



Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) 2018

Summary findings for Aberdeenshire Council



1.	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Methods and Sample	3
1.2	Summary format and notes to aid interpretation	4
2.	SMOKING	6
2.1	Smoking prevalence and attitudes to trying smoking	6
2.2	Source of cigarettes	7
2.3	Attempts to buy cigarettes	8
2.4	Smoking dependence	9
2.5	E-cigarette use	10
3	ALCOHOL USE	11
3.1	Prevalence of alcohol use and attitudes to trying alcohol	11
3.2	Drinking to excess	12
3.3	Availability/source of alcohol	13
4.	DRUG USE	14
4.1	Prevalence of drug use and attitudes to trying drugs	14
4.2	Whether offered drugs	16
4.3	Availability of drugs	16
4.4	Source of drugs used and obtaining help with drug use	17
5.	MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	18
5.1	Strengths and Difficulties	18
5.2	Mental Wellbeing (WEMWEBS Scale)	19

1 Introduction

The 2018 Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) is the latest in a national series of surveys of smoking, drinking and drug use among secondary school children. The first survey in this series was conducted in 1982. This local summary presents key findings from the 2018 survey for pupils attending schools in Aberdeenshire Council. The key findings are presented in a tabular format to aid comparative analyses and benchmarking. The 2018 results are compared to the results of the previous survey where there were local level results (change from 2013) and to the 2018 national average (difference from Scotland 2018).

All of these documents, along with the survey questionnaire and the Technical Report, are available on the SALSUS webpages.

1.1 Methods and Sample

SALSUS is a self-completion survey administered by teachers in a mixed ability class, under exam conditions. In 2018 schools were encouraged to administer the survey online (but could administer it on paper if that was more feasible). Fieldwork was completed between October 2018 and April 2019.

In Aberdeenshire Council there were 5,417 13 and 15 year old pupils (year groups S2 and S4, see notes on page 5) eligible to take part in the survey, with 1,069 pupils (20% of all eligible pupils) participating via the selected sample. As in previous years, the primary sampling unit was the class and, in each selected class, all pupils were invited to take part. All secondary schools (both state and independent) in every local authority were eligible to have classes sampled. However, as in previous years, schools dedicated to children with additional support needs were excluded from the sample. The response rates achieved (based on those sampled) for this local area are shown below:

	Aberdeenshire Council	Scotland
School response rate	56%	61%
Class response rate	53%	57%
Pupil response rate	88%	91%
Overall response rate (product of class and pupil response rate)	47%	52%

The characteristics of the pupils who took part in the survey were compared with the school census data to ensure that the survey results were representative of the population as a whole. Non-response weightings were applied to take any differences into consideration to ensure that data was not biased in favour of the groups that did participate.

Further details on the survey sampling methodology, sample characteristics and survey response rates can be found in the 2018 SALSUS Technical Report.

1.2 Summary format and notes to aid interpretation

The 2018 results are compared to the results of the previous survey (change from 2013) and to the 2018 national average (difference from Scotland 2018). Where appropriate, differences which are statistically significant at the 5% level are highlighted. For example:

Note: Example data for illustration purposes only.


		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
10%	of 13 year olds were regular smokers (usually smoking one or more cigarettes per week)	70	-1%	+5%
18%	of 15 year olds were regular smokers (usually smoking one or more cigarettes per week)	40	-8%	+1%


Key

 = < 50 pupils

n/s = not shown due to low base size (< 10 pupils)

n/a = not available (e.g. due to question changes between surveys)

 = statistically significant ('more favourable' than comparator)

 = statistically significant ('less favourable' than comparator)

In the above example:

- Ten percent of 13 year olds in this local area were regular smokers. This represents a decrease of one percentage point since the previous survey in 2013, however this change is not statistically significant so the value is not highlighted (white background).
- The percentage of 13 year old regular smokers in this local area is five percentage points higher than the equivalent percentage for Scotland as a whole. The red box highlighting this difference indicates that the result for this local area is less favourable than for Scotland as a whole and that this difference is statistically significant.
- Eighteen percent of 15 year olds in this local area were regular smokers. This represents a decrease of eight percentage points since the previous survey in 2013. The green box highlighting this change indicates that this is an improved position compared to the previous survey and that the change is statistically significant.
- The percentage of 15 year old regular smokers in this local area is one percentage point higher than the equivalent percentage for Scotland as a whole. However, this change is not statistically significant so the value is not highlighted (white background).

