Healthy Lifestyles of young people in Cumbria
A report from the Health-Related Behaviour Survey 2012

These results are from a compilation of data collected from a sample of primary pupils in Year 6 and secondary pupils in Years 8 and 10 in Cumbria during Summer 2012. This work was commissioned by Cumbria Children’s Services and Public Health, NHS Cumbria as a way of collecting information about young people’s knowledge, attitudes and behaviours as well as sources of information and support.

Teachers were briefed on how to collect the most reliable data and then pupils in Years 6 in the primary schools and Years 8 and 10 in the secondary schools anonymously completed the questionnaire. A total of 3845 pupils took part in 18 secondary schools and 28 primary schools.

Completed questionnaires were then returned to SHEU in Exeter for processing.

**Bold type** in the main body of the report indicates a result has an accompanying chart.

---

### 3845 young people were involved in the survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>14-15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>1556</td>
<td>1501</td>
<td>3845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trends
The HRBQ survey has been undertaken in secondary schools in Cumbria on 10 occasions, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1995, 2000, 2003*, 2006*, 2008*, 2010* and 2012*. (Asterisks indicate a combined primary/secondary survey.) It has been possible to look at certain questions and analyse the data over the whole period to see if any trends are discernible. Different schools took part in different years so this needs to be taken into consideration when studying the data.

### Reference sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>14-15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>6470</td>
<td>4662</td>
<td>4487</td>
<td>15619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>6321</td>
<td>4750</td>
<td>4664</td>
<td>15735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12791</td>
<td>9412</td>
<td>9151</td>
<td>31354</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cumbria data have been compared with a compilation of data from other areas in the UK that have completed similar versions of the questionnaire. This is the sample that will be used throughout the report under ‘Comparisons’.

---

### Topics include:
- Diet
- Physical Activity
- Hygiene and Health
- Leisure Activities
- Economic Wellbeing
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Risk-Taking Behaviour
- Healthy Lifestyles
There is an upward trend with age in the number of pupils who report having ‘nothing at all’ for breakfast; this is particularly noticeable among girls.

7% of primary pupils and 11% of secondary pupils said they had no fruit or vegetables on the day before the survey.

25% of primary pupils and 17% of secondary pupils said they had 5 or more portions.

We can compare dietary habits of primary and secondary pupils by showing the proportions who consume items ‘on most days’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Fruit</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy produce</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisps</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets/chocolates</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-diet fizzy drinks</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proportion of pupils eating sweets/chocolates and crisps on most days remained fairly consistent across the year groups.

28% of primary pupils and 30% of secondary pupils said they ‘rarely or never’ ate any fish/fish-fingers.

9% of primary pupils and 16% of secondary pupils drank no water on the day before the survey. 21% of primary pupils and 25% of secondary pupils drank about a litre or more.

21% of primary pupils and 24% of secondary pupils say they ‘very often’ or ‘always’ consider their health when choosing food.

36% of primary pupils and 47% of secondary pupils say they would like to lose weight. 4% and 8% want to gain weight.

94% of pupils said they were able to get water easily at school.

12% of Year 10 girls had nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the morning of the survey. It is interesting that 66% of Year 10 girls say that they would like to lose weight.

19% of the Year 10 girls also reported having no lunch on the day before the survey.

49% of secondary pupils had a school lunch on the day before the survey.

Primary school pupils in Cumbria are more likely to eat meat (38%) and dairy products (50%) on most days than pupils in the reference sample (32% & 52%).

Secondary school pupils in Cumbria are more likely to eat vegetables on most days (52%) than pupils in the reference sample (42%).

Secondary school pupils in Cumbria are more likely to consider health often when choosing food (55%) than pupils in the reference sample (41%).

Secondary school girls in Cumbria are less likely to have skipped breakfast on the morning of the survey (9%) than those in the reference sample (23%).

Primary school pupils in Cumbria are less likely to say that they drank a litre or more of water yesterday (21%) than are pupils in the reference sample (49%).
Links
We can see that young people who want to lose weight are more likely to skip meals, but this is not a good way of losing weight.

