

SALSUS 2018: Mental Health and Wellbeing National Overview

Background

The Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) is a biennial national survey of smoking, drinking and drug use among secondary school children in S2 and S4 (corresponding to 13 and 15 year olds). The survey includes questions on mental health and wellbeing, as well as other lifestyle, health and social factors. The last survey was conducted in 2015 and the last local level results were in 2013.

This summary outlines the national mental health and wellbeing figures from SALSUS 2018. It has been produced to accompany the local authority and NHS board reports, which compare local results to the 2018 national average, as well as local level changes from 2013. A full mental wellbeing topic report on the SALSUS 2018 data, which will provide additional analysis by age, gender, family circumstances and trends over time, will be published in spring 2020¹.

Further details on the methods, sample and response rates are available in the SALSUS 2018 Technical Report, published on the Scottish Government website. A copy of the questionnaire is also available.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

All pupils were asked questions from the 'Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire' (SDQ) (Robert Goodman, 1997). This measure has been included in SALSUS since 2006. The questionnaire lists 25 statements that are grouped into 5 scales - emotion, contact, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationships and pro-social behaviour. Each scale comprises of 5 questions. Overall scores were calculated for each of the five scales by summing the scores for all items within each scale. Scores are re-grouped into bands 'normal', 'borderline' and 'abnormal'² for each scale.

¹ This will be similar in content to the [SALSUS 2015 Mental Wellbeing Report](#).

² The terminology used to describe SDQ scores is borrowed from the original questionnaire designed by Goodman. While the terms 'normal', 'borderline' and 'abnormal' may seem out-dated in the context of the language used to describe mental wellbeing today, they have been retained in this report to draw comparisons to previous years.

SALSUS 2018: Mental Health and Wellbeing National Overview

SDQ Scores	2013	2015	2018	Base (2018)
Overall borderline/abnormal score (13 year olds)	27%	28%	36%	10,190
Overall borderline/abnormal score (15 year olds)	32%	34%	39%	9,032
Emotional symptoms borderline/abnormal score (13 year olds)	20%	22%	30%	10,308
Emotional symptoms borderline/abnormal score (15 year olds)	27%	30%	37%	9,101
Conduct problems borderline/abnormal score (13 year olds)	22%	23%	27%	10,469
Conduct problems borderline/abnormal score (15 year olds)	22%	25%	25%	9,257
Hyperactivity/inattention borderline/abnormal score (13 year olds)	29%	29%	35%	10,289
Hyperactivity/inattention borderline/abnormal score (15 year olds)	33%	32%	37%	9,089
Peer relationship problems borderline/abnormal score (13 year olds)	20%	22%	25%	10,308
Peer relationship problems borderline/abnormal score (15 year olds)	20%	23%	27%	9,096
Pro-social behaviour borderline/abnormal score (13 year olds)	22%	28%	23%	10,490
Pro-social behaviour borderline/abnormal score (15 year olds)	28%	34%	27%	9,266

SALSUS 2018: Mental Health and Wellbeing National Overview

Mental Wellbeing – Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)

All pupils were given a mean wellbeing score according to the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), included in SALSUS since 2010. Pupils were asked to indicate how often they had thoughts and feelings relating to 14 positively worded statements concerning their mental wellbeing. Each statement has a five item scale ranging from '1 - None of the time' to '5 – All of the time'. The lowest possible score is therefore 14 and the highest is 70. The higher the respondent's score, the better their mental well-being.

WEMWBS	2013	2015	2018	Base (2018)
Average wellbeing score (13 year olds)	50.0	49.7	48.1	10,414
Average wellbeing score (15 year olds)	47.6	47.2	45.7	9,513