

Supporting the health of YOUNG PEOPLE IN BEDFORDSHIRE HEARTLANDS

A summary report of the Health Related Behaviour Survey

These results are the compilation of data collected from a sample of middle and upper school pupils in Years 8 and 10 aged 12 to 15 in Bedfordshire Heartlands schools during the Summer term 2004. This work was commissioned by Bedford and Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trusts and was co-ordinated by the Healthy Schools team. A total of 1577 pupils took part in 16 middle and upper schools. The resulting data have provided the local health and education partnership with sound

information about young people's lifestyles.

Teachers were briefed on how to collect the most reliable data and then pupils in schools anonymously completed the questionnaire.

Completed questionnaires were then returned to Schools Health Education Unit in Exeter for processing.

A small number of pupils in primary school also completed the questionnaire but the sample was too small to include the data here.

1577 young people were involved in the survey

| School Year | Bedford | | Bedfordshire Heartlands | | Total |
|-------------|---------|---------|-------------------------|---------|-------|
| | Year 8 | Year 10 | Year 8 | Year 10 | |
| Boys | 182 | 223 | 264 | 125 | 794 |
| Girls | 174 | 227 | 231 | 151 | 783 |
| Total | 356 | 450 | 495 | 276 | 1577 |

Reference sample

AREA data have been compared with a compilation of survey areas that have completed similar versions of the questionnaire. These areas include East Sussex, Knowsley, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Croydon, Dudley, Solihull, Caerphilly, Luton, Southwark, and Worcestershire.

Topics include

Citizenship

Emotional Health and Well-being

Hygiene, Medication and Dental

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Sex and Relationships

Safety

Healthy Eating

Emotional Health and Well-being

Leisure Activity

Physical Activity



**Schools
Health
Education
Unit**

For more details please contact
SHEU
The Schools Health Education Unit
Tel: 01392 66 72 72
www.sheu.org.uk



Nationally Accredited Scheme

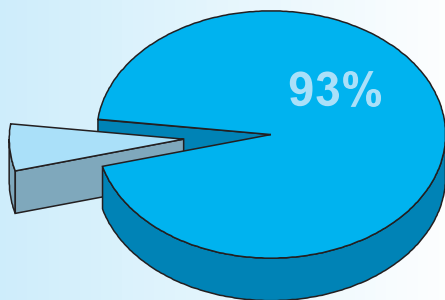
Bedfordshire Heartlands **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

Bedfordshire Heartlands pupils in Year 8 (ages 12 to 13 years)

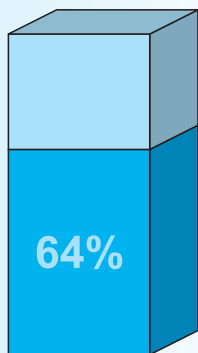
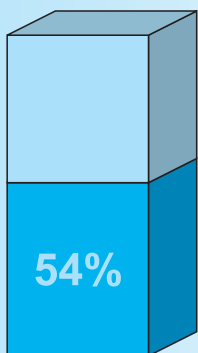
CITIZENSHIP

Background

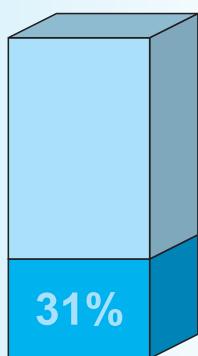
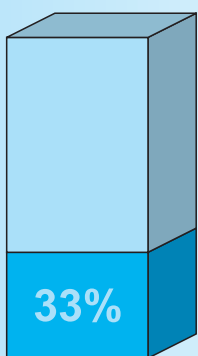
- 93% of pupils describe themselves as white UK, 2% say mixed.



- 64% of all pupils live with both parents. 18% live only with their mother, 12% live with mother and stepfather.
- 62% of pupils agreed with the statement that they were in charge of their health. 80% agreed that if they took care of themselves they would stay healthy.
- 54% of boys and 64% of girls in the Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 8 sample spent time doing homework on the evening before the survey.

