St. Helens
Health and Wellbeing
Pupil Survey 2014
Executive Summary
Introduction

Continuing to understand the health and wellbeing of children and young people in St. Helens helps schools, commissioners and service providers to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of individual children. Data regarding children’s health and wellbeing is fundamental to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and allows services to take a focussed approach towards addressing health inequalities. ‘Give every child the best start in life’ and ‘Support for Young People’ are key priorities of the St. Helens Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The concept of investment in early years is based on the Marmot Report which describes the life-course process where health, lifestyle and wellbeing in childhood affect health and wellbeing later on in life. Equally, the Department of Health Healthy Child Programme sets out clear expectations of how health and education services should provide universal prevention as well as meeting the needs of vulnerable children and families. Having a strong evidence base will continue to support St. Helens to effectively address and provide services which meet child health needs.

The St. Helens Health and Wellbeing Pupil Survey covers a broad range of health and wellbeing issues including diet, physical activity, tobacco, drugs and alcohol, dental health, mental wellbeing and staying safe. Pupils in years 6, 8 and 10 from all primary and secondary schools in St. Helens were invited to participate.

In addition to this survey, the questionnaire has been updated to encourage participation of young people who are supported through the Alternative Education provision, Youth Offending Service and the Young Peoples Drug and Alcohol Service. The data will be presented in a separate report and will provide an understanding of the self-reported health behaviours of vulnerable young people. This information will be used to review and address specific health needs through targeted commissioning intentions.

The St. Helens Health and Wellbeing Pupil Survey 2014 surveyed pupils from 41 primary schools and 9 secondary schools, with 4098 pupils responding. It is intended to repeat the survey annually so that we can be both mindful of changes to children’s health and wellbeing behaviour over time and utilise the data to monitor the impact of health improvement interventions.
Profile of the pupils

- Slightly more boys completed the survey in both primary and secondary schools.
- 6% of all pupils identified themselves as non-white British.
- More young people indicated that they had a disability (7%) compared to HWPS2013 (5%).
- Of those that reported that they had a disability the most prevalent type was learning disabilities.
- Six out of ten pupils said that they live with both their mum and dad, similar to last year’s survey.
- Nearly a fifth of all pupils reported that they had caring responsibilities at least some of the time.

Information, advice and guidance

- Pupils reported that lessons on staying safe were most useful. Lessons related to alcohol were not rated very highly by any year group.
- Four out of ten secondary school pupils said they had not received any lessons in handling their feelings.
- Half of Year 8 pupils (48%) and a quarter of Year 10 pupils (28%) reported that they had used the school nursing service in the last year.
- Almost half of secondary pupils (44%) said they knew how to contact the school nurse if they wanted to see them about something.
- 44% of secondary school pupils said they were aware of the TAZ team; this is lower than in the HWPS2013.

Diet

- Most young people in St. Helens eat breakfast. The number of children eating breakfast everyday or on most days is 93% for Year 6, 77% for Year 8 and 68% for Year 10.
- Amongst primary school pupils, there has been an increase in those who report having a school meal (either free or paid for); with 46% of pupils this year compared to 37% in 2013.
- For all three year groups most pupils brought in their own packed lunch; although Year 8 pupils are just as likely to have a school meal.
- One in four children in Year 6 and one in ten children in Year 10 met the recommended 5-a-day guideline for fruit and vegetables.
- More than two out of five secondary school pupils; and more than a third of primary school pupils drank energy and/or sports drinks everyday or on most days.
- Two-thirds of all pupils stated they had sweets or chocolate everyday or on most days.

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Dental health

- Nearly all pupils (99%) brush their teeth at least once a day, with 79% of primary and 85% of secondary school pupils reporting to brushing their teeth twice on a normal day.
- The percentage of primary school pupils that have visited the dentist in the past year appears to have decreased; whereas there has been an increase in secondary school pupils when compared to results from the HWPS2013.

Physical activity

- Three-quarters of primary pupils, and six out of ten secondary school pupils, reported doing less than 2 hours of physical activity in school lessons per week.
- Half of all Year 6 and Year 8 pupils don’t participate in any physical activity school clubs, with this figure rising to three-quarters of Year 10 pupils.
- Playing out with friends was the most popular way to be active.
- Around eight in ten pupils reported they could swim at least one length (approx. 25m).
- Walking or cycling to school appears to have increased amongst both primary and secondary school pupils compared to HWPS2013.
- In Year 6 the most popular form of transport to school is by car.

