

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2022/23

Lifestyle behaviours of Young People

Summary points

- Approximately one quarter (23%) of school aged children and young people in Bristol eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day while about 11% have none
- Just under half of pupils in Bristol (46%) report that they are physically active on 5 or more days a week, with boys much more likely to report this than girls.
- Smoking rates among school aged children and young people continue to fall with only 2% of secondary pupils saying that they smoked at least one cigarette during the last 7 days compared to 10% in 2009, but 21% of secondary pupils had tried vaping, up a little from 18% in 2019.
- 72% of secondary school pupils said they did not drink alcohol, up from 64% in 2019
- 90% of secondary school pupils (year 8 and 10) said they had never taken illegal drugs, up a little from 87% in 2019
- Cannabis remains the most widely used illegal drug, with 11% of year 10 pupils saying they had used it at least once, and 7% of year 10 pupils reporting using it in the past month.

Diet

5-a-day fruit and veg

Bristol's local "Pupil Voice" survey (2022) reported that:

- 28% of primary pupils had at least 5 portions of fruit or vegetables the day prior to the survey while 10% reported having had none at all.
- 19% of secondary pupils said that they had at least 5 portions of fruit or vegetables yesterday, while 12% reported having had none at all.
- About a quarter (23%) of all pupils said that they had at least 5 portions of fruit or vegetables yesterday, while 11% reported having had none at all.

The results overall are similar to those reported from the previous survey (2019), but the responses from secondary school pupils suggest a possible deterioration since then; the proportion reporting they eat 5 or more portions of fruit or vegetables per day fell from 22% to 19% between the two surveys, and the proportion reporting they eat none at all on a typical day rose from 9% to 12%. Trends in these indicators since 2013 suggest that this may be part of a longer term trend for secondary school pupils.

Looked after pupils (children in care), and those from single parent families were significantly more likely to report that they were not eating 5-a-day fruit and vegetables, than the average.

Breakfast

The proportion of children and young people in Bristol who reported eating nothing for breakfast on the day of the survey was 13%; with older pupils more likely to have had no breakfast, particularly girls (23% of female respondents in Year 8).

- 5% of primary pupils responded that they had nothing to eat or drink before lessons on the day of the survey, while 4% said they had a cooked breakfast.

- 19% of secondary pupils responded that they didn't have anything to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey, while 4% had a cooked breakfast.
- The most popular breakfast foods were toast or bread, and various cereals with milk although for more than half of pupils reporting they ate cereal on the morning of the survey, the cereal was a sweetened or chocolate variety rather than relatively plain.
- 6% of all pupils reported eating biscuits, cake, chocolate or sweets at breakfast on the morning of the survey, a slightly higher proportion reported eating some fruit (8%).

The proportion of primary school pupils reporting that they skipped breakfast on the day of the survey, has remained quite consistent for many years, back to 2009. The proportion of secondary school pupils reporting that they skipped breakfast on the day of the survey, in contrast has risen over the long term (10% in 2010) and markedly since the previous survey in 2019 (13%), to 19% in the most recent survey. Secondary school pupils in Bristol report a higher level for this measure than the national average estimated by our survey provider (approximately 15% in 2020/21).

Physical activity

The Bristol Pupil Voice 2022 findings indicated that 52% of primary pupils and 41% of secondary pupils were active (enough to breathe harder and faster or feel hot and sweaty for at least half an hour) on five or more days, in the week before the survey. In all year groups, boys were more likely to report being active 5 or more days in the week.

5% of primary pupils and 5% of secondary pupils responded that they weren't active (enough to breathe harder and faster or feel hot and sweaty, for at least half an hour) on a single day in the week before the survey.

Overall, the following groups of pupils were on average significantly less likely to be active everyday than their peers:

- Older pupils (i.e. secondary school pupils)
- Female pupils
- Pupils of an ethnicity other than White British
- Pupils reporting that they were LGBT+
- Pupils cared for mainly by one parent
- Pupils reporting that they have a learning disability or special educational need

A lack of time and being self-conscious about how they look taking part in physical activity were cited most often by secondary pupils as important barriers to exercising more. Cost and knowing what to do were the next most frequently cited factors.

Almost 60% of respondents to the survey overall reported more than three hours screen use during the previous day, the proportion was nearly 75% of secondary pupils. More than three hours screen use was found to be associated on average within the survey respondent group with less sleep, poorer mental and emotional wellbeing scores, and a lower frequency of physical activity. These relationships are not straightforward however; no screen use was also associated with poorer outcomes.

Secondary school pupils, LGBT+ pupils (secondary pupils only) and children from single parent families (secondary pupils only) were found to be significantly more likely than the average pupil to report more than 3 hours screen use. Pupils eligible for free school meals and young carers were less likely than average to report more than 3 hours screen use.

Smoking and Vaping

The 2022 Bristol Pupil Voice survey found that smoking rates among school aged pupils in Bristol are low. 2% of secondary pupils (year 8 and year 10 respondents) were regular smokers, reporting that they had smoked one or more cigarettes in the week prior to the survey. The prevalence of cigarette smoking within this cohort has fallen dramatically over the last 12 to 14 years, as it has also done in the whole population during this period. In 2008 15% of year 10 pupils reported smoking regularly, whereas the statistic in 2022 is around one-fifth of that rate.

