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## David McGeorge

# Developing a free research resource to support those concerned with the health and wellbeing of children and young people

In January 2006, the Schools Health Education Unit [SHEU] began sending out a monthly email with [links to research](#). The links were to information, chosen from the SHEU's databanks and the Internet, about the health and behaviour of young people aged 16+. The links were mainly to research papers and, where possible, to the complete paper or at least an abstract.

The development of the resource grew out of the SHEU's research work with schools and colleges across the country. It was clear that those working with children and young people did not have much time to search for relevant research that could support their work.

Initially, the resource concentrated on a number of issues related to 16+ year olds' health and wellbeing. The format was plain and simple – an email that linked to research with no subscription, attachments or pictures and with an opt-out facility.

The email was popular judging from some of the comments received:

*"I find the information extremely useful in my work here"*

Head of Student Health

*"I am very impressed with the content of the news. Thank you very much indeed"* Health Improvement Officer

As the resource developed, we opened up two further avenues with Internet links to research about 11-16 and 5-11 year olds. We also kept the weblinks that grew into an [archive](#). This required more maintenance and we decided to ask if the archive was still valuable. There were many positive replies including:

*"Please let me know if it is true that the resource is going to close, as I've found it an invaluable resource for collating specific info re. FE, with an international perspective, as well as more local research and practice. I hope it is not going to happen?"* Sexual Health Development Officer

*"What a great pity if this invaluable resource was no longer available. I use the information on this website to inform not just my planning for schemes of work and for lessons as*

*part of my role as PSHE Co-ordinator but also for the planning of whole school issues. Hope it still remains available in some format. I am sure many people in both health and education are just not aware of its existence."*  
PSHE Co-ordinator

The supportive comments helped us to continue the resource and regularly review by looking at the data generated and, from time-to-time, asking users for their opinions as to its value.

### 2006-2016

As this piece is being written in 2016, we know the resource continues to have a value and it has enabled thousands to easily access information that can support their work. To read more comments from users please [follow this link](#).

The SHEU resource has always focussed on research that is selective, applying to three age groups, and has a number of topic areas: Health incl. Mental Health, Food, Drugs, Exercise, Education, Life/Lifestyle, Relationships and Sex Education. There continue to be opportunities for other organisations to complement and develop resources for more specialist subject areas. For example: [The Sex Education Forum](#) provides a monthly bulletin with information about research, resources, Government publications, events and training.

Those who use the SHEU resource have limited time and appreciate the ease of use and breadth of information:

*"I know of no other similar way of quickly accessing research for children and young people across disciplines and sectors."* Lecturer

As well as informing our own research work, the resource has proven to be a useful asset to health and education professionals. Pressures on time often mean access to resources are limited but we anticipate any visit will result in valuable, supportive information.