



SWSHRN

South West - School Health Research Network

Principal Investigators: Professor Rona Campbell, Professor Russ Jago

Researchers: Emily Widnall, Dr Patricia Albers & Dr Lorna Hatch

Network Manager: Georgina Hopkins

What is SW-SHRN?



The study aims to test the feasibility of creating a network to improve the health, well-being, and educational attainment of school-aged children through research

SW-SHRN is currently in its pilot phase

Aiming to establish a School Health Research Network among secondary schools in the South West of England

Why SW-SHRN?



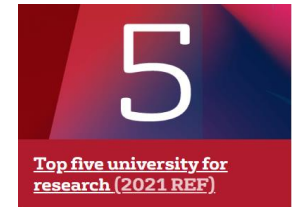
Strong links exist between health and educational outcomes for young people

Adolescence is a critical development period and offers key opportunity for early intervention

Schools represent a key environment to facilitate health and well-being

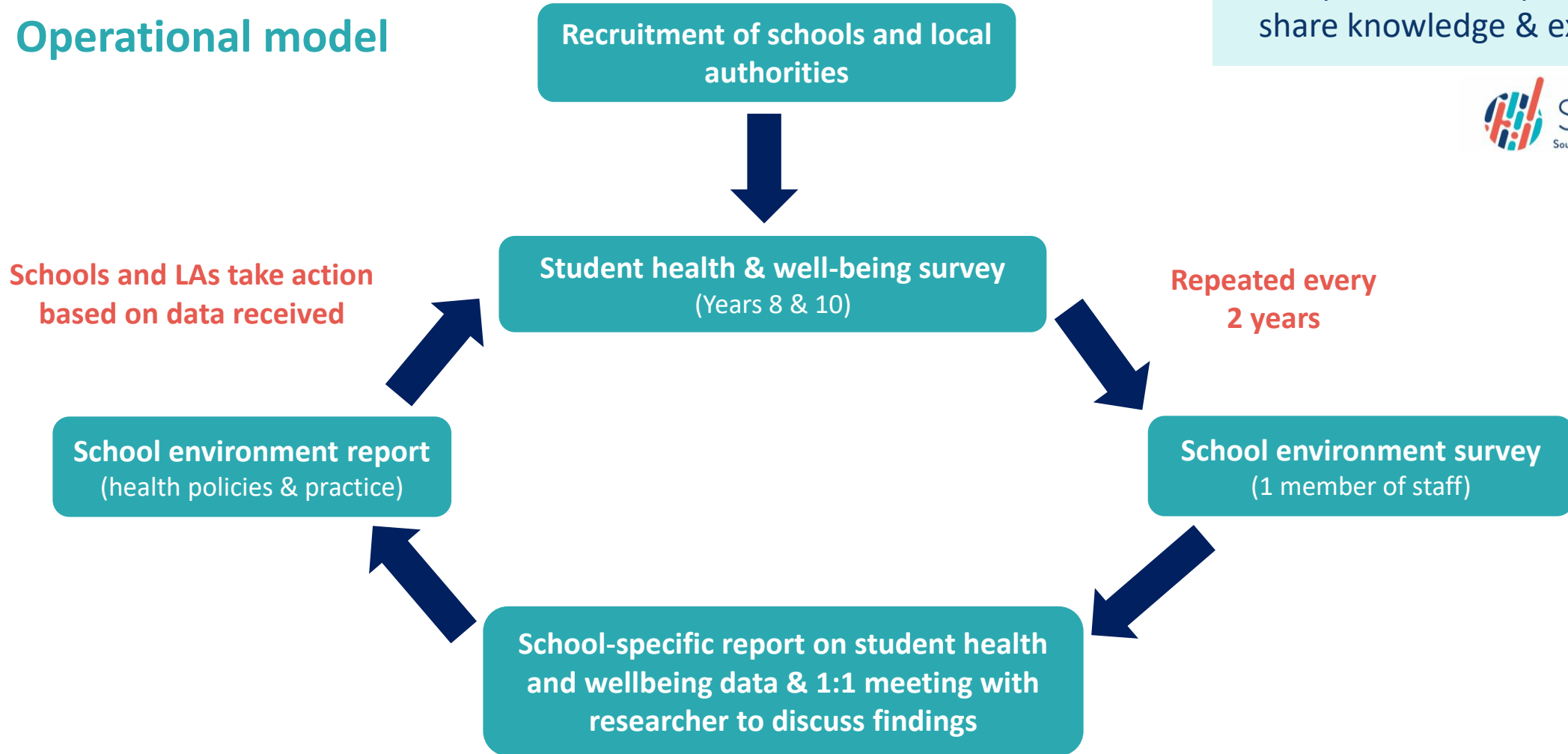
Networks established in Wales (SHRN) and Scotland (SHINE)

Based within the University of Bristol, a leading centre for health research. More than 94% of submitted research outputs rated as world leading or internationally excellent



How does SW-SHRN work?

