

GRAMPIAN YOUTH LIFESTYLE SURVEY 2007 SURVEY FINDINGS FOR ABERDEENSHIRE

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth Youth Lifestyle Survey carried out in Grampian, earlier surveys taking place in 1992, 1995 and 1998 and 2001. After a 6 year gap and with a collaboration of NHS Grampian and The University of Aberdeen, it was decided to repeat the survey in 2007. This year we also took height and weight measurements of a sub-group to assess the validity of the self-reported information. Repeating the survey every few years allows direct comparisons with the results of previous surveys so that attitudes, knowledge, behaviour and lifestyle changes among young people in Grampian can be monitored. From this we can identify where progress has been made and inform future action.

2. THE AIM OF THIS REPORT

This report aims to provide information about the survey and gives a summary of the key results for Aberdeenshire.

3. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY LIFESTYLE?

Lifestyles include our attitudes, knowledge and behaviours that together make up our way of living. Young people's lifestyles are shaped by different factors that positively or negatively influence their health beliefs and behaviours. These include things like the views of family and friends, their neighbourhoods, schools and health services, and finance. This survey looks at these issues a bit more closely to provide our statutory and voluntary sector partners with information to assist in creating the healthiest possible environments and opportunities for our young people to thrive and realise their full potential.

Many illnesses and premature deaths are avoidable and encouraging people to make positive changes to their lifestyle can help them add 'years to their lives, and life to their years'¹.

4. ABOUT THE SURVEY

As in previous years, the survey covered all secondary schools in Grampian including the independent schools.

The self-completion questionnaire included questions on general health, food, physical activity, smoking, alcohol, drugs, wellbeing, oral and dental health, accidents and relationships.

The questionnaire closely mirrored that of the previous surveys in order to measure changes in lifestyle and behaviour over time. Some questions have been added or changed to improve the quality of information obtained and to address new health issues.

The on-going ability to access and re-analyse the raw data at an in-depth level provides enormous opportunities to inform the work of NHS Grampian, the University of Aberdeen and partners.

¹ Working Together for a Healthier Scotland: a consultation document. 1998

When measuring the height and weight of the sub-sample a protocol was followed so the process was consistent throughout all the schools.

Due to these changes it was necessary to undertake a pilot study prior to the main survey in order to validate the new questions. This involved asking youngsters to complete the questionnaire and to participate in a follow-up group discussion which gave them the opportunity to comment on all aspects of the study. This allowed any problems with the questionnaire to be rectified.

The survey, in schools, was carried out between 1 October and 12 November 2007 and involved a 10% sample of pupils from years 1 to 6. University and NHS Grampian staff supervised the completion and collection of the questionnaires. This reduced the demand on school staff time and ensured that pupils were not influenced in their responses by the presence of teachers.

In total, 2341 questionnaires, 1127 from pupils in Aberdeenshire were completed and, in order to address any bias from non-responders, the data was weighted by year group and sex prior to analysis. The response rate for Aberdeenshire was 73% , 2% more than Grampian as a whole. Given the size of the sample achieved and the fact that any bias was reduced by weighting data, the survey provides a powerful and accurate statistical measure of young people's attitudes, knowledge and behaviour.

This report aims to present the survey findings for young people attending secondary schools in Aberdeenshire where appropriate results are compared to the overall Grampian figures.

All analyses contained in this report are based on weighted data. All figures have been rounded up to the nearest whole number where possible, as a result percentages quoted may not always add up to 100.

The University of Aberdeen and NHS Grampian wishes to thank the young people who took part, the schools, especially the teachers, for all their help and co-operation in carrying out the survey, as well as all those who contributed to the running of the survey.

5. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The following information summarises the main findings of the survey.

5.1 General Health

(a) Perceptions of Health

Nearly three quarters, 74%, of young people in Aberdeenshire felt that their health was 'good' or 'very good'. This is a 4% increase from the last survey. Perceptions varied among male and female respondents, however there was little difference in responses when comparing Aberdeenshire to Grampian.

	Aberdeenshire			Grampian		
	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Very good	32	18	25	30	20	25
Good	47	51	49	49	51	50
Average	20	28	24	19	26	23
Poor	1	3	2	2	2	2
Very poor	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2

Within Aberdeenshire there is a marked difference between responses given by males and females, in particular 14% more males than females said their health was very good, in general 7% more males than females perceived their health as above average.

A long term illness or disability was reported by 19% of young people in Aberdeenshire compared to 18% in Grampian overall. Of these, 61% of Aberdeenshire pupils named this illness/disability as asthma, similar to Grampian overall. In Aberdeenshire this represents 7% of all young people surveyed,

In order to assess young people's attitudes to a range of issues, they were asked if they perceived themselves to be:

	Aberdeenshire			Grampian		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Happy with their body	84	60	71	83	60	71
Fit and Healthy	80	62	71	80	64	72
Worried about gaining weight	23	62	44	24	63	44
Unhappy if eat too much	19	48	34	20	49	35
They have a well-balanced diet	70	66	68	70	66	68
Overweight	15	30	23	16	32	24
Underweight	7	4	6	8	4	6

Similar to the Grampian survey, results suggest that young males have a better perception of their health and feel fit and healthy whereas girls are more apprehensive and worry about gaining weight.