Notes on tables:

- Some percentages, particularly when results are broken down by age group and gender, may be based on a small number of pupils; these results should be treated with caution.
 - Any 2018 results based on < 50 pupils are shaded in grey (see table above).
 - Any results based on < 10 pupils are not shown (indicated with the text "n/s" (not shown)).
- 0% in the tables denotes that less than 0.5% of pupils gave that answer, whereas a - symbol denotes that no pupils gave that answer.
- Where data is unavailable (e.g. due to question changes between surveys) this is indicated with the text "n/a" (not available).
- The "Base" represents the number of valid responses used as the denominator to calculate the percentages.
- For the purposes of reporting, S2 pupils are referred to as "13 year olds" and S4 pupils are referred to as "15 year olds". While most pupils in S2 are 13 years old, and most pupils in S4 are 15 years old, some pupils are slightly older or younger.


2 Smoking



2.1 Smoking prevalence and attitudes to trying smoking

Pupils were asked a number of questions about smoking, and from these were categorised as 'regular', 'occasional' or 'non' smokers. They were also asked if they felt it was 'ok' for someone their age to 'try smoking to see what it's like'.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
90%	of 13 year olds reported they had never smoked	540	-2%	+2%
68%	of 15 year olds reported they had never smoked	515	0%	-2%
10%	of 13 year olds reported they had ever smoked	540	+2%	-2%
32%	of 15 year olds reported they had ever smoked	515	0%	+2%
1%	of 13 year olds were occasional smokers (sometimes smoke cigarettes but less than one per week)	540	0%	0%
6%	of 15 year olds were occasional smokers (sometimes smoke cigarettes but less than one per week)	515	0%	+1%
1%	of 13 year olds were regular smokers (usually smoking one or more cigarettes per week)	540	0%	-1%
8%	of 15 year olds were regular smokers (usually smoking one or more cigarettes per week)	515	+1%	+1%

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-  = statistically significant ('less favourable' than comparator)

2.1 Smoking prevalence and attitudes to trying smoking continued

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
23%	of 13 year olds felt it was 'ok' for someone their age to 'try smoking to see what it's like'	521	+7%	+4%
49%	of 15 year olds felt it was 'ok' for someone their age to 'try smoking to see what it's like'	498	-6%	+4%

2.2 Source of cigarettes

Pupils who were regular smokers were asked to indicate, from a list of possible sources, where they usually obtained their cigarettes/tobacco. Pupils could give more than one response. The main sources of cigarettes reported were:

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
43%	get someone else to buy them	39	-8%	-4%
57%	get given cigarettes by friends/family/carer	39	+4%	+9%
24%	buy them from a shop	39	+9%	-7%
46%	buy from other people	39	+13%	+12%
6%	buy from a van (e.g. an ice cream van or burger van)	39	+4%	-2%
11%	take cigarettes without asking	39	-6%	-1%

2.3 Attempts to buy cigarettes

Pupils who were regular or occasional smokers were asked if they had bought or tried to buy cigarettes/tobacco from a shop, supermarket or van in the last 4 weeks.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
n/s	of 13 year olds said they had managed to buy cigarettes/tobacco	8	n/s	n/s
21%	of 15 year olds said they had managed to buy cigarettes/tobacco	67	+15%	-8%
n/s	of 13 year olds said they had tried to buy cigarettes/tobacco but were refused	8	n/s	n/s
1%	of 15 year olds said they had tried to buy cigarettes/tobacco but were refused	67	-3%	-2%
n/s	of 13 year olds said they had not/never tried to buy cigarettes/tobacco	8	n/s	n/s
77%	of 15 year olds said they had not/never tried to buy cigarettes/tobacco	67	-12%	+10%