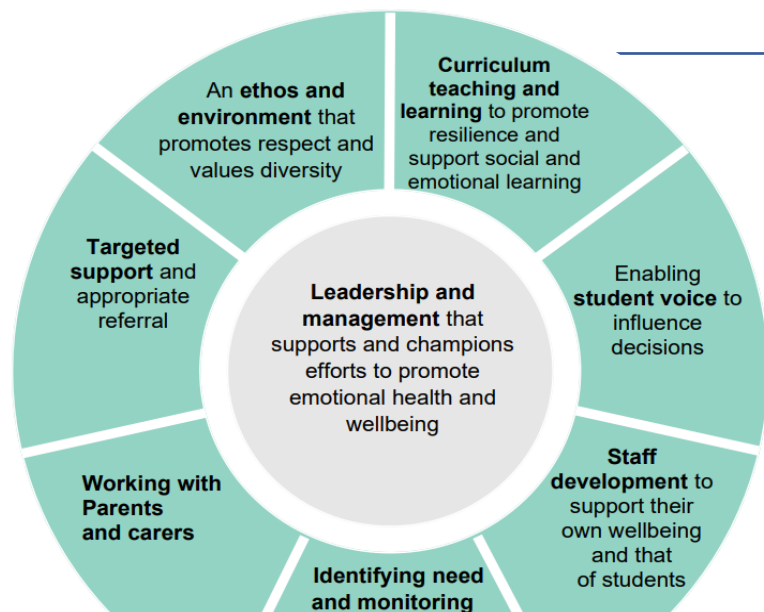
Operational model



Create a community of researchers, educators, learners, and public health practitioners to share knowledge & expertise



Key Features of SW-SHRN



Robust data with validated questionnaires and researcher-assisted data collection

Tailored school reports with benchmarking data for comparison across SW England

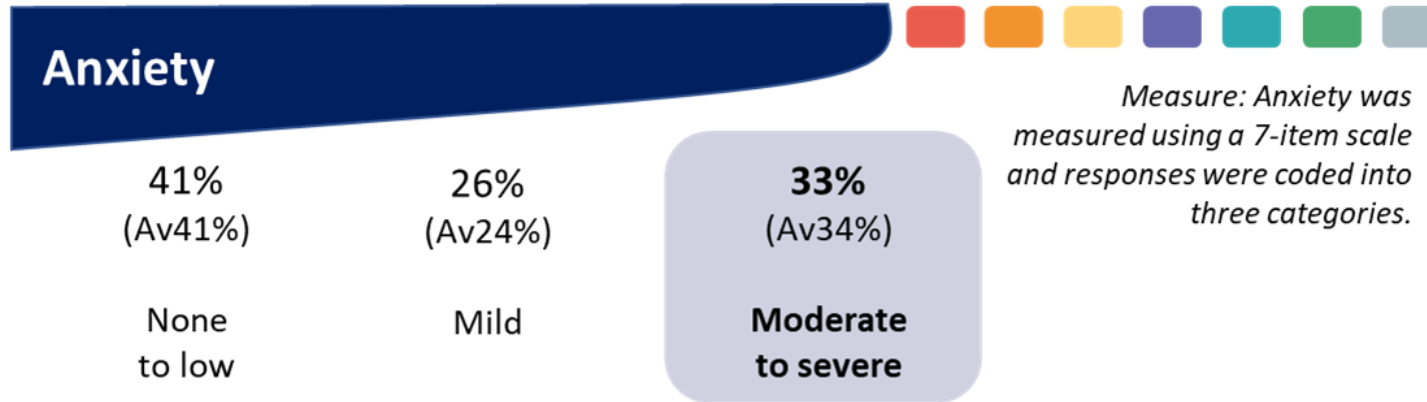
Using the student voice to identify key focus areas to target intervention

Insight into existing policies and programmes to support health and well-being across schools in SW England.