(b) Lifestyle

During the year prior to the survey many of those surveyed had made changes to their lifestyle.

Percentages who:

	Aberdeenshire	Grampian
	%	%
Tried to take more exercise	82	82
Changed their diet	52	51
Relaxed more often	50	51
Tried to get a good night's sleep	72	73

Feeling 'continually' under stress was reported by 4% of young people from Aberdeenshire and a further 21% said that they were 'frequently' under stress. Females had higher percentages than males of feeling continually or frequently under stress. These figures are similar to the 2001 survey.

Figures varied by year group. For example 6% of pupils in years 5 and 4% in year 6 felt continually under stress and 33% of 5th years and 37% of 6th years frequently felt under stress. Results were similar to the overall Grampian figures.

(c) Wellbeing

The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale was used in the 2007 survey which is a validated scale developed by Health Scotland for mental wellbeing. This is the first time this scale has been used for this age group so there is no other research to compare it with.

The table shows the results of the young people's thought and feelings

	None of the time %	Rarely %	Some of the time %	Often %	All of the time %
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	10	16	33	31	10
I've been feeling useful	4	15	40	34	7
I've been feeling relaxed	3	16	34	37	11
I've been feeling interested in other people	3	10	32	40	15
I've had energy to spare	5	16	30	34	15
I've been dealing with problems well	6	11	30	38	14
I've been thinking clearly	2	10	31	40	16
I've been feeling good about myself	4	11	30	36	20
I've been feeling close to other people	3	9	24	42	23
I've been feeling confident	3	11	29	39	19
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	4	18	40	36
I've been feeling loved	3	8	27	29	35
I've been interested in new things	2	8	24	42	24
I've been feeling cheerful	2	6	24	42	27

Results show that the highest percentages for often or all of the time are:

- able to make my own mind up about things - 76%
- feeling cheerful - 69%
- interested in new things - 66%
- feeling close to other people - 65%

A quarter of young people never or rarely felt optimistic about the future in fact only 41% of young people felt optimistic about the future often or all of the time. The next highest percentages for never or rarely was having energy to spare 21% and feeling relaxed and feeling useful 19%.

5.2 Sunscreen

Since much emphasis is placed on the use of sunscreens as a preventative measure against the rising incidence of skin cancer among the population, it was important to identify what percentages of young people use sunscreens both at home and abroad. Only 6% of respondents said they always used a sun lotion of factor 15+ in the UK with 51%, compared to 48% of Grampian overall, saying they sometimes used it. However 59% always and 34% sometimes used a 15+ sun lotion when abroad. Females were more likely to use a 15+ sun lotion than males.

5.3 Dental Health

Nearly all, 92%, of young people from Aberdeenshire were registered with a dentist, similar to Grampian overall, 84% had attended a dentist in the last six months and 11% had attended in the last year.

Attendance at a dentist

	Aberdeenshire	Grampian
	%	%
Percentage who attended dentist in last 6 months	84	83
Percentage who attended dentist 7-12 months ago	11	11

The following preventative measures were taken daily to improve dental health:

	Aberdeenshire	Grampian
	%	%
Brush teeth	98	98
Use a fluoride toothpaste	90	90
Use a mouth wash	47	47
Avoid sugary foods	18	19
Use dental floss	14	14

5.4 Accidents

Respondents were asked if they had had an accident that needed medical attention for cuts and injuries during the last 12 months. Results are as follows:

% who had had an accident in the last 12 months

	2001	2007
	% who had an accident	
Males	33	42
Females	20	26
Total	26	34

Results show that there is an 8% increase in the percentage of young people who had an accident, 68% of accidents was when doing sport.

5.5 Food

This section of the questionnaire aimed to establish young people's eating habits and their attitudes towards diet in relation to health. Some questions in this section have been changed since the 2001 survey so it has not been possible to make comparisons.

(a) Diet

Respondents were asked what they ate for breakfast. Cereal was eaten by 65% and bread or toast by 37%, 17% said they never ate breakfast.

Lunch was eaten every day by 79% of respondents, 17% ate lunch three to six days, 3% two days and less than 2% stated that they never ate lunch or ate it only one day a week. The school canteen was used by 45% of respondents, 32% used the local shop while going home or bringing a packed lunch was favoured by approximately 9%. Only 6% went to the local takeaway.

Most respondents, 87%, had an evening meal every day with 11% having a meal three to six days. Only 2% either had an evening meal twice a week, once a week or never. Fresh ingredients were used for an evening meal by 81% of respondents with 18% saying they ate convenience foods. Most respondents, 76%, ate their evening meal at home at a table, 23% said at home in front of the TV.