Year 10 females skipping meals by attitude to weight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Want to lose weight</th>
<th>Happy with weight</th>
<th>Like to gain weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skip Breakfast</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skip Lunch</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trends

Very often think about health when choosing food, 1992-2012

- The proportion of pupils who said they thought about their health ‘very often’ when choosing what to eat declined over the period 1992 to 2003. Since 2006 the proportion has increased for all groups (more so the girls than the boys), to the highest level seen to date.

No more than a drink for breakfast, 1988-2006, 2010-2012

- The proportion of pupils who say they have nothing more than a drink for breakfast on the day of the survey has dropped significantly since 2000, the biggest drop being between 2003 and 2006. Prior to the 2000 survey there had been slight increases for most groups. N.B. No comparable figures available for 2008.

Eat vegetables on most days, 1990-2012

- The proportion of pupils who say they eat vegetables on most days has recovered to some extent since a low point in 1995.

Eat fresh fruit on most days, 1990-2012

- The proportion of pupils who say they eat fresh fruit on most days has increased significantly since a low point in 1993.

Eating chips on most days among primary pupils 2003-2012

- An initial fall has not been sustained.
Primary/Secondary results

- We asked primary and secondary school pupils how many times last week they exercised enough to breathe harder and faster. The current figures for three times or more are:
  - Year 6M: 62%
  - Year 8M: 84%
  - Year 10M: 74%
  - Year 6F: 44%
  - Year 8F: 73%
  - Year 10F: 52%

- Enjoyment of physical activity declines with age and is most noticeable in its decline for girls.
- Those reporting they are physically ‘fit’ or ‘very fit’ also follows the same trend.

The physical activities most often taken part in were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walks</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike riding</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep fit</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding a bike</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogging</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going for walks</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-a-side football</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- We also asked pupils which activities they would like to start doing or doing more of:
  - Primary boys’ top three were swimming, rugby/mini rugby, and tennis; year 8 boys tennis, martial arts and weight training, year 10 boys weight training, swimming and martial arts.
  - Primary girls’ top three were horse riding, swimming and roller skating; year 8 girls horse riding, swimming and ice skating; year 10 girls swimming, horse riding and ice skating.

- Pupils were asked if there was anything that stops them doing as much exercise or sport as much as they want to. These are the top 5 barriers for primary and secondary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have enough time</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know what I want to do but I don’t know where to go</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It costs a lot to get there or take part</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am shy in front of other people</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know what to do</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 50% of primary pupils and 35% of secondary reported walking to school on the day of the survey.
- 3% of primary and 1% of secondary said they went to school by bicycle on the day of the survey.
- 57% of primary pupils and 34% of secondary reported riding a bike at least weekly.

- 76% of primary pupils and 51% of secondary said that their parents/carers do some sort of physical activity with them at least once a month.

- 53% of primary pupils said they had played sport after school on the day before the survey. Only 23% of secondary pupils said the same.
- 19% of primary pupils said they spent their own money in the last 7 days on leisure centre or sports centre activities. 8% of secondary pupils said this, but the secondary list was slightly different and 10% also reported spending their own money on sports equipment in the last 7 days.
Comparisons

- Year 10 females in Cumbria are less likely to say they enjoy physical activity ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a lot’ (53%) than the reference sample (61%).

- Secondary pupils in Cumbria are less likely to say they walked to school on the day of the survey (35%) compared to the reference sample (40%).

- Secondary pupils in Cumbria are more likely to say they played sports on the night before the survey (23%) compared to the reference sample (15%).

Trends

Exercise three days or more, 1995-2012

There is a jump in the proportion of pupils saying that they exercised three or more times last week, which we think was due to a change in the wording of the questionnaire to reflect a change in guidance.

View self as 'fit' or 'very fit', 1992-2012

The proportion of males who viewed themselves as 'fit' or 'very fit' has remained fairly static since 2000. For females the proportion has risen from 1995 to 2008 with the exception of Year 10 girls. Overall, the levels are still not as high as 1992 and it can be seen that Year 10 females have the lowest proportion overall.

