

West Dunbartonshire

Pupil Health Survey 2006

Introduction & Context

This report outlines findings from the West Dunbartonshire Pupil Health and Wellbeing Study which was carried out with approximately 40% of pupils in the year groups S1 to S4 in secondary educational establishments between April and September 2006. One of the main purposes of the study was to provide information about the health and wellbeing of pupils in the local area and individual establishments in order to assist with local planning.

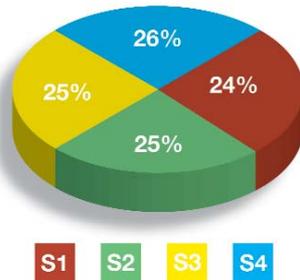
The questionnaire contained 86 questions on a wide variety of issues including a range of sub-headings such as “How Do You Feel”, “Physical Activity”, “Your Diet”, “Services for Young People”, “Behaviour”, “Home”, “Substance Misuse”, “Your Life in the Past”, and “Your Future”.

Selected Key Findings

- 78.3% of pupils reported feeling happy or somewhat happy about themselves in the past year. Females and older pupils were the least likely to describe themselves as happy.
- The majority of respondents had not experienced any type of bullying in the past year. S2 females reported the highest percentage of being victims of bullying.
- 46.6% engaged in vigorous exercise 4 or more times per week for a period of over 30 minutes while 7.3% never engage in vigorous exercise. Females were less likely to participate in vigorous exercise and did so less frequently than males.
- Rates of activity fell as deprivation increased. This was most stark among males.
- 65.8% of pupils did not meet the recommended 5-a-day target for fruit and vegetable consumption. The greatest percentage of those not meeting the 5-a-day recommendations were female, in S4 and in the most deprived postcode areas.
- 97.5% of pupils indicated that they had brushed their teeth the previous day.
- Whilst most pupils had never tried smoking females were most likely to be current smokers. The majority of pupils who reported smoking indicated that they would like or possibly like to give up.
- 34.4% of pupils reported never or rarely having been drunk, whilst 22.6% of pupils reported being drunk on at least once or twice a month. Females were slightly more likely to have ever been drunk and frequency of drunkenness increased with age and with deprivation.
- Females were considerably more likely to worry about all issues (with the exceptions of drugs and being called gay) than males. Exams were the greatest worry for all pupils.
- 85.5% of pupils reported that they had not taken any illegal drug or solvent in the last year. Among those who had used drugs Cannabis was the most common drug used and use was associated with increasing age.
- 16.1% of all pupils reported having a caring responsibility towards a family member; this was related to disability, long-term illness or drugs/alcohol problems.
- Most pupils had aspirations for the future however males and those from the most deprived areas were least likely to report wanting to go onto university or further education.

SAMPLE PROFILE

GRAPH 1: YEAR GROUP IN SAMPLE



2008 pupils from 7 educational establishments across West Dunbartonshire completed the questionnaire. This amounts to approximately 40% of the S1 to S4 school population in West Dunbartonshire.

The data was weighted for year group and gender to account for over/under representation

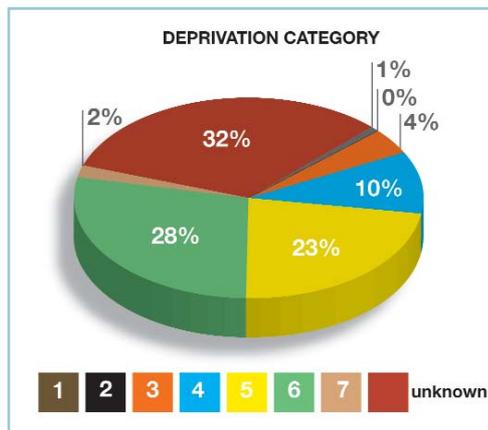
and to ensure that the sample was as representative of West Dunbartonshire S1 to S4 school aged population. This breaks down as 51% male and 49% female. Graph 1 shows the breakdown of year groups in the weighted sample.

