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# Young people in 1986 and 1996: spot the difference

**T**his year saw the 11th successive appearance of our annual *Young People* report, which began in 1986. Years 8, 9 and 10 are represented within the sample of 22,067 pupils from 130 schools surveyed during 1996. We also took the opportunity of comparing the Year 10 data with data from the equivalent Year 4 (secondary) pupils that completed the much earlier version of the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire in 1986, some of whom will now have their own children at school!

*Young People in 1996* also includes, for the first time, extensive information about young people's involvement with, and expenditure on,

arcade machines and scratch cards.

The report is divided into ten sections, each one of which concentrates on a particular aspect of the young people's lifestyle. A new section examines the use of gaming machines and Lottery scratch cards. A sample table from each section is presented here.

## *DIET: Weight and worry*

To explore the connection between a young person's attitude to their own weight and their concern for how they appear to others, we analysed the data from 3766 Year 10 girls. Table 1 shows the result.

**TABLE 1**

	<i>Like to put on weight</i>	<i>Happy with weight</i>	<i>Like to lose weight</i>
<i>Attitude of Year 10 girls</i>	%	%	%
Never worry about looks	<u>9.1</u>	8.9	3.5
Hardly ever worry	9.9	<u>15.3</u>	8.5
Worry a little	28.4	<u>31.0</u>	22.4
Worry quite a lot	24.3	24.7	<u>30.9</u>
Worry a lot	28.4	20.0	<u>34.7</u>
Number in category	243	1225	2298

First of all, the bottom line of the right-hand column reveals that more than half of the whole sample would like to lose some weight (2298/3766).

The upper line shows that fewer girls fall into the *never worry about their looks* category

than any other.

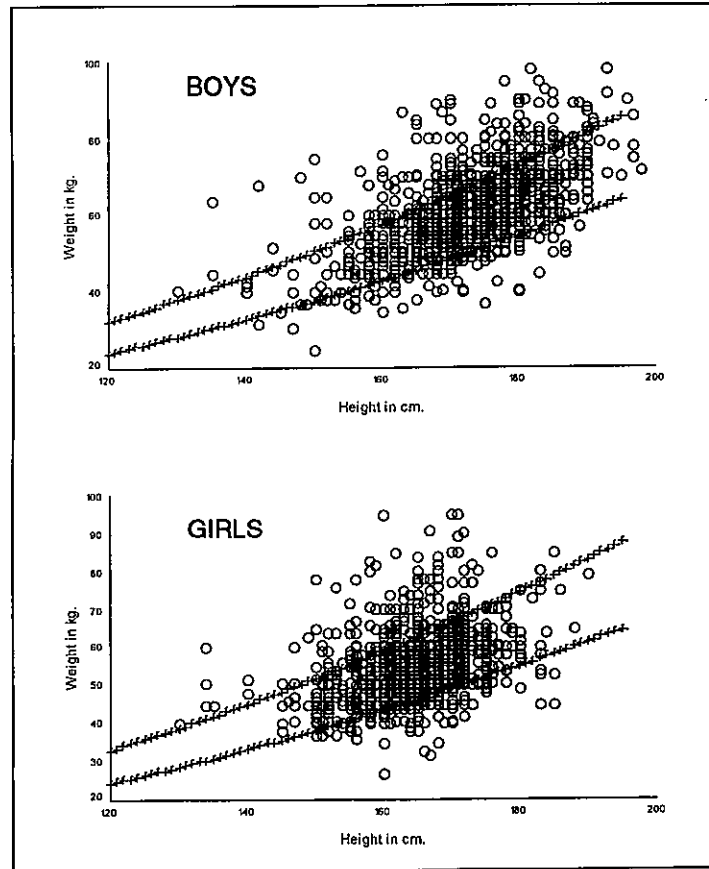
The ones that *hardly ever worry*, or only *worry a little*, are most likely to belong to the *happy with weight* group.

The girls that worry *quite a lot* or *a lot* are most likely to be found in the *like to lose weight* group.

The highest value in each line has been underlined, to help bring out these associations. The trend from upper left to lower right is good evidence that in these girls' minds, their looks and weight (actual or perceived) are linked.

Because personal weight seems to be such an important issue, we decided also to find out how many of the young people in the Year 10 sample had cause to be concerned about their weight

Figure 1. Scattergrams showing the weight and height measurements for over 2500 15-year-old boys and girls in the 1996 survey.



from a medical point of view. We could do this because the ones that know their weight and height were invited to record them.