(b) Snacks

As well as having regular meals, nearly all of those surveyed snacked. Pupils were asked how many times they had a snack consisting of, chocolate bars/sweets, crisps or savoury snacks, sugar fizzy drinks, diet/sugar free drinks and fruit juice/diluting juice. Results were:

Snack	None	One	Two	Three	More than three
	%				
Chocolate bars/Sweets	13	49	26	6	6
Crisps/savoury snacks	23	53	16	4	4
Sugary fizzy drinks	47	27	12	6	8
Diet/sugar free fizzy drinks	50	29	10	5	6
Fruit juice/diluting juice	5	18	23	21	33

Around half of respondents consumed one sweet or one savoury snack per day, 26% two sweet snacks and 16% two savoury snacks per day. There was little difference between respondents consuming sugary or sugar free drinks. More than three drinks of fruit juice/diluting juice was consumed by 33%.

(c) Fruit and Vegetables

Respondents were asked how many times a day they ate fruit and vegetables.

No times a day eaten	Fruit		Vegetables	
	%		%	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Once	18	16	21	21
Twice	26	28	29	31
Three	28	33	26	26
Four	18	15	14	13
Five or more	10	8	11	9

For both males and females the highest percentage, 31% ate fruit three times a day, and 30% ate vegetables twice a day, these are similar to Grampian overall.

Pupils were advised about eating five fruit and vegetables per day, they were then given statements about eating 5 a day on a sliding scale from 1 to 5. Results in table below:

	1	2	3	4	5	
	%					
Unpleasant	3	5	23	33	36	Pleasant
Worthless	3	2	14	29	52	Worthwhile
Unhealthy	2	1	5	12	80	Healthy
Stupid	3	2	11	24	60	Clever

They were also asked if they agreed or disagreed, on a sliding scale from 1 to 5, whether they would like to eat '5 a day' – results showed that 55% agreed with the statement and only 3% disagreed.

(d) Attitudes towards Health and Diet

Respondents were asked which of these statements would encourage them to eat more healthily.

	%
Healthy eating can help prevent diseases like heart disease and cancer	76
Healthy food is good for my health	74
Healthy eating can help me keep a healthy weight	72
Healthy eating is good for my skin	64
My parents want me to eat healthy foods	36
My friends want me to eat healthy foods	16

Young people obviously knew the benefits of healthy eating.

(e) Supporting Changes to diet

In order to help young people to make healthy food choices, it was important to identify appropriate ways in which we can support them.

Respondents indicated that if they wanted to change their diet the following would be helpful to them personally:

	Aberdeenshire %	Grampian %
More opportunities to choose food at home and school	85	85
Clearly labelled healthier choices at school	84	83
Being able to taste new products in school canteen	86	83
Information on what is needed for a healthy diet	80	79
More opportunities to cook at home	78	78
More opportunities to learn how to cook at school	77	78
More healthy food choices in school vending machines	79	77
More support from parents and friends	74	74

5.6 Physical Activity

(a) How Physically Active are Young People?

Physical activity includes sports, recreational activities and general 'active living' but for health purposes it must be performed at a moderate intensity (activity which increases your heart rate, but does not leave you exhausted e.g. brisk walking, cycling, dancing etc.)

In order to assess the amount of physical activity undertaken by young people, we asked how many hours each week they spend being physically active. Those aged 11-16 years old answered questions on physical activity for one hour or more per day, those aged 17-18 years old answered questions on physical activity for 30 minutes or more per day. These questions are in line with new guidelines and therefore there is no comparison to previous surveys.

Pupils aged 11-16 years

Physical Activity for a total of one hour or more each day

	Percentage of respondents exercising for this time					
	Aberdeenshire			Grampian		
	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
0-1 days per week	6	12	9	7	11	9
2-4 days per week	37	57	47	37	55	46
5-7 days per week	57	31	43	57	34	45

Results show that 57% of males were physically active on 5-7 days, 26% more than females, whereas 57% of females were physically active 2-4 days per week, 20% more than males.

Pupils were then asked several statements about being moderately physically active for 1 hour or more on a sliding scale from 1 to 5. Results below:

	1	2	3	4	5	
	%					
Difficult	6	10	24	25	36	Easy
Relaxing	19	22	35	16	9	Stressful
Not enjoyable	5	5	14	29	47	Enjoyable
Unhealthy	2	0.4	4.6	18	75	Healthy

Three quarters of the respondents agree being moderately physically active is healthy but not very easy to do.

They were also asked how confident, on a sliding scale from 1 to 5, they could be moderately physically active for 1 hour or more on at least 5 days a week. Results showed that 68% would be very confident or confident they could achieve this, 4% stated they were not very confident. These results were similar to Grampian as a whole.

