

A new challenge, and a new version of the questionnaire

In 1991 the government announced the City Challenge Initiative, a response to the deteriorating fabric and social structure of inner city areas. An important dimension of this initiative was to find out as much as possible about the young people living in them, and all ten of the 'first-wave' funded cities were attracted by the idea of using the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire to collect information. Now that 20 second-wave cities are also involved, use of the questionnaire is certain to be extended.

To meet their need, Version 16 of the questionnaire contains questions about 'aspirations'. These examine the young people's expectations about finding work, staying or moving on, going into higher education, raising a family, and other aspects of their post-school development. They are also asked to appraise the local facilities.

This 'aspirations' section arose out of an initiative involving the Office of Public Health in Newcastle upon Tyne, subsequently extended to the District Health Authority counterparts in Wolverhampton and the Wirral. A further modification involved adding an area key number to the questionnaire, so that the DHA could study the survey response patterns in different areas.

Several DHAs have planned inner-city surveys using Version 16 of the questionnaire. Typically these are on a year 8/year 10 basis, to be repeated biennially so that the younger age group is 'caught' a second time.

For the sake of continuity, changes between successive versions of the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire are kept to a minimum, but there is always pressure to add new questions, and these may require 'fine tuning' if our subsequent experience of coding the answers reveals weaknesses or unexpected interpretations.

Comparing Versions 15 and 16, the principal changes are shown in the boxes.

The 'health risk number' gives respondents

Removed from Version 15:

- 11. How much can you find to do in your spare time?
- 42. Number of cigarettes smoked yesterday.
- 59. What do you do when you have a problem?
- 60. Time of getting to sleep.
- 61. Time of waking up.
- 68. Pub visits during the past week.
- 69. With whom did you spend most time in the pub?

Added to Version 16:

- 22. Medication for epilepsy.
- 29. Dental fissure sealing.
- 34. Height.
- 35. Weight.
- 41. People smoking on most days at home.
- 50. Problems about drugs or AIDS.
- 53a. With which adults do you get on best?
- 53b. How many adults can you really trust?
- 68. Where can you get condoms free of charge?
- 69. At what age can you get condoms free of charge?
- 70. Knowledge of local birth control services.
- 71. Knowledge of birth control services for young people.
- 72. Aspirations on leaving school.
- 73. The chances of achieving these aspirations.
- 74. The difficulties in the way of achieving these aspirations.
- 77. Quality of local services and facilities.
- 78. School environment.
- 79. Health risk number.

*Aspirations:
hopes, doubts,
uncertainties*

*Measuring young
people's 'health
risk'*

the option of identifying their own entry in a series of values calculated from certain values in the data. These are returned to the school in the form of a list with an identification code (supplied by each pupil) against each one. Only the pupils will know their own code and be able to identify their personal health risk number.