91.6% of pupils who completed the questionnaire described themselves as “White Scottish”. The remaining pupils identified with 11 different ethnicities. 1.7% identified themselves as “White Other - British”, 0.9% as Other White background, 0.7% as Other mixed background, 0.5% as White Irish, 0.5% as (Black, Black Scottish or Black British) African, and 0.2% as (Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British) Pakistani.

The majority of pupils lived in West Dunbartonshire region (89.6% with the remainder who disclosed their post-code living

in Glasgow City (3.8%). Deprivation category scores are an area based measure derived from four census variables¹. And range from very high deprivation (depcat 7) to very low deprivation (depcat 1). Graph 2 shows the deprivation category breakdown for pupils based on the available post-code. 32% of depcat scores could not be calculated due to incomplete responses/non disclosure of postcode details and an anomaly among postcodes in the West Dunbartonshire area.

62.8% of pupils lived with their mother and father and 15.1% lived with one parent only; the majority of whom lived with their mother (13.7%). An additional 8.5% of respondents reporting dividing their time between living with their mum and living with their dad.



NOTE ON METHOD & STATISTICS

Originally, a company was commissioned to carry out the entire piece of research in terms of field work, data-entry/cleaning, analysis and reporting. Following advice from the research company regarding sampling and ability to interrogate data for cross-tabulation purposes, it was agreed that a sample of 50% of the year groups in each school would allow for adequate statistical analysis. The fieldwork was administered by representative workers from the research company and was carried out largely within classroom time usually in PSE lessons. Unfortunately the company so contracted had financial difficulties during the research and ultimately went into liquidation. They had carried out the great majority of the fieldwork in the secondary schools although additional fieldwork for alternative to school (Choices) and the SEN school was largely not undertaken. Due to the above the exact sampling methods are unclear and there was no specific analysis done on pupils who did not complete the questionnaire, these results should be interpreted as descriptive and indicative rather than wholly representative.

¹ over crowding, male unemployment, social class and car ownership.

FINDINGS

This summary report provides a useful snapshot of an extensive range of health indicators in young people in West Dunbartonshire in 2006 which are summarised in bullet points. The subsequent discussion represents an attempt to put these findings in context in terms of national and local strategies and previous national and local research where available.

The research also provides a baseline which can be used by strategic planners and local practitioners within West Dunbartonshire. In addition, specific recommendations have been made in the individual school reports in relation to how they can best take account of the findings in current and future school practice and initiatives

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Pupils were asked a series of questions exploring how they feel about themselves, what worries they have and whether they have been bullied in school. The following highlights the key findings:

Feelings about Themselves

- 78.3% of pupils reported feeling happy or somewhat happy about themselves in the past year. Females and older pupils were the least likely to describe themselves as happy. Respondents in the most affluent areas were more likely to describe their feelings about themselves at either extreme (happy or unhappy).
- 75.2% of pupils reported to feeling happy or somewhat happy about their health in the past year. Females were less likely than males to describe feeling happy about their health.
- The majority of pupils indicated a positive perception of life control (88% reporting 'some' or 'a lot' of control).

- Older pupils tended to report feeling more in control of their lives than younger age groups. S1 females report to have the least perceived control over their lives. Respondents in the most affluent areas were more likely to report having 'a lot' of control over their lives than pupils in midrange or the most deprived areas.

Self Esteem and Depression

- Using the Kandel and Davies scale² 12.7% of pupils were identified as being depressed.
- The majority of pupils were identified as having high self-esteem (55.9%) and medium self esteem (40.1%)
- * The percentage of respondents with high self-esteem decreased as deprivation increased. Overall males in the most affluent areas had the highest self esteem and females in the most deprived had the lowest.
- * 85% of respondents stated 'yes' when asked if they had anyone they could talk to about personal things or worries. Males and S4 pupils were least likely to have someone to talk to.

² This scale is a measure of depression, based on responses to various statements. It provides an indication of possible levels of depression in the sample, however it is not a substitute for a clinical diagnosis.

