

Children and Young People's Survey Report

Being Healthy - December 2019



Healthwatch Worcestershire gathers feedback about local health and care services and makes recommendations to those who run them about how they could be improved from the patient, service user and carer perspective.

In the **NHS Long Term Plan** there is a commitment to improving people's health through prevention and encouraging people to live healthy lives. It stresses the importance of giving everyone a healthy start in life. There are currently several initiatives and campaigns, such as Change4Life, to increase children and young people's understanding of healthy eating and the importance of regular exercise. There has also been an increased awareness in recent years about the need to promote understanding and support for children and young people around mental health and emotional wellbeing.

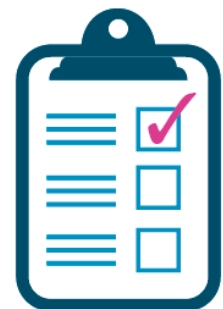
We wanted to know what children thought could help them to live a healthier life and the most effective ways to help them understand more about being healthy.

453 children and young people between the ages of 4 and 18 completed our survey as part of our summer engagement activities in 2019.

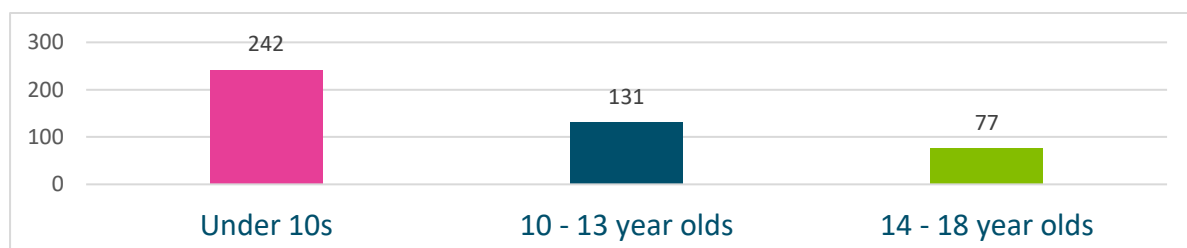
- 388 were completed at engagement events we have attended across Worcestershire, including:

Sports Partnership Worcestershire School Games, Fortis Summer Fun Days, Worcester Community Trust Family Day and Eid Party, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust Community Days, DY10 Big Picnic, Play Day in Lickhill Park, Spring into Summer in Springfield Park in Kidderminster, Worcester Show and Worcestershire Pride.

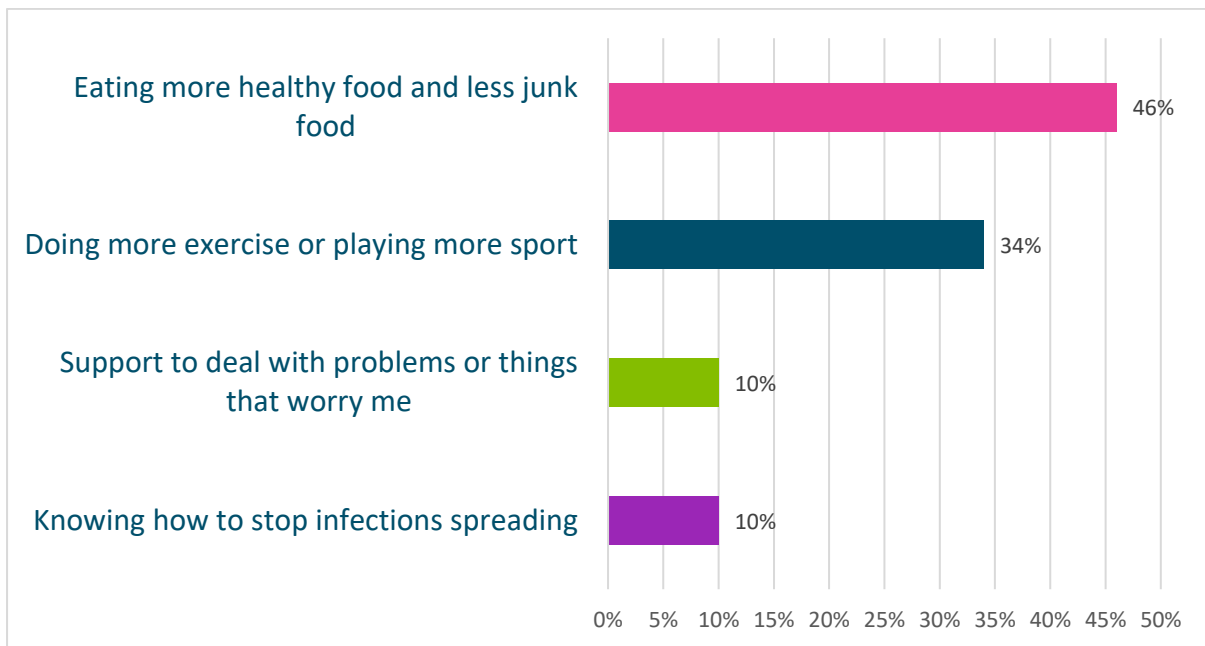
- 65 surveys were completed by students at Worcester Sixth Form College and Kidderminster College.



Ages of children and young people who took part



What is important to help you have a healthy life?

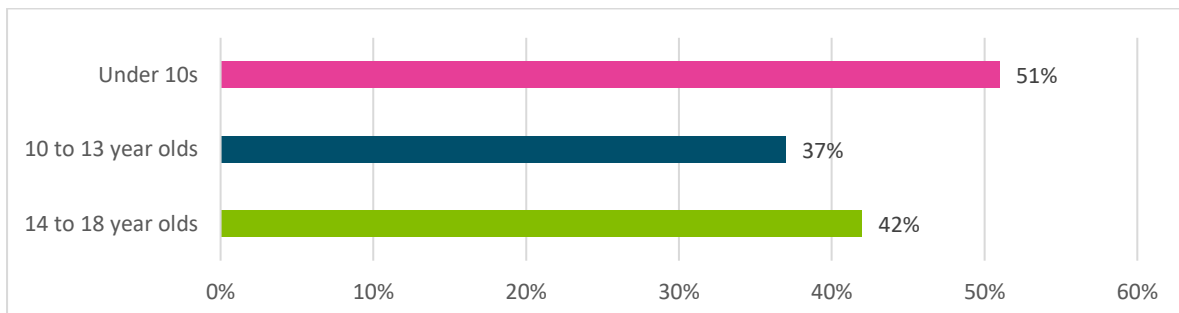


Responses suggest that eating more healthy food and less junk food was seen as the most important thing overall to help have a healthy life, as nearly half of the children and young people (46%) we spoke to chose this response.

This was followed by doing more exercise and playing more sport (34%). Support to deal with problems and knowing how to stop infections spreading were both chosen by 10% of respondents.

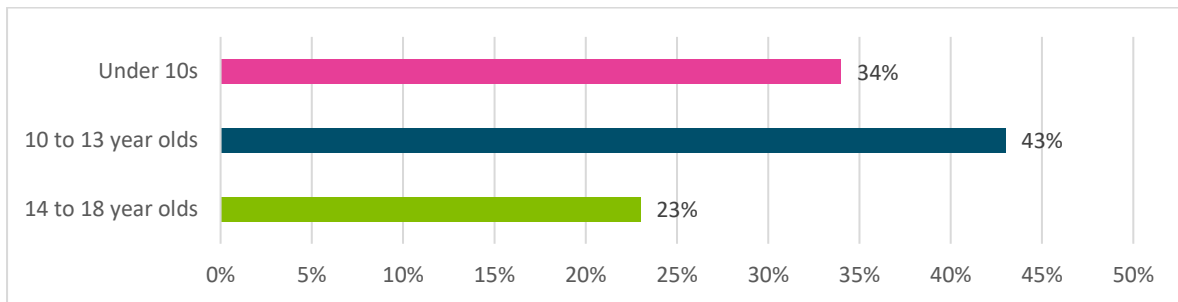
Variation across age groups

Eating more healthy food and less junk food



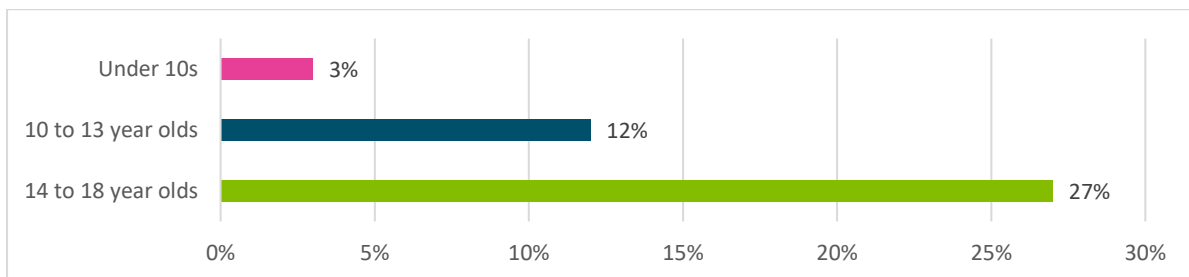
Healthy eating was most popular choice amongst younger children and the teenagers. The under 10s especially, with over half of them thinking this was most important.

Doing more exercise or playing more sport



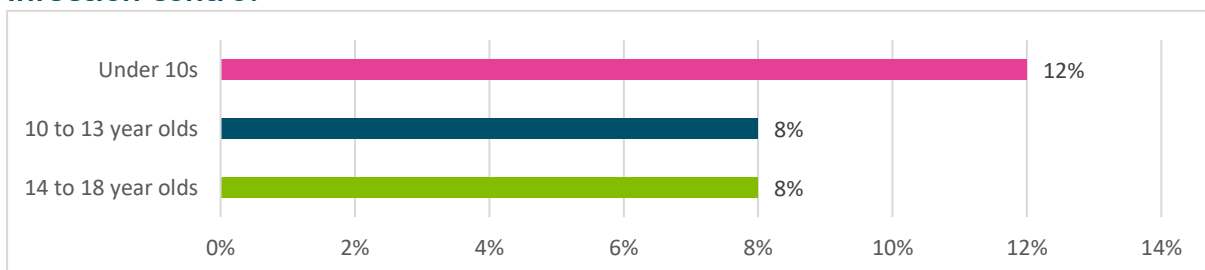
Exercise was the most popular choice for the 10 to 13 year olds. This may mean that campaigns and initiatives to increase participation in exercise and sport are currently more targeted at this age group and that there may be a need for an increased focus on encouraging older children and young people to participate in more exercise.

Support to deal with problems or things that worry me



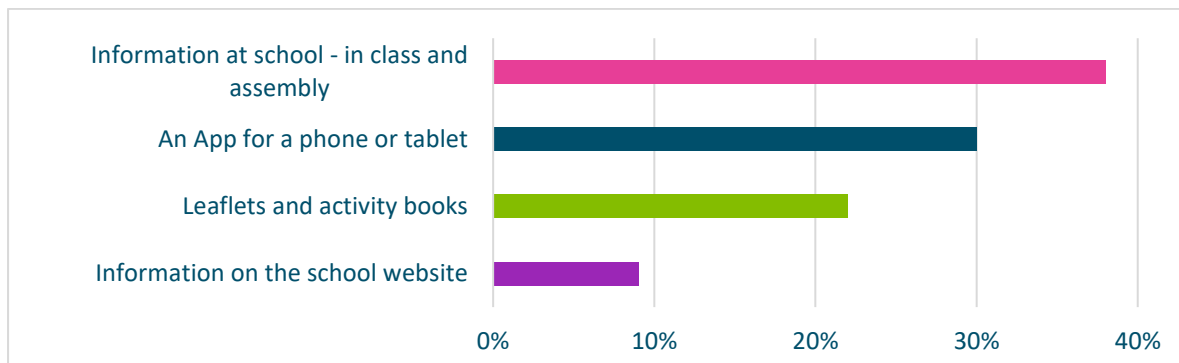
Older children and teenagers were more likely to select emotional wellbeing as being more important for their health than younger children. It could be that they are more likely to experience issues around emotional wellbeing. However, despite a small number of under 10s choosing this, the fact that 7 of them thought that it would help them to be healthier shows that it can still be an issue for younger children. Responses could also indicate it would be helpful to increase awareness amongst younger children about the importance of emotional wellbeing.

Infection control



The similar response rate across the ages suggests that all age groups could benefit from gaining more understanding about infection control and hygiene. The slight increase in responses from younger children suggests this may be something emphasised more in primary and first schools.

What would help you to understand more about how to be healthy?



Overall, being given information in school, either in class or assembly was seen as being the most helpful way to gain more of an understanding about being healthy. The only age variation was that the age 14 to 18 category had a higher number of responses for an app than information in school.

Of those who thought an app would be most helpful, more of the under 10s and the 10 to 13 year olds would prefer a game app, while the 14 to 18 year olds more frequently chose an information app.

Alternative ideas for things that would help children and young people to understand more about how to be healthy included: a television programme about how to be healthy, having speakers coming into school to share their experiences, a healthy living event, learning more about it at home and something that involved having fun and learning at the same time.

Points for consideration

- Children and young people, in particular the younger children have an awareness that what they eat is an important part of being healthy.
- Many children and young people are also aware of the benefits of exercise, although further promotion of this amongst teenagers could be beneficial.
- Older children and young people are more likely to recognise the importance of having support for emotional wellbeing on their overall health. It could be useful to increase awareness of this amongst younger children.
- It could be valuable to increase awareness and understanding amongst children and young people about how to stop infections spreading.
- Children and young people think that having information face-to-face, such as in class or assembly at school is the most effective way of providing understanding.
- Apps for phones and tablets could help children and young people to learn more about being healthy. These need to be age appropriate, with more focus on game apps for younger children and information apps for older children and young people.