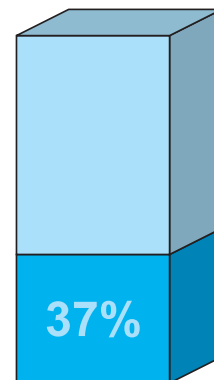
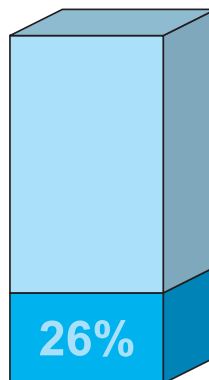


- 39% of pupils did no homework at all the night before the survey, 48% did up to an hour, and 13% did over an hour.
- 47% of pupils used the Internet after school the day before the survey, 26% used the computer to do homework.
- 33% of the girls and 31% of the boys cared for family members, on the evening before the survey.



EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- 59% of pupils reported that, in general, they were 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' satisfied with their life:
- 26% of girls and 37% of boys had high self-esteem scores.



- 27% of girls and 18% of boys had low or medium low self-esteem scores.
- 64% of boys and 80% of girls reported that they worried about at least one of the problems listed in the questionnaire 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.
- 38% worried about exams & tests, 38% about family problems, 25% about career problems and 21% about bullying.
- 28% of boys and 22% of girls said that they would keep any worries about bullying to themselves.

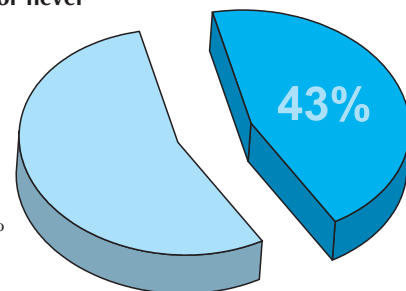


Can anti-bullying strategies be improved?

- Parents are the most popular sources of support for boys and girls for most problems.

HEALTHY EATING

- 18% of girls and 10% of boys had nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey.
- 10% of pupils said they had no fruit or vegetables on the day before the survey. 19% said they had 5 or more portions.
- 44% eat fresh fruit and 55% dairy produce on most days. 45% of pupils eat vegetables on most days.
- 41% of pupils have crisps, 40% sweets and chocolates and 20% 'non diet' fizzy drinks on most days.
- 43% said they rarely or never ate any fish.
- 10% of pupils drank no water on the day before the survey. 62% drank between 1 and 5 cups and 29% about a litre or more.



Dental care

- 82% of pupils reported that they cleaned their teeth at least twice the day before (the recommended frequency).
- 86% had visited the dentist within the past 6 months this rises to 94% within the past year.



What form of caring does this take? Do these children need any extra support?

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Drugs

- 25% of pupils are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know someone who takes drugs.
- 16% of Year 8 boys and 11% of Year 8 girls have been offered cannabis.
- 9% of pupils reported that they had taken an illegal drug in the last year. 5% had taken one in the last month.
- The top four drugs thought to be most dangerous were:**

| | Boys | | Girls | |
|----------|------|----------|-------|--|
| Heroin | 67% | Heroin | 69% | |
| Solvents | 62% | Solvents | 54% | |
| Cocaine | 55% | Cocaine | 53% | |
| Cannabis | 38% | Cannabis | 41% | |

- The top four drugs thought easy to get hooked on were:**

| | Boys | | Girls | |
|----------|------|----------|-------|--|
| Heroin | 66% | Cocaine | 75% | |
| Cannabis | 65% | Cannabis | 72% | |
| Alcohol | 63% | Heroin | 72% | |
| Cocaine | 60% | Alcohol | 69% | |

- 28% of pupils (more boys than girls) correctly identified alcohol as the drug that kills most people in this country.



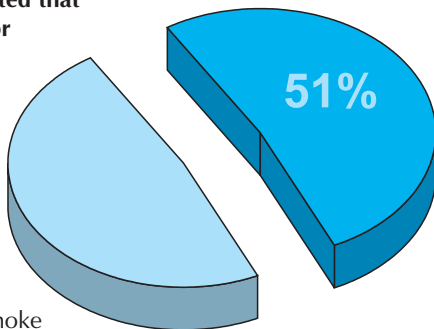
Can anything be done to improve the impact of school drug education while schools are so busy?