Using guidelines taken from a research paper published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, we plotted the weight/height measurements for over 2500 15-year-olds in the sample. The scattergrams are shown in Figure 1. In summary:

	Boys %	Girls %
'Underweight'	7.2	11.0
'Satisfactory'	74.0	73.7
'Overweight'	18.8	15.3
Valid responses	1286	1289

Compare the value of 15.3% of girls that are 'clinically' overweight according to the guidelines with the 61.3% of all the Year 10 girls that would like to lose weight.

The difference for the boys (18.8% compared with 24.1%) is much less marked.

**Other 'diet' findings**

■ **Breakfast** Almost 15% of the 14-15 year old girls had nothing at all for breakfast on a schoolday. 20% had nothing to eat, although some of these did have a drink.

■ **Lunch** 15% of the 14-15 year old girls ate no lunch on their previous day at school.

■ **Healthy eating** Girls are more likely than boys to take health into account when choosing what to eat. A quarter of the 14-15 year old boys never do.

■ **Food choices** Low-fat milk is not really popular — almost two-thirds of the boys and girls rarely or never drink it. Low-fat spreads are more popular, about two-thirds of all the young people having them at least once a week. Ordinary white bread is more popular with everyone than wholemeal or high-fibre bread. Almost a third of the boys and almost half the girls eat fresh fruit on most days. More than a quarter of the boys rarely or never eat salads. More boys than girls enjoy fizzy drinks, biscuits, and add sugar to hot drinks.

**2. DOCTOR & DENTIST: Talking to the doctor**

The figures in Table 2 show that far fewer girls than boys are at ease when visiting the

TABLE 2

	Yr 8 (12-13)		Yr 9 (13-14)		Yr 10 (14-15)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Confidence with GP	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very uneasy	7.2	7.5	5.9	5.9	5.2	6.6
Quite uneasy	8.6	12.9	7.8	13.4	8.2	12.9
A little uneasy	27.5	39.8	27.8	42.2	28.2	38.8
At ease	56.6	39.8	58.5	38.5	58.5	41.7
Valid responses	5190	5150	1371	1316	4398	4331

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- Toothbrushing in Adolescence**, by Ian Macgregor, John Balding & David Regis (1994).
- Alcohol Education in Schools**, by John Balding & Di Bish (1992).
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doctor. About 20% are *quite uneasy* or *very uneasy*.

The degree of ease is likely to depend upon the reason for the consultation, as well as on the ability of the GP to create a relaxed atmosphere. Data from earlier surveys showed that both boys and girls were more likely to feel at ease when the doctor was female (fairly unlikely, as only a quarter of GPs are women).

Further analysis shows that the percentage of Year 10 respondents that remember being *at ease* tends to be highest for those who made the most recent visit.

**Other 'doctor & dentist' findings**

■ **Going to the doctor** About 25% of the boys and 30% of the girls reported visiting their GP within the previous month, and about 50% of all the young people had done so within the previous three months.

■ **Toothbrushing** About 70% of the boys and more than 80% of the girls brush their teeth at

TABLE 3

	Yr 8 (12-13)		Yr 9 (13-14)		Yr 10 (14-15)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Wheezing after running	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	45.9	33.1	43.5	27.6	47.2	32.3
Occasionally	34.8	40.3	39.5	45.9	37.8	45.5
Quite often	11.3	14.8	9.6	16.0	9.9	12.7
Very often	8.0	11.9	7.3	10.5	5.0	9.4
Valid responses	5245	5205	1381	1330	4424	4353

least twice a day.

■ **Going to the dentist** At least 80% of all the young people reported visiting the dentist in the previous six months; up to 18% had fillings on their last visit.

**3. HEALTH & SAFETY: The 'wheezers'**

Table 3 shows that more than half the young people report wheezing and having trouble breathing at least *occasionally*. More girls than boys come into the *quite often* and *very often* categories.

The combined figures are higher than the percentage of self-reported asthma sufferers, and the question was introduced in order to reveal the possible extent of undiagnosed asthma. The figures support evidence from other sources that the condition is remaining undiagnosed in more girls than boys.

The perceptible fall with age in the *quite often* and *very often* categories could be linked to improvement in their asthmatic condition, less running or vigorous activity generally, or a greater understanding by the older pupils of the difference between a condition of breathlessness and the effects of lack of fitness.

