

The Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU) carry out [surveys in schools across the UK](#). Their latest annual report *Young People into 2011* costs £25 (including p&p) For correspondence, email: [sheu@sheu.org.uk](mailto:sheu@sheu.org.uk)

## SHEU

# Young People and their Health-Related Behaviour

*Young People into 2011* is a 'unique contemporary archive' of young people from the Schools Health Education Unit. There are over 100 health-related behaviour questions and answers from 83,724 youngsters between the ages of 10 and 15. They tell us about what they do at home, at school, and with their friends. The data have been collected from 1,100 primary and secondary schools across the United Kingdom.

The report is the twenty-fifth in the series starting in 1986 and since then over one million school pupils have taken part in the health related behaviour questionnaire (HRBQ). Nearly eight thousand separate school surveys have been involved with some schools repeating the survey of their pupils on five occasions.

The annual report is divided into nine chapters and a detailed *Introduction* that describes the questionnaire and the survey.

## Summary

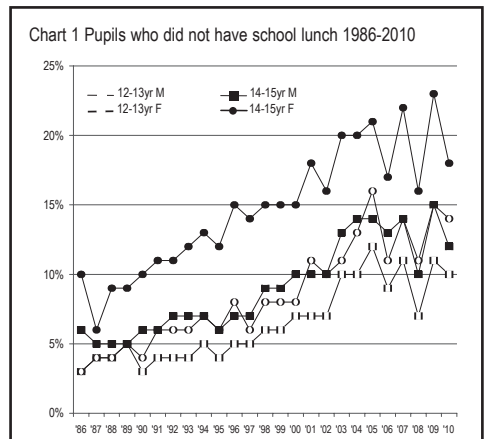
### Food choices & weight control

Less fresh fruit and vegetables are eaten as pupils get older. Up to 24% report eating 3 portions of fruit and vegetables. 15% of 14-15 yr. olds and 28% of 10-11 yr. olds report eating 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables *yesterday*. Up to 76% drank less than 1 litre of water *yesterday*.

In the sample, 56% of 14-15 year old females, 50% of 12-13 year old females and 32% of 10-11 year old females *would like to lose weight*. This compares with 27% of 14-15

year old males, 34% of 12-13 year old males and 24% of 10-11 year old males who *would like to lose weight*.

31% of Year 10 females have *nothing at all to eat for breakfast this morning* and 18% had nothing for lunch on the previous day. Chart 1 shows data from 1986 and an upward trend in those pupils reporting they *did not have school lunch yesterday*.



### Health & Safety

54% of 14-15 year old females report taking painkillers on at least one day during the previous week. There was a positive correlation between worrying about 3 or more topics and taking painkillers.

33% of 10-11 year. old females feel afraid (at least *sometimes*) of going to school because of bullying. As pupils get older, fewer say their school takes bullying seriously.

Around 20% of 14-15 year. old females

report ever being upset or scared by chat messages or pictures seen online.

**Family & Home**

Up to 64% of this sample live with both parents. Table 1 shows the percentage of those pupils living with their Mother and Father. Data are shown every five years from 1990.

Table 1 The percentage of pupils living with *Mother and Father together*.

Mother & Father	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Yr 8 M	77	71	67	61	66
Yr 8 F	75	70	64	60	64
Yr 10 M	75	71	67	62	64
Yr 10 F	74	69	64	58	63

Up to 43% of the pupils in the sample walk, at least some of the way, to school. More females than males did homework on the evening before the survey, and they tended to spend longer at it. Around 40% of the 12-15 year old males did no homework at all *yesterday*.

Up to 80% of males played computer games after school *yesterday*. 44% of 10-11 year old females *read a book for enjoyment* as an after-school activity compared with 24% of 14-15 year old females.

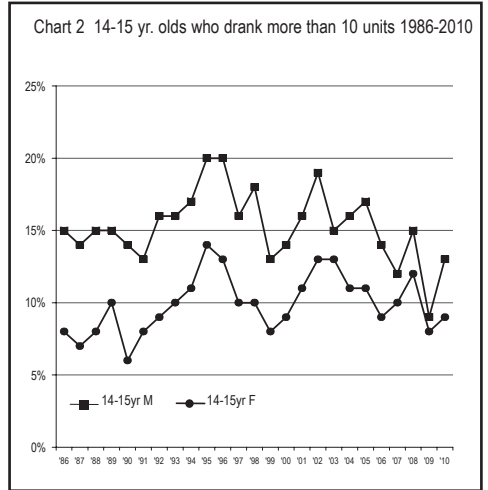
**Legal & Illegal Drugs**

Since the mid-1990s there has been a general decline in the percentage of 14-15 year olds who smoke regularly. Around 95% of 10-11 year olds say they have never smoked. This figure drops to 61% (males) and 54% (females) by the time they are 14-15 years old (see also Chart 3). Around 40% of 12-15 year olds live in a home where someone is a smoker.

