

Student Health and Wellbeing Survey 2017

Information about the Data Linkage and Longitudinal Research Project

Your school is invited to take part in the Data Linkage and Longitudinal Research Project as part of the 2017 Student Health and Wellbeing Survey. This document contains essential information about the project and what taking part entails for your school.

About the project

The Student Health and Wellbeing Survey is currently cross-sectional (i.e. data is collected at one point in time) and completed anonymously. We can conduct more sophisticated research if the survey is *longitudinal* and if we can *link data from the survey to other data sets* in Wales.

Longitudinal research can be thought of as 'research over time' and involves linking students' survey responses to future rounds of the Student Health and Wellbeing Survey if they take part in it more than once, e.g. in 2017, 2019, 2021 etc. This enables us to see how students' behaviour changes over time. It is much more powerful if we do this at the level of the student (a longitudinal survey) than with groups of students (repeated cross-sectional surveys).

For example, longitudinal research would enable us to evaluate how changes in school connectedness relate to young people's substance use. Being able to link students' answers about school connectedness in 2017 and 2019 would allow us to identify those students who are becoming more connected and those becoming less connected to their school and if that relates to their use of substances.

Data linkage research involves linking Student Health and Wellbeing Survey data to other datasets, such as those held by Welsh Government and the NHS, using secure and rigorous methods that ensure students cannot be identified from their data. Importantly, this will enable us to link the data we collect on young people's health and wellbeing to data on their **educational attainment**. An example of this type of research undertaken by Cardiff University linked data collected from primary school children about their breakfast consumption to their attainment at Key Stage 2.

To do both these types of research we need young people's names, dates of births and postcodes to link data over time for longitudinal research and to enable data linkage researchers to link our survey data to other datasets.

The purpose of this project is to explore acceptability among schools, young people and parents of providing names, dates of birth and postcodes at the end of the survey, and to ascertain the proportion of young people who do so.

The project has ethical approval from the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (SREC/2190).

What will schools have to do?

Schools will be provided with an *information video* to show to all students who will be taking part in the survey about a week beforehand. If any student misses the video, we will provide you with a leaflet to give them, which includes a link to watch the video online. The video lasts for about 6½ minutes and can be viewed here: www.shrn.org.uk/video / www.shrn.org.uk/cy/fideo The video will be available in Welsh in September.

The letter for parents in schools taking part in this project also contains a link to the video on our website. As in all schools, you should distribute the parent letter at least a week before the survey starts. If any parent does not want their child to give their name, date of birth and postcode the letter instructs them to notify the school. We will provide you with a form to record the names of students whose parents withdraw them. Ipsos MORI, the company delivering the survey on our behalf, will check this form and permanently delete the names, dates of birth and postcodes of any students who provide this information when their parents did not want them to.

What will parents and students have to do?

Parents will need to notify the school if they do not want their child to take part in the project. (The student can still take part in the main part of the survey.) If parents are happy for their child to make their own choice about taking part, they do not need to do anything.

Students will complete the survey and then be taken to a page that asks for their consent for their survey answers to be used for longitudinal and / or data linkage research. If they say yes to either, fields appear for them to give their name, date of birth and postcode. If they do not consent, they do not see these fields and they will be taken straight to the survey 'Thank you' page.

Next steps

If you would like your school to take part in the project, you don't need to do anything now. Over the summer we will randomly select 40 schools to take part in the project and you will be notified in September whether or not your school was selected. If it is selected, your September school pack will include the link to the video, a pdf of the leaflet, and your parent letter will include the link to the video.

If you do not want your school to take part in the project, please complete section 8 on Form A and return it to us by **21st July**. Your school will still make a valuable contribution to the Student Health and Wellbeing Survey and receive a Student Health and Wellbeing Report.

Contact details

If you have any questions, please get in touch:

Gillian Hewitt or Joan Roberts: shrn@cardiff.ac.uk Tel: 029 2087 9609