Again pupils were asked, on a sliding scale from 1 to 5, if they would like to be moderately physically active for 1 hour on at least 5 days a week, 60% agreed they would like to be physically active, 2% disagreed, again similar to results for Grampian.

Pupils aged 17-18 years

Physical Activity for a total of 30 minutes or more each day

	Percentage of respondents exercising for this time					
	Aberdeenshire			Grampian		
	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
0-1 days per week	3	8	6	3	10	6
2-4 days per week	41	65	54	43	61	52
5-7 days per week	56	28	40	54	30	42

As for the 11-16 age group results show that males, 56%, were more physically active than females, 28%, on 5-7 days with 28% taking more exercise, however 24% more females than males were physically active on 2-4 days per week.

Again pupils were asked, on a sliding scale from 1 to 5, several statements about being moderately physically active for 30 minutes or more. Results were:

	1	2	3	4	5	
	%					
Difficult	1	7	21	36	34	Easy
Relaxing	23	29	30	14	4	Stressful
Not enjoyable	3	4	10	39	44	Enjoyable
Unhealthy	0	0	3	24	73	Healthy

They were also asked how confident, on a sliding scale from 1 to 5, they were they could be moderately physically active for 30 minutes or more on at least 5 days a week. Results showed that 77% would be very confident or confident they could achieve this, only 1% stated they were not very confident.

Pupils were asked if they would like to be moderately physically active for 30 minutes on at least 5 days a week, on a sliding scale from 1 to 5, 64% agreed they would like to be physically active, 1% disagreed, this is similar to Grampian figures where 65% agreed and 0.7 disagreed.

(b) Reasons Given for Taking More Exercise

	Aberdeenshire %	Grampian %
To improve your health	94	95
To make you feel fitter	94	93
To have fun	94	94
To help you lose weight/maintain healthy weight	87	86
To improve your appearance	85	85
To help you relax/less stressed	80	78
To socialise/make friends	75	76
To have fun/compete/for a challenge/to improve performance	74	75
To impress	48	50
To please you family/friends	47	49

Having fun, improving health and feeling fitter have remained important to respondents since the 1995 survey.

(c) Reasons Given for NOT Taking More Exercise

	Aberdeenshire %	Grampian %
Lack of spare time at evenings/weekends	52	51
Bad weather	41	43
You don't know what's on	40	41
Don't like the choice of activities	37	37
Lack of facilities nearby, eg swimming pool	33	30
Not enough teams or activities to join	32	34
Lack of money	32	34
You already take enough exercise	30	33
None of my friends want to	28	29
Lack of transport	27	27
Don't have time to/can't shower after activity	27	29
Lack of privacy in changing rooms	26	26
Environment is not attractive	24	24
Don't like competitive activities	23	23
You don't like exercise	14	13
Fears about personal safety	13	14
Don't like participating with opposite sex	12	12
Physical disabilities/ill health	9	9

(d) Types of Activities

In the 2007 survey respondents were asked what type/s of activities they would participate in if they decided to become more physically active. Choices were competitive sports like football, hockey, non-competitive sports including cycling, swimming and walking, active lifestyle incorporating physical activity into your every day routine ie walking/cycling to school, housework etc, the last option was to go to a gym.

	Aberdeenshire %	Grampian %
Competitive sports	71	72
Non-competitive sports	77	74
Active living	73	73
Go to a gym	73	75

5.7 Leisure

Respondents were asked how much time they spend each day watching TV and playing computer games. Responses were as follows:

(a) TV

	Aberdeenshire %	Grampian %
Not at all	1	2
Less than 1/2 hour	19	17
Between 1 & 3 hours	60	61
Between 3 & 4 hours	14	13
4+ hours	6	8

The majority of young people spend on average between one and three hours each day watching TV.

(b) Computer Games

	Aberdeenshire			Grampian		
	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Not at all	5	10	8	5	13	9
Less than 1/2 hr	27	30	28	25	28	26
Between 1 and 3 hrs	46	45	45	48	45	46
Between 3 and 4 hrs	10	8	9	11	7	10
4+ hours	12	7	10	11	7	9

Results suggest that males spend more time each day than females playing computer games, although there has been a marked increase from previous surveys in the amount of time spent by females on computer games.

5.8 Smoking

Tobacco smoking is the most important preventable cause of disease and premature death in Scotland.

Children of smokers are more likely to be of smaller stature and to develop respiratory infections; more than 25% of the risk of sudden infant death syndrome is attributed to maternal smoking. There is an increasing awareness of the dangers of passive smoking in relation to lung cancer, asthma and respiratory infection. Sadly, smoking will kill many of today's teenagers in their later years.

