

## PRESS RELEASE

### The Young People into 2020 report

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We have just published *Young People into 2020*, which presents figures from **nearly ninety thousand** young people (**89,461**) completing surveys in 2019. This report is the 34<sup>th</sup> in a series begun in 1987. The full report may be obtained in PDF format by [application to SHEU](#).

#### Where are the figures from?

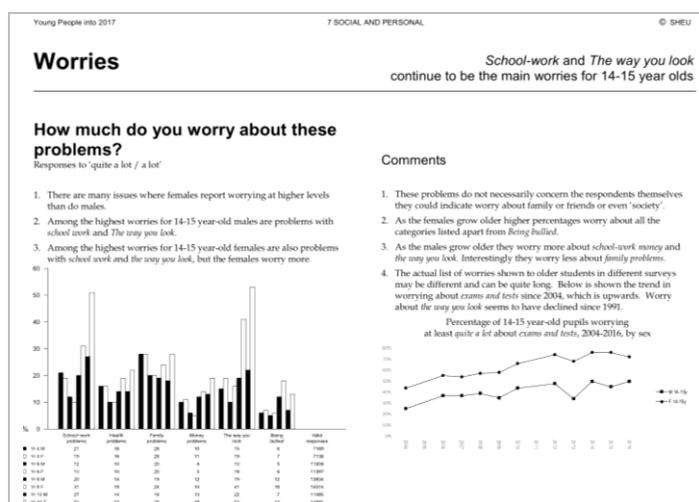
Every year, SHEU carry out healthy lifestyle surveys with young people for local authorities and each year these surveys involve tens of thousands of young people. At the end of each calendar year, we put all the results from all the surveys together, and publish a report. These reports contain findings from over 100 health-related behaviour questions using answers from pupils in primary and secondary schools. They tell us about what they do at home, at school, and with their friends.

#### What's in the report?

The report has 7 chapters:

- CHAPTER 1 - Food choices & weight control
- CHAPTER 2 - Doctor & Dentist
- CHAPTER 3 - Health & Safety
- CHAPTER 4 - Family & Home
- CHAPTER 5 - Legal & Illegal Drugs
- CHAPTER 6 - Exercise & Sport
- CHAPTER 7 - Social & Personal

The pages in each chapter show results from one question (sometimes two) and may also show links between questions and trends in responses going back over decades.



Some of the latest figures are different from those we last published in 2019, but not all the differences are new – it's better to describe them as continuations of trends that we have seen going on for some time. All the clearest trends are shown in the report and collected in a summary sheet published last year: [http://sheu.org.uk/x/pix/Trends\\_Young\\_People\\_into\\_2018\\_SHEU1.png](http://sheu.org.uk/x/pix/Trends_Young_People_into_2018_SHEU1.png)

#### Notes

1. SHEU (the Schools and Students Health Education Unit) was founded in Exeter University in 1977 by John Balding and has operated independently since 1997. It is the leading provider of health and lifestyle surveys for schools and holds a unique set of databanks showing levels of and trends in young people's behaviours since in the 1980s.

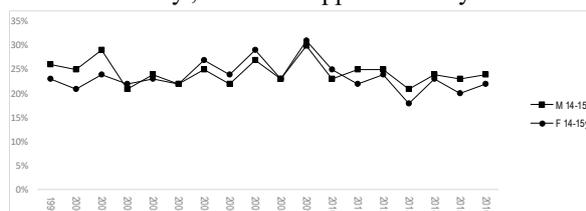
2. The sample size was **89,461**, but not all respondents answered all questions. **Ages and year groups reported were:**

Phase	Year group	Ages
Primary	Year 4	8-9 years old
	Year 6	10-11 years old
Secondary	Year 8	12-13 years old
	Year 10	14-15 years old

3. We discourage surveys being conducted on Mondays, so 'the day before the survey' should have been a normal school day, and similarly 'the week before the survey' will not have been a holiday week.

4. The accumulated databank from the hundreds of school surveys we support each year, involving tens of thousands of young people, is a valuable resource of information and provides many opportunities for insight and research. But we caution against simple reporting and interpretation of our figures as being from 'a national survey'; it didn't happen that way.

Many authorities use us every other year, and so will appear and disappear from the data sets, and there are some trends in which we can see evidence of a regional effect in the figures we obtain – as in the case of figures for eating wholemeal bread *on most days* in the middle 2000s, which shows a 'rollercoaster':



#### CHAPTER 1 - Food choices & weight control

- Headlines*
- Around 8% of all pupils said they ate no portions of fruit or vegetables yesterday. Over 30% of pupils aged 8-11 but less than 20% of 14-15-year-old pupils said they ate at least the recommended 5 portions on the day before the survey.
  - Up to ??% of pupils say they had no water to drink on the day before the survey.
  - There is a marked increase once we get to the secondary age group among females wanting to lose weight – ??% of 14-15-year-old females said they would like to lose weight.
- Trends*
- The trend for more pupils to skip lunch steadied about 10 years ago.
  - Daily consumption of crisps declined after about 2000 and has stabilised since.
- Links*
- Year 10 females who skipped breakfast on the morning of the survey were also more likely to have skipped lunch on the day before the survey, and to want to lose weight.