**Other 'health & safety' findings**

■ **Cycling** The percentage of cyclists that always or usually wear a safety helmet falls from 20% (12-13) to 10% (14-15). 40-50% of the young people had been on a cycle training course at some time.

■ **Toilet hygiene** More than a quarter of the boys and about 15% of the girls do not always wash their hands after using the lavatory, even if the facilities are available.

■ **Baths & showers** More than 40% of the 14-15 year old girls and a quarter of the boys had at least seven baths or showers during the week before the survey. 30% of the 12-13 year old girls also achieved this number of 'cleansings'.

■ **Disturbed nights** About a third of the boys and almost half the girls wake themselves up with coughing at least occasionally.

■ **Medication** Almost half the older girls had taken painkillers on at least one day during the previous week, and during the same period a quarter of the boys and a third of the girls had taken something for colds, throat infections, or flu.

**HOME: Journey to school**

Table 4 shows that about half the young people cover at least part of the way to school by foot. Almost a quarter use the *school bus* service, and another quarter are taken by *car*. Travelling by *bicycle* is not a popular option.

More than one method of travel can be recorded.

We analysed the data further to discover the percentage of young people that walked or cycled all the way to school or were transported all the way. The Year 10 results are given here:

	Boys %	Girls %
Walked/cycled	45.2	40.2
Transported	43.0	45.4

A small percentage of the young people travelled by a combination of 'active' and 'passive' methods.

**Other 'home' findings**

■ **Family structure** About 70% of the young people live with both parents, and up to 14% live in single-parent families.

■ **Television** Half the young people spent up to two hours watching television on the previous weekday evening. Almost a fifth had watched for more than three hours.

■ **Homework** Over a quarter of the 14-15 year old pupils did no homework on the evening before the survey.

■ **Computer games** Almost 50% of the 14-15 year old boys spent some time playing computer games on the previous evening.

■ **Evening activities** The most popular of all is television watching (over 80%), with homework, listening to music, computer games (boys), reading magazines and looking after pets also high in the list. Over half the boys played some sport.

■ **Mass entertainment** ITV is the most popular channel.

**DRUGS: Personal experience of illegal drugs**

Table 5 shows that cannabis is by far the most widely-experienced drug. Almost 30% of the Year 10 pupils surveyed had tried it at least once. Overall, about 8% of the Year 8 pupils and a third of the Year 10 pupils had tried at least one drug on at least one occasion.

Remember that the data do not differentiate between single 'try-outs' and habitual use; the percentage of current regular users will be smaller than the percentages shown here. For example, Year 10 results from one of the Unit's 1997 county-wide surveys show that only about half the boys and a third of the girls that had tried cannabis at all had ever taken it on a regular basis.

Comparison with the results from another question suggests that a substantial percentage of offers of drugs had been refused.

Overall, slightly more boys than girls within each year group have tried one or more illegal drugs, although the difference is quite small.

**TABLE 4**

Activity after school	Yr 8 (12-13)		Yr 9 (13-14)		Yr 10 (14-15)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<i>Transport to school</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
Car	24.5	27.5	25.6	26.0	19.3	25.2
School bus	22.8	23.7	28.5	32.3	22.6	22.3
Other bus	11.4	12.3	6.3	7.0	12.6	13.0
Train	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.1	1.3	1.1
Taxi	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.6
Bicycle	5.3	0.9	4.3	0.7	6.1	0.5
Foot	51.0	53.1	46.6	51.2	51.4	53.9
Missing data	1.4	1.0	1.2	0.6	1.3	0.5
Available sample	5288	5240	1386	1333	4446	4374

**TABLE 5**

Drug tried at least once	Yr 8 (12-13)		Yr 9 (13-14)		Yr 10 (14-15)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Amphetamines	1.6	1.2	3.3	3.4	8.9	9.8
Barbiturates	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.5	1.3	1.2
Cannabis	7.7	5.4	13.9	12.9	31.4	28.4
Cocaine	0.5	0.3	1.0	0.2	1.1	1.2
Crack	0.4	0.4	1.3	0.9	1.1	0.8
Ecstasy	0.8	0.5	1.2	0.8	3.8	2.9
Hallucinogens (natural)	1.0	0.6	2.5	1.2	5.7	3.5
Hallucinogens (synthetic)	1.0	0.7	1.7	1.1	6.1	5.6
Heroin	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.4
Solvents	1.2	1.6	2.8	2.1	5.0	5.7
Tranquillisers	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.7	2.0	2.7
None tried	90.8	92.7	83.9	84.6	66.6	68.7
Available sample	5288	5240	1386	1333	4446	4374

**Other 'drugs' findings**

■ **Smoking levels** A quarter of the 14-15 year old boys, and almost a third of the girls, smoked at least one cigarette during the previous week. These 'smoking' percentages are the highest recorded in 11 years of surveys.