(a) Smoking Status

The results of the last survey highlighted concerns about the rising incidence of smoking in young women. In the current survey, young people were asked about their current smoking status and results are tabulated as follows:

	Aberdeenshire			Grampian		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Smoke daily	5	8	6	5	7	6
Smoke some days	5	9	7	5	7	6
Given up smoking	3	3	3	3	3	3
Tried smoking once/twice	19	20	19	19	20	20
Never smoked	68	61	65	69	62	65

In Aberdeenshire 10% of males and 17% of females smoke daily or most days and there has been an approximate 7% decrease in both sexes smoking since 2001. Grampian figures also show a 7.5% decrease in the number of young people smoking since the 2001 survey was carried out..

Percentage of Respondents Smoking Regularly or Occasionally

	Aberdeenshire		Grampian	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Year 1	3	0	3	1
Year 2	6	7	6	6
Year 3	7	14	10	14
Year 4	19	30	13	27
Year 5	18	22	13	22
Year 6	5	23	9	20

In 2007, the percentage of young people in Aberdeenshire who smoke peaks at 30% and 19% for 4th year females and 4th year males respectively. In Grampian figures peak at 27% for 4th year females and 13% for both 4th and 5th year males.

(b) Quantity of Cigarettes Smoked

	Aberdeenshire			Grampian		
	Male %	Female %	Total %	Male %	Female %	Total %
Less than 1 cig/day	16	35	29	19	31	26
1-5 cigs a day	41	33	36	36	28	31
6-10 cigs a day	18	19	19	21	22	22
11-15 cigs/day	11	11	11	9	13	12
16-20 cigs/day	5	2	3	5	6	5
20+ cigs/day	9	0	3	11	1	4

The majority of young people in Aberdeenshire who smoke are smoking between 1 and 5 cigarettes per day which is the same quantity as the 2001 survey. In general it would appear that males smoke more cigarettes than females.

Young people who smoke were asked if their friends smoked and if they smoked the same brand – 64% said yes and 67% of these smoked the same brand as their friends. Of the pupils who smoke 81% strongly agreed or agreed that their family did not want them to smoke.

Most young people from Aberdeenshire started smoking at the age of 13 years – the same as the Grampian average.

(c) Reasons Why Young People Smoke

Young people were asked the reasons why they smoke - responses were as follows:

	Aberdeenshire	Grampian
	%	%
It calms your nerves	86	85
You wanted to try smoking out of curiosity	66	64
You feel smoking relieves boredom	61	60
You feel addicted to smoking	50	55
You enjoy the taste	40	39
You feel smoking gives you confidence	39	35
You smoke because your friends smoke	32	31

(d) Where do Young People Smoke?

The three most popular places where Aberdeenshire pupils smoke are - at parties (92%), in the street (90%) and outside pubs/night-clubs (62%). Over 60% of Aberdeenshire pupils smoke at school a 4% decrease since the 2001 survey.

(e) Stopping Smoking

Respondents were asked if they would like to give up smoking

	Aberdeenshire	Grampian
	%	%
Males	57	65
Females	65	67

Their main reasons for wishing to give up were:

	% who have reason for wishing to stop	
	Aberdeenshire	Grampian
To prevent disease and ill health	92	89
To save money	87	95
To improve fitness	81	90
To be more attractive	67	64
To respect the wishes of non smokers	57	49

Many have tried to cut down smoking, 57% of male and 80% of female smokers as well as 40% male and 53% females who have tried to give up smoking in the last year.

Smokers said that if they wanted to stop smoking the following would be helpful:

	Aberdeenshire %	Grampian %
Being or feeling less stressed	67	64
Encouragement and support from friends	60	59
Making cigarettes more expensive	46	39
Advice from doctor/healthcare worker	29	31
Encouragement from family	30	30
Raising legal age for smoking	29	23
Stop smoking group	18	20
A booklet offering advice and practical tips	26	21
Telephone helpline/advice line	11	13

(f) Exposure to Smoking

It was found that 8% of males and 14% of females from Aberdeenshire spend most of their day in an environment where people smoke. This compares with 10% of males and 17% of females from Grampian overall. Both percentages for Aberdeenshire and Grampian are reduced from 2001. Results also indicate that respondents who have a close relative or friend who smoke are more likely to smoke themselves.

Person known to respondent who smokes	Aberdeenshire		Grampian	
	Smoker	Non-smoker	Smoker	Non-smoker
	%	%	%	%
Close friend	88	28	88	29
Brother/sister	38	13	39	13
Grandparents	35	27	36	29
Mother/female guardian	38	21	45	22
Boyfriend/girlfriend	36	4	39	4
Father/male guardian	37	24	41	23

5.9 Alcohol

The main aim of the alcohol section of the questionnaire was to determine young people's present levels of alcohol consumption, their attitudes towards alcohol use, the results of their drinking alcohol, the reasons why they drink and the type of information they would like to be given to help them make informed choices.