Worries/bullying

- The five greatest worries for all respondents were exams (19.7%), looks (6.6%), the future (6.2%), school (5.2%) and family rows (5.0%).
- Females were considerably more likely to worry about the majority of issues than males, the exception to this being “drugs”, “being called gay” and “racism”
- The majority of respondents had not experienced any type of bullying in the past year. S2 females reported the highest percentage of being victims of bullying.
- 93% of respondents reported that they had not experienced any form of racial bullying or abuse in the past year, while 95.7% reported that they had not experienced religious bullying or abuse.
- Of the pupils that had experienced racial bullying or religious bullying the majority had faced being called names or being picked on, a very small number had experienced physical violence.

Overall the key theme that emerged on mental health and wellbeing is that the majority of pupils reported feeling positive about themselves in the past year, having a positive perception of control over their life direction and having high or medium self esteem. It is clear however, that males were more likely than females to indicate that they have ‘high’ self esteem, are more likely to feel the most positive about their life and their health and most likely to report that they have ‘a lot’ of control over their lives.

The indication that females have a less positive outlook than males is further supported when looking at what pupils worry about. Although exams were the greatest worry for all pupils, females were considerably more likely to worry about all issues (with the exceptions of drugs and being called gay) than males. In addition, while most pupils had not experienced any bullying in the past year, females and younger pupils generally were most likely to be victims.

Interestingly, the one area where females reported feeling more positive than males was in respect to having someone to talk to about worries and personal issues. This protective factor of having a trusted confidant may explain why although females report to having more worries and generally feeling less positive about themselves, S4 males were the most likely to show signs of depression.

When explored by deprivation the reporting of high self esteem decreases with increased deprivation and pupils in the least deprived areas are most likely to indicate they have “a lot” of control over their own lives.

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Pupils were asked a series of questions about physical health and wellbeing; this included oral health, physical activity levels, whether they had an illness or disability and their eating habits. The following information highlights the key findings:

Oral Health

- 97.5% of pupils reported having brushed their teeth the previous day, with 78.2% having brushed twice or more times that day.
- 80.1% of respondents had visited the dentist in the past year; non-attendance was more common within the most deprived areas.

The oral health of children is identified as a key issue at a national level and within the Community Plan for West Dunbartonshire in relation improving health and wellbeing and tackling health inequalities. Although the focus is generally on the reduction of cavities amongst pre-school children it is recognised that good dental health is important across all ages. The above figures indicate that the signs for good oral health within West Dunbartonshire are encouraging; however it is also evident that inequalities do exist with non-attendance at a dentist in the previous 12 months most likely among pupils from areas of high deprivation.

Long-term illness/ Disability

- 23.4% of pupils reported having a long-term illness or disability and almost half of these felt that it limited what they could do.
- Asthma was by far the most common condition and was reported by 50.4% of those who reported a condition (231 pupils in total).

Illness and disability is also recognised as a key issue within the West Dunbartonshire Community plan. In this study, deprivation was shown to be a factor in whether pupils have a long-term illness or not, with pupils in areas of least deprivation the least likely to report having any illness or disability.

It is possible that the level of illness and disability reported may be a significant factor contributing to the low levels of physical activity found (see below) particularly when considering that pupils commonly reported that their condition made them breathless or limited their ability to take part in sports or exercise. It is worth noting that the most common illness reported, asthma (reported by a majority of those with an illness or disability), should not automatically, if treated properly, limit physical activity in any way.

Physical Activity

- 46.6% engaged in vigorous exercise 4 or more times per week for a period of over 30 minutes while 7.3% never engage in vigorous exercise. Females were less likely to participate in vigorous exercise and did so less frequently than males.
- 80.2% of pupils reported owning a bicycle.
- Rates of activity fell as deprivation increased.

Targets outlined in Towards a Healthier Scotland aim for the proportion of 11 to 15 year olds taking vigorous exercise 4 times or more weekly to reach 50% by 2010. The figures for this study show that West Dunbartonshire is close to meeting the 2010 target.

