

Using a survey of 'smoking' information to boost the Humberside Health Promoting School Award scheme

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East Yorkshire reaches the parts other schemes miss

The Health Promotion Department in East Yorkshire is one of four that helped in the development of the Humberside Health Promoting School Award scheme (HPSA) alongside the Local Education Authority. The scheme has been piloted and running for some three years, with four schools gaining the Award during the pilot phase, five gaining it since, and a further 15 schools working towards the Award at present.

As there are some 500 schools in Humberside, it can be seen that we need to reach those parts that ordinary schemes do not.

The East Yorkshire experience in this respect, while not being earth-shattering, may be a pointer to others trying to recruit schools to their schemes.

Smoking and Healthy Schools

As the Senior Health Promotion Officer in East Yorkshire, with a responsibility for promoting the health of young people, I had agreed with our purchasers that I would undertake some work on reducing the number of young people that take up smoking, as well as the work already

in hand on the HPSA scheme.

In May 1995 I wrote to all the East Yorkshire schools — nursery, infant (5-7), primary (5-11), junior (7-11) and secondary (11-18). There are no sixth form colleges in the area, and special schools were excluded on this occasion. In my letter I asked if the member of staff concerned would mind filling in a questionnaire on smoking. For the secondary schools I sent the letter to the health education co-ordinator, the teacher with responsibility for all the health education in the school; for all the other schools I sent the letter to the Headteacher. I also included a short questionnaire and a stamped reply envelope.

Offering help

As can be seen from the letter, I reminded the schools of the HPSA scheme, which they had been invited to join when we launched the scheme the previous September. In addition, all schools had been sent another flyer for the scheme through the internal school mailing system. I also offered help with both smoking work and smoking policy development in the schools.

The questionnaire asked if the school had a smoking policy: the answer to this question should have been Yes in all cases, as the Local Authority had passed a motion requesting all Local Authority establishments, including schools, to introduce a controlled smoking policy some three years ago. I also asked if the schools covered smoking education, and which materials they use.

The final two questions asked if the school wanted me to come in to discuss smoking and the HPSA scheme.

The responses received to the 'smoking' enquiry.

	Number	Replies	Smoking policy	Smoking education	Visit request
Secondary (11-18)	12	7 (58%)	6	7	6
Junior (7-11)	12	8 (67%)	2	6	4
Primary (5-11)	67	30 (45%)	16*	19	17
Infant (5-7)	14	8 (57%)	2	2	1
Nursery	2	0 (0%)	0	0	0
Overall	107	53 (50%)	26	34	28

* Two of these unclear

Dear Headteacher

Smoking and Young People

I apologise for giving you yet more paper to read and deal with, but I hope that you will agree that the issue of young people smoking is sufficiently important to merit a few moments of your time.

Can I ask you to complete the slip overleaf and return it to me in the envelope enclosed.

In return, I am very happy to help you, where appropriate, in either drawing up a smoking policy for the school or discussing with you ideas for smoking education programmes based on lifeskills training.

Can I also remind you of the Health Promoting School Award scheme which was launched in Humberside last September. I can give you information and help on this as well.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you and meeting you to help promote the health of your students.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Wolmark
Senior Health Promotion Specialist

Please return as soon as possible

Name

School

.....

Do you have a smoking policy in the school? Yes/No
(If yes, please send me a copy if possible.)

Do you cover smoking education
in the curriculum? Yes/No

(If yes, within which years?)

.....

What materials do you use for smoking education?

.....

.....

Do you want me to make an appointment to come to the
school to discuss:

(a) smoking Yes/No

(b) Health Promoting School Award Yes/No

Thank you again

The results of the questionnaire are shown in the table.

Out of a total of 107 schools, 53 replied, which is a reply rate of nearly a half overall, and in all but one sector of schools the reply rate was well over half, the exception being primary schools. I think these results are very encouraging when there are so many other issues demanding the time of staff in schools.

Come and talk!

However, the most encouraging aspect of the questionnaire was the large number of schools that said they wanted me to come in to talk about smoking, the HPSA scheme, or both. Of the 53 schools that replied, 18 wanted me to talk about smoking and 20 wanted more information about the scheme. In the case of 11 of the schools, I was asked to talk about both. A positive invitation to visit was had from 28 schools altogether.

To date (March 1996) 23 schools have been contacted by phone and 23 visited, leading to five joining the HPSA scheme and a further five or six wanting to join it later in the school year. All of these will be doing some work on a smoking policy, as this is one of our criteria in the scheme.

So what started out as a request for information on smoking policies in the schools led to over 20 schools being visited and informed about the HPSA scheme. In most cases the person concerned was the Headteacher. There is also the possibility that other schools will join the scheme when the time is right for them.

LIFESTYLES 2 (Mainly Money)

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The success of *Lifestyles 1* (Mainly Social) encouraged us to develop a second datafile, aimed particularly at investigating how spending power may affect people and the things they do. *Lifestyles 2* (Mainly Money) contains 200 Year 10 pupils (100 boys, 100 girls, surveyed in 1994), with 25 variables in the database. The price is £15.00 including postage.

When ordering, please let us know the size of disc required, and the machine and software (one type only per set) into which you will be loading the datafile.

Please make cheques payable to the University of Exeter. If you have any queries, talk to Anne Wise on 01392 264728.