(a) Attitudes to Drinking Alcohol

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a list of statements, to determine young people's attitudes towards drinking alcohol. Responses were as follows.

	those who agree	
	Aberdeen shire	Grampian
	%	%
Drinking too much alcohol can cause health problems	89	89
One drink with the family is OK	85	84
Alcohol can make people take chances, ie drinking & driving	84	83
Drinking alcohol makes people lose control of themselves	71	70
Alcohol is expensive	70	70
Drinking alcohol can lead to unplanned pregnancy or catching sexually transmitted diseases	69	69
Drinking alcohol is sociable	57	55
Drunk people are unpleasant	54	54
Drinking alcohol is enjoyable	53	52
Drinking alcohol makes people violent	53	54
Drinking alcohol helps people forget their worries	42	42
Drinking alcohol helps people relax	40	40
Once you start drinking you are unlikely to stop	39	40
People under 18 should be allowed to buy alcohol	24	25

(b) Alcohol Consumption

Of the young people in Aberdeenshire 70% had taken an alcoholic drink compared with 69% of everyone surveyed. As would be expected this figure varied by school year ranging from 30% for 1st year pupils in Aberdeenshire to 95% for 6th year pupils.

In order to establish the quantities of alcohol consumed by pupils, those who had taken alcohol in the seven days prior to the survey were asked to detail what they had consumed. This was then converted to units of alcohol.

Out of all the responses, 265 (48%) pupils had consumed alcohol in the seven days prior to the survey. For these, the mean consumption level was 16.5 units for Aberdeenshire pupils compared to 18.5 units in Grampian.

Mean units of alcohol consumed in last seven days

	Aberdeenshire	Grampian
Males	17.6	19.7
Females	15.4	17.5
Average	16.5	18.5

Frequency of drinking alcohol

Aberdeenshire						
	Given up	1-2 a year	< 1 a month	> 1 a month	1-2 a week	3+ week
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Year 1	6	54	25	12	0.0	4
Year 2	4	38	34	15	8	1
Year 3	1	34	20	29	16	1
Year 4	2	15	21	39	20	3
Year 5	2	14	13	48	22	2
Year 6	0	9	12	36	39	4
Total	2	24	21	33	19	2
Grampian total	4	27	21	30	17	3

When compared to the overall 2001 figures it is evident that young people now drink more often, with higher percentages in categories 1-2 a year, <1 a month and >1 a month.

Young people from Aberdeenshire were most likely to drink alcohol at parties (88%). The second most popular place was at home with family (70%), while 42% of young people admitted to drinking in the street and 36% to drinking in pubs/night-clubs.

The average age for first drinking alcohol is 12 years old and when respondents first got drunk is 14 years old.

Respondents were asked if they had ever been really drunk and how often in the last month they drank 5 or more drinks

How often in last month drank 5 or more drinks?

	Males %	Females %	Total %
4 or more times	16	15	15
3 times	12	12	12
Twice	15	20	18
Once	18	17	18
Not had 5 or more drinks	22	18	20
Never had 5 or more drinks	18	17	17

Nearly 40% of respondents had never had, or not had 5 or more drinks in the last 30 days. Having 5 or more drinks 3 times in the last month was 12%, once and twice was 36% and 4 or more times was 15%.

Have you ever been really drunk?

	Males %	Females %	Total %
No never	34	28	31
Yes, once	15	24	18
Yes, 2-3 times	24	27	26
Yes, 4-10 times	13	15	14
Yes, more than 10 times	15	10	12

Of those who consume alcohol, 11%, of young people from Aberdeenshire would like to cut down on the amount of alcohol they drink. These young people drank an average of

16.5 unit of alcohol in the seven days prior to the survey, a decrease of approximately 2 units since the 2001 survey.

When asked what would help them to cut down on alcohol intake responses were as follows:

(c) Sources of Help

	Aberdeenshire	Grampian
	%	%
Leading a less stressful life	63	63
Advice and support from family and friends	62	37
More recreational facilities available at reasonable prices.	49	50
Information from Healthpoints	38	39
Meeting a new group of friends	31	37
Advice from an alcohol advisory group	29	30
Advice and support from teachers	23	23

Leading a less stressful life was a leading factor in 2001 and continues to be so in 2007 for Aberdeen City pupils. There has been a little change in respondents who say more recreational facilities at reasonable prices would help them cut down their alcohol intake since 2001.

(d) Reasons for Drinking

Young people gave many reasons for drinking alcohol. Some of these were as follows:

	Aberdeenshire	Grampian
	%	%
Like the taste	87	85
Like the way it makes you feel	69	71
It helps you relax	62	63
It helps you talk to people more easily	68	69
Want to get drunk	44	46
It helps you forget your worries	37	39

(e) Results of Drinking

Young people were asked if anything had happened to them as a result of drinking.

	Never %	Once %	Twice or more %
Had an argument	64	21	15
Had a fight	83	10	7
Visited a hospital A&E department	97	1	1
Been admitted to hospital overnight	98	1	1
Had an injury that needed to be seen by a doctor	95	3	1
Been taken home by police	93	5	2
Stayed off school	90	7	3
Been sick (vomited)	55	23	22
Tried any drugs	86	7	7
Been in trouble with the police	88	7	6
Had unprotected sexual intercourse	93	3	5

The two highest percentages of things happening as a result of drinking are, being sick 45% and having an argument 36%.