Other targets relating to physical activity are outlined in Sport 21: 2003-2007, target 3 within this document aims for 85% of 13 to 17 year olds to take part in sport out with the school curriculum more than once a week. Based on the findings of this study it would seem that young people are not meeting this target with 65.1% of respondents stating that they take part in sport/physical activity 2 or more times a week out with school.

Across all questions on physical activity females were less likely to report taking part in sport than males, with older females less likely than younger females. Deprivation also has an effect on whether pupils take part in physical activity out with of school, with pupils in more deprived areas less likely to engage in physical activity. Across all questions there were substantial minorities of pupils who were engaging in minimal amounts of activity and sport.

Diet

- 65.8% of pupils did not meet the recommended 5-a-day target for fruit and vegetable consumption. The greatest percentage of those not meeting the 5-a-day recommendations were female, in S4 and in the most deprived postcode areas.
- 68.6% consumed breakfast prior to completing the questionnaire. Females were more likely than males to have skipped breakfast with S4 pupils also the most likely to report missing breakfast.
- 91.8% of pupils reported to have eaten lunch the day prior to completing the questionnaire. Unlike breakfast there was little difference between males and females or between year groups.

The findings of this study indicate that significant improvements could be made for the majority of pupils in relation to their consumption of 5 pieces of fruit and/or vegetables and what they eat for breakfast and lunch. Although the number of pupils who eat breakfast is encouraging when what pupils eat for lunch is explored it is apparent that the majority of pupils eat out with the school canteen and in many cases eat junk or snack food. This has implications for the planning and implementation of Hungry for Success; in particular the implementation of Scottish Nutrient Standards for school lunches. If more young people are not encouraged to eat lunch within the school canteen it may be difficult for this initiative to have a lasting impact.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE & ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Pupils were asked about their experience of smoking, alcohol and drugs in addition to whether they take part in any anti-social behaviour. The following information highlights the key findings:

Smoking

- 59.6% of pupils reported that they had never tried smoking, 22.0% had smoked once or twice with 10.7% of pupils identified as current smokers.
- Males were less likely to have tried smoking than females (65.9% compared to 55.5%) and those in the most affluent areas were also much less likely to have tried smoking.
- The greatest percentage of smokers are females in the most deprived areas.
- The majority of pupils who reported smoking 'some days' or 'everyday' indicated that they would like or possibly like to give up.

Although the exact measures and sample group are different, it is possible to draw out some comparisons between the figures in this study for substance misuse with those found in a 2004 schools survey of 13 and 15 year olds nationally (SALSUS, 2004).

With just 10.7% identifying as current smokers in this study, the figures seem to compare favourably to the national picture where 9% of 13 year olds and 26% of 15 year olds were regular or occasional smokers. Similarly, 59.6% of pupils had never smoked in this study, compared with 59% of 13 year olds and 39% of 15 year olds in SALSUS.

In both studies, females were more likely to smoke and this study also reinforced previous findings that smoking rates are higher in areas of deprivation. It is worth noting that in both this study and SALSUS a majority of smokers are interested in giving up.

Alcohol

- 35.5% of pupils had never drunk alcohol while 20.2% reported drinking once or twice per year. 17.6% of pupils reported drinking alcohol once a week or more.
- The highest percentage of those who reported drinking once a week or more were males within the S4 year group (30.5%)
- 34.4% of pupils reported never or rarely having been drunk, whilst 22.6% of pupils reported being drunk on at least once or twice a month. Frequency of drunkenness increased with age and with deprivation.
- The drinks most reported as being consumed by pupils who drink were alcoholic fizzy drinks (alcopops) (50.6%), beer/lager or cider (50.5%) and spirits (43.6%)

As with other studies, drinking in this sample increased with age and deprivation but a majority of pupils overall reported never or rarely having been drunk. Similar to the national 2004 SALSUS figures, females were very slightly more likely to report having ever been drunk than males. Drinking patterns were also similar to the national study, with males preferring beer, lager or cider, and females preferring alcopops or spirits.

