

Appendix A: Health & Wellbeing Survey Analysis

April 2025



Approach

This report provides an overview of the insight from our analysis of health and wellbeing data gathered at the end of 2024 compared to that gathered in November 2023, November 2022, and March 2022. This report provides the beginnings of trend data over 4 points between March 2022 and December 2024. Officers have compared year group survey responses to those from previous years in order to continue to determine if the actions taken to date have positively impacted pupil wellbeing. Comparisons with national data sets have been made where possible. Please note, current data is included in **bold**, last year's in plain, November 22 in plain, and March 22 in *italics*.

The surveys undertaken are anonymous (which prohibits matching to SIMD profile), therefore, the Family Affluence Scale (FAS) has been used. The FAS asks questions about material assets with the answers given, summed to create an overall score to enable analysis. Young people who didn't want to respond to particular questions were able to disregard them and **606 (17.5%)** of primary school pupils and **895 (16.8%)** of secondary school pupils are not included in the analysis by family affluence due to incomplete responses. This is thought to be a sufficiently high response rate to have confidence in the insights gleaned.

Gender can be a strong influence on mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Girls (from the onset of puberty) self-report higher emotional difficulties than boys whilst boys are more likely to exhibit behavioural traits. National data also shows that those who are transgender or non-binary are more likely to report adverse health outcomes as a result of 'minority stress' and exposure to stigma and discrimination. **75 (2.8%)** primary and **217 (2.2%)** secondary pupils chose not to record or disclose their gender when asked (this is a reduction in percentages on last year). We cannot make assumptions about the reasons for pupils selecting 'In another way/Prefer not to say'. Not disclosing gender could indicate that some young people did not see the relevance of the question and chose to disregard it, or that a young person may identify as being transgender (identify as a gender different to their sex at birth). This may also indicate young people who identify as being non-binary (those that do not or do not fully identify as either male or female), thought the question was irrelevant or a range of other potential scenarios.

Background

During December 2024, **9,924** children and young people from P6-S6 (3471 Primary, 6453 Secondary) completed the Mental Health & Wellbeing Survey developed by the Scottish Schools Health and Wellbeing Improvement Research Network (SHINE), this was a slightly lower return rate than the previous year (10,382, 9803, 9431). In real terms this means that we have returns from **65%** of all pupils from P6 to S6 with a higher proportion of returns as

expected from younger year groups. The Primary 6 and Secondary 4 returns increased this year compared to previous years. SHINE had to delay the start of the survey this year, due to their data platforms being upgraded, this could have impacted on Schools' ability to carry out the data collection due to it being closer to end of term and the end of the calendar year with an increase in associated activities.

Year group	% of returns March 2022	% of returns November 2022	% of returns November 2023	% of returns December 2024
P6	81%	81%	80%	85%
P7	80%	85%	86%	74%
S1	67%	77%	68%	63%
S2	64%	68%	68%	59%
S3	72%	64%	63%	63%
S4	46%	49%	58%	61%
S5	44%	43%	56%	55%
S6	41%	42%	50%	43%

Note: this Table column from 2024, does not include those pupils who did not provide their year group (n=4 in primary and n=53 in secondary)

The response rates means that the confidence level exceeds 95% for respondents. As a result, we can have confidence in the data.

Children and young people from P5-S6 also had the opportunity to undertake a Physical Health & Wellbeing survey developed by the Local Authority. Questions within this were drawn from previous local surveys, national lines of enquiry and the clarification sought to support effective local planning based on the working knowledge of school leaders. **8916** pupils completed this survey in November/December 2023, an increase of 1923 from the previous year. There is a full section looking at this data within this appendix following the SHINE analysis.

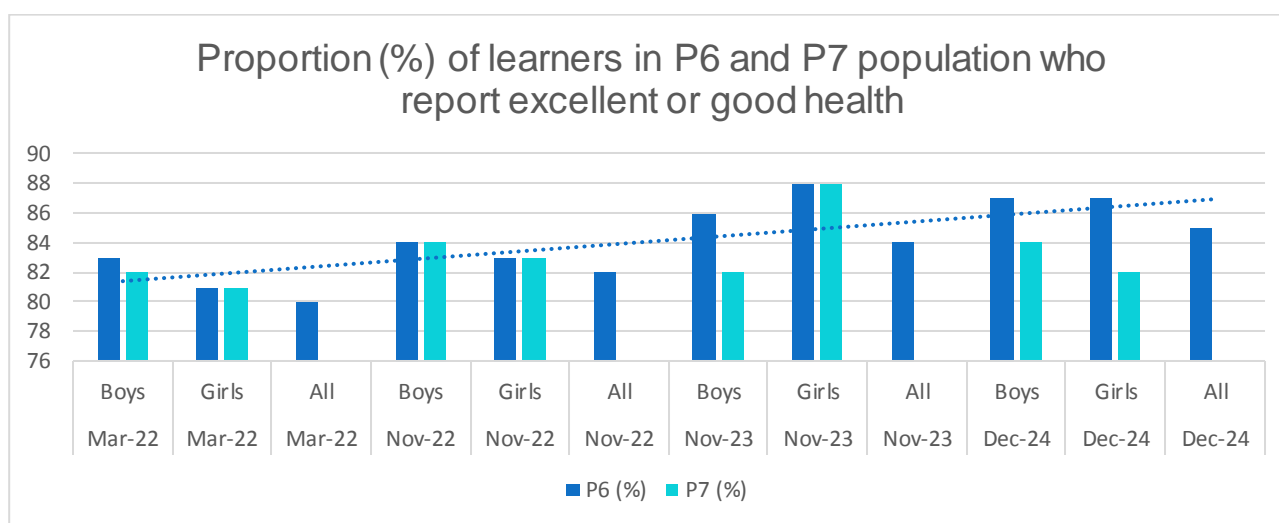
The analysis of both surveys provides an opportunity to reflect on our current approaches and identify appropriate next steps to address emerging health needs. This report will be shared with key partners so that it can be used to inform work in delivering against the Children's Services Plan 2023-26 and will be considered as the National Improvement Framework Plan for 2025-26 is being developed.

SHINE Mental Health Survey results - Primary 6 & 7

4220 (3561) pupils from P6 and P7 completed this survey with **87 pupils** not providing details of their gender and **51** (48) pupils not identifying their year group.

Young people were asked about their happiness with eleven aspects of life including family, friendships, school, appearance, future, and life overall.

85%, 3587 (84%, 2991; 82%, 2897; 80%, 2616) of learners in primary 6 and 7 who responded, reported that their health was excellent or good. The proportion of pupils self-reporting Excellent Health in particular has increased consistently over time and more noticeably for girls.



Based on Scottish Government data reports from February 2023, which is still the most recent health census data, the Scottish average for excellent and good health in P6/7 is 78.4% compared to the Local P6 & 7 average of **85%**. As a result, local data exceeds the Scottish average and suggests that we are taking appropriate steps to mitigate risk and improve pupil health and wellbeing.

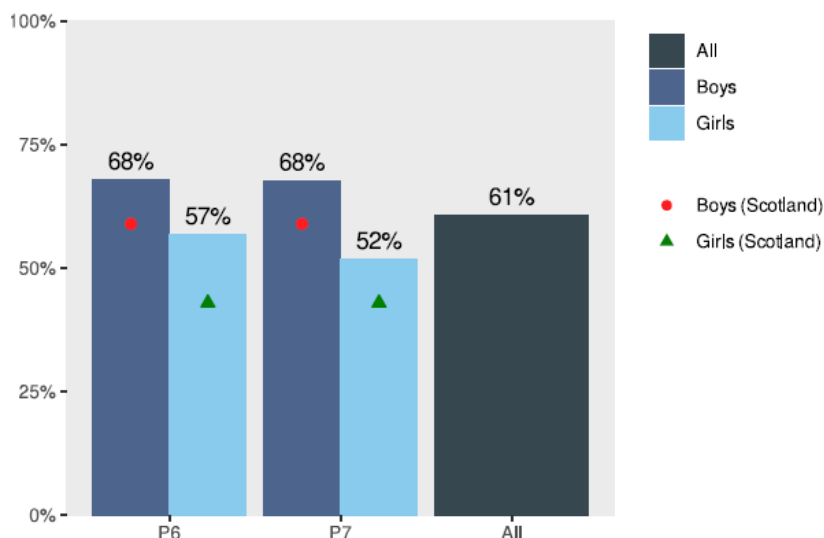
Across general health, we continue to see a consistent positive improvement in outcomes. Those in the low family affluence group, however, continue to be more likely to report a range of negative outcomes across nearly all the measures within the survey. This is also seen nationally in the Scottish Government Data and in the health outcomes of adults living in areas of deprivation. This needs to continue to be considered carefully as we work across all departments within the council to address the poverty related attainment and health gap.

Family affluence – General Health			
Primary pupils	Low	Medium	High
% Excellent or good health	80 (77, 73, 72)	85 (85, 83, 81)	93 (92, 89, 84)

% Feeling always or often confident	51 (53, 49, 45)	63 (62, 58, 55)	69 (72, 66, 57)
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Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

We have seen dips in confidence levels in both low and high affluence groups for Primary aged pupils this year. We can see from the table regarding gender breakdowns that this reduction in confidence reporting has been seen in girls and our 'did not disclose' gender group. But our confidence levels remain much higher than the Shine National Comparators.



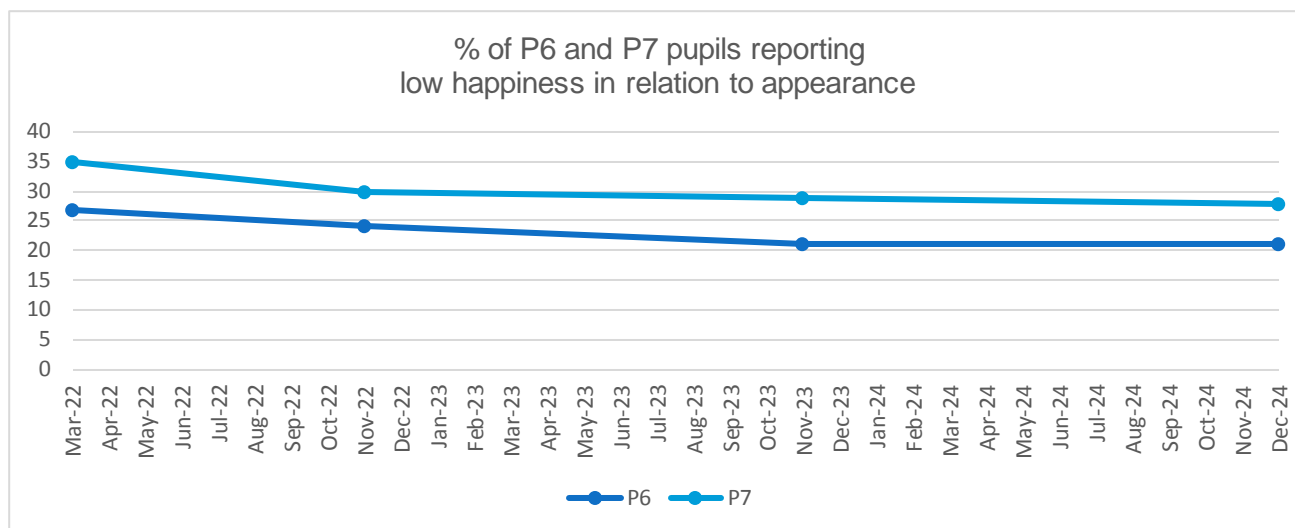
Amongst both primary and secondary school pupils, those young people who did not disclose their gender remain more likely to report a range of negative outcomes and feelings across nearly all measures, although improvement is evident from last year. We continue to work with schools and partner organisations to address any emerging patterns from this data and other data sets regarding gender.

Gender – General Health			
Primary pupils	Boy	Girl	Did not disclose
% Excellent or good health	86 (85, 82, 82)	85 (85, 84, 81)	71 (66, 61, 50)
% Feel always and often confident	68 (68, 65, 61)	54 (56, 50, 45)	38 (32, 27, 26)

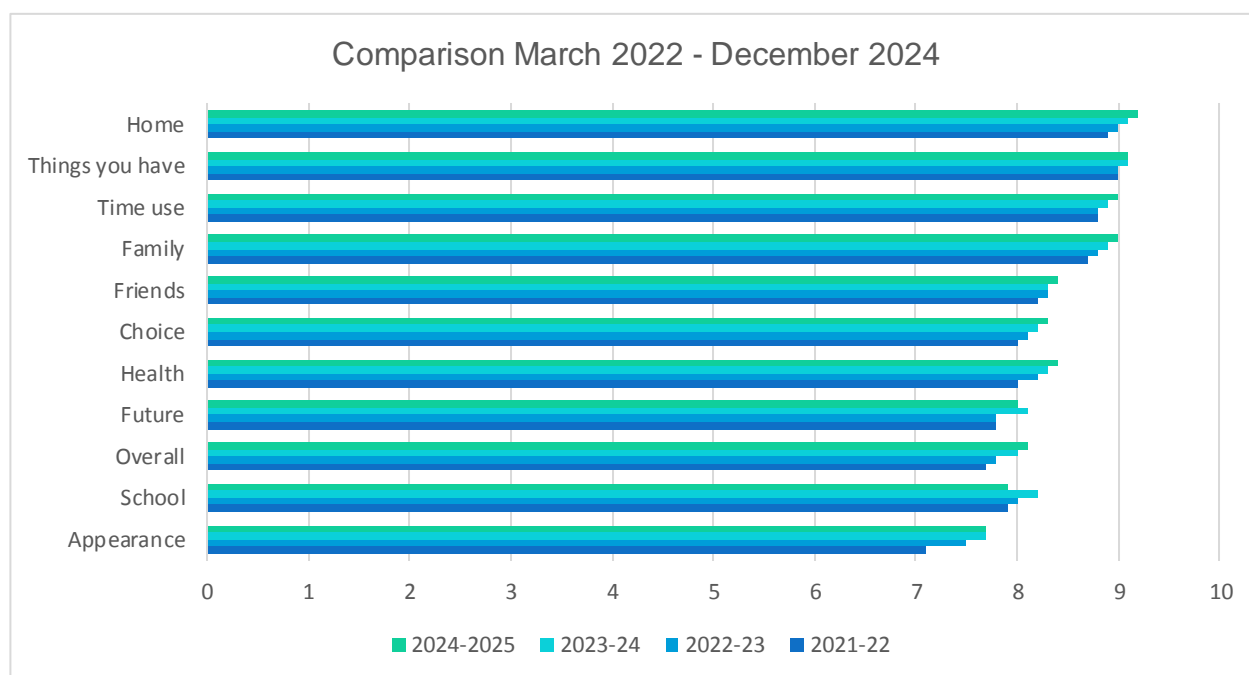
Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Happiness

Learners were asked to rate how happy they are with various aspects of their life. Response options ranged from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'very unhappy', 5 means 'neither happy nor unhappy' and 10 means 'very happy'. Similar to the previous year, on the whole boys were slightly more positive than girls, however, this was the opposite when asked specifically about school. This is broadly to be expected given what we know about how young people grow and develop and are impacted by puberty.



Across P6 and P7, learners were positive about many aspects of their lives. We have seen a decrease in the number of learners reporting low happiness in relation to their appearance from our baseline which is positive. However, across both age groups and gender categories, 'Appearance' was still lower than other aspects, with **21%** (21%, 24%, 27%) of P6 learners and **28%** (29, 30%, 35%) of P7 learners noting appearance as a concern.



December 2024 survey data continues the overall reduction of 5 percentage points in those concerned about appearance compared to our baseline of March 2022. This suggests that work in this area continues to have a positive impact.

Young people in the lowest family affluence group were more likely to report low levels of happiness across a range of life domains than their more affluent peers at both primary and

secondary school level. Those in the lowest group were more than twice as likely to report lower levels of happiness with life as a whole, the home they live in, choices available to them, friendships, appearance, their future than their peers in the least deprived cohort. We see an increase in low happiness reporting this year for low affluence group in regards to appearance, which has increased by 1%. There continues to be an overall reduction in the self-reporting of low happiness for those in the lowest affluence group, but this goes alongside a reduction for all, meaning the poverty gap itself isn't actually being reduced. This continues to have implications for how we work to address the poverty related attainment gap and more effectively target our interventions at those most in need. Data from Scottish Government shows this is a strong theme across Scotland and remains a focus nationally as well as being a local priority.