■ **Sources of cigarettes** 20% of the 14-15 year old girls were able to buy cigarettes from a shop.

■ **Attitude to smoking** Within the 17% of boys and 23% of girls in the 14-15 age range that call themselves 'regular' smokers, only about 6% say that they do *not* want to give up.

■ **Exposure to alcohol** About 40% of the 12-13 year olds and almost 60% of the 14-15 year olds had consumed at least one of the listed alcoholic drinks during the previous week.

■ **Beer or lager** About 40% of the boys aged 14-15 drank beer or lager during the previous week. The average amount consumed by these boys during this period was 3.2 pints.

■ **Alcohol units** During the previous week, about 6% of the 14-15 year old boys drank more than 21 units, and 8% of the girls drank more than 14 units. These are the officially-recommended maximum adult figures.

■ **Obtaining alcohol** Among the young people aged 14-15, 18% of the boys were able to buy alcoholic drink from an off-licence, and 10% of the girls obtained it from a pub.

■ **Drinking at home** Of the 12-13 year olds, more than 20% had drunk alcohol at home during the previous week. This figure rises to about 30% for the 14-15 year olds. About 40% of the

14-15 year olds drink at home without their parents always knowing.

■ **Exposure to illegal drugs** Among the 14-15 year olds more than a third have been offered cannabis, and over 40% have been offered one or more illegal drugs.

■ **Drug users** About 70% of the 14-15 year olds are fairly sure or certain that they know at least one drug user.

**6. MONEY: Paid work**

The figures in Table 6 show that *babysitting* is the most popular employment for the girls, and a *paper or milk round* for the boys. A substantial percentage of the younger respondents are paid to do *housework*.

Working in a *shop*, or a *hotel* or other establishment serving food, is increasingly popular with the older girls.

In the case of *babysitting*, it may be questioned whether someone as young as 12-13 would be able to cope with one or more infants, in a possibly unfamiliar house, in a crisis.

Local Authority by-laws also refine the legislation relating to young people's employment.

**Other 'money' findings**

■ **Paid work during term time** The percentage of young people with a regular job rises from about 23% (12-13) to 40% (14-15).

■ **Hours worked** The 14-15 year old 'workers' are working an average of 6.3 hours. About 13% of them worked for 11 hours or more during the week before the survey.

■ **Money earned** The 12-13 year old 'workers' earned an average of £9.27 (boys) and £8.21 (girls). At 14-15 the averages were £14.76 and £13.63 respectively.

■ **Pocket money** For 12-13 year old boys and girls the average pocket money was £4.08 and £4.12 respectively. For the 14-15 year olds the values were £5.85 and £5.65.

■ **Total income** For 12-13 year old boys and girls the average total income from pocket money and job (if any) was £5.56 and £5.02 respectively. For the 14-15 year olds the values were £10.23 and £9.61.

■ **Items bought** Sweets, crisps, soft drinks, and comics or magazines are among the most popular items for boys and girls. 16% of the

**TABLE 6**

Type of regular job	Yr 8 (12-13)		Yr 9 (13-14)		Yr 10 (14-15)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Babysitting	7.6	35.3	7.5	36.9	6.9	35.9
Hairdressing	0.6	1.4	0.8	2.4	0.6	2.8
Working in a shop	6.1	7.1	5.2	5.1	10.4	15.6
Manual work	5.3	1.0	7.5	2.9	8.3	1.5
Paper or milk round	45.7	18.6	55.1	25.7	47.5	15.1
Hotel, bar, or café	2.8	4.2	6.0	7.0	6.6	14.1
Farm work or gardening	6.6	3.4	5.2	2.9	5.7	1.5
Paid housework	13.6	18.6	6.8	9.0	4.2	5.7
Other work	11.5	10.2	5.8	8.1	9.9	7.7
Valid responses	1204	928	517	455	1584	1515

14-15 year old boys purchased Lottery tickets. Almost 10% of these boys bought at least one Instants card during the previous 7 days.