#### CHAPTER 2 - Doctor & Dentist

- Headlines*
- Nearly half of pupils have visited a doctor in the last three months.
  - 40% of 14-15-year-old females felt *quite* or *very uneasy* on their last visit.
  - 80-90% of all groups had been to the dentist in the last year.
  - About 75% of all groups brushed their teeth at least twice on the day before the survey.
- Trends*
- The proportion visiting the dentist in the last 6 months remained fairly constant since 1986, despite several changes in the organisation of NHS dental care.

#### CHAPTER 3 - Health & Safety

- Headlines*
- Around 27% of primary pupils said they experienced bullying behaviours *often* or *every day* – these behaviours included *teasing* and *name-calling* but also being *pushed/hit*.
  - Of those bullied often, about 1/3 report being bullied during school break times.
  - The most common reasons reported for being bullied were *size or weight* and *the way you look*, especially for older females.
  - Fear of bullying at school declines with age.
  - Up to a quarter of older pupils report unwelcome behaviours from boyfriends/girlfriends, like jealousy, hurtful language and checking my ‘phone.
  - 80% of all groups say they have been told how to stay safe while online.
  - 13% of older females (14-15yo) say they have sent sexual images of themselves.
  - 1.3 of pupils (more males) reported having an accident in the last year that needed medical attention.
- Trends*
- Reports of being bullied and the fear of being bullied have increased since 2011.
- Links*
- Getting plenty of sleep is associated with fewer worries and more contentment with their weight in 14-15-year-old females.
  - There is an association between wellbeing and time spent online or using a ‘phone.

#### CHAPTER 4 - Family & Home

- Headlines*
- About 40% of the older pupils walked at least part of the way to school on the day of the survey.
  - About 2/3 of the sample live with mother and father; less as they get older.
  - About 75% of the sample identify as White (British or other).
- Trends*
- A rise in time spent playing computer games is shown clearly in our figures for males of all ages.
- Links*
- Being a young carer is associated with several unwelcome outcomes – more reports of being bullied, of smoking, of money worries and of accidents.
  - Similarly, having free school meals is also associated with being bullied.

## CHAPTER 5 - Legal & Illegal Drugs

- Headlines*
- 15% of the 14-15-year-olds had drunk alcohol in the week before the survey. Drinking was done most often at home.
  - Nearly 5% of 14-15-year-olds had smoked a cigarette in the week before the survey.
  - 1/3 of pupils live in homes where someone smokes, but just ??% report someone smoking indoors.
  - 23% of 14-15yo have tried tobacco cigarettes, but 30% report trying e-cigarettes.
  - 13% of pupils aged 14-15 years had ever tried drugs – nearly always cannabis, if nothing else.
- Trends*
- Smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol are in long-term decline in our figures; cannabis experimentation has been fairly stable for the last decade.
  - Figures for reported experience with cannabis are notable for an absence of much effect of legislation during changes 2004-2009.
- Links*
- There is an association between finding drugs education lessons more useful and lower substance use (see Chapter 7).
  - Alcohol use always used to be associated with higher self-esteem among older pupils, but this pattern has reversed in recent years.

## CHAPTER 6 - Exercise & Sport

- Headlines*
- Around 90% of all groups say they did some sort of exercise last week but less than 10% said they exercised every day, and even fewer claimed to exercise hard enough to get hot. (Recommendations are for daily exercise of at least an hour in total, including some vigorous exercise and strength-building activities.)
  - Weekly sports and activities included *going for walks* (over half of secondary females) *soccer* (over half of secondary males) and *dancing* (over a quarter of secondary females).
  - Among secondary pupils, the most commonly reported barriers to taking exercise were *time, cost, availability* and, especially in females, *shyness* (31% of 14-15yo girls).
- Trends*
- Enjoyment of physical activities is lowest among 14-15-year-old females and is declining.
  - Perceived fitness is in decline among both secondary year groups and both sexes.

## CHAPTER 7 - Social & Personal

- Headlines*
- Over half of 10-11-year-olds agree that *the school cares whether I am happy or not* but just a third of 14-15-year-olds say the same.
  - The majority of 12-15-year-olds enjoy *at least half* of their lessons.
  - Worries about *school* and *the way you look* are higher in secondary age groups, particularly among 14-15-year-old females (over 60% of whom are worried at least 'quite a lot' about each issue).
  - The most commonly reported response to having a problem or feeling stressed is to *talk to someone about it*. Some pupils distract themselves with *music* or comfort themselves with *eating more*; over 10% of 14-15yo females say they sometimes *cut or hurt myself*.
  - Over 2/3 of secondary pupils judge that they can *usually or always say no* if someone wants them to do something that they don't want to do.
  - Nearly % of 14-15-year-old pupils know where to get condoms free of charge.
- Trends*
- We see a continued decline in the proportion of 14-15-year-old females who score in the top bracket of self-esteem scores, with more scoring in the lower brackets.
  - Worry about *school, exams and tests* seems to be increasing among 14-15 year-olds.
- Links*
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual young people are more likely than their peers to report being bullied and also to have tried smoking or drugs.