



hbsc

HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN
SCOTLAND



About the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study (HBSC)

HBSC is a World Health Organisation (WHO) cross-national study which aims to increase our understanding of young people's health and wellbeing, health behaviours and social context. HBSC monitors the health and health behaviour of young people over time and across countries as well as the wider context in which they live. This includes important aspects such as family and peer relationships, the school experience and the socio-economic environment in which they are growing up. This helps us to understand better what factors shape and influence health and health behaviours.

The first study was conducted in Scotland in 1990 and it has been repeated every 4 years since then, providing a unique insight into how health and health behaviours have changed over the last 30+ years. HBSC involves 50 countries across Europe and North America and therefore allows us to see how young people in Scotland are doing compared with young people in other countries.

The 2022 survey is funded by Public Health Scotland (previously NHS Health Scotland) and conducted by Researchers at the University of Glasgow and the University of St Andrews.

Survey population

Data are collected through school-based surveys, using an international standard questionnaire. The target population of the study is young people attending school, aged 11 (P7), 13 (S2) and 15 (S4) years. In each participating country a sample of around 5000 young people complete the survey.

Example survey topics

- Mental wellbeing
- Sleeping habits
- Electronic media use
- Eating habits
- Physical activity
- Alcohol and tobacco use
- Sexual health (S4 pupils only)
- Life at school
- Relationships with friends and family



The 2022 survey

In addition to monitoring long-term trends, the 2022 survey will provide invaluable information on how young people are faring after the disruption of COVID-19. This includes key areas such as mental health, sleep, social media use and school life.

Report outputs from 2018 survey

To read the 2018 Scotland national results, showing key findings and trends over time by gender, age and socioeconomic status, visit the [HBSC Scotland 2018 National Report](#).

Based on the 2018 survey results, we also produced 4 short research briefings which can be used as an educational resource within the classroom setting:

[Young People's Diet and Physical Activity in Scotland](#)

[Life at School in Scotland](#)

[Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing in Scotland](#)

[Young People's Screen Time and Social Media Use in Scotland](#)



Who uses the data?

The data produced by HBSC are used to provide evidence to inform the development of policies and programmes tailored to the needs of young people at local, national and international levels. Key users include:

Scottish Government

Public Health Scotland

Schools

Academics

Schools Health and Wellbeing Improvement Research Network (SHINE)

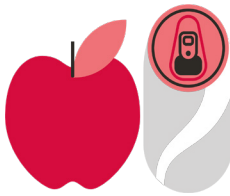
Third sector organisations

International organisations e.g. WHO, UNICEF, OECD

What have we learnt from 30 years of HBSC in Scotland?



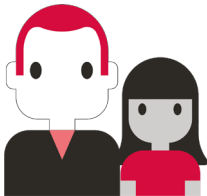
Substantial reductions in alcohol and tobacco use



Improvements in eating habits, e.g. decline in consumption of chips and soft drinks



Declines in mental health and wellbeing



Changes in family life, but improvements in relationships with fathers



Emerging findings on sleep difficulties



What our data users say

"Your research is important for a number of different reasons..... it provides us with a barometer against which we can broadly measure the success of policies which aim to improve the health and well-being of Scotland's Young people. It also shows us where the challenges remain".

Scottish Minister for Children and Young People 2011-2016, from the HSBC 30th Annual Conference, Summary Report

"HBSC has again provided high quality data on the health and wellbeing of school-aged children's health, and Scotland's primary source of international comparisons. As we face new and ongoing challenges, and develop new ways of working together to tackle them, such data will remain vital"

Public Health Scotland

What are the data used for?

Data from the HBSC Scotland survey have been used by Scottish Government to measure progress of the Child Poverty Strategy for Scotland and provided much of the evidence around health and wellbeing of adolescents for their review of poverty and inequalities; Life Chances of Young People in Scotland Evidence Review. HBSC data contributed to the Scottish Government Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People's Strategy 2016-2026, and is the only source of internationally comparable data on adolescent sexual health in Scotland. HBSC Scotland data is available in the World Health Organisation data gateway, where the health and wellbeing of Scotland's young people can be compared to those in countries across Europe. Data from Scotland and other European countries are used by UNICEF in their flagship 'State of the World's Children' reports, and several of their 'Report Card' series highlighting inequalities in young people's wellbeing between rich countries.

Further information

If you would like to find out more about HBSC please visit:

HBSC Scotland: gla.ac.uk/hbscscotland

HBSC International: hbsc.org

You can also contact us by email: sphsu-hbscscotland@glasgow.ac.uk

MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit



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To find out more about the work of the MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, visit www.glasgow.ac.uk/sphsu