... information from nearly 610,000 young people is stored in the unique databank.