2.4 Smoking dependence

Pupils who were regular smokers were asked how long they had smoked for, whether they would like to give up, and whether they had ever tried to quit.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
53%	had smoked for more than a year	38	-10%	-7%
26%	reported that they would like to give it up	37	-3%	-4%
41%	said they had tried to quit at some time	38	-11%	-13%
43%	said that they would find it 'very' or 'fairly' difficult to quit	38	-16%	-8%
35%	who had smoked for more than one year said it would be 'very difficult' to give up	18	+4%	0%
12%	who had smoked for one year or less said it would be 'very difficult' to give up	19	-2%	-1%

2.5 E-cigarette use

All pupils were asked about their use of e-cigarettes.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
15%	of 13 year olds reported either trying or using e-cigarettes	531	+10%	-3%
34%	of 15 year olds reported either trying or using e-cigarettes	507	+21%	-1%
1%	of 13 year olds reported using e-cigarettes once a week or more	531	+1%	0%
4%	of 15 year olds reported using e-cigarettes once a week or more	507	+4%	+1%


3 Alcohol use



3.1 Prevalence of alcohol use and attitudes to trying alcohol

Pupils were asked questions about their alcohol consumption and whether they felt it was 'ok' for someone their age to 'try drinking alcohol to see what it's like'.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
42%	of 13 year olds reported they had had an alcoholic drink (a 'proper alcoholic drink – a whole drink, not just a sip')	520	+13%	+6%
77%	of 15 year olds reported they had had an alcoholic drink (a 'proper alcoholic drink – a whole drink, not just a sip')	508	+2%	+6%
7%	of 13 year olds said they had drunk alcohol in the week prior to the survey	543	+3%	+1%
22%	of 15 year olds said they had drunk alcohol in the week prior to the survey	515	+2%	+2%
67%	of 13 year olds thought it was 'ok' for someone their age to 'try drinking alcohol to see what it's like'	520	+22%	+16%
84%	of 15 year olds thought it was 'ok' for someone their age to 'try drinking alcohol to see what it's like'	500	-2%	+5%

Key

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3.2 Drinking to excess

Pupils who had ever had an alcoholic drink were asked whether they had ever been drunk and asked to indicate the number of times they had been drunk.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
56%	of 13 year olds reported that they had never been drunk	215	-5%	+9%
33%	of 15 year olds reported that they had never been drunk	385	-2%	+3%
44%	of 13 year olds said they had ever been drunk	215	+5%	-9%
67%	of 15 year olds said they had ever been drunk	385	+2%	-3%
5%	of 13 year olds said they had been drunk more than 10 times	215	+1%	-4%
20%	of 15 year olds said they had been drunk more than 10 times	385	+4%	-5%

3.3 Availability/source of alcohol

Pupils who had ever had an alcoholic drink were asked if they had bought or tried to buy alcohol from a shop, supermarket or off-licence in the last 4 weeks.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
2%	of 13 year olds reported that they had managed to buy alcohol	213	+1%	-3%
5%	of 15 year olds reported that they had managed to buy alcohol	386	+4%	-5%
1%	of 13 year olds said they had tried to buy alcohol but were refused	213	-1%	-1%
0%	of 15 year olds said they had tried to buy alcohol but were refused	386	0%	-1%
97%	of 13 year olds said they had not/never tried to buy alcohol	213	-1%	+4%
94%	of 15 year olds said they had not/never tried to buy alcohol	386	-4%	+6%


4 Drug use



4.1 Prevalence of drug use and attitudes to trying drugs

Pupils were asked a series of questions about drugs, which were used to derive the figures below.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
95%	of 13 year olds had never tried any drugs	528	-1%	+1%
82%	of 15 year olds had never tried any drugs	502	-2%	+3%
5%	of 13 year olds reported having used drugs, even if only once	528	+1%	-1%
18%	of 15 year olds reported having used drugs, even if only once	502	+2%	-3%
3%	of 13 year olds reported using drugs in the last month	528	+1%	-1%
10%	of 15 year olds reported using drugs in the last month	502	+4%	-2%
4%	of 13 year olds reported that they had used drugs in the last year	528	+1%	-1%
16%	of 15 year olds reported that they had used drugs in the last year	502	+2%	-2%

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-  = statistically significant ('more favourable' than comparator)
-  = statistically significant ('less favourable' than comparator)