Alcohol

- 44% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey.
- Boys: 21% of Year 8 boys drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- Girls: 16% of Year 8 girls drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 49% of pupils said that if they drink alcohol at home, their parents always know.
- Pre-mixed spirits, wine and beer were the most popular drinks.

Tobacco

- 51% of pupils reported that they have a parent or sibling who smokes indoors in their home (including themselves) most days:**



- 6% of Year 8 pupils reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.
- 7% of pupils said that they used to smoke but don't now.



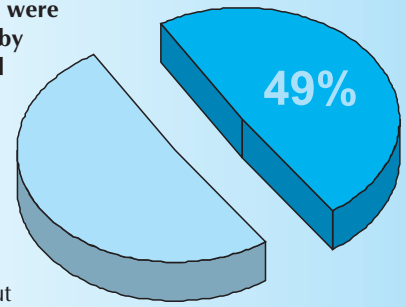
What impact does this have on future smoking habits? Can these be changed?

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

- When asked what was their main source of information about sex 69% of pupils said school lessons. 28% of the boys and 29% of the girls said their friends. 42% overall said their parents.
- When asked what **should be** their main source of information only 14% of pupils said their friends. 70% said it should be school lessons and 51% said their parents, 21% said it should be an advice centre.
- 19% of pupils said they believed there was a special contraception and advice service for young people available locally, 68% said that they didn't know.

SAFETY

- 49% of pupils said they were treated for an accident by a doctor or at a hospital within the last year.**



- 21% of pupils rated the safety of their area, when going out after dark, as 'poor' or 'very poor'. 4% said this about going out during the day.
- 20% of the boys and 6% of the girls reported that they were fairly sure or certain that they had friends who carried weapons for protection when going out.
- 15% reported that they had been the victim of violence or aggression in the area where they live in the last 12 months.

LEISURE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- 87% of pupils said they spent time watching television, after school, on the day before the survey.
- 56% met with friends, 62% of the boys and 32% of the girls played sport, on the evening before the survey.
- 72% of the boys played computer games, on the evening before the survey.
- 79% of pupils reported that they enjoyed physical activities 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.
- 51% of the boys and 35% of the girls considered themselves 'fit' or 'very fit'.
- 54% of the boys and 33% of the girls reported that they had exercised hard, three times or more, in the last week.
- The top four physical activities were:**

| | Boys | | Girls | |
|-------------|------|------------------|-------|--|
| Football | 64% | Going for a walk | 43% | |
| Bike riding | 60% | Bike riding | 37% | |
| Tennis | 36% | Dancing | 36% | |
| Jogging | 33% | Swimming | 35% | |

(The table shows the proportion of pupils who said they did these activities at least weekly.)

- When asked what activities they would like to do in school PE and games that they don't normally do, the girls' top answers were rounders, football, and cricket. The boys' top answers were dancing, ice skating and rollerblading.



Are boys encouraged to do more vigorous activities than girls?

Gender differences amongst Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 8 pupils

- ↑ **More** Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 8 boys record levels of high self esteem. 37% of the boys compares with only 26% of the girls.
- ↑ **More** Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 8 boys are likely to say that they are satisfied with their life, 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'. 64% of boys compares with 53% of girls.
- ↑ **More** Bedfordshire Heartlands boys are happy with their weight, 62% compares with 40% of girls saying the same. 57% of the girls say that they would like to lose weight compared with 34% of the boys saying the same.
- ↑ **More** Bedfordshire Heartlands boys agreed with the statements that they are in charge of their health. 27% compared with 18% of girls.
- ↑ **More** boys are fairly sure or certain that they, or their friends carry weapons for protection when going out. 20% of boys compare with 6% of girls who say the same.
- ↓ **Boys** in Bedfordshire Heartlands are **less likely** to eat fresh fruit, vegetables and salad 'on most days' compared with the girls eating the same. The girls are less likely than the boys to have pasta and drink fizzy drinks.
- ↓ Bedfordshire Heartlands boys are **less likely** to have eaten a packed lunch the day before, they are more likely to have a set or cafeteria lunch than the girls are.
- ↓ Boys in Bedfordshire Heartlands are **less likely** to think that you can get hooked on drugs compared with the girls. 60% of boys said that it is easy to get hooked on Cocaine. This compares with 75% of girls who said the same.
- ↓ Bedfordshire Heartlands boys are less likely to have cleaned their teeth twice or more 78% compares with 86% of the girls saying the same.