5.10 Sexual Health

(a) HIV

Of Aberdeenshire school pupils surveyed, 9% said that they worry a lot about becoming HIV positive, a further 11% claim to worry quite a lot. These figures are similar to Grampian overall.

To assess knowledge of how the infection can be contracted, a list of statements was given and respondents asked if they were true or false. Results for Aberdeenshire pupils were as follows:

Health message	Correct answer	% who gave correct answer	% who gave wrong answer	% who were unsure
A person can get HIV by shaking hands with someone who is HIV positive	NO	72	3	25
A person can get HIV by sharing needles/syringes with someone who is HIV positive	YES	83	2	15
A person can get HIV by having sexual intercourse with someone who is HIV positive	YES	90	2	7
A pregnant woman who has HIV can pass it onto her baby	YES	65	4	31
A person can get HIV by donating blood	NO	22	36	42
A person can become infected by HIV by sharing a cup or glass with someone who is HIV positive	NO	47	11	42
A person can get HIV by swallowing street drugs	NO	24	27	49
A person can protect themselves from HIV by using condoms every time they have sex	YES	77	4	19
A person can protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases by using condoms every time they have sex	YES	77	4	19
Taking the contraceptive pill can prevent a person from becoming pregnant and being infected with a sexually transmitted disease	NO	41	21	38

There has been an overall decline in the knowledge of HIV and it was noted during the implementation of the survey that many of the 1st and 2nd year pupils did not know what

HIV or AIDS was. There has been a decrease in knowledge in all categories, especially young people thinking you could get HIV by shaking hands with someone who was HIV positive, thinking HIV can be passed on by donating blood or by sharing a cup or glass. Accordingly there has been an increase of those who gave a wrong answer and those who were unsure in nearly all statements.

Two new statements were added this year, protection from sexually transmitted diseases by using condoms and the contraceptive pill preventing a person from becoming pregnant and being infected with a sexually transmitted disease. Only 77% knew that a using a condom can protect against contracting a sexually transmitted disease and 41% knew that the pill could not prevent infection from a sexually transmitted disease. This follows the trend in previous surveys that knowledge of how HIV can be contracted has reduced and it appears that awareness of HIV has got progressively worse.

(b) Relationships

The pupils were asked about their relationships and 73% of Aberdeenshire respondents said that they currently have or have had a boyfriend or girlfriend. Pupils who had never had a relationship were not required to complete any further questions in the relationship section of the report and **have been excluded from the baseline of the percentages quoted.**

Pupils who had had a relationship were asked to specify activities they had participated in during their relationships. Responses were as follows:

	Aberdeenshire			Grampian		
	Never %	Occasionally %	Frequently %	Never %	Occasionally %	Frequently %
Hugging	3	21	75	4	32	64
Kissing on mouth	13	27	61	8	25	67
Light petting (fondling, caressing above waist)	31	29	40	27	33	40
Heavy petting (fondling, caressing below waist)	49	24	28	46	27	27
Oral sex	71	14	15	71	16	13
Sexual Intercourse	75	11	14	74	13	13

Participation in each of the activities increased with age, particularly among those who had had sexual intercourse. The following table provides a percentage breakdown by year for those pupils who had either occasionally or frequently had sexual intercourse.

Respondents who had had sexual intercourse

	Males %		Females %		Total %	
	Aberdeen shire	Grampian	Aberdeen shire	Grampian	Aberdeen shire	Grampian
Year 1	4	2	4	2	4	2
Year 2	8	8	3	5	6	6
Year 3	22	22	23	21	23	21
Year 4	24	29	36	34	31	32
Year 5	32	39	41	44	38	42
Year 6	55	60	60	57	58	58

Results indicate an increase in the percentages of both 6th year males and females who are sexually active compared to the 2001 survey.

(c) Use of Contraceptives

Most, 86%, of sexually active respondents in Aberdeenshire used a contraceptive the first time they had sex compared with 84% of Grampian overall.

Percentage of sexually active respondents who use a contraceptive

	Aberdeenshire %	Grampian %
Always	78	71
Nearly always	13	14
Sometimes	4	8
Never	6	6

Results show that a higher percentage of young people are now regularly using contraceptives compared to 2001.

Of the young people in Aberdeenshire who were sexually active, 87%, knew where to get condoms free of charge compared to 81% of 2001 respondents. There were also 82% who knew that they could get contraceptive advice to prevent pregnancy even if they are under 16 years of age.