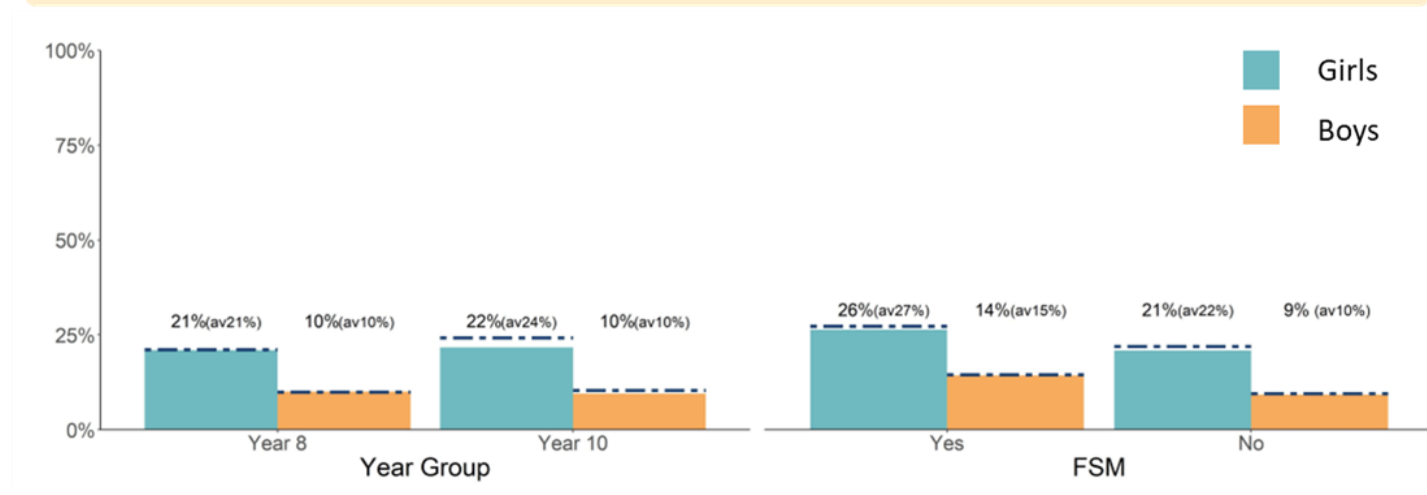
Sharing of expertise and best-practice across the network

Aligning with the 8 principles of a whole school approach

Sample graph from report



Graph 1. Sample breakdown of students who reported feeling moderate to severe anxiety