Differences between Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 8 pupils and SHEU wider databank figures

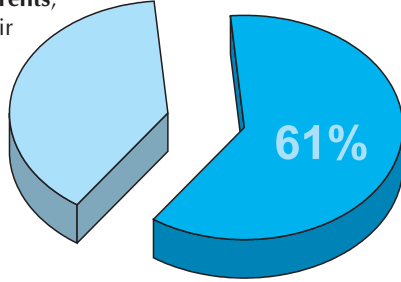
- ↑ Pupils in the Bedfordshire Heartlands survey are **more likely** to eat vegetables and fresh fruit on most days than are those pupils saying the same in the wider sample.
- ↑ They are also more likely to drink water during the day and appear to be more aware of the '5 a day' messages as they record higher percentages eating portions of fruit and vegetables on a regular basis.
- ↑ Pupils in this survey are **more likely** to eat a packed lunch, this would help to explain the higher proportions saying that they eat crisps 'on most days' compared with the wider sample.
- ↑ Year 8 boys in this survey are **more likely** to say that they want to lose weight compared with the same group in the wider sample.
- ↑ Year 8 pupils in Bedfordshire Heartlands are more likely to have drunk alcohol in the past week compared with Year 8 pupils saying the same in the wider sample.
- ↓ Boys in Year 8 are **less likely** to say that they have **never smoked at all** compared with the same group in the wider sample.
- ↓ The Year 8 pupils are also **less likely** to say that they are satisfied with their life at the moment.
- ↓ Pupils in the Bedfordshire Heartlands survey are **less likely** to take measures to avoid sunburn than are those pupils saying the same in the wider survey.

Bedfordshire Heartlands pupils in Year 10 (ages 14-15 years)

CITIZENSHIP

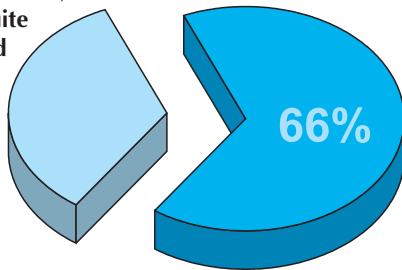
Background

- 95% of pupils describe themselves as white UK. 1% said that they were white non-UK.
- 61% live with both parents**, 15% live only with their mother.
- 49% of pupils did homework on the evening before the survey and 24% did over an hour.
- 50% of pupils used the Internet after school the day before the survey.
- 59% of pupils say that they use the Internet for finding out about their hobbies & interests, 64% use it for chatting and 22% use it for help and advice.
- 84% of pupils are never supervised when they use the Internet.
- 22% of pupils cared for family members after school the day before the survey.



EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- 66% of pupils reported that, in general, they were 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' satisfied with their life:**
- Parents are the most popular sources of support for boys and girls.
- 54% of boys and 37% of girls had high self-esteem scores.
- 66% agreed with the statement that they were in charge of their health.
- 82% of pupils say they are 'never' afraid of going to school because of bullying. 4% say that they think others may fear going to school because of them.
- 71% of pupils reported that they worried about at least one of the problems listed in the questionnaire 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'
- The top four worries were:**



| | Boys | | Girls |
|----------------------|------|----------------------|-------|
| Exams and tests | 33% | Exams and tests | 58% |
| Family problems | 27% | Their looks | 58% |
| Career problems | 23% | Family problems | 40% |
| School-work problems | 22% | School-work problems | 34% |

(The table shows the proportion of pupils who said they worried about the problems 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.)

HEALTHY EATING

- 11% of boys and 19% of girls reported having nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey.
- 18% of boys and 26% of the girls also reported having no lunch on the day before the survey.
- 20% of boys and 60% of girls say that they would like to lose weight.