Culture change and prevention and education of alcohol misuse are two of the key strands of the Scottish Executives Plan for Action on Alcohol which was recently updated (2007). Key action points in the plan relevant to this are plans to implement a media literacy education pilot in schools and plans to develop comprehensive alcohol education as part of a broader substance misuse education programme.

Drugs

- 85.5% of pupils reported that they had not taken any illegal drugs/solvents in the past year.
- Cannabis was the most commonly reported drug being used (taken by 13% of the total sample).
- The reporting of drug use increased with age. Pupils from the most affluent DEPCAT categories were also less likely to report taking drugs than those in the least affluent and midrange deprivation categories.

Two of the four key aims of Scotland's drugs strategy concern drug use among young people. Under the aim of "helping young people resist drug misuse in order to achieve their full potential in society", the key objective or target is to achieve a reduction in "the proportion of people under 25 reporting use of illegal drugs in the last month and previous year". Young people are also a particular focus of the key aim "to stifle the availability of drugs on our streets" where a key objective is the reduction of "access to drugs amongst 15-16 year olds". These aims and objectives inform local policies and Drug and Alcohol Action Teams' Corporate Action Plans as well as national policy.

In this study, most pupils had not taken an illegal drug in the last year (85.5%) and use increased with age. This compares with the national picture where 89% of 13 year olds and 69% of 15 year olds had not used an illegal drug in the last year. In both studies, most pupils who had taken a drug had used cannabis.

Anti-social Behaviour

- Just under half of pupils (49.6%) indicated that they had not engaged in any anti-social behaviour.
- The most frequent types of anti-social behaviours pupils were involved with were truanting (29.4%), fighting (28.3%) and vandalism/graffiti (19.2%)
- Males were more likely than females to engage in all individual forms of anti-social behaviours.

The most frequent types of antisocial behaviour reported by pupils were truanting, fighting and vandalism/graffiti, all of which were more likely to have been reported by males. Although not explored in this study it should be noted that young people are also highly likely to be victims of crime as well as perpetrators³.

³ Smith, D. J. The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, Edinburgh University. www.law.ed.ac.uk/cls/esytc

SERVICES

Pupils were asked a number of questions about the services they are aware of and the services they use. They were also asked about their awareness of youth involvement structures such as pupil councils and wider youth forums. The following information highlights the key findings:

Services

- 21.9% of respondents attend a youth club or centre with males more likely than females to attend (26.1% and 19.6% respectively). Youth club attendance decreases as pupils get older (32.3% of S1 compared to 11.3% of S4).
- 6.8% of pupils reported that they were members of their school's pupil council. 5.2% of pupils reported that they were members of a local youth forum.
- Knowledge of youth only health services increases as pupils get older (20.9% in S1 compared to 31.7% in S4)
- The services that most pupils had used were Playdrome (86.1%), Meadow Centre (73.1%), Y-Sort it (43.8%), Skate park (35.6%) and Youth 2 youth (14.1%). These figures provide an indication of the usage of individual services however as some of the services are generic and West Dunbartonshire wide whilst others are specialist and area specific the findings are non-comparable.

- Across all services the numbers of pupils using services was significantly fewer than the numbers who were aware of them.
- Over 70% of pupils rated the top five most used services as 'very good' or 'good'.
- 93.2% of pupils had heard of Childline with 57.4% indicating that they would phone the line if they needed to. Pupils in older year groups were significantly less likely to phone Childline if they needed to than younger pupils.
- 90% of pupils hold a West Dunbartonshire Young Scot Card and over three-quarters of those have used their card.

While pupils' knowledge of services was generally low and usage of services even lower, it is important to consider these findings in the context of most respondents being happy with themselves and their lives generally. It may be the case that awareness and use of some of the more specialist services included in the questionnaire are not required or appropriate for the majority of pupils. However, in relation to more generic youth and health services, efforts should be made to raise pupils' awareness of these services in the community and their confidence to access these services.