Family affluence – Report of low happiness			
Primary pupils	Low	Medium	High
% Life as a whole	9 (9, 12, 13)	5 (6, 7, 8)	4 (2, 5, 6)
% Family relationships	5 (6, 5, 7)	2 (3, 3, 4)	2 (3, 1, 4)
% Home you live in	5 (5, 5, 6)	2 (1, 2, 3)	0 (1, 2, 3)
% Choice in life	7 (7, 9, 7)	4 (5, 6, 6)	3 (3, 4, 5)
% Friendships	7 (9, 9, 7)	4 (5, 5, 7)	5 (4, 3, 5)
% Things you have	3 (5, 3, 4)	1 (1, 2, 2)	0 (1, 1, <1)
% Health	8 (8, 9, 10)	4 (4, 6, 7)	2 (2, 2, 5)
% Appearance	20 (19, 19, 25)	13 (14, 12, 16)	8 (9, 7, 12)
% Future	7 (10, 12, 8)	4 (5, 7, 9)	3 (4, 5, 5)
% School	10 (9, 12, 11)	9 (7, 8, 10)	8 (6, 5, 8)
% Free time	3 (5, 3, 4)	2 (2, 2, 3)	1 (1, 2, 2)

Bold=Dec '24, **plain**=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Reviewing the data by gender shows that the small group of 86 who did not disclose their gender were nearly 4 times more likely to be negative about life as a whole than their peers and 6 times more likely to report poor health. There is a continued reduction in the number of those who did not disclose their gender reporting low happiness in their appearance to **39%** this year, from a baseline of 55% in March 22. This is in line with overall reduction in reporting of low happiness around appearance for all groups. This small group still has a noticeable disparity compared to other school populations, and we need to continue to carefully consider how we address this.

Apart from the category of health, there has been a reduction in the incidence of low happiness in all other life categories for the Did Not Disclose Gender group this year compared to last. This group were more than 4 times as likely to report low happiness than boys and girls in primary.

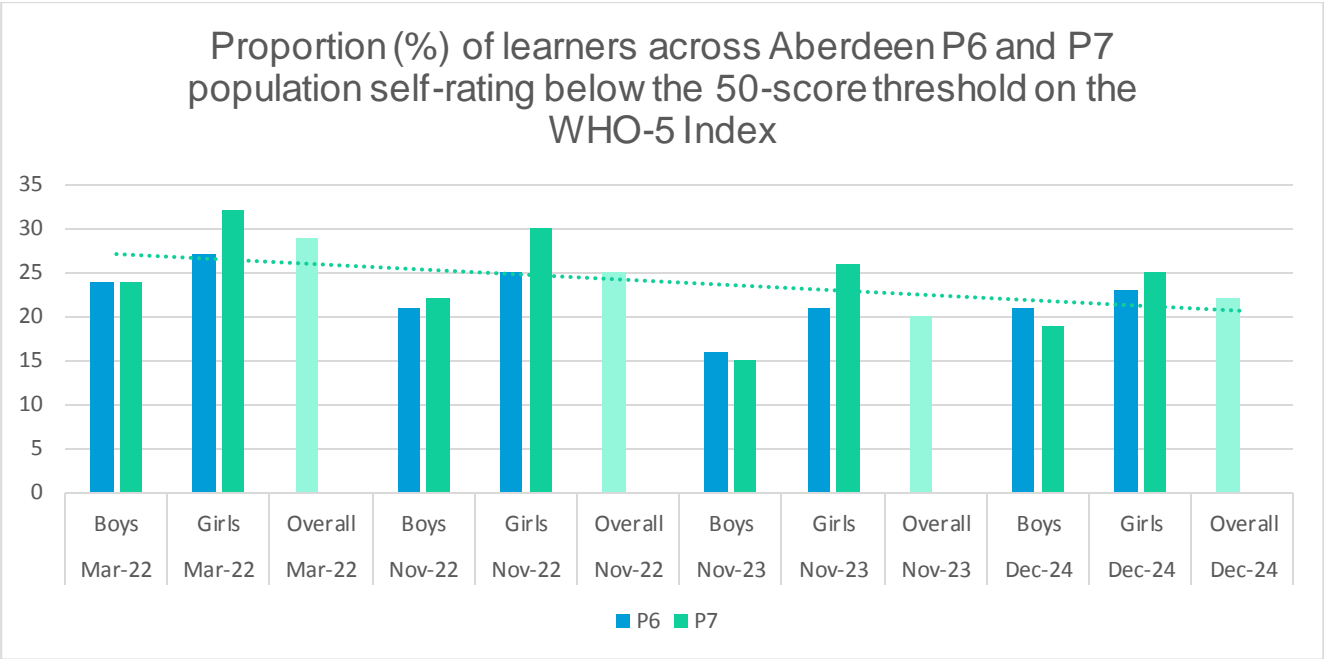
The focused consideration around self-esteem including the impact of social media has had a positive impact in reducing the high levels of low happiness in relation to appearance in

this year's return. This work will continue, and we hope to see continued further reductions in next year's survey.

The WHO-5 Wellbeing Index is a five-item scale which provides a measure of emotional functioning. Items are summed to create a score ranging from 0 to 100. A score of 50 or less on the WHO-5 indicates low mood

78% of those in Primary 6 and 7 didn't show evidence of having low mood. This is a positive increase of 7% since our baseline in March 2022 but a slight decrease of 2% from last year. This means that **22%** of learners across Aberdeen P6 and P7 population self-rated below the WHO-5 50-score threshold, indicating they have low mood. This is a positive figure and is around or *below* the Scottish average provided by Shine.

We are confident that a continuing focus on supporting the mental wellbeing of learners through counselling, LIAM (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management), DBI (Distress Brief Intervention), ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants), Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance, Trauma Informed, and Emotion Coaching approaches, is impacting positively on pupils.



Low mood was more prevalent amongst young people from the least affluent group, for example, amongst primary school children, **28%** of pupils from the low affluence group reported low mood compared with **16%** of those in the most affluent group. The difference between outcomes for those deemed to be at risk of depression was also stark with the lowest affluence group more than twice as at risk compared to those deemed the most affluent.

Family affluence – Low Mood			
Primary pupils	Low	Medium	High
% Low mood	28 (31, 34, 34)	20 (18, 23, 28)	16 (11, 15, 23)

% Risk of depression	10 (10, 11, 13)	5 (4, 7, 8)	4 (2, 3, 5)
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Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Low mood also varied by gender amongst both primary and secondary school pupils with girls more likely to report low mood than boys. However, we have seen a slight increase in the number of boys reporting low mood and risk of depression. This will need to be considered next year to ensure this is just a one-off variance in the data. Those who did not disclose their gender were more than twice as likely to have low mood than their peers. Those who did not disclose were around three times as likely to report being at risk of depression. There is a reduction in this area this year, with an 11% reduction in the percentage at risk of depression.

Gender – Low Mood			
Primary pupils	Boys	Girls	Did not disclose
% Low mood	20 (16, 22, 25)	24 (24, 26, 30)	45 (51, 51, 59)
% Risk of depression	6 (4, 7, 8)	7 (8, 7, 9)	17 (28, 15, 21)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Emotional and Behavioural scale

There continues to be a higher percentage of girls than boys showing elevated responses within the Emotional Scale, in P6, **37%** (35, 41%, *44%*) and in P7, **35%**, (38, 42%, *44%*) (compared to boys **19%** and **22%**). This is an improvement of **7%** and **9%** since March 2022. Whilst the responses for Behavioural aspects were similar for both boys and girls with an average **15%** (14%, 16%, 17%) of responses being elevated, similar to last year but an overall decrease from March '22. Data from Scottish Government also shows a gender bias; national data shows mental wellbeing for girls to be poorer than for boys overall in Scotland. Broad alignment between local and national data continues to be observed.

Family affluence - Emotional and Behavioural scale			
Primary pupils scoring as expected	Low	Medium	High
% Emotional	64 (62, 57, 57)	72 (72, 67, 65)	80 (80, 71, 69)
% Behavioural	81 (81, 80, 78)	86 (87, 84, 83)	89 (89, 90, 86)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Amongst primary school pupils, those who did not disclose gender were **30-40%** less likely to score “as expected” on the emotional and behavioural scales. The percentages of pupils scoring as expected in the Behavioural scale have also remained consistent with last year’s data.

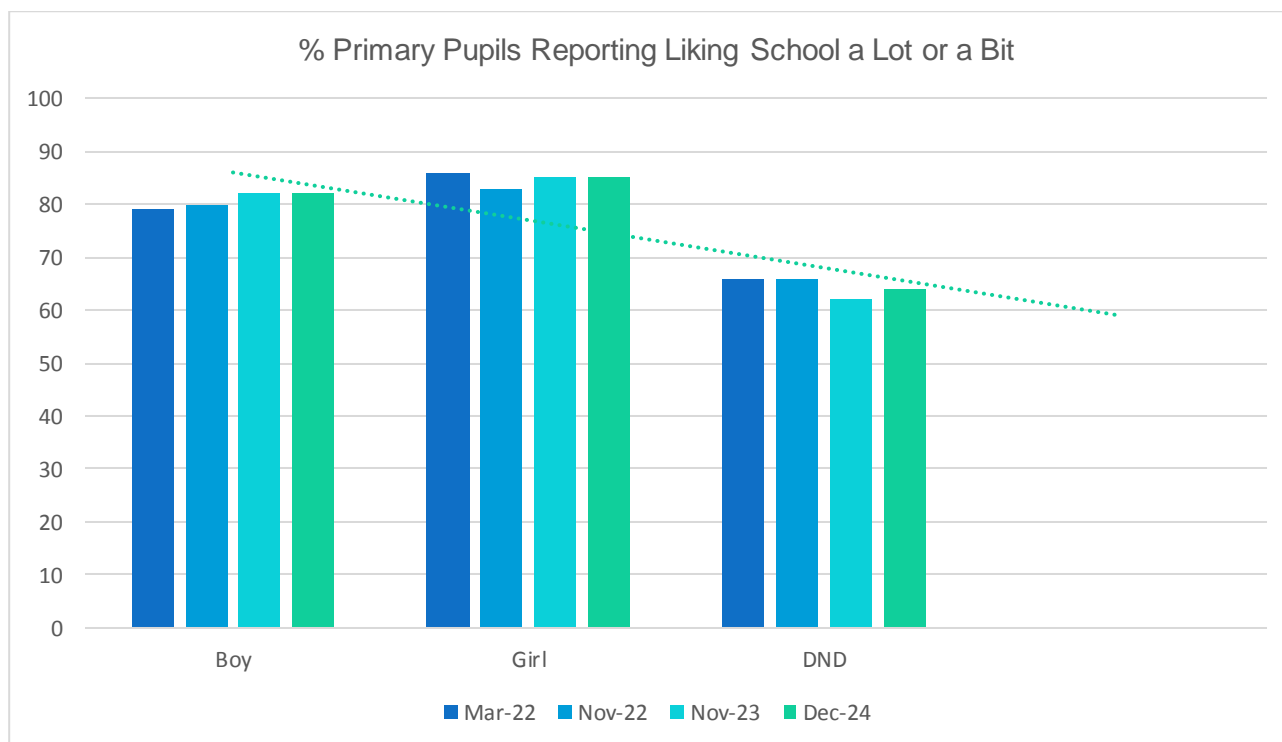
Gender - Emotional and Behavioural scale			
Primary pupils scoring as expected	Boys	Girls	Did not disclose
% Emotional	80 (79, 73, 72)	64 (63, 59, 56)	41 (42, 33, 28)
% Behavioural	85 (85, 83, 81)	86 (87, 87, 87)	65 (66, 66, 66)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Liking School

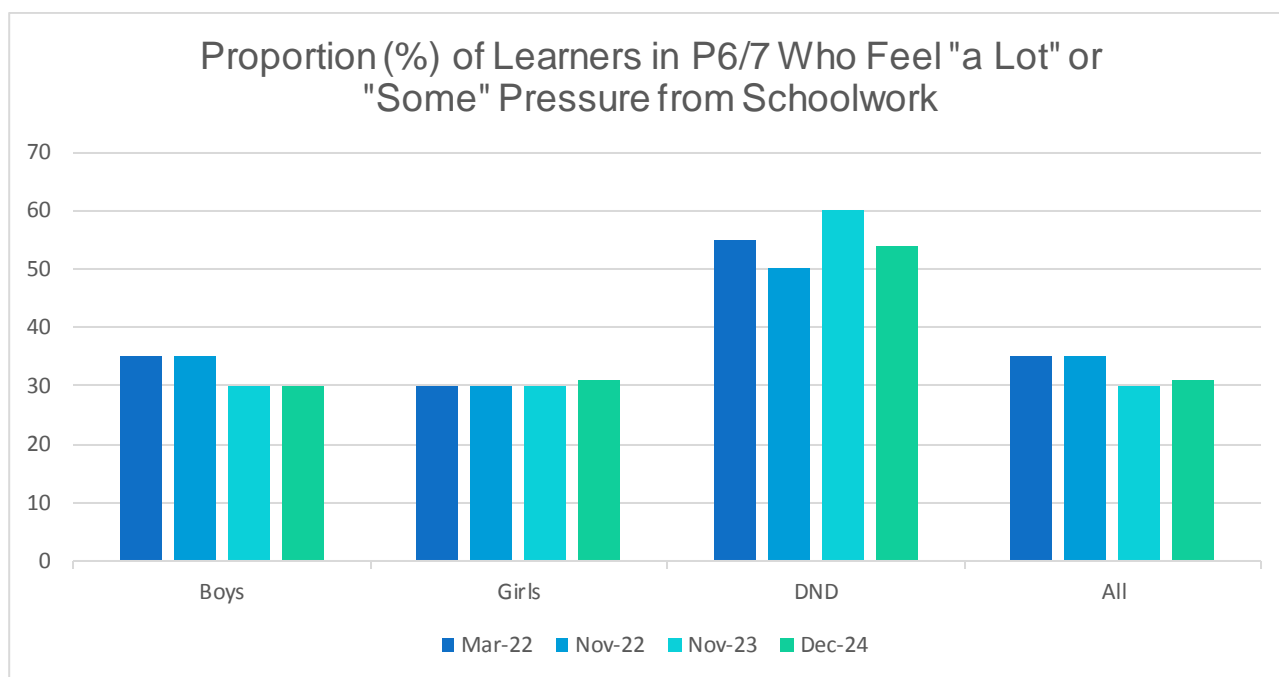
The number of P6 & 7 learners reporting that they like school shows a continued slight overall increase, **83%** (84%, 82%, 80%) who like school a bit or a lot. A trend had been observed over the data sets of girls reporting liking school more than boys in both P6 & P7.

The P6 and P7 learners who did not disclose their gender, reported the lowest levels of 'liking school a lot or a bit' compared to boys and girls with **64%** (girls **85%**, boys **82%**). Additionally, unlike boys who saw a small increase each year, and girls who kept within a range of 85, for the DND group there was an increase of **2%** this year, which has made up some of last year's 4% decrease for this group.



Pressured by Schoolwork

Shine report the HBSC Scotland national average being the same as Aberdeen's percentages for boys, but the national average of girls feeling pressure by schoolwork is more than 5% higher than Aberdeen's **30%**.