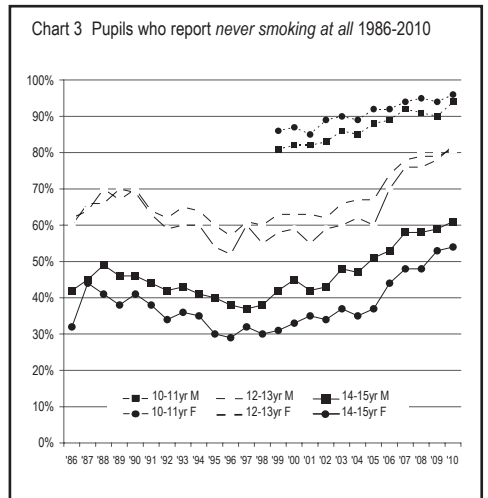
50% of the 14-15 year olds are *fairly sure* or *certain* that they know a drug user. 11% of 14-15 year olds have mixed drugs and alcohol *on the same occasion*.

Around 15% of 14-15 year-olds have ever tried illegal drugs and a declining trend report taking cannabis (up to 15% of 14-15 year olds in 2010).

Up to 36% of 14-15 year olds reported drinking in the *last seven days*. Chart 2 shows data from 1986 - 2010 of those 14-15 year olds that report drinking more than 10 units of alcohol.



Data from 1986 show a rising trend, from around the late 1990s, of those pupils who report *never smoking at all* (Chart 3).



## Money

The percentage of young people with a regular job rises from 19% (12-13 yr. males) to up to 29% (14-15 yr. males). More males than females save money and there is an upward trend, since 1993, in those 12-15 year olds saving money.

## Exercise & Sport

Over 92% of the sample of 10-15 year olds report exercising at least on one day *last week*. At least 65% of males and 46% of females report exercising vigorously on 3 or more days. 65% of 10-11 year old females think they are *fit* or *very fit*. This falls to 27% by the time they reach 14-15 years of age. From 1991 there is an upward trend (10%-22%) of 14-15 year old females that report being unfit.

Table 2 shows data from Year 10 females who report *no active sports at all*. The percentages range from from 14% - 19%.

1992	19%	2002	14%	2008	16%
1997	19%	2007	15%	2010	19%

## Social & Personal

*The way you look* remains a worry for females aged 12-15 years (48%-57%). Up to 36% of older pupils report enjoying *most* school lessons. The *Sex and Relationship* education lessons appear to be the only ones where more 14-15 year old females (41%) report a higher percentage compared with 12-13 year old females (38%).

As the females get older, more are interested in staying in their neighbourhood; they are less interested in finding a job *as soon as you can* and getting training for a skilled job. 67% of 14-15 year old females, compared with 54% of 14-15 year old males, want to continue with full-time education.

Table 3 shows statements from the *Every Child Matters* section and reveal a marked difference between the positive responses from primary and secondary pupils e.g. *Having work marked to see how to improve it* drops from around 86% (10-11 yr. olds) to around 56% (14-15 yr. olds).

## Conclusion

This new report provides an insight into young people's health-related behaviour. Additional data from 1986 - 2010 help to see trends in this 'unique contemporary archive' that complements the research work of the [Schools Health Education Unit](#).

	Yr 6 M	Yr 6 F	Yr 8 M	Yr 8 F	Yr 10 M	Yr 10 F
The school cares whether I am happy or not	66	69	37	38	31	33
My work is marked so I can see how to improve it	85	87	58	58	56	57
I know my targets and I am helped to meet them	71	72	48	46	46	43
My achievements in and out of school are recognised	63	63	46	45	41	40
The school teaches me how to manage my feelings	60	61	32	29	25	20
The school helps me work as part of a team	76	78	48	51	41	44
In this school people with different backgrounds are valued	57	58	46	48	43	48
The school encourages everyone to take part in decisions	76	80	49	55	45	50
The school encourages me to contribute to community events	60	60	34	31	27	24
Total sample	10258	9845	7824	7833	7650	8123