Emotional health and friendship

- More than eight in ten of all pupils appear to have the confidence to talk to their parents or carers about most things.
- Less than half of all pupils felt they could happily talk about their feelings; confidence appears to reduce from Year 6 through to Year 10
- School work and exams worried pupils the most.
- Pupils in Year 10 and Year 8 are significantly more likely to worry about how they look (41% & 31%) compared with children in Year 6 (17%).
- Whilst talking to mum is still the main source of support for all year groups, this does decrease with age (Year 6 = 60%, Year 8 = 52%, Year 10 = 39%). The opposite trend is seen amongst pupils seeking support from friends, which increases as they get older.
- More than one in ten of all pupils stated they would not talk to anybody if they were worried.
- A fifth of all secondary school pupils report that they have self-harmed or considered it.
**Alcohol, smoking and drugs**

- There appears to have been a reduction in the percentage of secondary school pupils drinking alcohol, with 16% of pupils reporting drinking alcohol on at least one day, compared to 19% in HWPS2013.
- 99% of primary school children and 92% of secondary school pupils don’t smoke cigarettes.
- Over 40% of pupils live with a smoker.
- The vast majority of pupils have never used e-cigarettes, although over a quarter of Year 10 pupils (28%) have tried an e-cigarette.
- More than nine in ten secondary school pupils (92%) reported that they had never taken any drugs (not including medicines).
- Of those secondary school pupils that have ever tried drugs, and stated the type of drug(s) taken, 96% have used cannabis.

**Staying safe**

- Over half of Year 6 pupils (54%) reported that they had been bullied (either a bit or a lot), with nearly a third of secondary school pupils reporting to have ever been bullied.
- Of those that reported bullying behaviour over half of all pupils reported experiencing verbal bullying behaviour (54% primary; 56% secondary).
- More than one in ten pupils reported to have been cyberbullied.
- Of those that said they had been cyberbullied, Year 10 pupils were least likely to report this to anyone.
- Across all year groups, home is where most pupils feel safe.
- Just as many Year 10 pupils feel safe walking with friends at night as they do at school (60% and 61% respectively).
- Around one in ten secondary pupils (13%) report that they have been a victim of physical or verbal abuse near their home.
- Nine out of ten secondary school pupils (90%) use social networking sites.
- Half of all primary school pupils (51%) reported using social networking sites which shows a drop since the 2013 survey (57%).
- The average ranking of feeling safe increases as pupils get older (from 7.3 in Year 6 to 8.2 in Year 10).
- When comparing to results in HWPS2013 there has been a slight increase in secondary school pupils reporting that there have been cyberbullying incidents in their schools (2013 = 40%; 2014 = 44%).
Conclusion

The survey continues to reveal some positive health and wellbeing attributes of children and young people in St. Helens, such as the high proportion of pupils having the confidence to talk to their parents about most things. Nearly all pupils have more than one friend, with friendships becoming increasingly important as a source of support as they get older. It is also encouraging that a significant proportion of pupils eat breakfast either everyday or most days. The ability to swim also emerged positively, with eight of ten pupils reporting that they could swim at least one length (approx. 25m). Other positive results in respect of safety include the use of e-cigarettes, with the vast majority of primary and secondary pupils never having used an e-cigarette; and lessons on safety being rated as most useful.

A comparison with the HWPS2013 highlights some changes in health behaviours, such as the increased uptake of school meals amongst primary school pupils and an increase in the proportion of pupils that walk or cycle to school in both primary and secondary school pupils. Whilst there appears to be a slight drop in fruit and vegetable consumption from HWPS2013; there has been an increase in pupils visiting the dentist in the last year.

However, the survey has also revealed some new and continued challenges amongst the health related behaviours of St. Helens children and young people. Continued challenges include the high proportion of pupils living with a smoker and the number of pupils who did not feel happy talking about their feelings with anyone. The majority of pupils continue to consume sweets and chocolate on most days, and the number of pupils not participating in school club activities continues to be high. Additionally, there remains a significant proportion of pupils that report to having caring responsibilities. The survey also highlighted some emerging challenges, such as the proportion of secondary school pupils that have self-harmed or considered it; as well as bullying behaviour being reported, especially verbal bullying. Another emerging challenge is the regular consumption of high energy/sports drinks amongst both primary and secondary school pupils.

The results of the survey will be shared with Head Teachers and key stakeholders, schools will also receive a report specific to their school. Schools are encouraged to utilise the findings within their own settings. The findings will provide contextual data for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and will be utilised to ensure services and interventions are developed to meet local need.