Did sport/physical activity last night among primary pupils 2003-2012

The proportion of primary school pupils who exercised at least three times last week, enough to breathe harder and faster, has been quite steady over the last few years.
Primary/Secondary results

- The proportion of pupils taking measures to avoid sunburn decreases as they get older. 8% of primary pupils said they never did anything to try to avoid sunburn. This increased to 18% of secondary pupils. The figures for ‘whenever possible’ were 17% and 14%.

- The figures for taking precautions against sunburn ‘whenever possible’ were 17% for primary pupils and 14% for secondary pupils.

- 86% of primary pupils and 81% of secondary pupils had visited the dentist in the last 6 months. 1% of both age groups said that they had never been.

- A further 17% of secondary pupils reported not having a safety helmet.

Primary results

- 55% of pupils wash their hands before lunch and 78% after going to the toilet.

- 47% of all Year 6 pupils go to bed between 9pm and 10pm; 23% of the sample are already in bed by then.

- Another 8% of pupils went to bed after 11pm.

Secondary results

- 12% of pupils got 6 or fewer hours of sleep the night before the survey.

- 72% got at least 8 hours sleep.

- 65% of pupils said that the amount of sleep they normally get is enough for them to stay alert and concentrate on their school work; 13% think it isn’t enough.

- 53% of pupils said that the amount of sleep they normally get is enough for their health; 11% think it isn’t enough.

Trends

Brushing their teeth at least twice yesterday, 1988-2012

- There was a change in the wording of the question between 1992 and 1995.

- There has been a gradual increase in the proportion of pupils brushing their teeth at least twice on the day before the survey.

Comparisons

- Primary school pupils in Cumbria are more likely to say they at least usually take precautions to avoid sunburn (54%) than are pupils in the reference sample (44%).

- Secondary school pupils in Cumbria are less likely to have reported going to the dentist in the 12 months before the survey (84%) than the pupils in the reference sample (94%).

(N.B. the Cumbria survey took place in the summer, while the reference sample is composed of surveys from throughout the year.)
LEISURE

Primary/Secondary results

- 74% of primary pupils and 87% of secondary pupils said they spent time watching television, after school, on the day before the survey.
- 14% of secondary pupils watched for more than 3 hours.
- 58% of the primary boys and 73% of secondary boys played computer games, on the evening before the survey. 31% of secondary boys spent more than 2 hours playing computer games after school on the evening before the survey.

Primary results

- 53% played sport on the evening before the survey.
- 59% played with friends on the evening before the survey.
- 58% of the boys played computer games, and 62% played sport on the evening before the survey.
- 29% of boys and 47% of girls reported reading a book for pleasure on the evening before the survey.

Secondary results

- The most common after school leisure activities on the day before the survey were watching television, doing homework, and using the Internet for socialising.
- 23% of pupils reported reading a book for pleasure on the evening before the survey.
- 52% of pupils looked after pets.

YOUNG CARERS

- 7% of secondary pupils responded that they are a ‘young carer’.

VOLUNTEERING

- 10% of secondary pupils said they spent some time on the evening before the survey helping or volunteering outside the home.
- The breakdown by age and sex was: Y8M: 10% Y10M: 11% Y8F: 10% Y10F: 9%

Trends

Watching TV for more than 3 hours, 1990-2012

- The proportion of pupils who said they watched television for 3 hours or more on the night before the survey remains fairly consistent since the initial drop seen in 1992, but may have fallen in recent years. This is echoed in the primary figures since 2003:

Secondary school pupils in Cumbria are more likely to have read a book for enjoyment last night (23%) than pupils in the reference sample (10%).

Secondary school pupils in Cumbria are more likely to have helped/volunteered outside of the home last night (10%) than the pupils in the reference sample (2%).
Primary/Secondary results

- The most commonly purchased items last week were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fizzy drinks/soft drinks</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure or sports centre</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phones</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 11% of primary school pupils received more than £10 pocket money last week; 26% of secondary school pupils spent more than £10 of their own money last week.

Secondary results

- Thinking about plans after Year 11, 45% of secondary pupils want to continue in full-time education, 29% want to find a job as soon as possible, and 26% want to stay in the neighbourhood in which they live. 43% of Year 10 males want to stay in full-time education, which compares with 59% of Year 10 females.