HOME LIFE

Pupils were asked a series of questions relating to their life at home; this included whether they had access to a computer at home, whether they had any caring responsibilities, whether they had a part-time job and information on whether they had experienced major 'life event's. The following information highlights the key findings:

- Over three-quarters of pupils have access to a computer at home and have internet access (79.1%).
- 39% of pupils reported that a member of their family had a disability, long-term illness, drug or alcohol problem or combination.
- Reporting of disability within the family was greatest within the most deprived areas, with family members with long-term illness or a drug or alcohol problem the greatest within the midrange DEPCAT.
- 16.1% of all pupils (n=323) reported to have caring responsibility towards a family member.
- The majority of young carers reported that their caring responsibilities had no effect upon them (n=204).
- The majority of pupils do not have a part-time job with 20.4% of pupils reporting to have one. Males and pupils in upper year groups were the most likely to have a part-time job. Pupils from affluent areas were also more likely to have a part-time job.
- 63.7% of respondents reported experience of the death of someone close to them, 38.1% reported illness of someone close to them and 34.5% reported separation or split of their parents.
- A quarter of pupils who had experienced a traumatic event reported that it was currently having an effect on them, for the majority this was feeling depressed, sad or low.

A significant minority of pupils reported having caring responsibilities which mostly related to a family member with a disability or long-term illness. A small number of young carers reported caring for a family member with a drug/alcohol problem - this group represented approximately 2.7% of the total pupil sample.

The most common life events to affect pupils were the death or illness of someone close to them or the separation /splitting up of their parents and for many pupils this event was still causing them to feel depressed, sad or low.

Both carers and those experiencing traumatic events could benefit from additional support to prevent their circumstances from affecting their health and prospects in the medium to long-term.

THE FUTURE

Pupils were asked a series of questions about what they hoped to do after school, how well they think they had been encouraged by school and parents and what their school could do to help improve the health of pupils. The following information highlights the key findings:

- Most pupils reported having aspirations for the future once they leave school, 33.6% hope to attend university, 22.0% to go onto further education and 13.5% to get a job.
- Females were considerably more likely than males to want to go onto university (45.6% compared with 33.0%) and further education (28.8% compared with 22.3%). However males were more likely to hope to get a job when they leave school (22.1% and 9.0%).
- Aspirations to attend university or further education increased with affluence, with pupils within the most affluent areas being more likely to aspire to attend university than pupils from the midrange or most deprived.
- Younger pupils are more likely to be uncertain about what they hope to do after school than older pupils.
- 7.4% of respondents reported that they already have a criminal record. The percentage of males who reported already having a criminal record was twice that of the females (10.6% and 4.4% respectively)
- 91.2% of pupils reported that they felt that their parents or carers encourage them to do their best at school.
- 90.2% of pupils reported that their parents or carers encourage them to think about their future.
- 84.0% of pupils felt encouraged by their school to do as well as they could.
- 73.0% of pupils in the sample felt that their school had prepared them very or fairly
- Pupils were asked if there was anything from a 13-item list that their school could do to improve their health and happiness.

The five most common responses were:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| - Provide more choice/longer sessions in P.E. | (54.1%) |
| - Clean/paint school corridors, classrooms or toilets | (45.1%) |
| - Provide nicer/healthier food in the canteen | (41.2%) |
| - Clean/paint school buildings or grounds | (35.9%) |
| - Encourage respect between teachers/staff and pupils | (22.8%) |

Encouragingly most pupils indicated that they had some aspirations for the future and felt encouraged by parents and their school to consider their future and do their best. However significantly fewer indicated that they had aspirations of university/further education that those reported in 2005 MORI Scotland and YouthLink Study 'Being Young In Scotland (55.6% and 68%).