4.1 Prevalence of drug use and attitudes to trying drugs continued

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
1%	of 13 year olds reported usually taking drugs at least once a week (including those taking drugs 'most days')	550	0%	0%
2%	of 15 year olds reported usually taking drugs at least once a week (including those taking drugs 'most days')	519	+1%	-1%
2%	of 13 year olds reported that they had used cannabis [the most commonly used drug] in the last year	528	0%	-2%
15%	of 15 year olds reported that they had used cannabis [the most commonly used drug] in the last year	502	+2%	-2%
8%	of 13 year olds felt it was 'ok' for someone their age to 'try taking cannabis to see what it's like'	522	+6%	0%
31%	of 15 year olds felt it was 'ok' for someone their age to 'try taking cannabis to see what it's like'	498	+17%	-2%

4.2 Whether offered drugs

All pupils were asked if they had ever been offered any of the drugs on a list provided.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
24%	of 13 year olds reported they had been offered drugs	535	+14%	+1%
43%	of 15 year olds reported they had been offered drugs	512	+13%	-4%
15%	of 13 year olds reported they had been offered cannabis [the most commonly offered drug]	521	+10%	-1%
39%	of 15 year olds reported they had been offered cannabis [the most commonly offered drug]	501	+11%	-3%

4.3 Availability of drugs

All pupils were asked to rate how easy it would be to get illegal drugs if they wanted to.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
25%	of 13 year olds reported that it would be 'very' or 'fairly' easy to get illegal drugs if they wanted to	516	+14%	+2%
52%	of 15 year olds reported that it would be 'very' or 'fairly' easy to get illegal drugs if they wanted to	504	+15%	+3%

4.4 Source of drugs

Pupils who had used drugs were asked where they obtained their drugs on the last occasion they took them (and could give more than one source). They were also asked if they had used all the drugs themselves, had sold some or had given some away.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
37%	of 15 year olds obtained their drugs from a friend of the same age on the last occasion they took them	82	-13%	-8%
37%	of 15 year olds obtained their drugs from an older friend on the last occasion they took them	82	+4%	+14%
47%	of 15 year olds gave some drugs away on the last occasion they took them	80	-12%	-3%
10%	of 15 year olds sold some of their drugs on the last occasion they took them	80	+8%	+2%

4.5 Obtaining help with drug use

Pupils who had used drugs were asked if they felt that they needed to get help because of their drug use or if they would like to stop taking drugs.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
7%	of 15 year olds felt they needed to get help because of their drug use	87	+3%	0%
44%	of 15 year olds would like to stop taking drugs	73	-5%	0%

5 Mental health and wellbeing

5.1 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

All pupils were asked questions from the 'Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire' (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 grouped into bands 'normal', 'borderline' and 'abnormal'* for each scale.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
36%	of 13 year olds had an overall borderline/abnormal score	478	+12%	+1%
41%	of 15 year olds had an overall borderline/abnormal score	467	+9%	+2%
30%	of 13 year olds had a borderline/abnormal score for emotional symptoms	482	+11%	0%
36%	of 15 year olds had a borderline/abnormal score for emotional symptoms	469	+6%	-1%
24%	of 13 year olds had a borderline/abnormal score for conduct problems	484	+5%	-3%
28%	of 15 year olds had a borderline/abnormal score for conduct problems	470	+3%	+3%
36%	of 13 year olds had a borderline/abnormal score for hyperactivity/inattention	481	+11%	+1%
40%	of 15 year olds had a borderline/abnormal score for hyperactivity/inattention	469	+8%	+3%

* 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.

5.1 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire - continued

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
24%	of 13 year olds had a borderline/abnormal score for peer relationship problems	482	+5%	0%
26%	of 15 year olds had a borderline/abnormal score for peer relationship problems	471	+7%	-1%
22%	of 13 year olds had a borderline/abnormal score for pro-social behaviour	485	+1%	-1%
31%	of 15 year olds had a borderline/abnormal score for pro-social behaviour	472	+6%	+5%

5.2 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.

		Base	Change from 2013	Difference from Scotland 2018
48.54	was the average wellbeing score among 13 year olds	450	-1.55	+0.47
45.61	was the average wellbeing score among 15 year olds	464	-1.94	-0.12