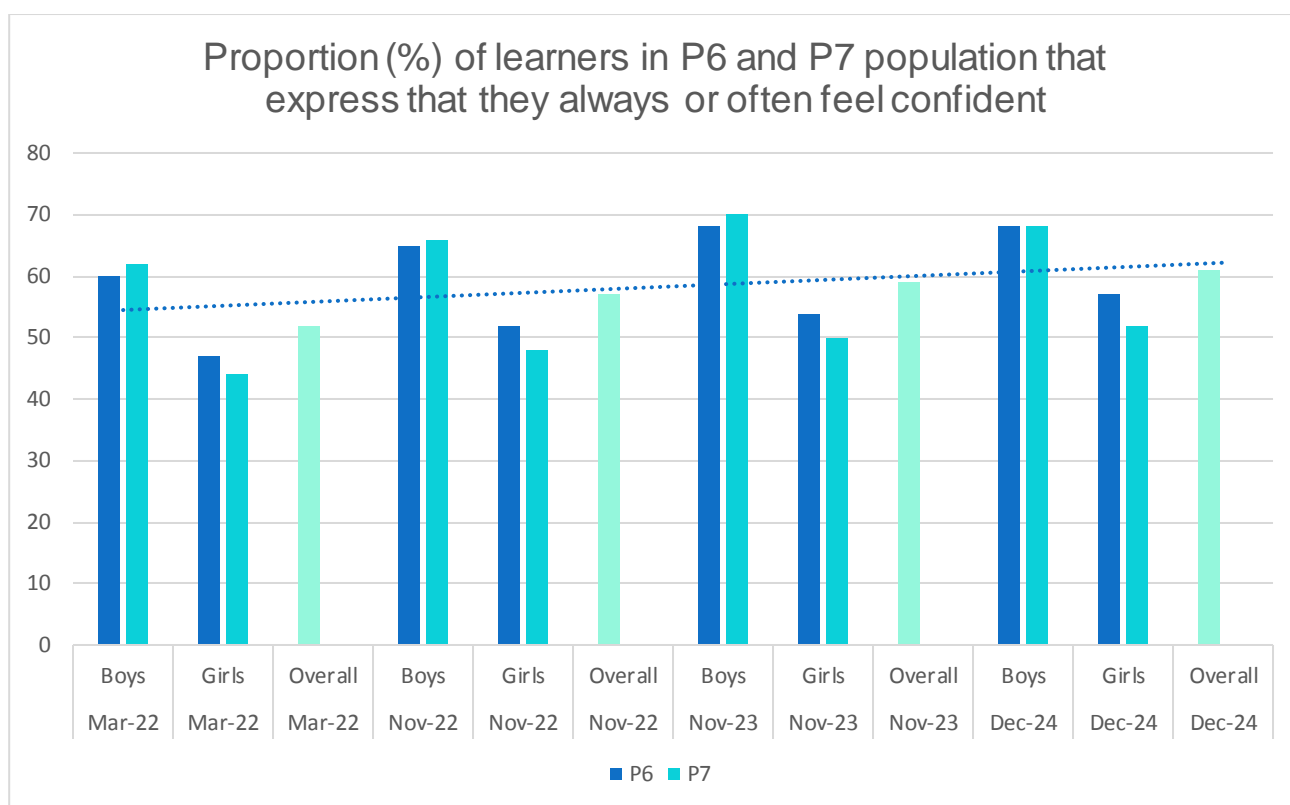
When considering gender, the proportion of learners who feel a lot or some pressure from schoolwork shows us that the figures have remained quite static. With those children who DND gender feeling the most pressure from schoolwork, compared to their peers even in Primary school. Individual schools have access to this information at a more localised level to understand if there are any particular groups most impacted.

Unlike previous years where some of the school experience data did not vary by family affluence, this year all data relating to liking school and pressurised by schoolwork showed poorer performance for low compared to high affluence.

Self Confidence

Learners were asked about how confident they felt in themselves.

61% (61%, 57%, 52%) of P6 and P7 pupils stated that they always or often felt confident. This has increased year on year, with a plateau this year with the same score as last year. We are now over the Scottish Averages provided by Shine. Shine compares our data to HBSC National data for Scotland. This shows around **10%** more of our P6&7 learners continue to rate their confidence positively compared to national reporting.



Overall, reported confidence levels between March '22 to December '24 data sets reflect statistically meaningful improvement by gender and phase, resulting in a seen increase in self-reported confidence levels among all pupils and higher than the Scottish comparison.

Scottish data for all school stages for 'feeling always or often confident' shows a strong gender difference with girls reporting lower confidence levels than boys. Overall, the percentage for our primary pupils who DND their gender reported **23** points less confidence levels than the median percentage (**38** compared to **61**). Although this discrepancy remains higher than we would like there are signs that this has decreased, from a difference of 35% in March '22, 30% in November '22 & 28% in November '23.

In terms of Family Affluence, the lowest to the highest groups had a difference of **18** in percentage of Primary 6/7 children reporting 'feeling always or often confident' (**51** to **69**). This difference had been gradually increasing, 12 in March 22, 17 in Nov 22, 19 in November 23 but reduced by 1 to 18 this year.

The Social Emotional Health Survey (SEHS) measures different aspects of a child's social and emotional wellbeing: Gratitude, Zest, Persistence and Optimism. All these aspects are positive character traits and are linked to having more positive mental health and greater school engagement.

Gratitude is associated with increased life satisfaction and social interaction including perception of support and providing support to others as well as academic achievement.

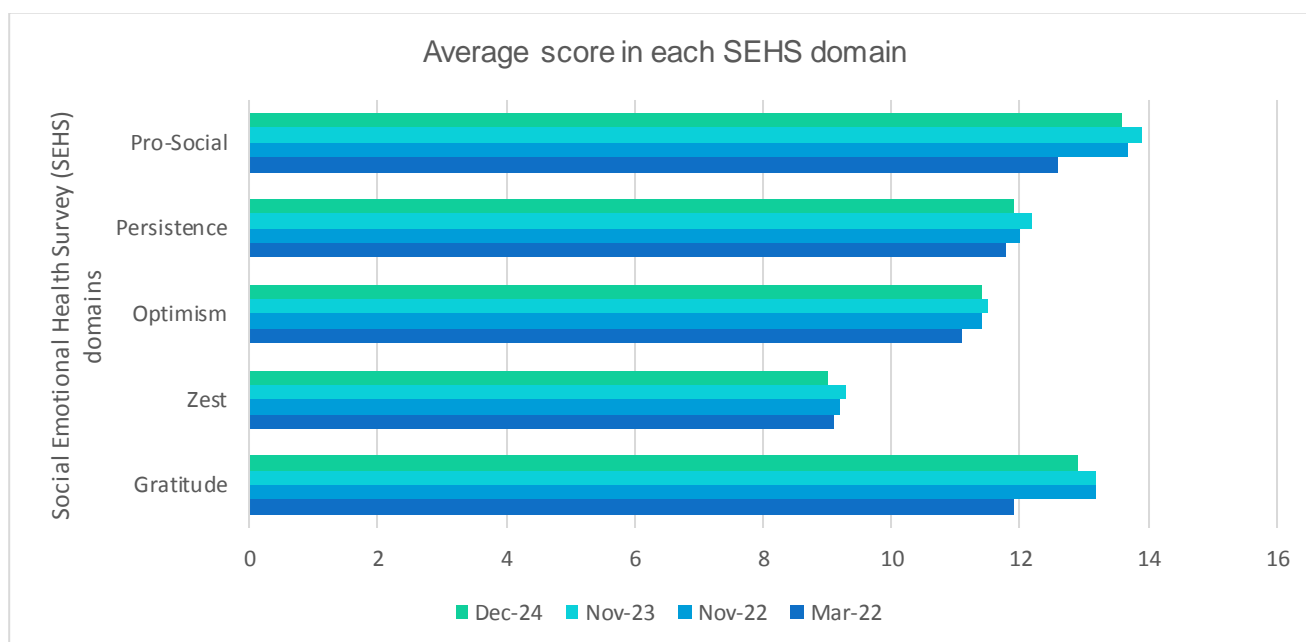
Optimism is associated with greater interest in school, persistence and coping as well as more positive social relationships.

Zest has a positive association with relationships with others, improved emotional wellbeing and autonomy.

Persistence has been shown to increase learning, mediating the relationship between motivation and performance.

The co-occurrence of multiple positive psychological traits from these 4 areas is called (covitality) they are associated with increased resilience, pro-social behaviour, school engagement (which is a key determinant in school attendance) and satisfaction.

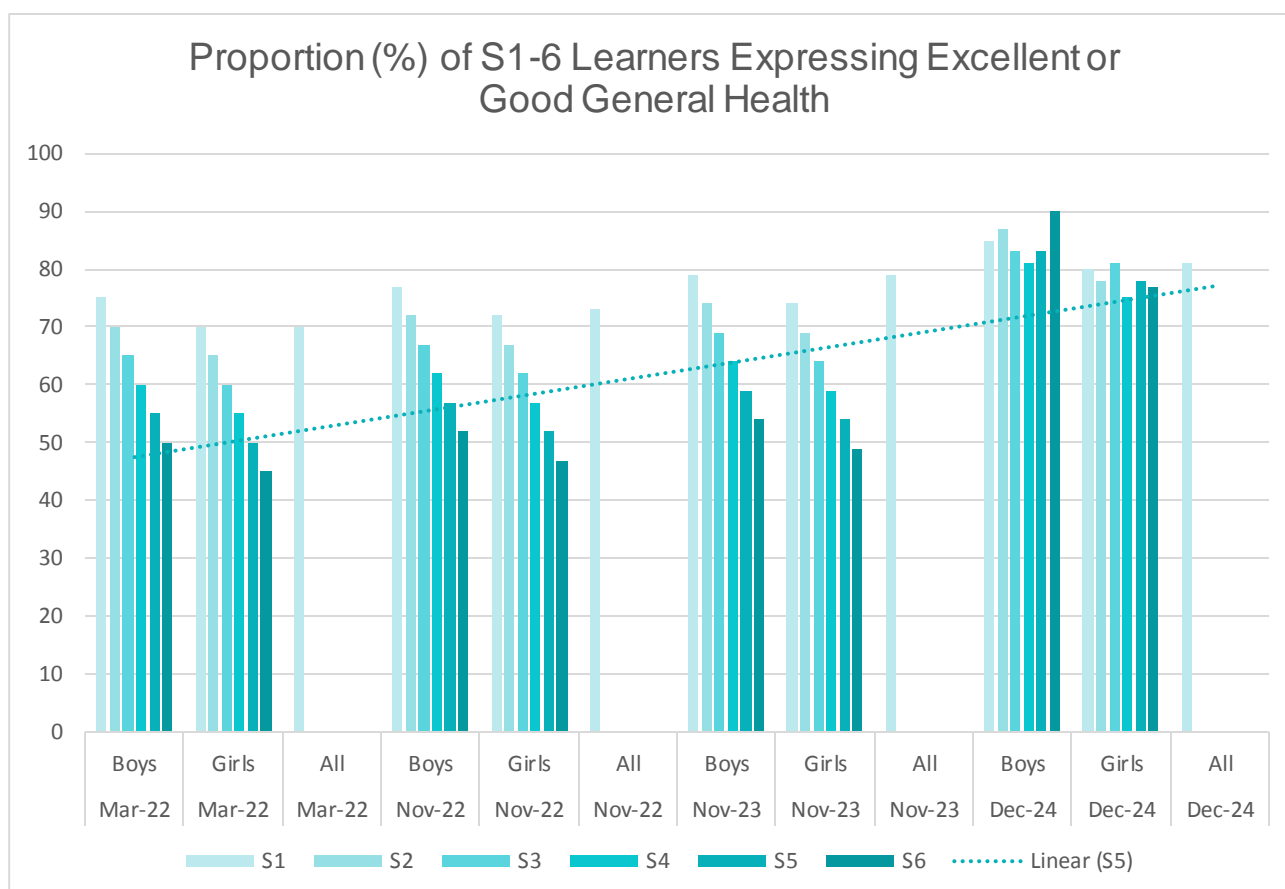
The responses to this section of the survey provide scores out of 16 within these four domains and then are collated to create an overall *covitality* score, out of 64.



Across gender groups and year groups, responses since March 22 have continued to gradually increase across all aspects, showing a positive picture for all. Increasing the overall pro-social scores of both boys and girls. This year we have seen a slight dip in our primary scores in this area. For the overall positive mental health score for primary pupils (“covitality”) those who did not disclose gender had the lowest score (**45.3** boys/**45.6** girls versus **40.2** DND) and there continues to be no significant difference between boys and girls.

SHINE Mental Health Survey(Secondary 1-6)

6453 (72%) (62% 6686; 59% 6270; 60% 5914) of learners from S1-S6 completed the secondary survey with **173** (207, 292, 237) learners choosing not to provide details of their gender and **53** (29, 98, 93) learners not identifying their year group.



The data suggests that boys continue to be more confident about their general health.

The percentage of both male and female learners across secondary stages that state that their general health is Excellent or Good has increased by **2%** from 79% to **81%**. However, this continues to be slightly lower than the levels reported by children at the primary stage.

For both boys and girls, there is an appreciable increase in self-reported general health between survey points with the whole cohort outcome rising again to **81%** from 79% (73% baseline).

Gains can be observed across Secondary, with a reduction in the gap of positive reporting between boys and girls. The Scottish comparison data provided by SHINE shows that ACC data tracks to around the same percentages. This year there is no exception for our current S5 girls, who were previously well below the Scottish comparator by about 9 data points and are now just above the Scottish comparator. Previously there was over a 12% negative differential seen by this cohort compared to our average, this year this has reduced by 9 data points to a 3% difference. This cohort is a focus cohort given their low reporting in previous data sets. They will be highlighted throughout this appendix. This cohort of girls

started Secondary school in the 2020-21 School year and were not able to have the usual transition processes or experiences as peers in the years above or below them.

The differential between boys and girls, although closing with each data set, continues to show a gap of **six** percentage (seven in 2023, points. The difference between the average percentage for all compared to those who DND gender is **25** although a large difference is greatly reduced from the 34 percentage points last year.

The graphs above show that self-reporting of good health is improving with each data set.

Reporting good or excellent health continues to be associated with family affluence at both primary and secondary school level, for example, **88%** of secondary pupils in the high family affluence group rated their health as good or excellent compared with **71%** of those in the low family affluence group, a difference of 17 percentage points. This has remained at the same level from last year. Although not a directly comparable measure, review of national data from 2022 (no updated figures for this year) shows a **10%** difference between the lowest and highest affluence groups. The local difference is greater suggesting a need for continued focus on this area. However, the national lowest affluence group is **2%** lower than in Aberdeen at 69.2%.

Family affluence			
Secondary pupils	Low	Medium	High
% Excellent or good health	71 , (71, 61, 59)	82 (79, 74, 70)	88 (88, 81, 80)
% Feel always or often confident	37 , (36, 34, 27)	45 (45, 41, 35)	53 (50, 48, 44)
% Feel lonely all or most of the time	22 , (23, 29, 32)	16 (16, 19, 24)	11 , (13, 17, 19)
% Has self-harmed at least once in lifetime	19 , (22, 25, 25)	15 (18, 19, 23)	17 (17, 17, 21)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Young people in the low family affluence group were more likely to report lower levels of confidence at both primary and secondary school. We can see that the 2024 survey continues to show increased confidence levels across all 3 levels of Family Affluence, but the Family Affluence Scale (FAS) gap continues to not reduce.

Young people in the low family affluence group were more likely to report feeling lonely all or most of the time, compared with those in the high family affluence (**22%** versus **11%**).

The gap has reduced between affluence group in relation to reporting of self-harming at least once, reducing from a high of 8% points difference to the current 2% differential. A reduction of 6%.

Girls continue to be consistently more likely to report more negative outcomes than boys, with greater differences between boys and girls continuing amongst secondary pupils. Improvements are observed or sustained, for girls across the four areas.

Prevalence of self-harming varied by gender, with four in ten (**40% n=69**) of those who did not disclose their gender reporting that they had self-harmed at least once in their lifetime, compared with **17%** of girls and **13%** of boys. We did see a reduction for both boys and girls of **3%** in terms of self-harming. This area will continue to require careful consideration by the Mental Health Improvement Collaborative. A Scottish Government Strategy for Self-Harm has been published and has been shared with all schools. Training from Penumbra the official Scottish Government training partner on Self-Harm, is now offered nationally and shared with all settings.