■ **Spending money** The average amounts spent during the week before the survey were as follows. Boys aged 12-13, £6.18; aged 14-15, £11.29. For girls these figures were £5.01 and £9.46.

■ **Staying in budget** Comparing income and expenditure suggests that the girls are more responsible than the boys in this respect.

### SPORT: Hard exercise

Table 7 presents the young people's report on their recent experience of strenuous exercise. About 40% of the boys, and a smaller percentage of girls, exercised vigorously *three times or more* during the previous week.

	Yr 8 (12-13)		Yr 9 (13-14)		Yr 10 (14-15)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<i>Hard exercise in past week</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	17.2	17.3	16.3	14.6	17.1	19.3
Once	17.8	23.7	19.8	25.2	19.3	29.5
Twice	25.9	29.7	24.3	31.5	24.3	27.9
Three times or more	39.1	29.3	39.7	28.6	39.3	23.3
Valid responses	4464	4605	1290	1271	3908	3928

	Yr 8 (12-13)		Yr 9 (13-14)		Yr 10 (14-15)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<i>Worry quite a lot or a lot</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
School	16.1	21.7	16.5	26.2	19.2	30.4
Money	16.2	18.1	20.2	25.1	23.6	29.8
Health	17.7	26.1	16.0	28.4	16.2	26.1
Career	14.4	13.0	25.2	26.3	26.1	32.6
Unemployment	12.2	9.2	17.1	15.8	20.3	19.7
Friends	18.1	38.5	19.8	42.5	18.4	42.5
Family	25.8	37.1	27.7	43.0	27.0	45.8
The way you look	25.4	50.1	30.5	59.4	28.2	57.5
HIV/AIDS	13.8	16.6	18.6	22.0	19.0	25.2
Gambling	8.2	6.9	9.5	7.3	8.5	6.5
Smoking	15.3	17.8	18.0	19.1	14.8	15.6
Drinking	11.7	12.5	12.7	13.5	10.4	12.2
Drugs	20.4	23.7	24.0	26.6	19.2	24.1
None of these	37.7	23.6	30.0	14.6	31.6	13.8
Worry about at least one	62.3	76.4	70.0	85.4	68.4	86.2
Available sample	5288	5240	1386	1333	4446	4374

About a third of the boys, and almost half the Year 10 girls, exercised only *once* or *never*.

Exercise is a habitual thing, and the previous week's performance is likely to represent the 'norm' for these young people.

Advice from researchers is that young people should raise their heartbeat through exercise for at least three 20-minute sessions a week. The figures presented here suggest that between one-fifth and one-third of this group exercise at least three times a week, although the duration of each session is not known.

The percentage figures under *never* and *once* for both the boys and the girls may have implications for the future fitness and health of a large proportion of the community.

### Other 'sport' findings

■ **Enjoyment of sport** 60% of all the boys but only about 36% of the girls enjoy physical activities 'a lot'.

■ **Active sports** Many of the listed activities show a decline in involvement with increasing age. Notable exceptions are squash, badminton, and weight-training.

■ **Fitness** More boys than girls consider themselves fit or very fit, but even so the number of boys considering themselves very fit falls from 16% (12-13) to 13% (14-15). The number of girls considering themselves unfit or very unfit rises from 14% (12-13) to 24% (14-15).

■ **Frequency of activity** In general, boys are more active than girls. A third exercised hard enough to make themselves short of breath three or more times during the previous week.

### SOCIAL & PERSONAL: Worries

The bottom percentage line in Table 8 shows that more girls than boys are 'worriers'.

Overall, the boys' highest percentages are discovered under *none of these*, whereas the girls' are for *the way you look*.

Family problems are also an important source of concern, as is *money* for the Year 10 group. *Drugs* cause more concern than *smoking*, *drinking*, or *AIDS*.

These problems do not necessarily concern themselves directly: they could indicate worry about family or friends, or even 'society'.

### Other 'social & personal' findings

■ **Boyfriends and girlfriends** 76% and 68% of the 14-15 year old boys and girls respectively did not have a current partner.

■ **Information about sex** Parents become less important, and friends become more important, with increasing age, but the majority of teenagers of all ages feel that their parents should be the main source of information.

■ **Worries** 'How you look' is the principal worry for girls, but career, family, and HIV/AIDS are also high on the list of the older teenagers.

■ **Self-esteem** In the scoring method used in the surveys, boys' self-esteem tends to be higher than girls'.