Figures at end of pilot study

5,211 survey responses

18 schools recruited

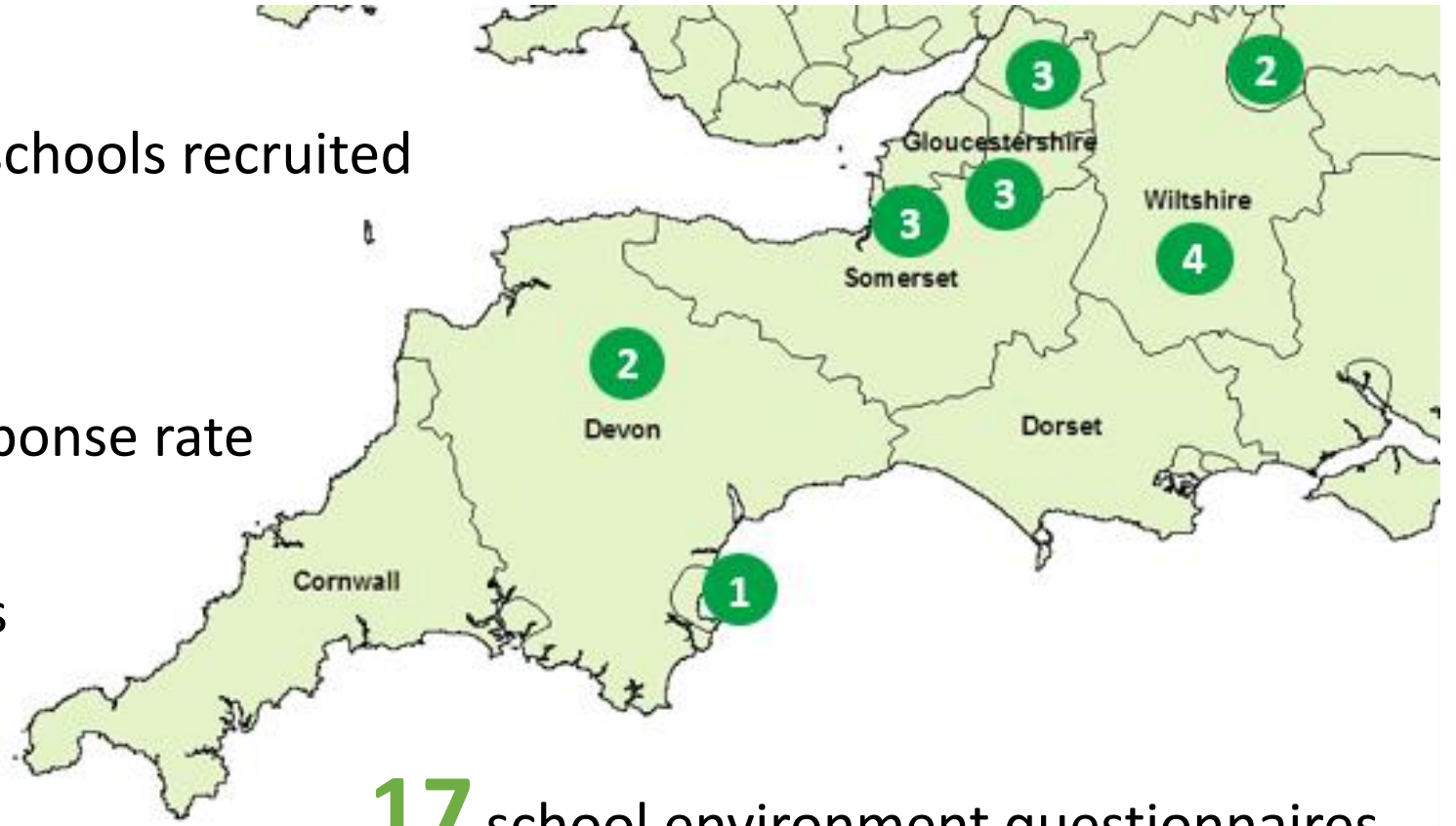
24 reports shared

73% response rate

26 qualitative interviews

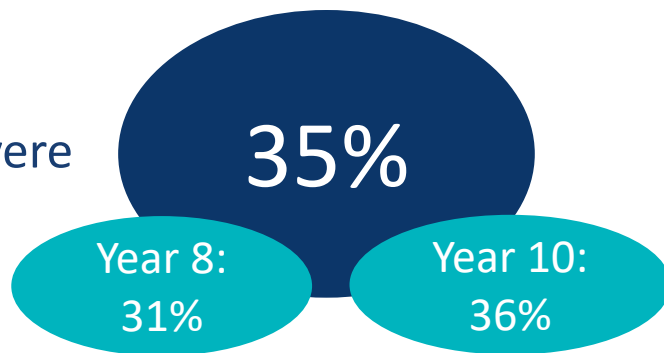
7 local authorities

17 school environment questionnaires

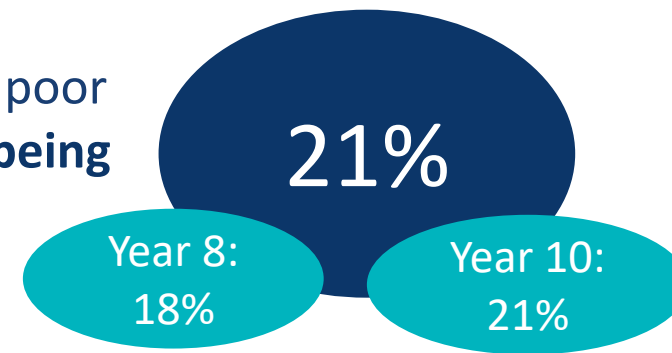


Findings: Mental Health and Well-being

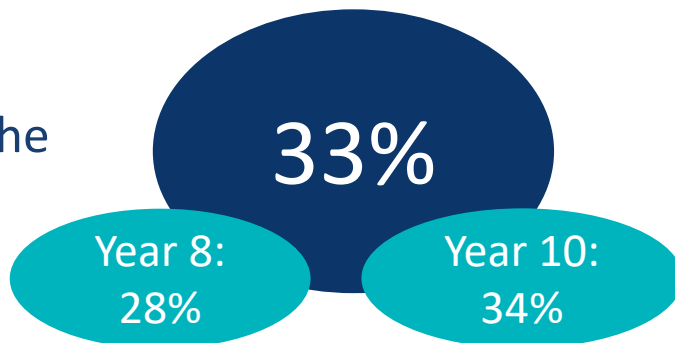
Experiencing moderate to severe **anxiety**