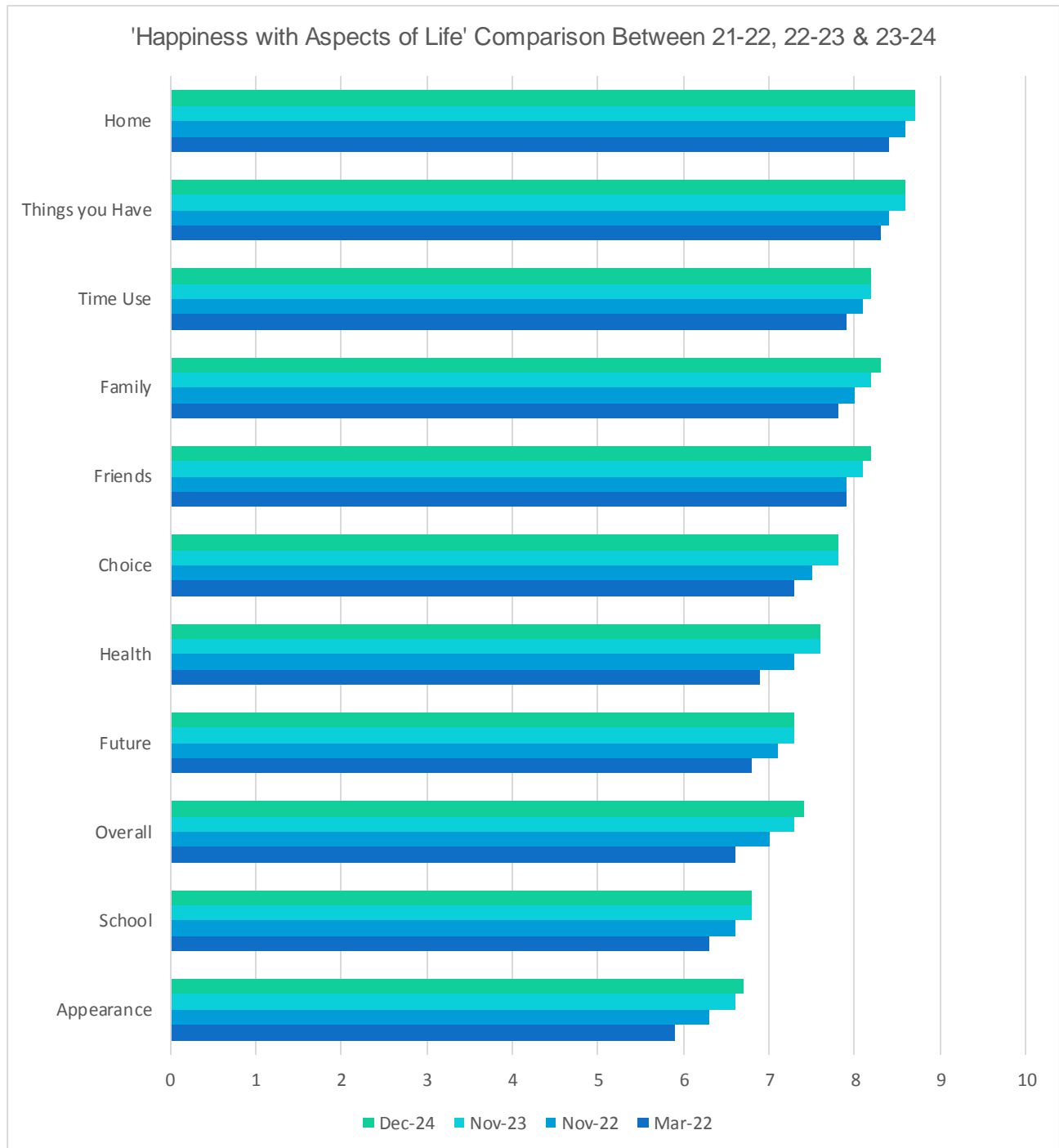
Outcomes in these measures were poorer for those who did not disclose their gender, compared to both boys and girls. However, improvements were seen this year for this group in all categories, and improvements were particularly noted in a reduction of reporting of feeling lonely all or most of the time – down **12%** from 2022, and an increase in self-reporting of feeling always or often confident – increased by **9%** from last year.

Gender			
Secondary pupils	Boy	Girl	Did not disclose
% Excellent or good health	84 (83, 79, 77)	78 (76, 69, 65)	56 (45, 39, 39)
% Feel always and often confident	58 (57, 55, 49)	33 (33, 28, 23)	26 (17, 24, 20)
% Feel lonely all or most of the time	13 (15, 17, 17)	20 (20, 23, 30)	40 (46, 46, 52)
% Has self-harmed at least once in lifetime	13 (16, 15, 18)	17 (20, 21, 24)	40 (38, 38, 48)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Learners were asked to rate how happy they are with various aspects of their life. Response options ranged from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'very unhappy', 5 means 'neither happy nor unhappy' and 10 means 'very happy'.

Within Secondary Schools, it was again clear that the aspects of their lives learners were most happy with are: home, things they had, time use, friends and family; with school and appearance consistently receiving lower scores. The chart below shows us that there is increased happiness with all aspects of life for each year's data point.

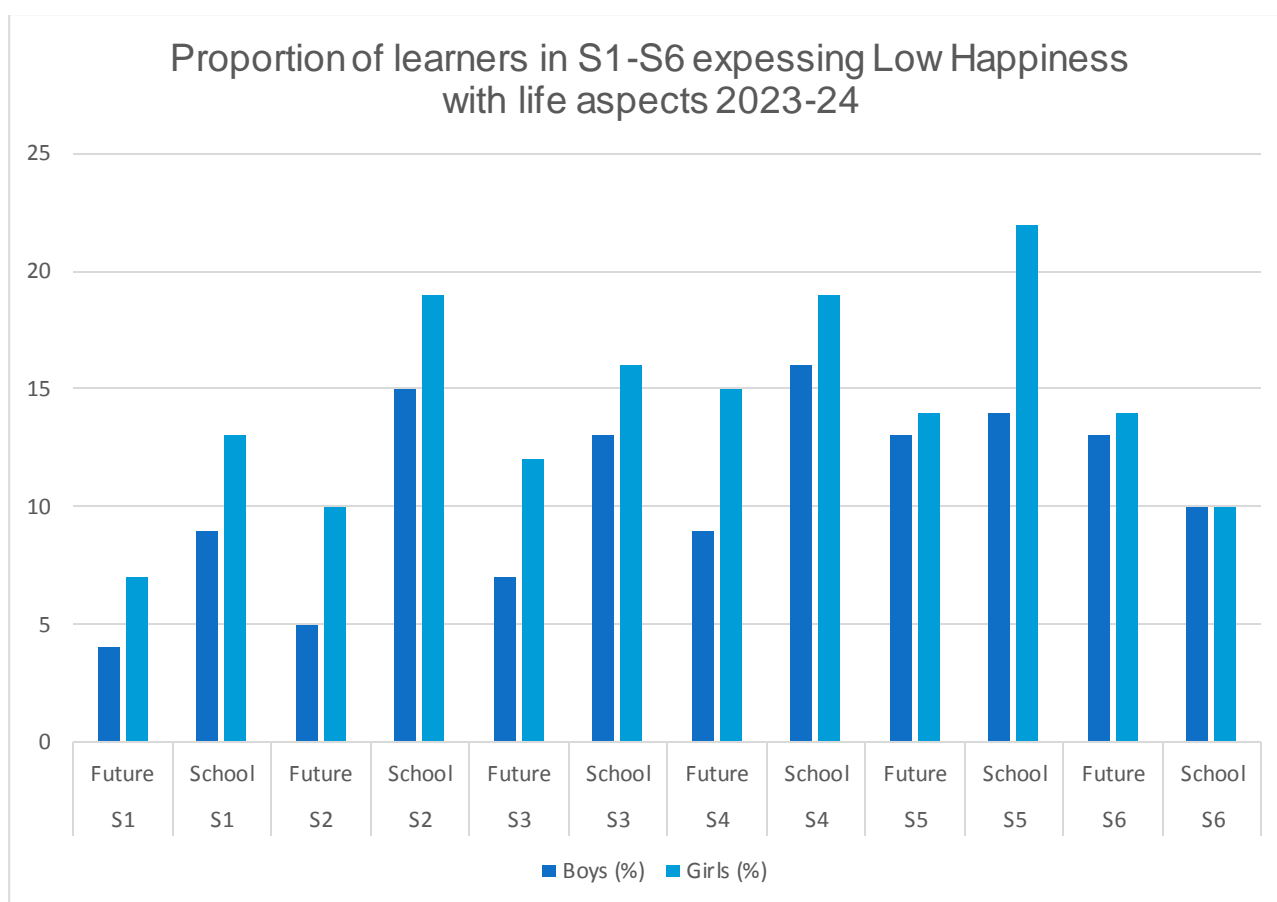


Overall, 19% (a continued reduction of **12%** since March 2022) of learners report low happiness linked to 'Appearance' and 15% (a continued reduction of **8%**), linked to 'School'. There is a continued trend of reduction in both areas. There continues to be, however, an

increase in the number of learners transitioning from primary to secondary who report low happiness regarding school (10% to 15%; 5% difference compared to last year's 9%).

There is a gender difference in girls reporting more low happiness aspects of life views compared to boys across the spectrum (except for things they have), this continues to be seen in their perceptions of School compared to boys. But all low happiness has decreased for each aspect, and the gender gap has decreased noticeably in relation to School. Girls consistently express lower happiness than boys regarding the Future, that continues on a mainly deteriorating trend up to S6.

Our cohort of focus, our current S5 girls have reduced their **low** reporting, **22%** school and **14%** future compared to 27 & 17% respectively last year.



Family affluence heavily continues to influence happiness at the secondary phase. Those in the low affluence group were more than thrice as likely to be unhappy with life in general than those in the highest affluence group. Those in the lowest affluence group's low ratings have mostly decreased or stayed consistent, but so have the other affluence groups, therefore the gap hasn't decreased between groups to the extent we would hope.

Family affluence (% of Low Happiness with... by Affluence)			
Secondary pupils	Low	Medium	High
% Life as a whole	14 (16, 20, 25)	8 (10, 15, 17)	4 (7, 10, 13)
% Family relationships	10 (11, 12, 18)	5 (5, 8, 10)	3 (4, 5, 7)
% Home you live in	6 (8, 10, 12)	3 (3, 4, 5)	2 (1, 2, 3)
% Choice in life	10 (10, 14, 15)	6 (6, 9, 10)	3 (4, 6, 8)
% Friendships	7 (7, 10, 10)	4 (5, 6, 7)	4 (3, 5, 6)
% Things you have	5 (7, 8, 10)	2 (2, 4, 4)	2 (1, 2, 2)
% Health	14 (15, 19, 22)	8 (9, 13, 16)	5 (6, 9, 11)
% Appearance	28 (30, 33, 38)	18 (20, 25, 30)	11 (15, 18, 23)
% Future	17 (16, 17, 22)	9 (10, 13, 15)	5 (7, 9, 10)
% School	21 (23, 27, 29)	14 (16, 18, 21)	10 (14, 15, 18)
% Free time	8 (7, 9, 12)	5 (5, 6, 7)	3 (2, 4, 5)

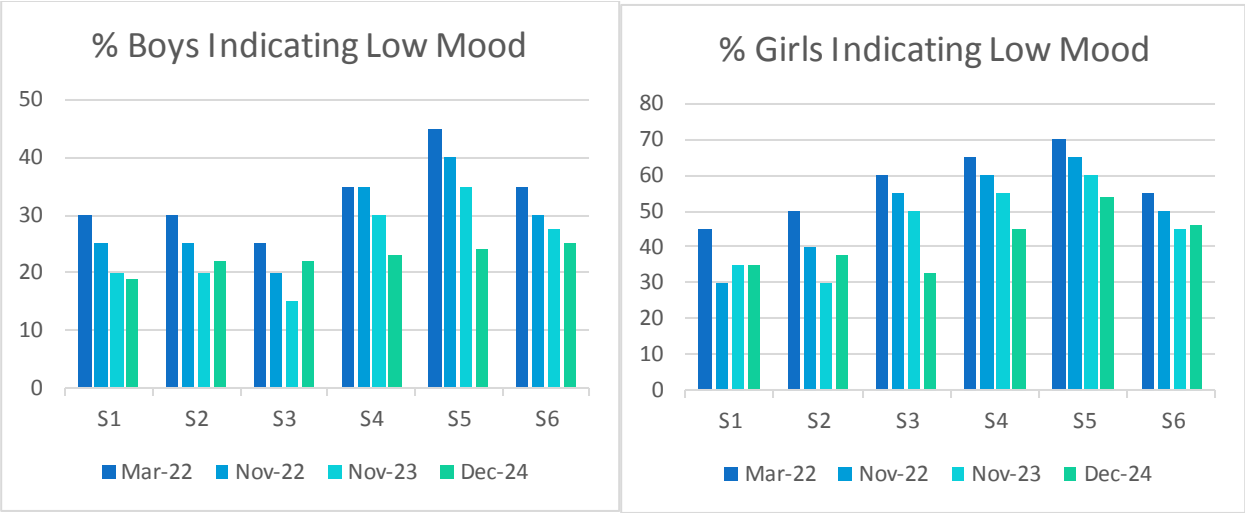
Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

In terms of low happiness with life, across nearly all of the measures, pupils who didn't disclose their gender expressed the most unhappiness at both secondary and primary level, in all aspects. Some noticeable improvements were observed in these areas. Reporting of low happiness in relation to 'Life as a Whole', 'School', all reduced by 5 percentage points or more for the DND gender group. Continued improvements were seen in regards to 'Health', 'Appearance', and 'Future'. Increases were seen in the reporting of low positivity in relation to the areas of 'Friendships', 'Family Relationships', 'Choice in Life'. As the table below shows they are continuing to report much lower positivity than their peers in most areas, in all 'aspects' they were at least three times as likely than their peers to report low positivity in each. The gap between this group and their peers has widened, even for the areas that have seen continued improvement. The difference between girls and boys continues, but improvements were seen for both these groups but not reducing the gap between them.

Percentage reporting Low Positivity by Gender			
Secondary pupils	Boy	Girl	Did not disclose
% Life as a whole	6 (8, 10, 11)	12 (13, 18, 20)	31 (36, 44, 50)
% Family relationships	4 (3, 4, 6)	7 (8, 11, 13)	25 (20, 27, 30)
% Home you live in	3 (3, 3, 3)	4 (4, 6, 7)	13 (14, 13, 22)
% Choice in life	5 (6, 7, 7)	7 (8, 10, 13)	23 (21, 26, 33)
% Friendships	4 (4, 5, 5)	6 (6, 9, 8)	17 (14, 18, 17)
% Things you have	3 (3, 3, 3)	3 (3, 5, 6)	9 (9, 12, 13)
% Health	7 (7, 9, 10)	11 (11, 15, 20)	29 (33, 36, 44)
% Appearance	13 (13, 15, 17)	25 (28, 33, 41)	47 (50, 56, 61)
% Future	8 (8, 8, 10)	12 (12, 15, 19)	33 (35, 36, 39)
% School	13 (15, 16, 16)	17 (18, 23, 27)	32 (39, 37, 44)
% Free time	4 (3, 2, 4)	7 (6, 8, 11)	15 (14, 12, 14)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

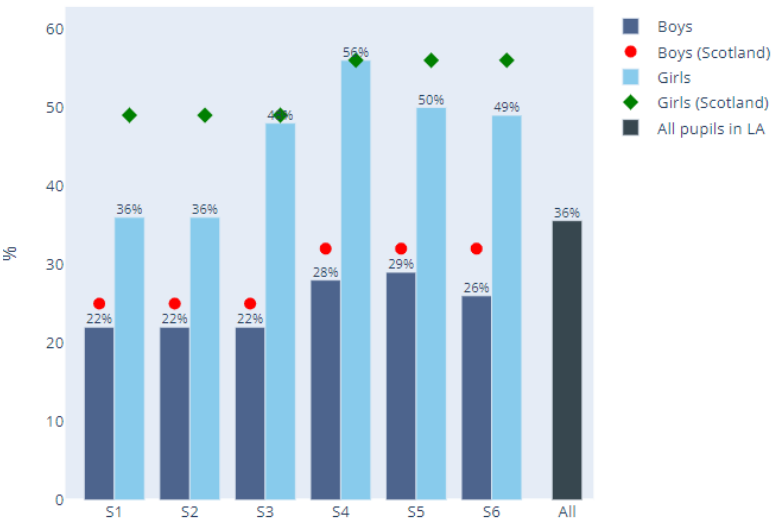
The WHO–5 Wellbeing Index is a five-item scale which provides a measure of emotional functioning. Answers are collated to create a score ranging from 0 to 100. A score of 50 or less on the WHO-5 indicates low mood.

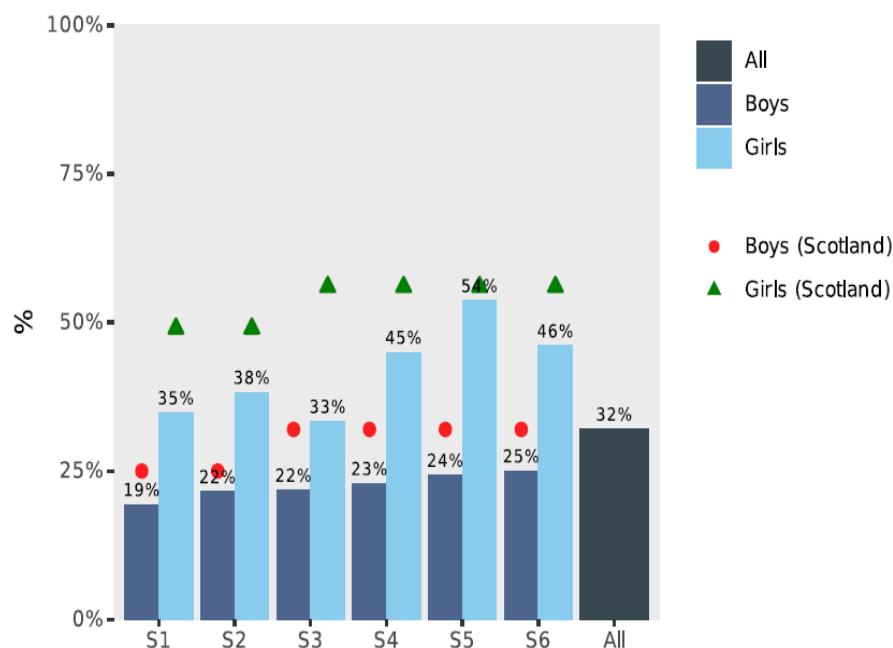


We have seen a small reduction for our cohort of focus, S5 girls, who report low mood; 54% compared to 56% last year, and 60% the year before.

The proportion of learners across S1-S6 self-rating below the 50-score threshold on the WHO Wellbeing Index is continuing to show year-on-year signs of improvement across each phase, and for all learners in this cohort.

Table Showing ACC Low Mood compared to SHINE Scottish Average 23 Vs 24

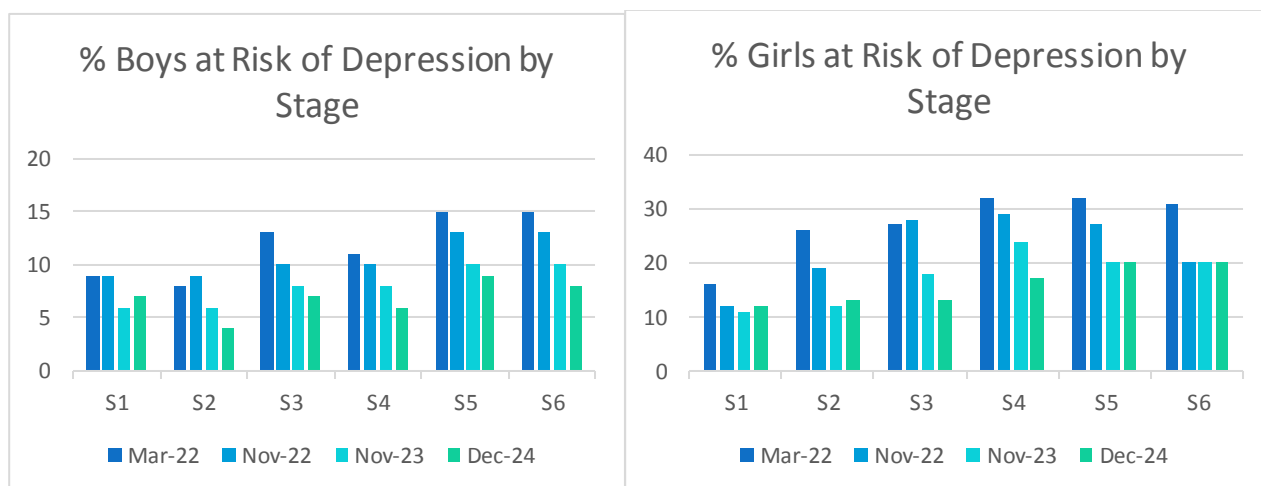




Encouragingly for all stages and gender, this year now including girls in S3 & S4 and including our cohort of focus in S5, we report lower percentages than the indicated Scottish Average provided by SHINE (chart above provides visual).

The graphs above indicate an overall positive picture towards the reduction of low mood in both boys and girls from March 2022. Overall, there has been a further **4%** reduction of learners indicating low mood (a 15% reduction since our baseline).

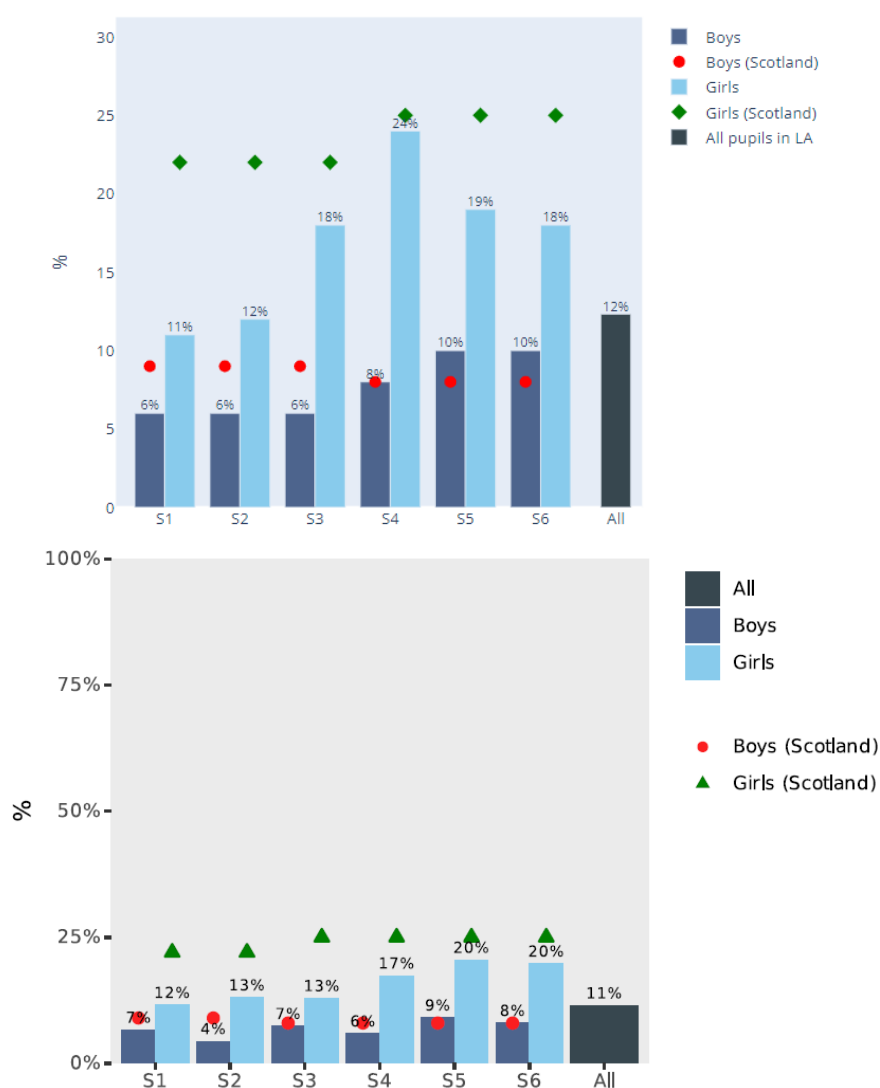
The graphs below highlight the proportion of those scoring 28 or less and are classified as at risk of depression. We see a reduction in the number of learners at risk of depression in both gender groups and every year group. Previously our cohort of focus, S5 Girls risk of depression score was 24%, this has dropped down to **20%** this year. This is below the updated Scottish Comparator of 25%.



The gap between girls and boys in relation to risk of depression continues. But you can see from the charts above (green column is most recent data) reductions overall in risk of depression have continued for both genders.

Concerns for the wellbeing of girls compared to that of boys remains. However, ACC Secondary Girls are self-reporting levels well below the SHINE Scottish Average. So, although we see a difference in more girls than boys being at Risk of Depression, we have lower figures in this area than the Scottish Average.

Table Showing ACC At Risk of Depression compared to SHINE Scottish Average 23 Vs 24



Boys risk of depression has reduced this year, and is now on or below the Scottish National Comparator provided by Shine. As you can see from the charts above, this is a marked improvement from previous years. Our cohort of focus, S5 girls, had a further reduction of 4% in this area this year.

Family affluence continues to strongly influence low mood and a risk of depression. We have again seen reductions across each Family Affluence group, but the smallest reduction for the lowest affluence group. The gap between affluence groups has not reduced. As with for primary schools, this information will have to be considered carefully as interventions are being planned and continued to continue to address equity and poverty proofing across the City.

Family affluence			
Secondary pupils	Low	Medium	High
Low mood	42 (45, 50, 56)	31 (34, 42, 47)	21 (28, 33, 38)
Risk of depression	16 (18, 24, 25)	10 (11, 15, 20)	5 (7, 10, 13)

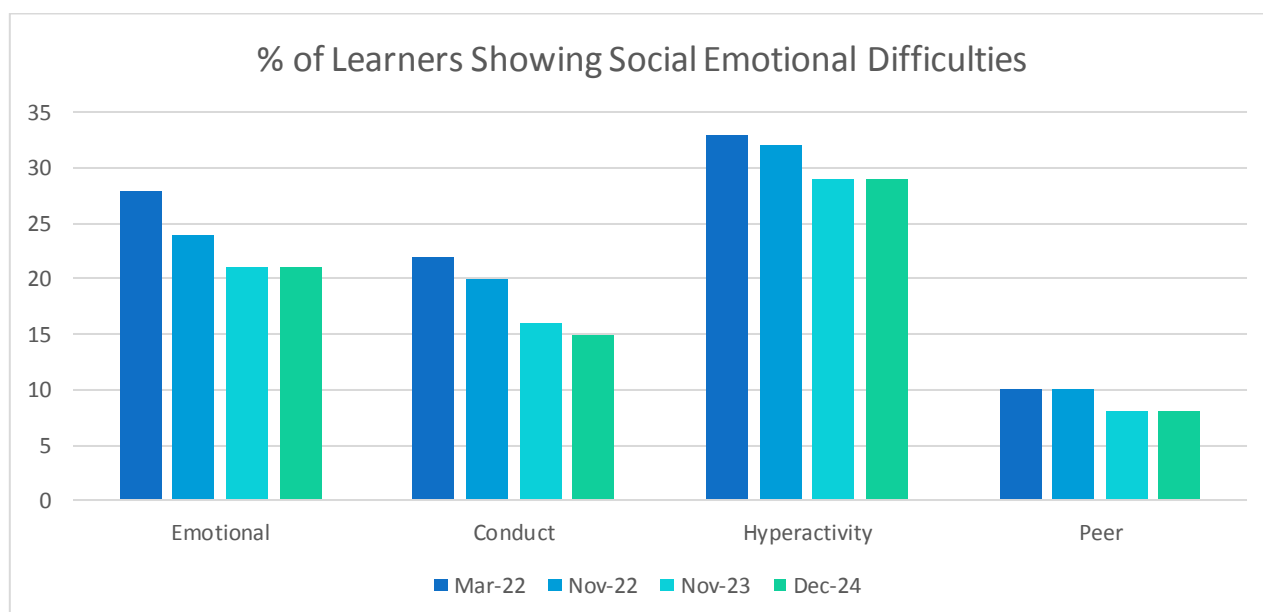
Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Those who did not disclose their gender continue to be far more likely to self-report low mood and be considered at risk of depression than their peers. We have seen an increase in this group's risk of depression. This is still a relatively small number overall (59 compared to 61 last year).

Gender			
Secondary pupils	Boys	Girls	Did Not Disclose
Low mood	22 (24, 30, 34)	41 (45, 53, 58)	61 (70, 73, 78)
Risk of depression	7 (7, 10, 11)	15 (17, 21, 26)	33 (29, 37, 44)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

The Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) measures mental health difficulties in different areas: emotional symptoms, conduct, hyperactivity and peer relationships.



Reviewing all year groups there is still a higher percentage of girls showing difficulties with hyperactivity and emotions. There is an overall slight decrease across all measures since March '22.

Although at first glance the high percentage of learners showing difficulties is of concern, data for Aberdeen City continues to mirror Scottish Government data on differences between genders:

Encouragingly, Aberdeen City wellbeing data for both genders continues to be ahead of last recorded national data. There is still a need to continue to consider a local focus on effectively meeting the emotional wellbeing needs of girls across all year groups, but we have seen improvements in our S5 Girls Hyperactivity. This has reduced by **6%** from 36% to 30%, and Emotional has reduced by **3%** from 40% to 37%. Conduct has also reduced by **5%** from 15% to 10%. This extends to considerations around community and education supports. Further consideration should be given to what further opportunities there are to provide support as our local data highlights this area.

Secondary school pupils in the high family affluence group were less likely to report mental health difficulties, as scored by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDS). Overall, **71%** of those in the most affluent group scored within the expected normal range on this scale, compared with **51%** of those in the low family affluence group. This is a change in profile from last year. Overall, the highest affluence group increased their SDQ score by 5%, whereas the lowest affluence group's SDQ score decreased by 2%. Meaning the gap between them increased from 13% to **20%**.

Family affluence			
Secondary pupils scoring as expected	Low	Medium	High
% Emotional	61 (62, 58, 53)	70 (70, 66, 62)	77 (73, 70, 66)
% Conduct disorder	73 (70, 66 63)	77 (75, 71, 67)	79 (74, 73, 68)
% Hyperactivity	53 (54, 51, 49)	59 (60, 55, 56)	64 (62, 59, 59)
% Peer relations difficulties	63 (65, 59, 59)	75 (76, 71, 70)	83 (82, 78, 77)
% Pro-social	77 (72, 70, 70)	82 (77, 74, 72)	86 (80, 80, 78)
Overall SDQ score	51 (53, 45, 42)	62 (63, 56, 53)	71 (66, 62, 59)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

A quarter (**25%**) of those who did not disclose gender scored within the "as expected" normal range in the overall Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score compared with **54%** of girls and **69%** of boys. The DND group improved overall by **4%** this year but decreased in terms of expecting scoring for peer relationships difficulties. Both girls and boys reported higher scores, but DND group reported lower scores this year overall.

Gender			
Secondary pupils scoring as expected	Boys	Girls	Did not disclose
% Emotional	85 (85, 83, 81)	55 (56, 53, 45)	41 (35, 36, 29)
% Conduct disorder	73 (73, 71, 69)	76 (74, 70, 65)	60 (60, 52, 48)
% Hyperactivity	63 (65, 61, 62)	56 (56, 53, 51)	30 (31, 29, 31)
% Peer relations difficulties	74 (74, 71, 73)	73 (74, 70, 68)	35 (42, 41, 40)
% Pro-social	74 (69, 68 68)	88 (82, 79, 78)	64 (62, 62, 55)
% Overall SDQ score	69 (70, 65, 64)	54 (54, 46, 43)	25 (21, 24, 19)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

At secondary school, those who did not disclose gender were more likely to have lower scores in the domains of belief in self, belief in others and emotional competence. Girls and boys performed similarly in belief in others, and emotional competence, but girls performed worse in the belief in self-domain. This maps onto what we know about teenage girls and teenage brain development in terms of self-esteem and confidence.

Sleep

Secondary learners were asked to complete the adolescent sleep wake scale that measures sleep quality. Higher scores indicate better sleep quality.

Boys in all year groups continue to indicate that they have a better sleep quality than girls. The average sleep score from March 2022 has remained consistently around 38. It is currently **38.3**, an increase of 1.3 from last year.

All pupils, however, would benefit from increased sleep quality to positively impact on their mental and physical health. The links between social media and the use of digital technology and the potential impact this has had on the measures noted continue to be monitored. There is a range of data around the increased need for sleep in the teenage years, with teenagers having a different biological circadian rhythm and sleep requirements to adults, or younger children. For example, they need more sleep and need more sleep in mornings than others.