■ **Control of personal health** At least a third of the young people feel that their health is dominated by external factors that they can do nothing about. Among the rest, more boys than girls feel that they are, in fact, able to do something positive about their health.

■ **Getting on with adults** About 40% of the 12-13 year olds give 'mother and father' as the adults with whom they get on best. For the 14-15 age group, 'mother' alone is also nominated by a substantial percentage.

■ **Life satisfaction** More than 15% of the boys and 20% of the girls record a depressed outlook, while about the same proportion are not sure how they feel. About 20% of the boys and 12% of the girls, however, are very satisfied with their lives.

■ **Transmitting HIV** More than a third of the

	Yr 8 (12-13)		Yr 9 (13-14)		Yr 10 (14-15)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<i>Items carried for protection</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never carry anything	69.6	79.7	69.7	79.8	67.5	79.4
Sound alarm	2.7	7.5	1.9	7.4	1.4	7.8
Spray	2.0	4.9	1.5	3.8	2.3	4.8
Weapon with a blade	13.2	3.1	17.4	5.0	17.8	5.1
Weapon that fires air pellets	2.4	0.1	3.3	0.2	3.5	0.3
Weapon that fires bullets	1.0	0.2	2.0	0.2	2.0	0.3
Other	4.2	6.7	4.1	1.9	5.9	2.3
Missing data	8.4	4.6	5.4	3.5	5.6	2.7
Available sample	5288	5240	1386	1333	4446	4374

YOUNG PEOPLE IN 1996 is the 11th and most detailed report we have published.

We printed the same number of copies as we did of *Young People in 1995*, which sold out some time ago. We expect the new report to sell just as well. The report costs £33, including postage.

young people surveyed think that blood transfusions in the UK are potentially dangerous.

■ **Birth control services** Among the 14-15 age group, two-thirds of the boys and almost half the girls do not know if there is a local service for young people.

### PERSONAL SAFETY: Carrying personal protection

Girls are less likely than boys to carry protection. Their form of security is likely to be a *sound alarm* or *spray*. A *weapon with a blade* is by far the most popular protection for the boys.

The percentage that *never carry anything* is almost unchanged from year to year, which suggests that the need to carry personal protection is perceived at a very early age, perhaps even in primary school.

*Sound alarms* and *sprays* have a more defensive function than the other items, and their provision may be accepted, even funded, by parents.

### Other 'personal safety' findings

■ **Neighbourhood safety** Up to a quarter of the young people think that safety outside after dark is poor or very poor.

■ **Bullying** About a third of the 12-13 year old girls and a quarter of the boys sometimes, often, or very often fear going to school because of bullying.

■ **Fear of physical attack** About 12% of the 14-15 year old girls fear physical attack often or very often, while over half the girls and more than one-third of the boys fear it at least sometimes.

■ **Carrying personal protection** A third of the 14-15 year old boys, and 20% of the girls, report that they may carry some kind of protection when they go out.

**10. SCRATCH CARDS & GAMBLING MACHINES: Frequency of playing**

This section developed out of collaborative work with Dr Sue Fisher. Her work is funded by Oflot, and she describes her findings in reports available from that organisation (2 Monck Street, London SW1P 2BQ, 0171 227 2000).

About 30% of the Year 8 respondents had tried scratch cards during the past year. Almost half the Year 10 boys, and 40% of the girls, had done so. About 14% of the Year 10 boys and 8% of the girls appear to play at least once a week.

More than 60% of the Year 8 boys had played on gambling machines during the previous year. This is more than the percentage of Year 10 boys. About a third of all the girls had played.

The level of gambling does not change very much between Years 8 and 10, but there is a noticeable increase in the number of older respondents trying their luck with scratch cards. This suggests that the arcade-game habit has already been formed by Year 8, whereas scratch cards become more tempting (or accessible) with increasing age.

**Other 'gambling' findings**

■ **Amount spent** On average, the 14-15 year old male players spent £3.68 on arcade machines

during the previous month. The girl players spent £1.58.

■ **Getting addicted** At least a quarter of the players reported having spent more money than they originally intended to on at least one occasion during the previous year.

■ **Stealing to play** During the previous year, about 10% of the older boys and 5% of the girls had taken, or obtained, playing money without permission.