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

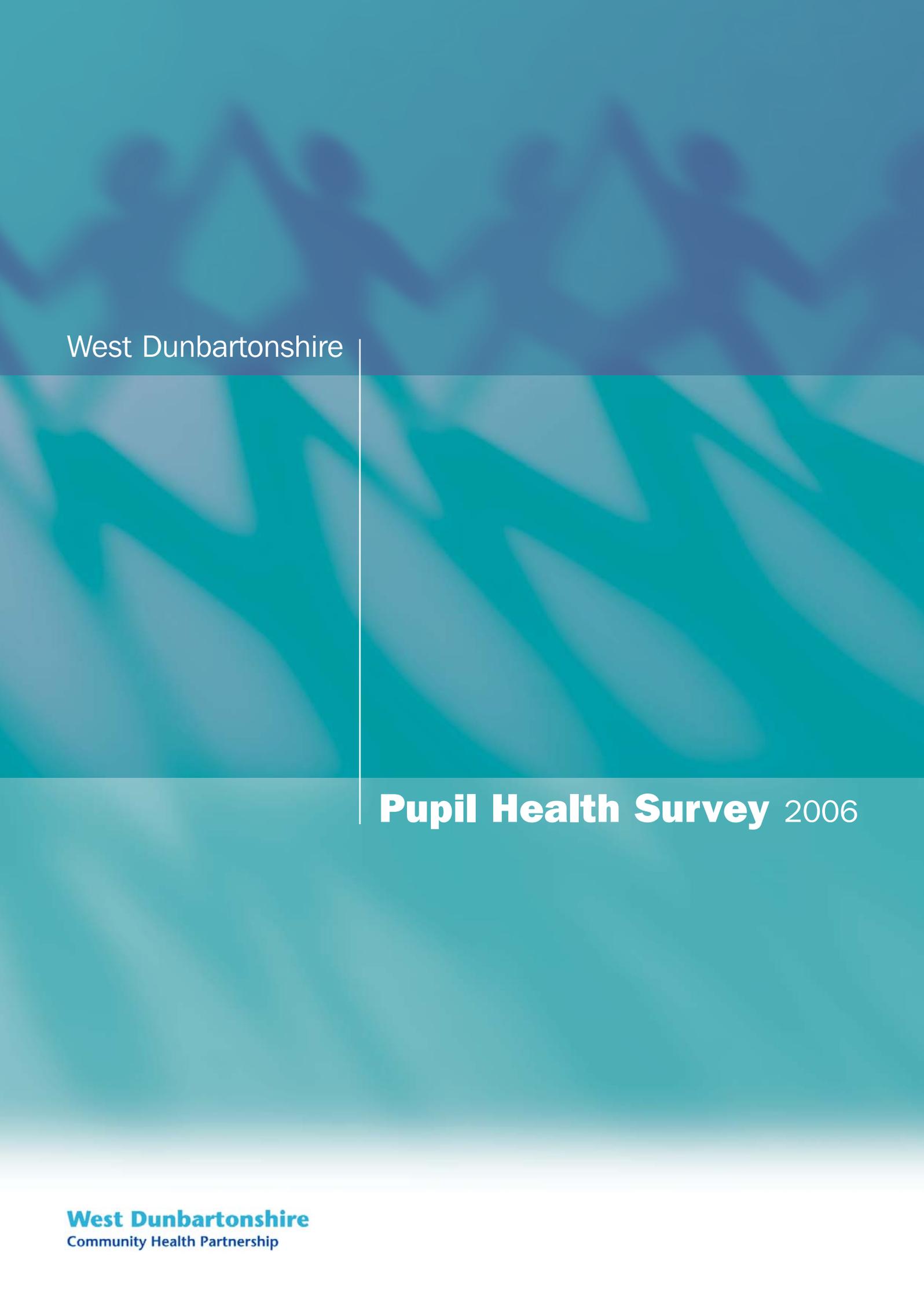
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- West Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership
 - Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Promotion (Schools Team)
- West Dunbartonshire Health Promoting School Unit
- West Dunbartonshire Youth Health Improvement Group

The Heads and members of staff from participating schools particularly from Pastoral Care and PSE.

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