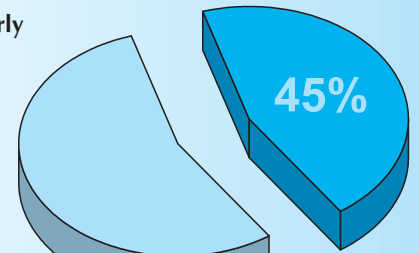
How many Year 10 girls that are trying to lose weight are not eating breakfast or lunch?

- 28% of boys say they never consider their health when choosing what to eat.
- 17% of pupils reported that they had no portions of fruit or vegetables on the day before the survey.
- 39% of pupils eat crisps, 'on most days', 33% fresh fruit and 41% sweets or chocolate bars.
- 24% of girls and 12% of boys had no water to drink on the day before the survey. 24% of pupils had about a litre or more.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL & TOBACCO

Drugs

- 45% of pupils are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know someone who takes illegal drugs.**



- 44% of Year 10 boys and 36% of Year 10 girls have been offered cannabis. 29% of pupils have been offered other drugs.
- 18% of pupils reported that they had taken an illegal drug in the last month.
- The top four drugs thought to be most dangerous were:**

| | Boys | | Girls |
|--------------|------|--------------|-------|
| Heroin | 82% | Heroin | 81% |
| Cocaine | 62% | Cocaine | 62% |
| Solvents | 46% | Solvents | 45% |
| Amphetamines | 27% | Amphetamines | 34% |

- The top four drugs thought easy to get hooked on were:**

| | Boys | | Girls |
|----------|------|----------|-------|
| Heroin | 74% | Heroin | 87% |
| Cocaine | 65% | Cocaine | 79% |
| Cannabis | 59% | Cannabis | 68% |
| Alcohol | 50% | Alcohol | 62% |

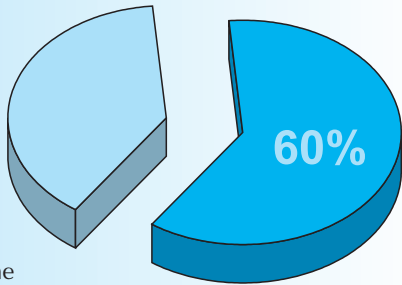
- 49% of pupils (more boys than girls) correctly identified alcohol as the drug that kills most people in this country.



Can anything be done to reduce drug use? Is there a need to improve drug education?

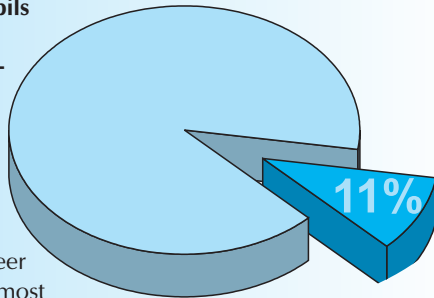
Alcohol

- 60% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey.



- 23% of pupils drank on only one day, 37% drank on more than one day.
- 32% of pupils drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 14% of Year 10 boys and 5% of Year 10 girls said they drank 21 or more units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.

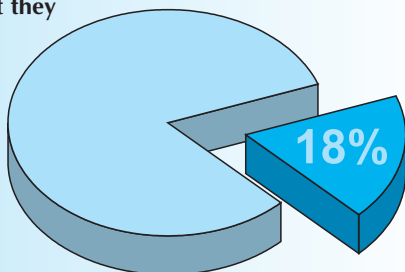
- 11% of Year 10 pupils were able to buy alcohol from an off-licence that should sell only to over-eighteens.



- Pre-mixed spirits, beer and wine were the most popular drinks.

Tobacco

- 51% of pupils reported that there is someone who smokes indoors in their home (including themselves) most days.
- 27% of boys reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly. 33% of girls reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.
- 18% of pupils say that they smoke but would like to give up.



Can anything be done to slow down or stop this progression in smoking? Can additional smoking prevention work be done with girls? How can parents, who may be smokers, help?

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

- When asked what was their main source of information about sex 50% of pupil said school lessons. 56% of the girls said their friends. 24% of the boys said the Internet and 24% said TV, films.
- When asked what should be their main source of information only 18% of pupils said their friends. 60% said it should be school lessons and 39% said their parents.
- 29% of Year 10 pupils said they believed there was a special contraception and advice service for young people available locally, 60% of pupils said they didn't know.