# 1986-1996

*A comparison for 14-15 year olds*

**DIET**

*Compared with what they recorded doing in 1986...*

- More are having something for BREAKFAST
- More are having PACKED LUNCH at school
- Fewer go HOME for lunch
- More girls are having SOMETHING for lunch
- Fewer are eating CHIPS frequently
- Fewer are eating CRISPS frequently

**DOCTOR & DENTIST**

*Compared with what they recorded doing in 1986...*

- They are going to the DOCTOR slightly more frequently
- More are BRUSHING their teeth twice daily instead of only once
- The frequency of visits to the DENTIST has not changed
- Fewer record having had FILLINGS on their last visit to the dentist

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

*Compared with what they recorded doing in 1986...*

- Fewer seem to have gone on a CYCLING COURSE
- More are WASHING THEIR HANDS whenever possible after using the toilet
- Similar high numbers take PAINKILLERS

**FAMILY, HOME & NEIGHBOURHOOD**

*Compared with what they recorded doing in 1986...*

- Fewer (especially boys) are going to school by BICYCLE
- Fewer are watching TELEVISION for 3 hours or more
- More are watching NO TELEVISION at all
- More play COMPUTER GAMES
- Fewer are reading BOOKS for enjoyment

**DRUGS**

*Compared with what they recorded doing in 1986...*

- More are smoking CIGARETTES
- BEER AND LAGER drinking patterns are similar
- CIDER consumption has fallen slightly
- Consumption of WINE may have increased slightly
- Consumption of FORTIFIED WINE by girls has dropped considerably
- SPIRITS appear to have become more popular with girls
- Overall, fewer young people are DRINKING more per head
- Fewer are BUYING alcoholic drink in a pub or bar, but more are purchasing it from an off-licence and possibly from a supermarket
- More are drinking at friends' and relations' HOMES
- [Questions about illegal drugs were not asked in 1986.]

**MONEY**

*Compared with what they recorded doing in 1986...*

- Fewer, especially boys, report having a regular paid JOB
- More girls work as BABYSITTERS

- Fewer girls work in a SHOP or have a PAPER ROUND
- The 'workers' are not working such long HOURS
- More are putting money into SAVINGS schemes

**SPORT**

- Compared with what they recorded doing in 1986...*
- FEWER GIRLS are participating in the listed sports

**SOCIAL & PERSONAL**

- Compared with what they recorded doing in 1986...*
- A similar percentage have a BOYFRIEND OR GIRLFRIEND
- Fewer use their parents as their main source of information about SEX; more turn to their friends
- Teachers are much less likely to be approached about SCHOOL PROBLEMS
- More would share problems to do with money, health, and career with MOTHER AND FATHER together
- Their selection of their FAVOURITE ADULT was very similar

[The groups of questions about personal safety and gambling did not appear in the 1986 questionnaire.]

**Towards the half-million . . .**

The total number of young people that have completed the HRBQ is fast approaching the 400,000 mark. Adding our other questionnaires (Primary HRBQ, *Just A Tick*, and those used in special studies) means that the SHEU 'machine' has processed data from about half a million young people since the first organised surveys in the early 80s.

**TABLE 10**

	Yr 8 (12-13)		Yr 9 (13-14)		Yr 10 (14-15)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<i>Buying scratch cards</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
No purchase in past year	69.6	72.1	60.7	66.8	55.4	60.7
Less than once a month	10.2	11.7	13.0	13.9	15.0	17.6
About once a month	5.4	5.2	7.4	7.1	7.7	8.0
About 2-3 times a month	4.7	4.0	7.0	4.6	8.0	5.8
About once a week	7.0	5.5	8.3	6.2	9.6	6.2
About 2-3 times a week	1.9	0.9	2.4	1.2	3.0	1.3
Nearly every day	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.3
Every day	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.1
<i>Gambling on arcade machines</i>						
Have not played in past year	58.3	64.5	58.8	70.1	50.1	62.7
Less than once a month	16.4	19.3	17.9	19.4	20.5	22.1
About once a month	7.8	5.7	7.8	4.6	7.3	5.3
About 2-3 times a month	6.9	5.9	6.1	3.3	9.1	5.6
About once a week	5.1	2.7	4.8	1.6	6.1	2.6
About 2-3 times a week	3.5	1.3	3.2	0.7	4.2	1.1
Nearly every day	1.1	0.4	0.9	0.4	1.4	0.5
Every day	1.0	0.1	0.5	0.1	1.3	0.2
Valid responses	3872	3933	1338	1288	3226	3132

John Balding is Director of the Schools Health Education Unit.