- 57% put money into a savings scheme last week.

- 27% of pupils have a regular paid job.

- The most common form of work for boys is a paper/milk round. Most Year 8 girls did either a paper/milk round or paid housework. Year 10 girls mainly work in hotels, bars or cafés.

Comparisons

- Secondary school pupils in Cumbria are more likely to have a regular paid term-time job (27%) than pupils in the reference sample (12%).

- Secondary school pupils in Cumbria are more likely to put money in a savings scheme in the last week (57%) than pupils in the reference sample (37%).

- Secondary school pupils in Cumbria are more likely to say they want to continue in full time education (45%) than pupils in the reference sample (56%).

Links

- Having money to spend and plan budgets is useful, but it also provides an opportunity to purchase items which are not healthy. For example, sweets and soft drinks are the most commonly purchased items. Young people with higher incomes are more likely to take part in a variety of health-risky behaviours:

Trends

Regular paid term-time job, 1988-2012

- Fewer pupils in recent surveys report having a regular paid job during term time. This trend has a gentle slope but has persisted for two decades.

No pocket money in primary school pupils, 2003-2012

- The proportion of primary school pupils who get no regular pocket money has increased over the period of study.
Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks go to all the pupils in Cumbria for their willingness and enthusiasm to take part in this survey. The help, and the time and effort spent, by staff of the schools is also acknowledged.

Thankyou to all those people from a variety of agencies who were involved in the questionnaire design and to the steering group members : Anne Sheppard (Children’s Services), Mike Conefrey (Children’s Services ), Bruce Lawson (Active Cumbria), Mike Graham (Public Health, NHS Cumbria), Cathryn Beckett (Public Health, NHS Cumbria) and Sue Milner (Children’s Services).

Our thanks go to the staff and pupils that took part:

**Primaries:**
- Alston Primary School
- Appleby Primary School
- Beaconside CE Primary School, Penrith
- Black Combe Junior School, Millom
- Ewanrigg Junior School, Maryport
- Ghyllside Primary Training School, Kendal
- Greengate Juniors, Barrow
- Haverigg School
- Heron Hill Primary School, Kendal
- Holme Cultram Abbey CE School, Abbeytown
- Kingmoor Junior, Carlisle
- Kirkby Stephen Primary
- Longtown Primary School
- Nenthead Primary school
- Penny Bridge CE School, Ulverston
- Shap Endowed CE School
- Silloth Primary School
- Sir John Barrow School, Ulverston
- South Walney Junior School, Barrow
- St Begh’s Catholic Junior School, Whitehaven
- St Catherine’s Catholic Primary School, Penrith
- St James’ Catholic Primary School, Millom
- St James’ CE Junior School, Whitehaven
- St. Margaret Mary Catholic Primary, Carlisle
- St Michael’s CE Primary, Dalston
- St Paul’s Junior School, Barrow
- Thomlinson Junior School, Wigton
- Valley Primary School, Whitehaven

**Secondaries:**
- Caldew School, Dalston
- Dallam School, Milnthorpe
- Dowdales School, Dalton-in-Furness
- Furness Academy, Barrow
- John Ruskin School, Coniston
- Keswick School
- Kirkbie Kendal School, Kendal
- Newman Catholic School, Carlisle
- Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Penrith
- Samuel King’s School, Alston
- Solway Community Technology College, Silloth
- St Benedict’s Catholic High School, Whitehaven
- Trinity School, Carlisle
- Ullswater Community College, Penrith
- Ulverston Victoria High School
- Walney School, Barrow
- Whitehaven School
- William Howard School, Brampton

For further information about the survey contact:

Sue Milner
Planning and Commissioning Officer
Planning and Commissioning Team
Partnerships and Prevention
Children’s Services
80 Warwick Road
Carlisle CA1 1DU
Tel. 01228 221241
sue.milner@cumbria.gov.uk

Copies of the full HRBQ report and all summaries can be found at:

Cumbria Intelligence Observatory
www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk