

The School Health Research Network (SHRN)

A policy, practice and academic partnership supporting children's and young people's health and well-being in primary and secondary schools across Wales.

An outline for primary schools



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1.

Who we are

Since 2013, The School Health Research Network (SHRN) has brought together schools in Wales with academic researchers, policymakers and practitioners from health, education, and social care to promote evidence informed approaches to improving children's and young people's health and well-being in school settings.

SHRN, has become a unique and invaluable part of the education health and well-being infrastructure in Wales, and what's more- it is of no cost to state maintained primary and secondary schools.

Our strategic partnership with Public Health Wales and integration with The Welsh Network of Health and Well-being Promoting Schools (WNHWPS), along with substantive and ongoing investment from Welsh Government, has enabled SHRN to grow into a national network of research and evaluation.

SHRN is cited in over thirty Welsh Government policies and strategies as providing support for the delivery and evaluation of health and well-being policy agendas and interventions. These include the *Whole-School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being (2021)* and Estyn's *Healthy and Happy Report (2019)*.

'Our positive Estyn report is down to the use of SHRN data and how we are using it to improve our school.'



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What we do

SHRN's core aims are to improve children's and young people's health and well-being by:

Providing robust and bespoke health and well-being data for schools, regional and national stakeholders to enable data-driven self-evaluation and action planning across both health and education.

Providing a national infrastructure, supported by Welsh Government and Public Health Wales, to work with policymakers and practitioners from health, education, and social care to co-produce high quality school-based health and well-being research.



Generating new research evidence on how best to improve children's and young people's health and well-being in the school setting by facilitating the co-production and evaluation of whole school interventions such as the Whole-School Approach to Emotional and Mental well-being and the Curriculum for Wales.

Facilitating the translation of school health and well-being research evidence into practice, helping schools, and those who support them, to understand health research evidence and how it can be used for health and well-being improvement.

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Our core elements at a glance

1. The SHRN Student Health and Well-being Survey

Primary and secondary schools in our network complete a bilingual, electronic student health and well-being survey every two years. The aim of the survey is to provide schools with high-quality and accessible data on the health and well-being of their learners.

Our student health and well-being survey asks children in year groups 3-6, and young people in year groups 7-13 about various aspects of their health and well-being including physical activity, nutrition, and school life. It also includes other key topics that are associated with good overall health and well-being, such as sleep and school connectedness.

2. The SHRN School Environment Questionnaire (SEQ)

The SHRN School Environment Questionnaire is completed by a member of the School Leadership Team every two years at the same time as The SHRN Student Health and Well-being Survey is administered. It allows relationships between school policies and practices (e.g. school leadership; school ethos; school environment; curriculum learning; family and community engagement) and learner health outcomes to be investigated. Used in combination with The SHRN Student Health and Well-being Survey, it provides schools with a unique opportunity to assess the health and well-being of learners in the context of their own school policies and practices.



SEQ data is used by schools as an auditing mechanism to prepare for and evidence practice for Estyn school inspections.



SHRN to produce lay summaries and supporting resources outlining 'what works' for school practice.



SHRN and Public Health Wales to align with the new Minimum Standards for WNHWPS.



SHRN to support research into various aspects of the school environment and highlight how schools can influence learners' health and well-being.

3. SHRN data and supporting resources

SHRN helps schools to understand health research evidence and how it can be used for health improvement. SHRN works closely with Public Health Wales and WNHWPS to provide evidence-informed resources. Resources include webinars and research briefings to engage with and support all members of the school community to better understand and meet the health and well-being needs of their learners.

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SHRN 2024: A timeline for primary schools

June-July
2024

Survey recruitment:

Primary Schools register to take part in The SHRN Student Health and Well-being Survey and The SHRN School Environment Questionnaire (SEQ).

September -
December
2024

Data collection:

Registered primary schools:

- Receive their SHRN survey support pack.
- Send information to parents and carers.
- Administer the student survey to their learners.
- Complete The SHRN School Environment Questionnaire (SEQ).

April
2025

Report dissemination:

- Primary schools receive their bespoke School Student Health and Well-being Data Report.
- SEQ report available on our website.

'Being a member of SHRN gives our school, access to up-to-date and relevant research, support and information.'

5.

Our role in the Curriculum for Wales Health and Well-being Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs), and the Whole-school Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being (WSA)

SHRN plays a significant role in the development and delivery of the Curriculum for Wales Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience, as well as the planning, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the Whole-School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being.

SHRN is now a central piece of our school's self-evaluation process. It allows us to measure progress in aspects of our approach to the health and well-being of our learners.

In addition, we can now compare our feedback against other schools across Wales which helps us hold the mirror up to our practice and provision.'

Additionally, SHRN represents an important means by which learners can influence the vision and delivery of services and practice which affect their well-being, attainment, and future life chances.

By embedding pupil voice into school policies, schools can introduce a wide range of well-being initiatives from enhanced extracurricular activities, better food provision, to school connectedness and emotional support.



6.

Why should your primary school sign up to SHRN?

SHRN provides...



A data strategy for self-evaluation and school improvement

School level reports enable schools to target their response and prioritise their learners' well-being.

An evidence-based framework that enables schools to measure objectively and apply data universally to all. SHRN uses validated questions which gives confidence in the data gathered, enables progress to be tracked across survey waves and monitoring across learner year groups.

Monitoring of the health, education, and school experience of small and/or vulnerable population subgroups, e.g. care experienced children and young people, young carers, and children and young people of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller heritage.



Professional development and networking

Rich opportunities for inspiring and purposeful collaboration with other like-minded schools.

Support for school cluster approaches enabling action planning, evaluation, and feedback. Working across childhood and adolescence to better understand and support events such as transition to secondary school.

Networks which engage with practitioners, leaders, researchers, and policymakers for schools to share experiences, disseminate research findings and learn together.

Evidence-informed resources, including webinars and research briefings that engage with and support all members of the school community.



Translation of school health and well-being research evidence into practice

Aggregated and anonymised reports to enable data sharing and discussions with key stakeholders in the school community. It also encourages learners to be more honest with their answers as they cannot be identified.

Integration with WNHWS informs work at national, regional, and local levels.

Key data for Public Health Wales to identify what works to improve health and well-being in schools.

SHRN supports...



The Whole-school Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being and The Curriculum for Wales

A data led practice infrastructure to positively influence children's health and well-being within the whole-school approach. Schools who use their learner and environment data to evidence informed practice have been routinely praised by Estyn.

A targeted approach to Personal and Social Education (PSE) curriculum review and development as the data can be viewed according to year group and genders.



School culture and development

Co-production and the evaluation of whole-school interventions, providing data that can help to ensure pupil voice is heard, evidenced and factored into school planning.

Support cultures of reassurance and empathy. where learners can be reassured that they are not alone in the way they feel and/or appreciate that others feel differently to them and may require support.

Consent and safeguarding. Our research has been reviewed and approved by Cardiff University Ethics Committee.

Encouragement of confident discussions about well-being priorities at all levels of the school community.

'Being a member of SHRN gives access to up-to-date and relevant research, support, and information.'

7.

Join us

Between 2022-23 over 32,500 learners from 354 primary schools across Wales took part in our pilot health and well-being survey on topics such as healthy eating and physical activity, electronic device use and school transition.

In June 2024, we are inviting all primary schools in Wales to become part of the largest and most active health and well-being network of schools in the country. They will join the 100% of maintained secondary schools already recruited to the network.

SHRN offers primary schools rich opportunities for inspiring and purposeful collaboration with other like-minded schools, whilst also giving them the unique

opportunity to generate their own school level data to inform their health and well-being plans and implement a wide range of improvements in their school. Our staff lead a diverse array of networks which engage with practitioners, leaders, researchers, and policymakers. Such networks provide opportunities for everyone to share their experiences, disseminate research findings and learn together.

In turn, our regional and national partners and collaborators use SHRN data to support schools and leverage investment into school communities, generating targeted opportunities for children and young people by introducing activities and initiatives to boost their health and well-being.

If you represent a primary school in Wales, and you would like to find out more about becoming a member of SHRN or completing the 2024 data collection, please email primarySHRN@cardiff.ac.uk



Download these reports



Download a copy of our primary school exemplar report.



Download key findings from The SHRN Student Health and Well-being Survey in Primary Schools 2022-23.

8.

Over a decade of excellence- our success stories and impact


We have led the way in facilitating the translation of school health and well-being research evidence into practice. We work with schools to ensure they have information and support to make a real difference to the health and well-being of their learners.

Schools from across Wales have embedded SHRN data into their school development plans, and implemented a range of improvements and health and well-being initiatives, including:

- Offering a greater variety of extracurricular activities to boost physical activity.
- Enhancing the nutritional value of food provision.
- Strengthening and improving school connectedness. and more!

We are extremely proud of the work we do and our achievements.

Visit shrn.org.uk to read about school experiences about taking part in SHRN, and how their survey results enabled them to celebrate their strengths and work on challenges.



'SHRN has helped us to celebrate our many successes as well as to introduce targeted interventions where they are most needed.'

'SHRN has helped us educate our learners and staff to make healthy and informed lifestyle choices that will have far reaching impacts on their lifelong health and well-being.'