Children in local authority care, young carers and those with special educational needs and disabilities, were all more likely to report smoking in the week prior to the survey, compared to the average figures.

Some groups of young people are still very likely to be cigarette smokers despite the declining trends observed overall. An analysis of young people (aged 11 to 18) in contact with the Youth Offending Team in Bristol in 2020 and 2021 indicated that more than half of them were regular smokers. 75% of those aged 14 or 15 (i.e. approximately comparable to the year 10 respondents to the Pupil Voice survey) were regular or occasional smokers.

A relatively high proportion of children in Bristol are exposed to cigarette smoke at home and/or in the car, and these pupils were markedly more likely to smoke themselves than the average rate within the Pupil Voice survey. 25% of primary pupils and 30% of secondary pupils responded that their parents/carers smoke. 5% of primary pupils and 10% of secondary pupils said that someone regularly smokes indoors at home in rooms that they use. 6% of primary pupils and 9% of secondary pupils responded that someone smokes in a car in which they themselves are travelling, even though this is now illegal.

There has been an increase in the rates of young people in Bristol who have tried e-cigarettes (vaped). Pupil Voice 2022 data indicated that 21% of secondary pupils had tried e-cigarettes in the past or use one currently. This has increased from 18% in 2019. The proportion of secondary school pupils reporting they used them regularly or occasionally rose from 4% to 7% over the same period. 73% of the pupils that have tried e-cigarettes had never smoked a conventional cigarette, or had only done so once, so the vast majority of vaping by Bristol pupils appears to be among non-conventional cigarette smokers. 70% of regular and occasional cigarette smokers had also tried e-cigarettes but were still smokers.

Data from similar pupil surveys across England suggests that young people in Bristol are not significantly more or less likely to smoke cigarettes than their peers from other parts of the country.

Alcohol

The 2022 Bristol Pupil Voice survey found that 6% of year 6 pupils (10/11yrs), 11% of year 8 pupils (12/13yrs) and 25% of year 10 pupils (14/15yrs) reported drinking alcohol in the 4-weeks prior to the survey.

Findings since 2008 indicate that the prevalence of alcohol use amongst primary and secondary school pupils has fallen markedly over the period.

LGBT+ pupils (Year 10 only), those with a disability or a long term illness, those living in single parent families, young carers and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities were significantly more likely than the average pupil to report drinking alcohol in the month prior to the survey.

The 2022 Pupil Voice survey also found that female pupils were more likely to drink alcohol than male pupils.

Drug misuse

Data from the 2022 Bristol Pupil Voice survey suggests that Bristol secondary school pupils continue to be offered a wide range of illegal drugs, but the two most frequently used substances are cannabis and nitrous oxide (laughing gas).

20% of Year 10 pupils had been offered cannabis. 11% said they had ever used cannabis, 10% had used it during the last year and 7% had used it in the last month. Prevalence among Year 8 students was lower, with 4% saying they had been offered cannabis and 2% saying they had ever used it.

6% of Year 10 students said they had been offered nitrous oxide. 6% said they had ever used it, 4% had used it in the last year and 2% in the last month.

Overall, 10% of secondary pupils (Years 8 and 10) said they have ever taken some form of illegal drug, down from 13% in 2019.

Within the responding cohort of secondary pupils, those who identified as LGBT+, young carers, those with a disability or long term illness, those living in single parent families and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities were all significantly more likely than the average pupil to report illegal drug use.

The survey also found that female pupils in secondary schools were more likely to report having used an illegal substance than male pupils.

The 2022 survey recorded the lowest reported level of illicit drug use since the Pupil Voice survey started in Bristol in 2008, with declining usage reported in 5 out of 7 surveys conducted since 2008.

Further data / links:**The Bristol Pupil Voice Survey**

The national 'What About YOUth' survey that has previously provided useful Bristol data for this section, and comparisons to the rest of the country, has not been repeated since 2014/15, so all the findings reported in this section on the health-related behaviours of young people in Bristol have been derived from the Bristol Pupil Voice Survey. This survey asks detailed questions on a wide range of topics of interest to public health, school staff and colleagues working in Bristol City Council.

The Pupil Voice survey was first commissioned in Bristol in 2008 and repeated in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2019 and most recently 2021/22. All primary and secondary schools in the city are invited to take part in the survey and during 2021-22 we had approximately 4,600 pupil responses from more than 30 primary, specialist provision and secondary schools in the city.

In 2021/22 there were responses from approximately 20% of Bristol schools, and approximately 18% of all Bristol pupils in the academic year groups of interest (4, 6, 8 and 10), aged from 8-9 years to 14-15 years of age. Coverage is therefore good, and analysis indicates that the findings should be reasonably representative of the wider pupil population of mainstream state schools in the city.

Further information and findings from the Bristol Pupil Voice Survey 2022, will be made available in an updated summary report on the Bristol Healthy Schools webpages later this year. The previous summary report (based on the 2019 survey) can be found here:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/bristol-healthy-schools/topics/data-and-research>

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Date of next update: tbc