The majority of young people in Aberdeenshire who have or have had a relationship are most comfortable discussing questions about sex with their friends - 79%. Nearly half, 47%, of Aberdeenshire pupils said they would be comfortable speaking to a doctor, with around 37% saying parents/guardians or school nurse. Nearly a third, 31%, said brothers/sisters, 26% a youth worker and 24% a phone line service. Only 20% said they would be comfortable speaking to teachers.

5.11 Drugs

This section of the questionnaire was used to determine young people's attitudes to drug taking and also the extent of drug misuse in Grampian. For the purpose of the questionnaire 'Drugs' were defined as those substances that had not been prescribed by a doctor or pharmacist for medical reasons. (These substances did not include alcohol or tobacco).

(a) Drug Use

A third, 34%, of young people surveyed had been offered drugs and 14% of respondents had tried drugs. As would be expected, older pupils were more likely to have taken drugs.

Respondents who had never taken drugs were not required to complete any further questions and **percentages given in the following tables are based only on those who had taken drugs.**

Respondents were asked to give information on the type of drugs that they had used and also how often these drugs are taken. This was done by asking them to complete the table shown below. In order to ensure that the information provided was accurate, a 'dummy' variable was included in the list. Pupils who claimed to have taken the dummy variable were excluded from the analysis.

Percentage of drug users who had taken the following					
	% never taken	% taken 1-2 times	% taken monthly	% taken 1-2 days / week	% taken 3-7 days / week
Cannabis	17.8	42.0	22.1	6.1	12.1
Magic Mushrooms	91.8	6.5	1.7	-	-
Amphetamines	89.7	6.9	2.5	-	0.9
Ecstasy	82.0	12.1	4.2	0.8	0.9
Diazepam (valium)	95.6	1.7	1.7	0.6	-
Cocaine	81.6	12.4	5.2	-	0.8
Temazepam	97.4	1.7	0.9	-	-
LSD, Acid	92.3	3.4	1.7	-	-
Unprescribed 118's,	98.2	1.8	-	-	-
Methadone	97.1	2.9	-	-	-
Heroin	96.6	0.9	2.5	-	-
Gas/Glue – other solvents	75.0	13.3	9.1	1.8	0.8
Poppers (Amyl Nitrate)	78.5	11.6	8.1	0.9	0.9
Crack (rock, stone)	94.0	5.2	-	0.9	-
Anabolic Steroids (roids)	100	-	-	-	-
Methamphetamine	94.7	3.5	1.7	-	-

The results show cannabis is used more commonly than any other type of drug. This is also true for Grampian as a whole.

(b) Reasons for Taking Drugs

The following reasons were given for taking drugs:

	Aberdeenshire %	Grampian %
Drugs help you relax	53	53
You like the way drugs make you feel	55	51
Drugs help you to talk to people more easily	33	35
Drugs help you forget your problems	34	31
You like drugs	33	32
You don't want to feel the odd one out	17	18
You feel forced to take drugs	5	8
Drugs make you dance better	19	19
Taking drugs is a mature thing to do	7	5
You need drugs to feel 'normal'	6	5
You feel unable to stop even if you wanted to	9	8

(c) Ease of acquiring drugs

Respondents were asked how easy it would be for them to get illegal drugs, results were:

	Aberdeenshire %	Grampian %
Very easy	38	40
Fairly easy	38	37
Fairly difficult	5	7
Very difficult	5	3
Impossible	2	2
Don't know	11	11

All respondents were given a list of statements about drugs and asked to agree or disagree. Responses are outlined below highlighting the difference in responses when comparing drug users with non-users.

(d) Attitudes towards drugs

	% who agree with statement			
	Aberdeenshire		Grampian	
	Drug user	Non drug user	Drug user	Non drug user
Taking drugs not prescribed by a doctor can cause health problems	72	78	72	77
Once you start taking drugs you are unlikely to stop	57	83	62	83
Taking drugs makes people lose control of themselves	67	84	73	85
People who take drugs are unpleasant	23	62	32	64
Taking drugs is sociable	27	9	24	8
Some drugs that are illegal should be made legal	57	18	56	20
There is a safe limit for taking un-prescribed drugs	54	22	53	22
Drugs are safer than alcohol	16	4	15	4
Taking drugs is good for my image	7	3	6	3

Clearly there is a difference in views between respondents who have tried or regularly take drugs and those who have never taken drugs. Among the most noticeable was that 62% of those who have never taken drugs think people who take drugs are unpleasant in contrast to 23% of those who have taken drugs. Over half, 57%, of those who have taken drugs feel that it should be legalised. This is compared to 75% in 2001, a difference of 18%. However there is an 11% decrease in non drug users who think some drugs should be made legal.

The majority, 88%, of drug users have gained their knowledge relating to drugs from friends.

The full report for the Grampian Youth Lifestyle Survey 2007 and reports for Aberdeen City and Moray Community Health Partnerships can be found at:

www.nhsgrampian.org/youthlifestyle2007

www.abdn.ac.uk/public_health/pubhealth/youth_lifestyle.php

www.hi-netgrampian.org

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