Family affluence			
	Low	Medium	High
Mean sleep quality score	36 (36, 35, 35)	39 (38, 37, 37)	41 (40, 39, 38)

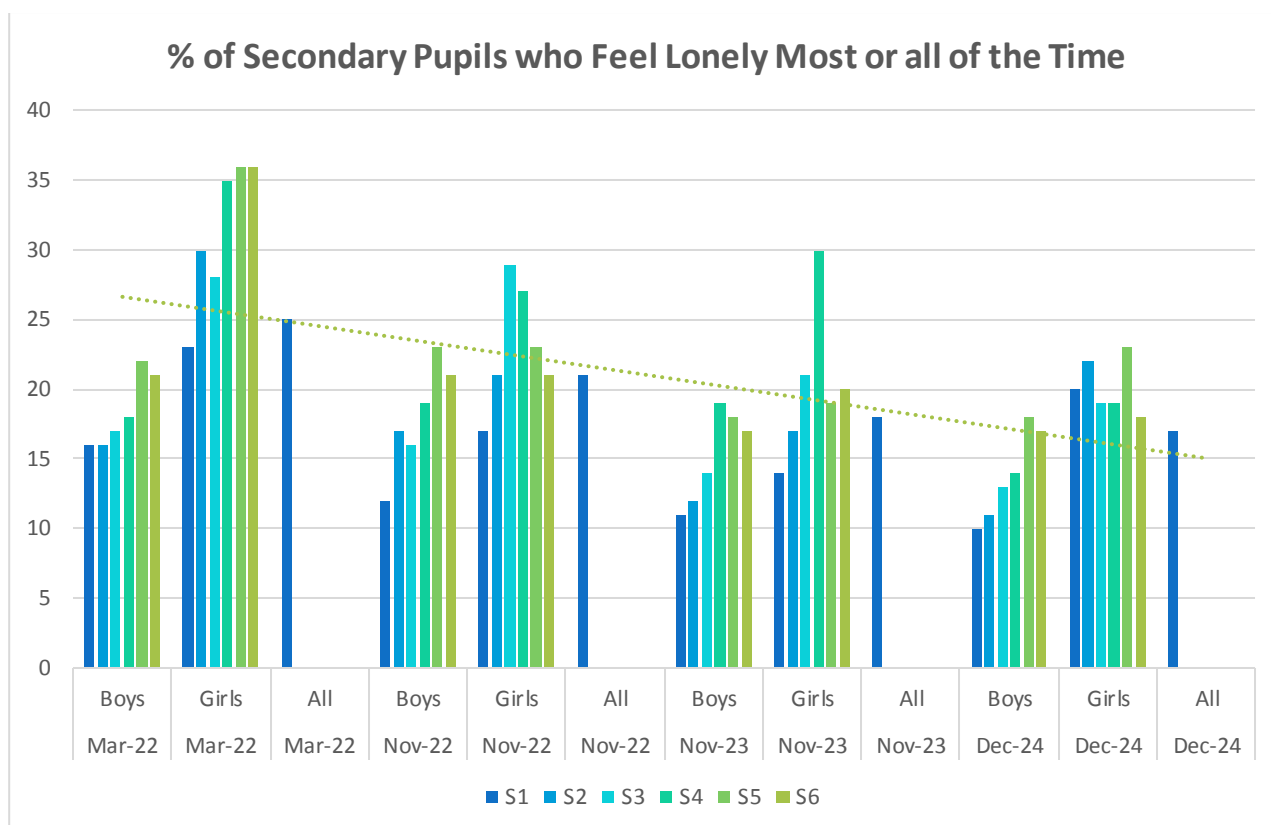
Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Young people in the high family affluence group continued to report higher sleep quality than those in the other affluence groups. Those who did not disclose their gender continued to report poorer sleep than all other groups but increased by a point this year.

Gender			
	Boy	Girl	Did not disclose
Mean sleep quality score	40 (40, 39, 39)	38 (37, 36, 35)	30 (29, 30, 29)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Loneliness



There are links between high loneliness, other areas of wellbeing and decreasing positive life outcomes. Learners across Aberdeen City, reported lower levels of feeling lonely all the time. **17%** compared to 28% last year, a decrease of **11%** on last year. You can see from the chart above that our cohort of focus have also decreased their reported levels of loneliness to **23%** a reduction of **7%** from last year, their reporting of loneliness had stayed static at 30% previously.

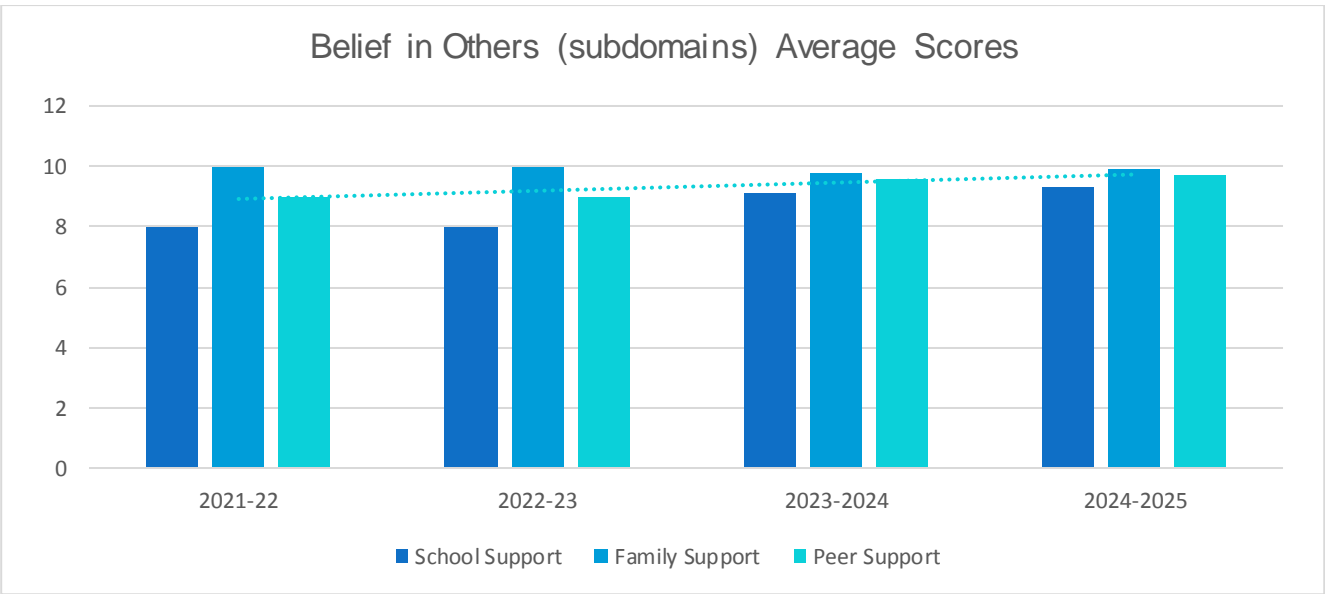
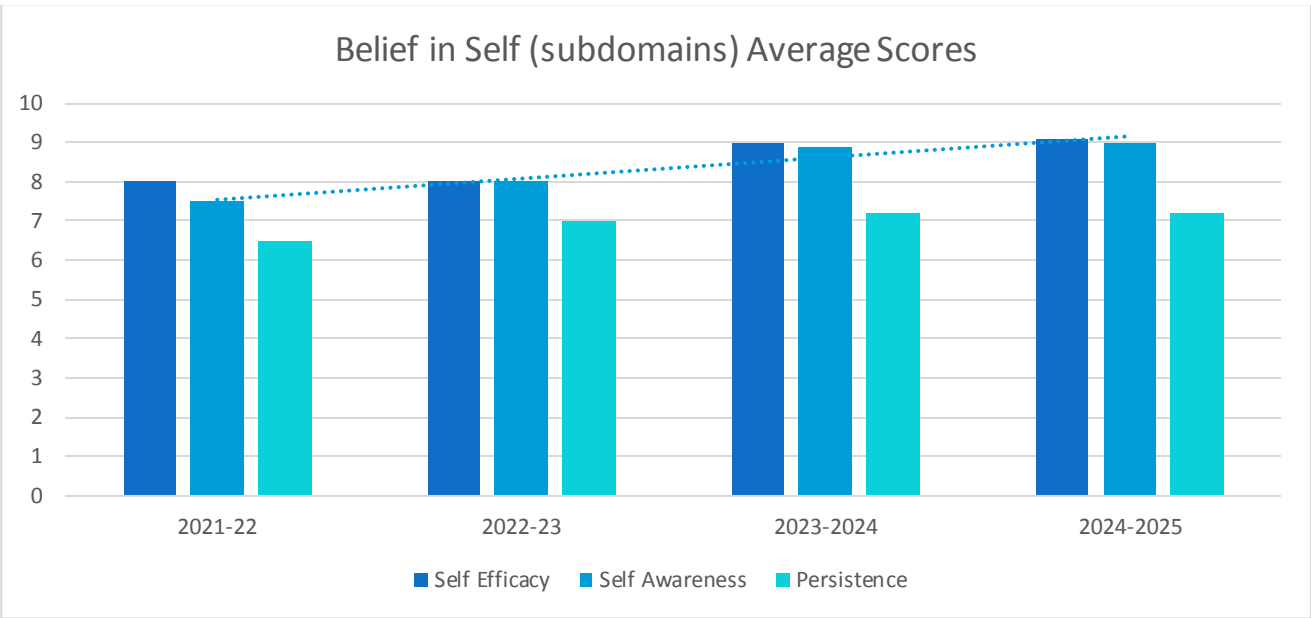
Research on loneliness in teenagers tells us that teenagers report higher levels of loneliness, and they feel social connectedness and conversely loneliness more acutely than any age group in society. Additionally, their self-reports of feelings of loneliness are related to their need to feel socially connected, particularly to groups. Even a short time away from a strong positive group can make them feel lonely. Many secondary school's activities and clubs, outdoors sporting clubs to a lesser extent, were suspended in line with the range of restrictions from the Covid-19 pandemic. Since these have been re-established, we have seen these figures around loneliness continue to decrease. There are ways we can incorporate more social learning across the secondary curriculum which can also support this area, supporting wellbeing more generally. These outcomes should continue to be explored by leaders and pastoral care and supports in our Secondary settings.

Social Emotional Health

This measures different competencies of positive socio-emotional health, which are fundamental for young people to develop to live engaging and meaningful lives.

In all year groups, boys show higher levels of self-efficacy, self-awareness, and persistence, with self-efficacy rating higher in most year groups. Since March 2022, there has been a positive increase in all 3 areas of a range of 3-5 in relation to the summed average scores of belief in self.

Learners overall are showing a positive response to belief in others with an increase in the areas of school support and family support. Data for boys suggests that school support and family support are better than peer support and for girls, peer support is significantly higher at all year groups. This gender difference is again in-line with national data from Scottish Government, that boys and younger children self-report higher positive perceptions of those they live with. Teenagers, especially females seek more peer support and acceptance from peers than their family members, as a function of the teenage brain.



Our cohort of focus, our current S5 girls reported higher levels across each area and every domain in comparison to previous years. This is really encouraging and contributes to the positive picture for this cohort.

Emotional regulation, empathy and self-control are reviewed to understand Emotional competence. The results are pretty static from November 2022. Self-control continues to be lower than the other 2 subdomains. Within this section all subdomains have increased by .2 points. At this time in a teenager's development, we see a reduction in their ability to correctly recognise emotions in others (if not related to themselves) and increased self-consciousness.

Overall, learners' levels of optimism are continuing to rise. Importantly this includes last year's S3 and S4, who are showing an increase on the previous year, and an increase on their peer groups at their stage last year. Our cohort of focus, S5 girls, have increased from 7.1 to 7.6 which is important to see. Local data continues to be at odds, in a positive way, with the national data which shows a declining picture up to S5 and S6.

Gender			
Secondary pupils level of optimism	Boys	Girls	Did not disclose
Optimism	8.7 (8.6, 8.3, 8.0)	7.9 (7.6, 7.3, 6.9)	6.5 (6.1, 6.1, 5.6)

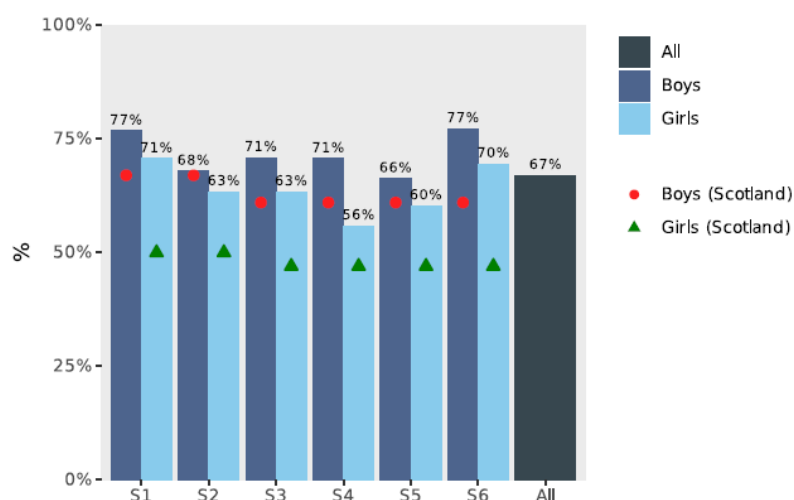
Bold=Dec '24, **plain**=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

We can again see poorer outcomes for those who did not disclose gender, but they have had another increase in their self-reporting this year in this area.

Liking School

Learners were asked to select whether they liked school from a scale of, a lot to not at all. **24%** (compared to **36%** last year and baseline of **42%**) of learners indicating that they don't like school very much or at all. There is real continued improvement in this important area. Work done by schools in relation to transition arrangements and the impact of ABZCampus on subject choices and experiences could be positive factors on these improving figures from young people. Scottish Government data reports the low trend in attitudes across S1 – S4, improving in S5 and 6. This pattern is now continuing to be seen within our data set, with stronger ratings now seen for S5&S6. The percentage of pupils who like school (a lot or a bit) remains what appears low across secondary stages but are very much in line and ahead of - the HBSC Scotland national average provided by Shine. Our cohort of focus, S5 Girls, increased to **60%** reporting liking school this year, compared to 52% last year, and ahead of the Scottish average provided by Shine.

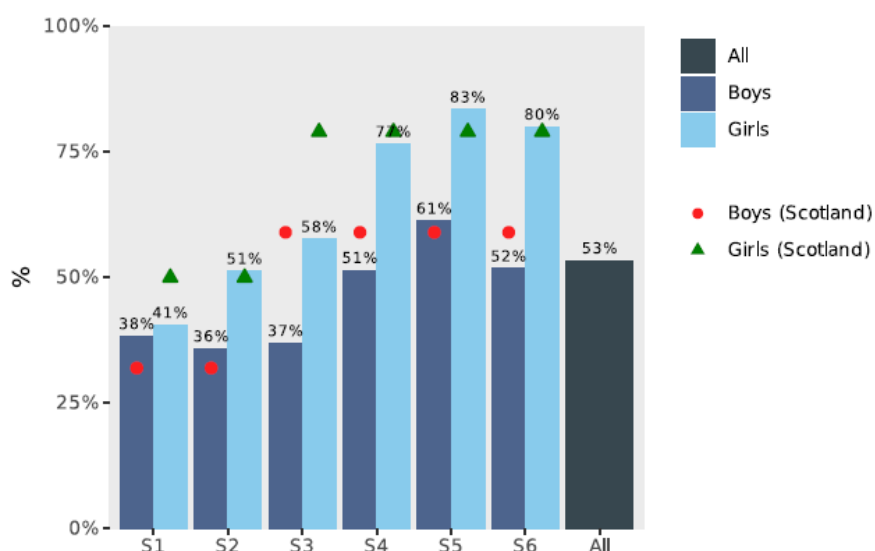
Table Showing % of Pupils Who Reported They Like School a Little or a Bit compared to SHINE Scottish Average 24



Pressured by Schoolwork

The number of pupils who feel pressured by school work has gone down overall by two points to **53%**, (55%, 54%, 58%). This remains a high figure. The Secondary Quality Improvement Officers Team will continue to consider this, and explore with Secondary Head Teachers and their teams.

Table Showing % Table % of Pupils Reporting They Feel a Lot of or Some Pressure From Schoolwork compared to SHINE Scottish Average 24



We can see that we have the same distribution or pattern as the Scottish Comparators, but in all but one we are at or below the Scottish average Shine provide. This is really encouraging. Our cohort of focus, S5 girls express feeling more pressured by schoolwork than any other year group, and ahead of S5 girls last year, they also report higher than they did in S4. They are just above the national average Shine provide.

There is a continuing gender gap between boys and girls that, as in last year, statistically develops as learners progress through the phases. Improvements have been seen across all groups, but differences between groups remain.

Gender			
Secondary pupils reported levels towards School	Boys	Girls	Did not disclose
Like school a lot or a bit	71 (68, 68, 65)	64 (61, 58, 53)	52 (43, 48, 43)
Feel a lot of or some pressure from schoolwork	44 (45, 44, 47)	62 (62, 63, 68)	74 (78, 76, 75)

Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

Family affluence			
Secondary pupils reported levels towards School	Low	Medium	High
Like school a lot or a bit	61 (59, 59, 52)	68 (65, 63, 59)	74 (66, 66, 65)
Feel a lot of or some pressure from schoolwork	57 (53, 57, 64)	54 (56, 54, 58)	49 (52, 56, 54)

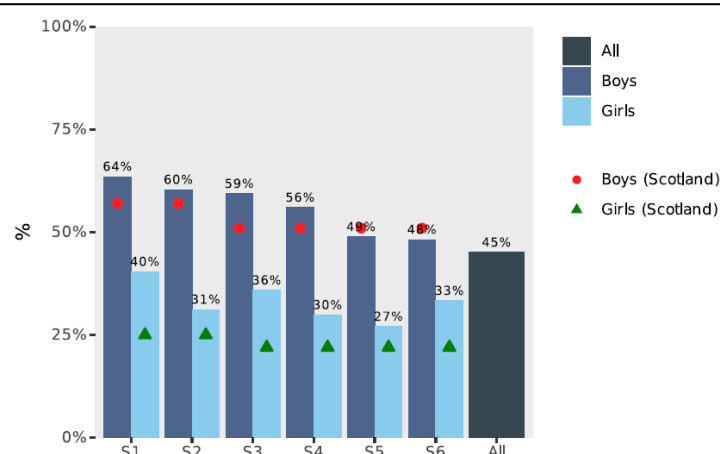
Bold=Dec '24, plain=Nov '23 & '22, *italics*=Mar '22

There is a marked difference of perspectives of school based on Family Affluence with a gap between the highest and lowest of 13% for Liking School, and 12% for Feeling Pressured by Schoolwork. Looking forward, the outcome of the on-going education reforms, most notably the Hayward Review, may impact positively here as less reliance is put on single high-stake exams which are known to disproportionately affect those living in areas of deprivation. Given that improvements have been seen in liking school measure, we hope that this will translate into feeling less pressurised by schoolwork in the future.

Self Confidence

The proportion of all S1-S6 pupils who express that they always or often feel confident has risen by ten percentage points from our baseline in March 2022 to **45%**. Our cohort of focus show an increase in self-reporting of always or often feel confident from 22% last year to **27%** this year.

Table Showing % of Secondary Pupils Who Feel Always or Often Confident



We can see from the graph, S1-S6 girls and boys expressing 'Always or Often Confident' above that we are ahead of the Shine reported Scottish Average for most stages, especially for girls. This is an improvement on our first 2 years especially and last year, particularly for our S3 & S5 cohorts. Our cohort of focus S5 girls have lower levels than their peers but show an increase of 5% over their reporting last year. There are clear differences between girls and boys reporting in this area, with boys averaging reporting twice as much confidence than girls overall, with some variations by year. However, this year we can see that boys in S5 and S6's reporting of self-confidence has dropped by 8-10%. This needs to be considered further as a new development and is perhaps reflective of some of the reporting around later male teens, their online experiences and the impact on them. Secondary leaders and their teams will look at their local data and continue to adapt and address through Personal Social Education curriculum and support.

Self-Harm

3622 (5949 last year) learners were asked if they had ever hurt themselves on purpose, **15%** (19%) said yes, which is 4% lower figure than last year. There is a difference between the responses from girls and boys with **12%** (16%) of boys stating they had hurt themselves on purpose and **17%** (20%) of girls. This gender difference is seen nationally, and for all ages of the Scottish Population.

14% (16%) a further reduction of 2% from last year of all learners from S1-S6 choose 'prefer not to say' with **7%** (10%) of boys selecting this option and **20%** (20%) of girls. There is a higher incidence of learners in the low affluence group who report having self-harmed at least once in their lifetime (19% compared to 11% for the high affluence group).

This data, although a further reduction in learners self-harming, these figures are higher than we would like. This area needs continued significant focus through partnership approaches to support young people. National and UK wide data pre-pandemic showed that self-harm was on the increase, with teenage girls and those identifying in the LGBTQA+ most at risk at using this coping strategy as a way of managing mental health. Of the 3622 learners who were asked, boys reported 13%, compared to girls 17%, and those who did not declare their

gender were over twice as likely to report having self-harmed at least once in their lifetime at 40%. The Scottish Government Self-Harming strategy aims to support understanding around Self-Harm behaviours and promotes early intervention around mental health indicators. National training in this area continues to be offered, and schools can request support from the Educational Psychology Service for support to explore this area.

Summary

We are delighted to see continued year-on-year improvements across the majority of the wellbeing picture in Aberdeen City compared to the previous three data sets. For example, we can observe a reduction in levels of pupils with low mood and at risk of depression, and a marked reduction in reported loneliness. We also see increases in terms of performance on items such as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which measure mental health difficulties, increased optimism, and continued higher reporting of self-confidence levels.

Where we have been provided with the SHINE National Scottish Average we can see we are either tracking alongside this or performing better than the reported Scottish average. We are seeing increased improvements against national comparators each year.

We are pleased to see improvements for our cohort of focus, our S5 girls (previously our S4 girls), our Covid generation. In almost all measures we can see improvements for this group, compared to their previous reporting, but also in some measures against previous S5 cohorts too. Focused work by secondary schools in this area has contributed to these improved outcomes.

We are still observing reporting of lower positivity towards school between primary and secondary, but we have seen higher reporting of learners liking school. Feelings of pressure regarding schoolwork remains higher than we would like and has increased for some groups. Work continues in these areas.

The small group (173 Secondary & 75 Primary) who 'Did Not Disclose' their gender are continuing to report poorer mental health outcomes in almost every area. This is seen particularly for the small Secondary group in relation to measures of happiness; loneliness; feelings about their future, and school; low mood and risk of depression, and lowest scores on all the Strengths and Difficulties areas (SDQ) which measure mental health difficulties.

The reporting of our learners in relation to positive aspects of mental health and wellbeing – Belief in Others, Belief in Self, and Emotional Competence all remain static. It is positive they have not reduced, but we know that investing in areas that promote good mental health can increase resilience and improve outcomes.

Girls continue to report poorer mental health and wellbeing than boys, given what we know about the teenage brain and the broader picture in society this is to be expected, but we have some areas of focus within this.

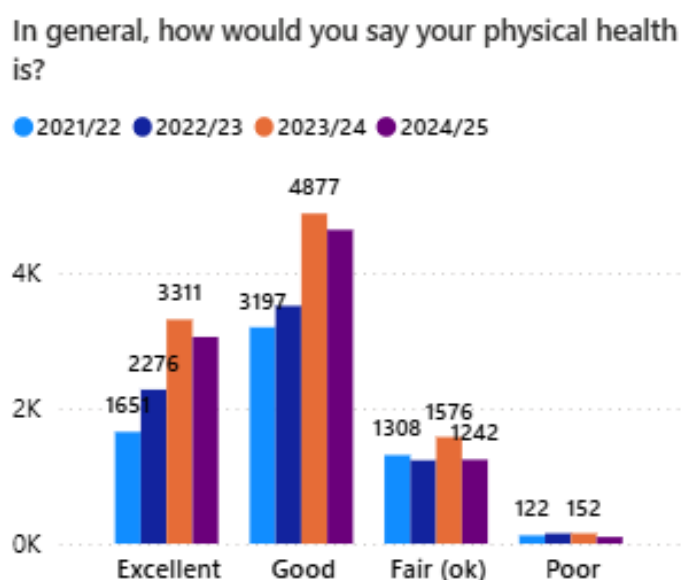
The gap between the Family Affluence Scale Groups (especially between the lowest and highest affluence) has not reduced. Individually we are seeing reductions in key areas of reporting, we like the national picture across Scotland, are struggling to 'close the poverty

related gap'. Wider community work and partnership will be key on addressing this longer-term area.

Physical Wellbeing Survey Results (P5-S6)

9031, compared to 9916, (7,172, 6278) last year, learners from P5-S6 completed the Physical wellbeing survey in December 2024. This is a slight decrease of 885 responses. This decrease follows previous years of continued increasing numbers of return and could be due to the later administration of the survey, which was to keep it aligned with the Shine Mental Health Survey (due to their platform changes). Similar to the Mental Wellbeing survey, learners were asked to identify how well they thought their general physical health was.

The majority of learners, **85%** (84%) continued to identify their general health as good or excellent, with a further 1% increase in this area on top of the 9% seen since November 2022. **14%** (a reduction of 2%) felt their general health was fair with a further **1%** of learners stating that their general health was poor. This shows an improvement across general physical wellbeing. This still presents as being more positive for primary pupils than secondary.



Physical Health and Body Image

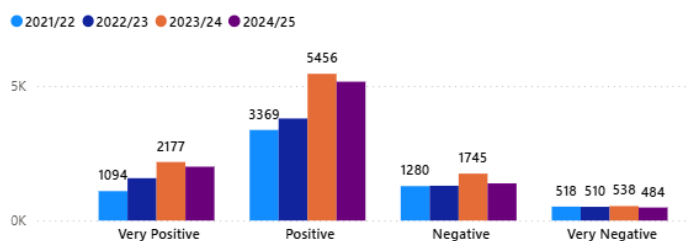
NHS physical activity guidelines suggest that on average children and young people between 5 – 18 should aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity, physical activity a day across the week. **60%** (61%) of learners who completed this survey meet the national health standards set above. This is a slight decline year on year. Primary pupils report this slightly higher than secondary, evidencing the need for us to continue focusing on increased physical activity at the early stages of pupil development to build good habits, and considering a range of options and opportunities at Secondary to make activities appealing and accessible.

79% (77%, 75%, 71%) of learners feel positive or very positive about their body image, showing a gradual increase of **8%** from November 2022. As with the mental wellbeing survey, however **21%** (23%, 25%, 29%) of learners reported that most of the time they felt negative or very negative about their body image. Out of the **484** pupils who stated they

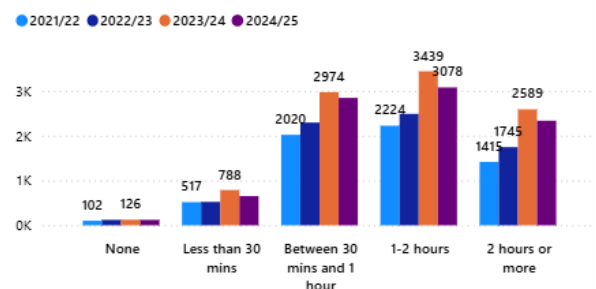
felt very negative about their body image, **175** of those pupils were in Primary School, this is an increase on last year and means we need to stay alert to building positive components of mental health, as featured above in the Shine mental health and wellbeing survey, to counteract negative self-image and esteem.

The Mental Health Foundation have reported that 35% of 13–19-year olds said their body image causes them to ‘often’ or ‘always’ worry. They also stated that 37% of young people said they felt upset, and 31% said they felt ashamed about their body image. This shows that nationally poor body image and worries about appearance are commonplace amongst young people and must remain a national as well as local focus for improvement and support.

How do you feel about your body image most of the time?



How much time do you spend doing physical activity on your most active school day? (this may include break time, PE, walking to school etc.)



Relationships with others

Throughout our lives, both the number and quality of relationships can impact our mental and physical wellbeing. The benefits of social interactions and good mental health are significant. Proven links include lower rates of anxiety and depression, higher self-esteem, more positive physical health outcomes, greater empathy, and more trusting and cooperative relationships.

Being available to listen to children and young people, is essential for supporting individual needs and understanding fully what is required. Learners were asked if they had an adult in their lives that listens to them about how they are feeling. **72%** (70%, 68%, 64%) positively shared that they always did, showing a further increase of 2%, an overall growth of **8%** from March 2022. **3%** also stated no, they did not have an adult in their life that listens to them about how they are feeling. This is a positive reduction of 2% from our baseline of 5% from March 2022.

94% (94%, 93%, 95%) of learners identified that overall, their relationships with other people were positive some, most, or all of the time. Continued focus on a sense of belonging and connection to schools, wellbeing, equality, equity and real inclusion will support us to continue to build a positive culture for our learners to thrive at home, school and in their local community.

The numbers of pupils who felt included across their life has also kept consistent since last year from our baseline in March '22, as seen in the table below:

	Always or often felt included				
	March '22	November '22	November '23	December '24	Difference (since March '22)
At home	81%	83%	85%	85%	+4%
In the classroom	75%	76%	78%	78%	+3%
At break / lunch times in school	82%	82%	84%	84%	+2%
Online	72%	73%	76%	75%	+2%

Relational Questions New for December 2024

Three new questions were added for the 2024 survey, as a way of exploring some areas of interest to the Education and Children's Services Committee. There is only one year's data at this point, and these areas will take on more significance as future data sets get added. The three new questions are:

- Are you aware of your school's relationship policy?
- I have a say about decisions in school which affect me through pupil voice opportunities
- How well do you feel any bullying situations are resolved in school?

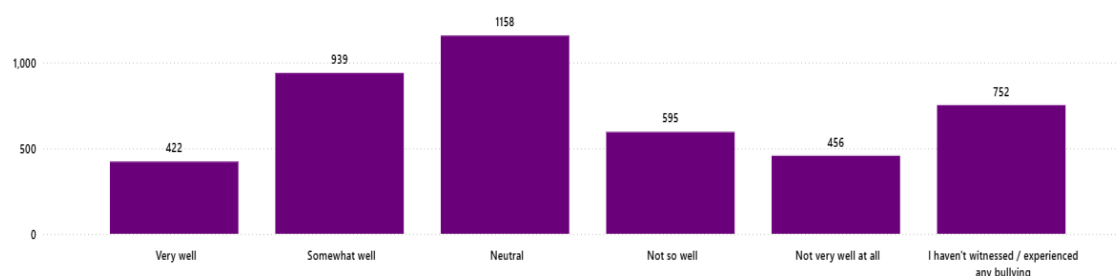
59% of responses answered they were 'aware of their school's relationship policy'. That means 41% did not know about it, or did not remember it. This is helpful information for schools to take forward for their community to consider.

Only **16%** of respondents answered that they *frequently* 'have a say about decisions in school which affect me through pupil voice'. **43%** of respondents answered they *occasionally* do, **24%** they *rarely* do, and **13%** responded *never*. With United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child now enshrined and enacted in Scots Law, it's important our learners feel they have a say in the decisions that matter to them. Autonomy and choices play an important role in our resilience and wellbeing. This data will be used by schools as part of their Standards and Quality Improvement Planning and reporting.

There were more positive responses in regards to 'how do you feel any bullying situations are resolved', the most frequent answer was Neutral, followed by somewhat well, then I haven't witnessed bullying, before the more negative responses of not so well, not very well at all; the lowest chosen response was very well. Again, this is useful data for schools to use in planning for their learners – responding to and communicating with them.

How well do you feel any bullying situations are resolved in school?

2024/25



Individual schools will take their local data forward and can seek support from the Educational Psychology Service in engaging learners meaningfully.

Feeling Safe

Learners were asked to consider how safe they felt within various environments. Across stages and year groups, the majority of learners reported that they felt safe always or most of the time in their communities, at home and in school, however, there remains a small percentage of learners who feel that they rarely or never feel safe in these environments. We will continue to work with the Health & Wellbeing Youth Group; we will explore this further at a school community level to understand this better and address this both at local level and city wide. Where appropriate we will involve the Community Planning Partnership and other partners.

It is positive that learners are reporting increased levels of *feeling safe in school*, with an increase to **82%**, from a baseline of 79% in 2022.

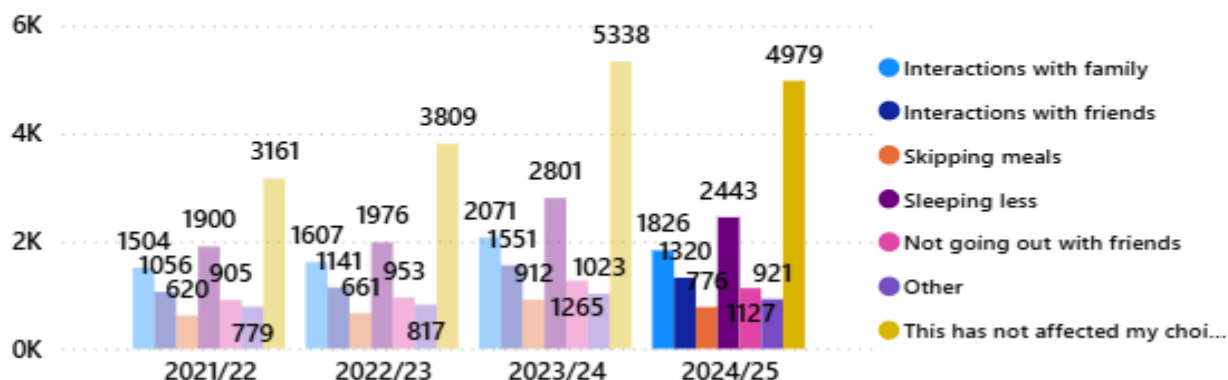
	Feeling safe always or most of the time				
	March 22	November 22	November 23	December 24	Difference (since March 22)
In the community	86%	87%	88%	88%	+1%
At home	96%	96%	97%	97%	+1%
At School	79%	81%	80%	82%	+3%
Online	76%	76%	79%	80%	+4%

Sleep

The NHS advises that teenagers between the age of 13-18 should have a recommended 8 hours sleep. Research into Teenage brain development recommends instead 10+ hours sleep for 12+ year olds due to the complex brain processes they are undertaking at this stage in their development. Learners were asked about their usual sleep patterns and the number of hours they slept the night before completion of the survey. **8%** (8%) of learners again reported that they had 5 hours sleep or less with **2%** (2%) learners again saying that they had less than 3 hours sleep. **236** (109, 187, 257) Primary aged pupils reported that they usually went to bed after midnight, this shows a sudden increase of 127 pupils. This increase is in contrast as the previous years have held a pattern of continuing reduction from the baseline number of 257. This is an area that our partners who work with parents in Education and Lifelong Learning can explore, alongside schools, and the Stronger Families Series of parental events.

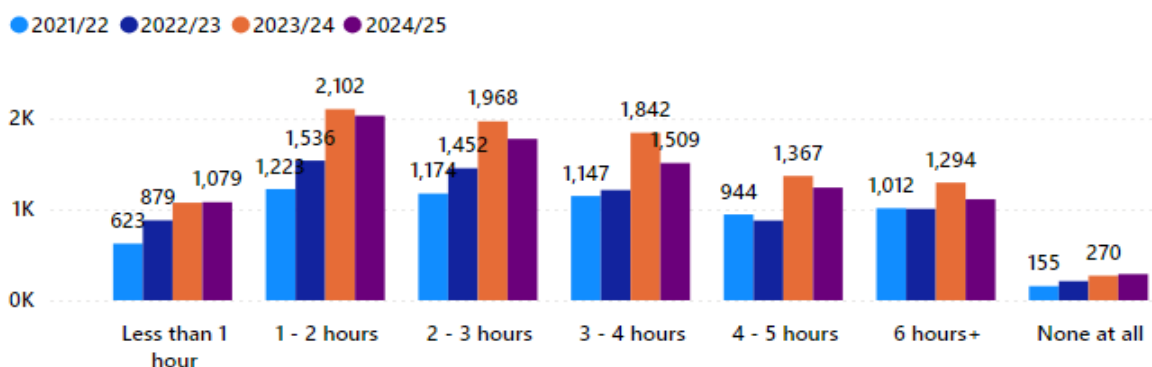
The most popular time of going to sleep for P5-P7 pupils is shared equally between before 9pm and between 9pm and 10pm. Secondary pupils selecting between 10pm and 11pm. This is a change from last year's 11pm-midnight, which is encouraging. We will continue to work with parents through our Stronger Families Series to support positive choices around sleep routines and sleep diet.

Has technology affected any of the choices you make on a daily basis?



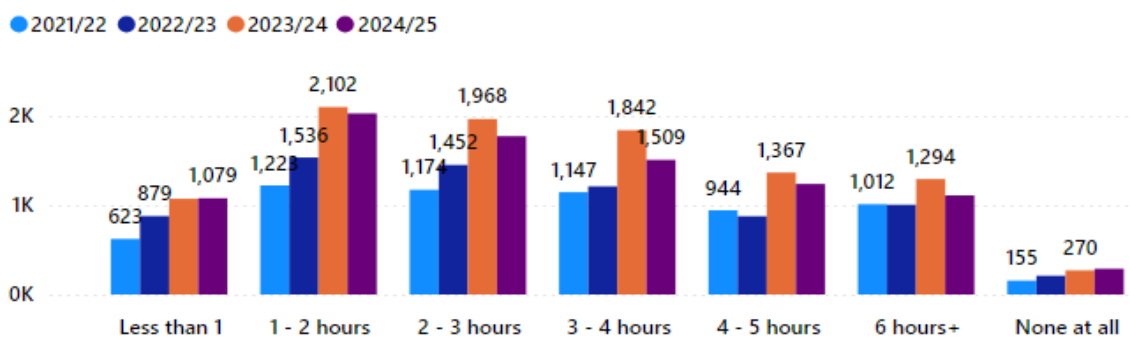
27% (28%, 27%, 30%) of learners feel that technology has affected the choices that they make regarding sleep, showing a further reduction of 1% leading to a 3% since March 2022.

Weekdays (Mon-Fri)



The figure for learners reporting that on school days they can spend more than 3 hours on technology during free time has remained static. **45%** (45%) learners reported that on school days they can spend more than 3 hours on technology during free time. **13%** reported they spend more than 6 hours per day.

Weekdays (Mon-Fri)



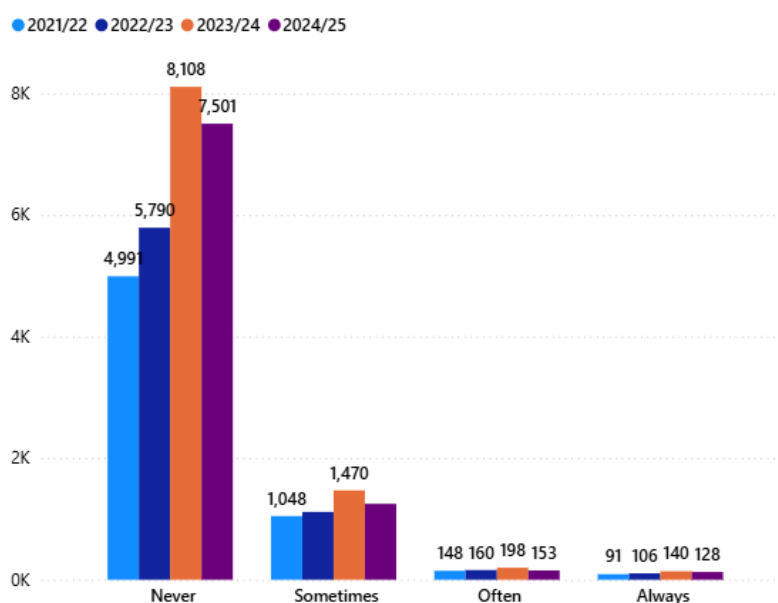
These figures increase further at the weekend. **65%** (65%) report 3+ hours at the weekend with **28%** (28%) continuing to state that they spend more than 6 hours on technology at this time. The increase is seen solely through increased number of learners reporting they spend 6+ hours at the weekend. 946 of these are Primary stage learners. HBSC (Health Behaviour in School Aged Children) data for Scotland shows the average of *continuous social media use throughout the day*, this is at 34% for 11-year-olds, and 48% for over 13's. We can see this is not a like-for-like measure but gives some insight into the national picture. This continues to be a high figure in terms of time spent on technology, consideration should be given for encouraging healthy choices for learners, and their families. Research is ongoing nationally around healthy technology diet, and benefits and risks to learners of school ages in spending their time online, whether on social media or gaming. We will share and adapt our approaches when this research is available. Continued work around the use of technology will be delivered through school curriculum and wellbeing sessions; the Stronger Families series; communications with families; and school and/or Associated School Group level events to support and develop practice in this area.

Food and Drink

Establishing good eating habits is vitally important to support positive weight management and general good physical health. We have seen a continued increase of learners eating breakfast daily during the school week, that has plateaued this year to remain at **62%** (62%, 61%, 59%). Only **49%** (51%) of secondary pupils eat breakfast daily on a school day with 74% (75%) of primary pupils having breakfast before going to school. There was a variance in the number of learners who reported starting the day with breakfast on school days versus weekends with 75% (74%) eating breakfast daily at the weekend. 16% (16%) of all respondents continue to regularly attend school with no breakfast.

There are times when children and young people do not have access to sufficient food to meet their nutritional needs. The continued impacts of the cost of living for all could further impact this. **3%, 238** (3%, 281) learners who completed the survey, reported that they often or always went to bed hungry because there was not enough food at home. This has remained a static percentage. Continued review of this data at a local level will help us identify where food parcels, foodbanks, breakfast clubs and other such resources could help us address this and target our support to ensure all learners have enough food.

Some children and young people go to school or to bed hungry because there is not enough food in the house. Does this happen to you?



Substance Use / Misuse

Smoking

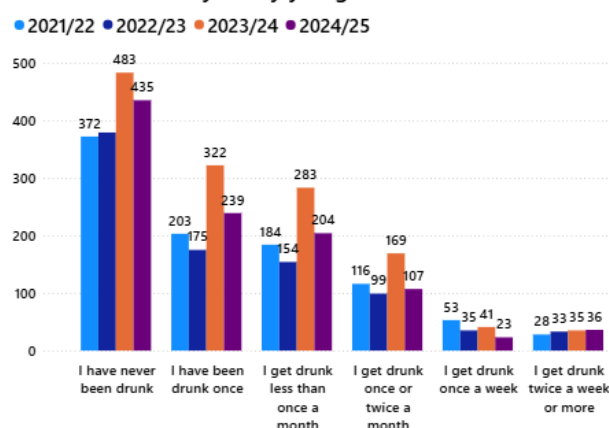
6%, 556, (8%, 771 6.7%, 473, 8% 477) of learners reported that they have tried smoking cigarettes or e-cigarettes. This is a reduction overall from our baseline percentage from March 2022. **7%** (30) learners reported smoking between 1-20 cigarettes a week and **28%** (25) learners reported smoking more than 20 a week.

The number of young people reporting that they use e-cigarettes or vapes was **1.4%, 128** (2.4%, 235) reporting that they use e-cigarettes or vapes once a week or more. This is a slight decrease in reported vaping. It is encouraging to see this reduction, and we hope that the work being carried out in this area is helping educate learners to make informed health choices in relation to smoking and vaping. We will continue to raise awareness across school communities and continue to work with partners to ensure vaping and smoking are being addressed and schools are supported to manage this.

Alcohol

Learners were asked about alcohol consumption, regularity and type of alcoholic drinks consumed. **88%, 7987** (87%, 8582 88%, 6137; 84.64%, 5242) learners stated that they had never had a drink of alcohol. Of those that answered that they had tried alcohol (which was 1044 learners or 12%) **59%** (76, 62, 80) of learners shared they get drunk more than once a week. This figure is an encouraging reduction of **17%** on previous years reporting. The small group that said they

How often would you say you get drunk?

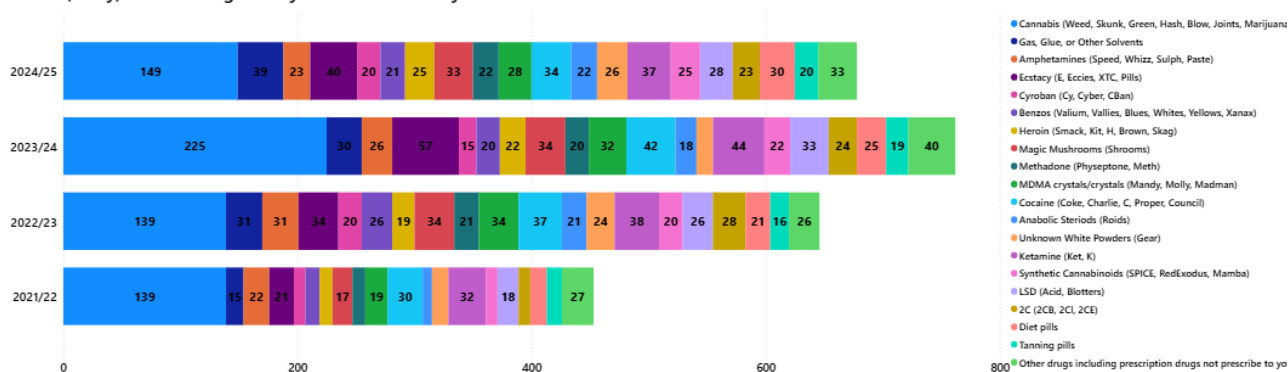


drank, highlighted Spirits, Alcopops, and Cider as those most often selected for regular consumption.

Drugs

98%, 8843 (97%, 9641) learners reported that they had never taken drugs. **2%, 188** (3%, 275) of our learners reported that they have taken illegal drugs, drugs formerly known as legal highs, solvents, or prescription drugs that were not prescribed for them. Of the learners who reported taking drugs (**2%, 188** learners), further questions revealed that **26** (43) also reported that they use drugs daily. This is an almost 50% reduction on the previous year. The largest number of responses reported, linked to cannabis, followed by Ecstasy, solvents, Ketamine, prescription medicines and Cocaine. Ecstasy use this year seems to have reduced further in usage, compared to the uptick reported last year. “Lifestyle drugs” seem to be on the rise, with very small increases; these include steroids, and diet and tanning pills.

Which (if any) of these drugs have you used in the last year?



Summary:

- Although we saw a higher number of returns this year than in our first 2 data sets, we saw a decrease in responses compared to last year. Consideration should be given to moving the survey data collection point to facilitate schools' administration of the surveys.
- New questions have been added this year, which help explore some of the factors that contribute to good health and wellbeing and explore some of the functions and duties on schools with the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Areas of improvement have been observed in more learners reporting they are continuing to:
 - Sleep* more than they were previously and for more than 5 hours a night
 - Feel *safer* across all aspects of their life, including at School
 - Feel more *included* across all aspects of their life
 - Have increased overall *good health*
 - Have overall increased positive feelings about *body image*
 - smoking or using *vapes* in lower numbers

- Feel *listened to* by those in their life
- Are having *earlier bedtimes*
- Areas requiring further consideration and continued support, including engaging with community partners, with more learners reporting:
 - dissatisfaction with their body image within primary stage learners (although there was a reduction overall)
 - *not eating breakfast* daily at a continuing increased level of 51% within secondary stage
 - Their usage of *alcohol* has only slightly reduced
 - An increase in lifestyle drugs, such as tanning and diet pills, and steroids that have not been prescribed to them. But there is a *slightly* lower number that have *tried illegal substances* overall.
 - No reduction in the number of learners who spend more than 3 hours per day using *online technology*
 - Being impacted by *online technology* affecting the *choices* that they make, relating to and *impacting their sleep* still at high figures, with a 1% reduction this year

Summary of Overall Next Steps

Through the LOIP and associated Children's Services Plan we will link with the Mental Health Collaborative to review any identified trends and consider how to address these.

We need to give some consideration to changing the month of data collection, moving to December this year could have negatively impacted the numbers of returns. Shine offers a September survey, which given it's point in the new academic year is worth trialling to see if this improves data collection and grants time for schools to use the data within the school year.

Aberdeen City Council continues its focus on poverty reduction. This is important as the poverty related gap in relation to almost all mental and physical health and wellbeing outcomes exists. We are of course pleased to see improvements in lowering the numbers associated with the different affluence groups or SIMD but are mindful that the poverty gap is not reducing, even if overall numbers are.

Work continues in regard to the area of physical appearance. This is to build upon the gains observed in this year's data. We will need to consider carefully our support for girls in particular, and those who did not disclose their gender identity, who have shown greater challenges with regards to mental health. We know that community and parenting approaches are needed alongside school level work.

It will be important to monitor primary into early secondary stage boys to see if some data this year was the beginning of a trend relating to male confidence, or just some outliers within the data sets.

We will continue to promote healthy choices and build confidence in our young people and parents and carers, to support good decisions in areas such as sleep, exams, understanding of teenage development, use of technology and misuse of substances. Continued community approaches, making best use of the combined opportunities of the recently expanded Education and Lifelong Service to allow for better collaboration and joined-up approaches.

We will continue to monitor trends carefully and report on a yearly basis to ensure that we are targeting the right supports in the right areas. Individual schools and Associated Secondary Groups will continue to use their specialist knowledge of their contexts alongside this data to ensure autonomous and appropriate responses. Existing supports will continue and be adapted based on feedback on outcomes and areas arising in this report.