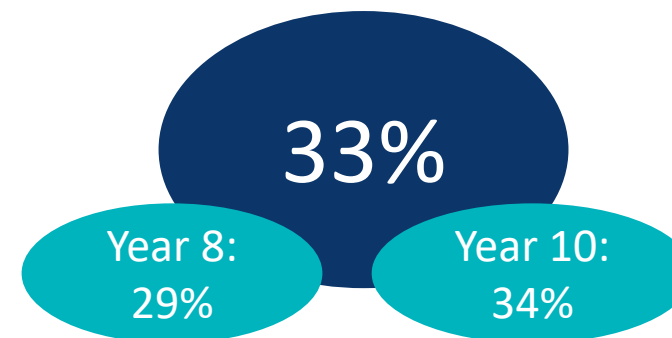
Experiencing poor mental **well-being**



Feeling **lonely** some or all of the time



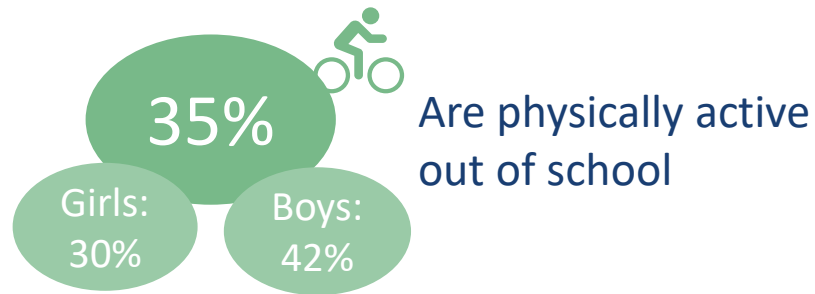
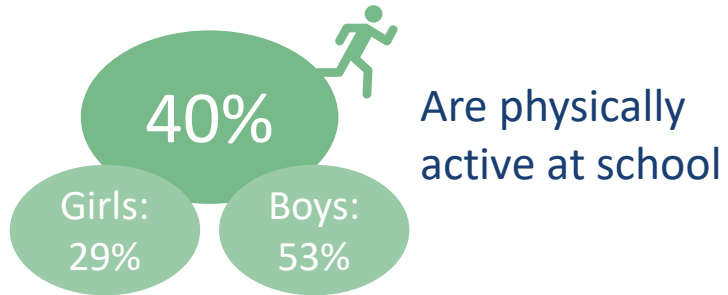
Experiencing symptoms of **depression**



Rates of probable mental disorders have increased since 2017; in 6 to 16 year olds from one in nine (11.6%) to one in six (17.4%) in 2021

NHS Digital, Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2021 - wave 2 follow up to the 2017 survey

Findings: Health-related behaviours



Children's activity levels have not recovered after end of Covid restrictions – study

Only about a third of children and young people are meeting recommended activity levels, Bristol study finds



bbc.co.uk

Children less active after Covid-19 restrictions eased, study finds
Researchers say activity levels among children in England have fallen below national guidelines.

Wider Research:

- Only 36% of children meet physical activity guidelines
- Physical inactivity associated with obesity and both major risk factors for several chronic diseases
- In contrast, PA is positively associated with physical, psychological and social indicators of health

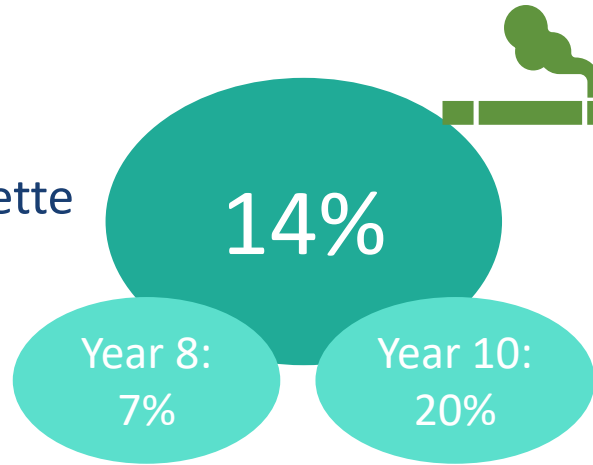
Department of Health. (2011). *Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers*. Salway, R., Foster, C., de Vocht, F., Tibbitts, B., Emm-Collison, L., House, D., ... & Jago, R. (2022).