Can young people's knowledge of contraception services be increased?

SAFETY

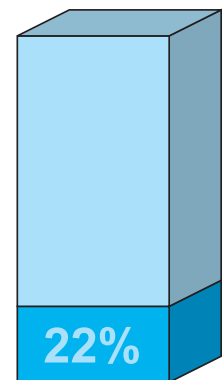
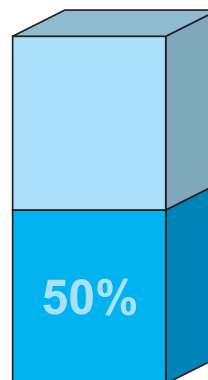
- 45% of pupils said they were treated for an accident by a doctor or at a hospital within the last year. 11% of the boys had an accident playing sport, 15% of the girls had an accident at home.
- 90% of pupils had visited the dentist in the twelve months before the survey.
- 21% of pupils said that they have asthma. 22% of pupils say they never do anything to avoid sunburn.
- 25% of pupils rated the safety of their area, when going out after dark, as 'poor' or 'very poor'. 4% said this about going out during the day.
- 17% of pupils reported that they were fairly sure or certain that they had friends who carried weapons for protection when going out. When asked what weapons were carried, 16% of the boys reported 'weapon with blade'.
- 25% of boys and 14% of girls said that they had been the victim of violence or aggression in the last 12 months in the area where they lived.

LEISURE

- The most common after school leisure activities on the day before the survey were watching television, listening to music and meeting with friends.
- 7% of girls and 20% of boys spent more than 2 hours playing computer games after school on the evening before the survey.
- 77% had used the Internet at home in the last month and 75% at school. 84% of those say they are never supervised.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- 50% of the boys consider themselves 'fit' or 'very fit' compared with only 22% of the girls.



- 34% of pupils reported that they had exercised three times or more, in the week before the survey, which made them breathe harder.
- Outside school hours, soccer and bike riding were the most popular form of physical activity for the boys and, for the girls, it was going for a walk.
- When asked what physical activities they would like to start doing more of, the girls expressed an interest in cricket and hockey, the boys were interested in climbing/ abseiling.
- When asked what they would like to do in PE/Games sessions, the girls asked for swimming, the boys - football.

What local facilities are available for youngsters to be active?

Gender differences between Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 10 pupils

- ↑ **More** Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 10 boys said that they never consider their health when choosing what to eat. 28% of boys compares with 7% of girls for this question.
- ↑ Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 10 boys are **more likely** to drink at least a litre of water during the day. 27% of boys drank at least a litre of water compared with only 20% of girls who said the same.
- ↑ **More** Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 10 boys said that they knew someone personally who took the drugs listed in the questionnaire. 48% of boys said that they didn't know anyone, this compares with 42% of girls who said the same.
- ↑ Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 10 boys are **more likely** to say that they have been the victim of violence or aggression in the area where they live in the last 12 months. 25% of boys compares with 14% of girls who said the same.
- ↑ Bedfordshire Heartlands boys are **more likely** to say that school lessons should be their main source of information about drugs. 70% of boys compares with 65% of girls who said that school lessons should be the main source.
- ↓ Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 10 are **less likely** to say that they are afraid of going to school because they might be bullied. 85% of boys say that they are 'never afraid', this compares with 80% of girls who said the same.
- ↓ Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 10 boys are **less likely** to worry about exams and tests, the way they look, or problems with family and friends when compared with the percentages of girls who worry.
- ↓ Bedfordshire Heartlands boys are **less likely** to say that they smoked a cigarette in the last week, 32% of girls smoked last week compared with 22% of boys who said the same.
- ↓ Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 10 boys are **less likely** to say that they know where they can get condoms free of charge. 46% of boys know where to get free access to them compared with 63% of girls who say the same.
- ↓ Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 10 boys are **less likely** to have done homework the evening before the survey compared with girls saying the same. 43% of boys compares with 54% of girls who said they did homework the night before. They are more likely than the girls to have played sport, met with friends and played computer games.

Differences between Bedfordshire Heartlands Year 10 pupils and SHEU wider databank figures

- ↑ Pupils in Bedfordshire Heartlands are **more likely** to say that they smoked in the last seven days compared with pupils who said the same in the wider sample.
- ↑ Pupils in Bedfordshire Heartlands are **more likely** to have drunk alcohol than pupils who say the same in the wider sample. They are also likely to have drunk more water.
- ↑ Pupils in Bedfordshire Heartlands are **more likely** to say that they have trouble breathing when running compared with pupils in the wider sample who said the same.
- ↑ Pupils in Bedfordshire Heartlands are **more likely** to say that they have had cannabis in the last month compared with pupils in the wider sample who said the same.
- ↑ **More girls** in the Bedfordshire Heartlands survey are aware of a special contraception and advice centre available to them locally, compared with girls in the wider survey who said the same.
- ↑ Pupils in Bedfordshire Heartlands are **more likely** to say that they are in charge of their health than pupils are in the wider survey.
- ↓ Pupils in Bedford and Bedfordshire Heartlands are **less likely** to say that safety during the day is 'very good' in the area where they live compared with pupils in the wider survey, although similar levels report being the victims of violence or aggression in the last 12 months.
- ↓ Pupils in Bedfordshire Heartlands are **less likely** to say that they live with both mother and father together.

The Way Forward – over to you

The work was funded by Bedford and Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trusts; Bedfordshire Drug Action Team; Bedfordshire LEA; Bedfordshire Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and the Luton and Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Scheme. As a result of their work we have excellent data to be used by schools, the Education Authority, the PCTs as well as other statutory and voluntary agencies that support the health of young people in the county. This work will inform action plans for joint working between and within organisations involved in improving the health and well-being of pupils in schools.

Our thanks go to the staff and pupils of the schools involved:

**Fulbrook Middle
Holmemead Middle
Kings Houghton Middle
Northfields Upper
Redbourne Upper
Robert Bloomfield Middle
Samuel Whitbread Upper
Woodland Middle
Tithe Farm Lower**

For further information about the survey contact:

**Barbara Rooney
Healthy Schools Co-ordinator – Luton and Bedfordshire
Health Improvement Manager – Children & Young People
Bedford PCT Tel. (01234) 792629
email: barbara.rooney@bedford-pct.nhs.uk**

Luton and Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Programme Current Priorities and Programmes

Promoting Emotional Health and Well-being

Promoting Emotional Health and Well-being is a priority for the scheme this year. A simple audit form was sent out to all schools in October. This will enable us to collect information relating to the good practice, which already exists in our local schools to promote and support the emotional health and well-being of young people. The information will help us to plan a package of support for schools and inform the content of the 2005 Healthy Schools Conference which will focus on this theme.

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)

The new SRE Information and Guidance and Curriculum Framework has been sent out to all schools in November. This will be followed up by a comprehensive training programme for teachers, governors and parents co-ordinated by the Education Consultant for SRE and The Lodge

Healthy Eating

Have you received your updated version of the Healthy Eating Folder? This was sent out to all schools in September 2004 and contains very useful information to help schools to promote healthier eating habits.

Physical Activity

A key objective for the Healthy Schools Scheme this year is to work closely with schools to develop and

support family based obesity intervention projects. The Healthy Schools Physical Activity Sub-group will be developing a set of good practice standards for schools on which new projects can be based.

PSHE Teachers' Certification Programme

30 teachers from across the County are taking part in this exciting new programme. 20 teachers are completing an extension module in SRE and 10 are focusing on Drug and Alcohol Education. Funding is available for the next two years to support the DfES targets to have at least one teacher with a PSHE certificate in all secondary schools by 2006. The next course will be starting in April 2005.

PSHE Community Nurses' Programme

Luton and Bedfordshire will be joining the next cohort of this programme in April 2005, and will offer community nurses the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in PSHE, and specifically SRE and Drug and Alcohol education. This will complement the ongoing teachers' continuing professional development programme.

Useful websites

www.healthy-schools.co.uk
www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

**For more information about any of the above contact
Barbara Rooney, Healthy Schools Co-ordinator,
Tel. 01234 792629**