Accelerometer-measured physical activity and sedentary time among children and their parents in the UK before and after COVID-19 lockdowns: a natural experiment. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 19(1), 1-14.

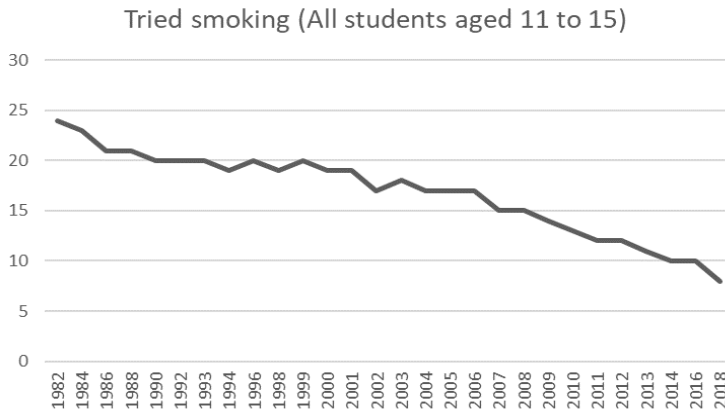
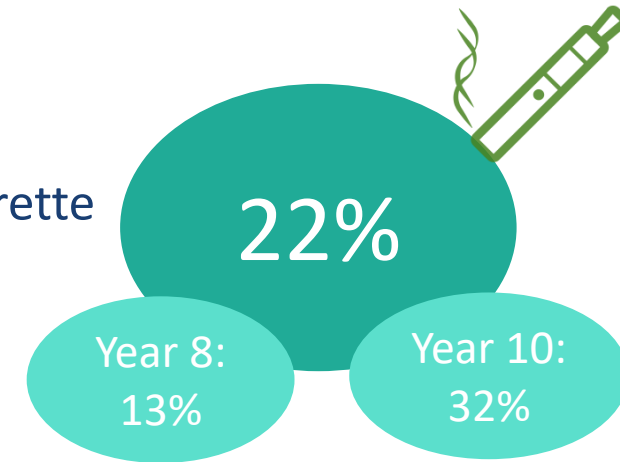
Guthold, R., Stevens, G. A., Riley, L. M., & Bull, F. C. (2020). Global trends in insufficient physical activity among adolescents: A pooled analysis of 298 population-based surveys with 1.6 million participants. *The Lancet*, 4(1), 23-35.

Findings: Risky Behaviours

Tried tobacco cigarette at least once

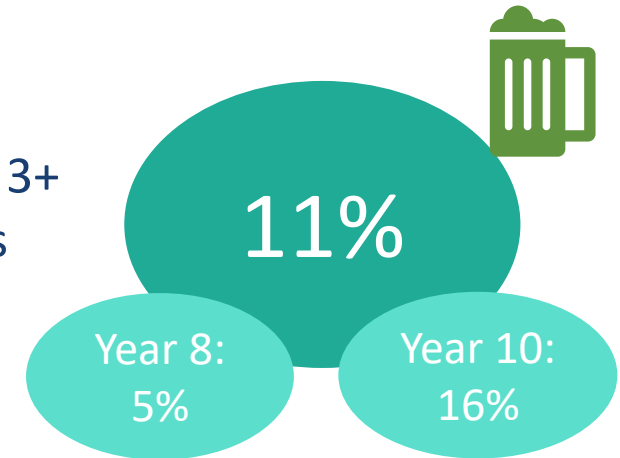


Tried an e-cigarette at least one

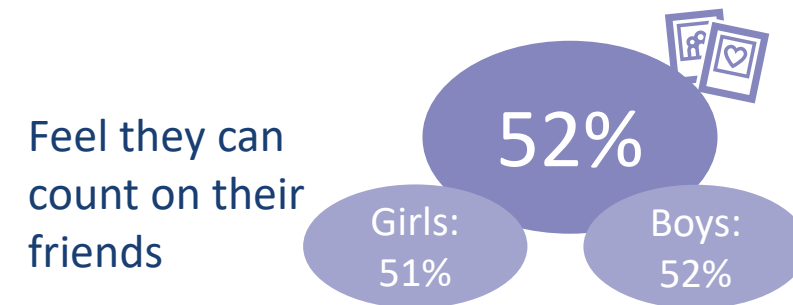
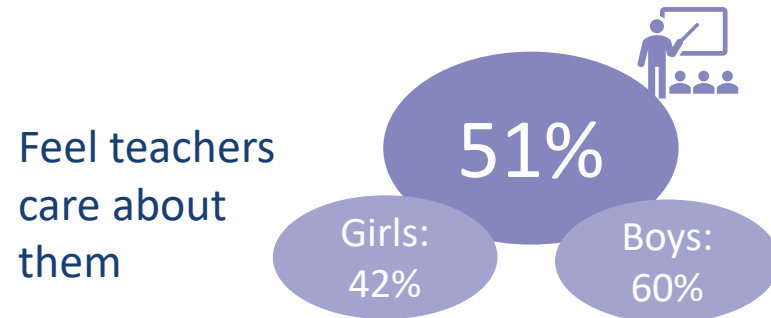
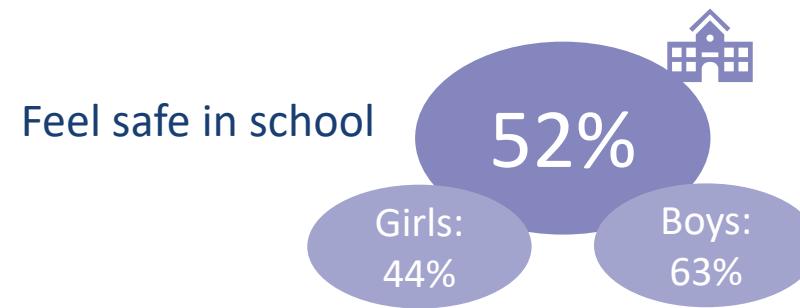
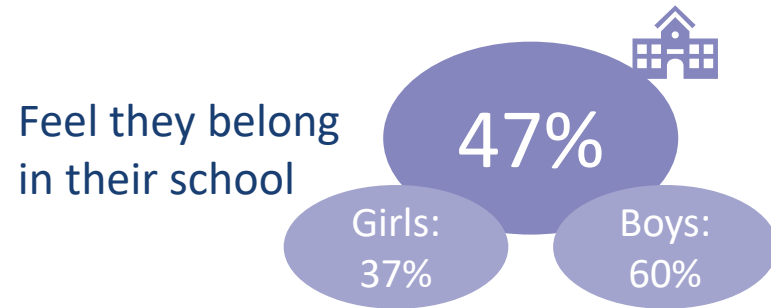


Data from NHS Digital England 2018
<http://digital.nhs.uk/pubs/sdd18>

Consumed alcohol 3+ days in last 30 days



Findings: School Connectedness & Peer Support



Wider Research:

- **School connectedness has been found to act as a protective factor against bullying and risk of suicide (Kim et al. 2020) as well as substance use and physical activity (Weatherson et al. 2018)**
- **Research has also found that peer relationships play an important role in adolescent mental health (Roach, 2018)**

Kim, J., Walsh, E., Pike, K., & Thompson, E. A. (2020). Cyberbullying and victimization and youth suicide risk: the buffering effects of school connectedness. *The journal of school nursing*, 36(4), 251-257.

Weatherson et al. (2018). The protective effects of school connectedness on substance use and physical activity. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 63(6), 724-731.

Roach, A. (2018). Supportive peer relationships and mental health in adolescence: An integrative review. *Issues in mental health nursing*, 39(9), 723-737.

School & Stakeholder Feedback

"I hope it will open up more conversations with our students, and us knowing what areas they need support on, and then being able to target these areas."

"The survey has helped identify particular groups of students and areas which we could now work on rather than just shooting in the dark at what we could do."

"We can't make change unless you understand what is happening in your school environment, and measure it successfully, and then make change based on that. So, I think it is a great initiative."

"I thought the report was brilliant, it was really clear. I really liked the benchmarking that you did and the breakdown of boys and girls in different groups...so I was able to identify Year 10 boys that are pupil premium students, we've got a real problem with this."

"I really liked the graphic, that was probably the most powerful part of it. The breakdown of the questions, again, that was really fascinating, in having the bar graph for free school meals, boy and girl ratio, that was really, really powerful."

Any questions?

SW-SHRN@bristol.ac.uk

