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NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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**Health and Well-being in the  
1990s - a Study of Young  
People's Attitudes and  
Behaviour in the London  
Borough of Newham**

**Summary**

**1995**

**Health and Well-being in the  
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Behaviour in the London  
Borough of Newham**

**Sandra Jowett**

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**1995**

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## **Dedication**

This is dedicated to the late Margaret Allsop, Consultant Community Paediatrician, Newham Healthcare, whose devotion and hard work made this study possible. She was fully committed to the needs and well-being of the children and young people in Newham. We hope to achieve the standard set by her in her memory.

## **Acknowledgements**

This work could not have been completed without the support and assistance of many individuals. Particular thanks are due to the headteachers, staff and students in the four participating schools. The students tackled the questionnaires with enthusiasm and showed a serious commitment to the issues covered. Staff were generous with their time in arranging our access to students. I am grateful to Juliet Burley, David Harris, Mary Hawkes, Shelly Pathak, Ray Sumner and James Tooley for working with the young people as they completed the questionnaires.

The Advisory Group were involved throughout and I appreciated their insights and suggestions.

I am indebted to my colleagues Wendy Keys and Lesley Kendall (the project statistician) for their valuable support and for their very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this report. Neil Rubra's assistance with the early statistical work was appreciated. David Upton's editorial skills were instrumental in producing this report, which was typed with superb efficiency by Alison Bannerman. Some of the questions, particularly those relating to health, drew on the work of John Balding and his colleagues from the HEA Schools Health Education Unit at the University of Exeter.

## **Advisory Group**

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## **Foreword**

In Newham our children and young people are one of our most important assets. Their health, education and development are central to many of the services that each of our authorities provides.

This research provides valuable information to all those planning the future of services for children and young people in education, health and social services. It gives a clear view of some of the most important concerns for young people today as well as showing where current services can be improved.

We would like to thank all those involved in the research, particularly Sandra Jowett from the National Foundation for Educational Research, the schools and lastly the young people who took the time to make their voices heard.

Ian Harrison  
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## **BACKGROUND**

### **Rationale for the research**

The research reported here arose from the concerns of professionals from various sectors of service provision about the needs of young people in Newham and the best way to provide for them. It was felt that the establishment of a database on what was important or worrying to these young people would enable services to be more responsive and would help to direct resources more efficiently and effectively. Staff in healthcare, education and social services were keen to obtain such data and incorporate them into their future planning and review. To this end, information was collected by questionnaire from students in Years 8 and 10 in a sample of secondary schools. The research was funded jointly by Newham Social Services and City Challenge (a Government initiative which targeted areas for extra resourcing and development), and was informed and guided by an Advisory Group representing the various professional groups. This summary describes the research and presents the findings and their implications. A full report detailing the results is available from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

### **The issues covered**

The young people were asked to provide information on a range of topics concerning their health and well-being. Some of these areas mirrored those in the Government's Health of the Nation document (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1991), which emphasised that there was a need 'for people to change their behaviour — whether on smoking, alcohol consumption, exercise, diet, avoidance of accidents and, with AIDS, general behaviour'. Having explained that 'we live in an age where many of those main causes of premature death and unnecessary disease are related to how we live our lives', the report proclaimed that 'education is the key' to promoting change.

More specifically, the Government's report emphasised the need to lower the number of young people who start to smoke or become pregnant before the age of 16 and to provide education, advice and information about the need for a healthy balanced diet as part of a healthy life style. The report commended 'appropriate physical activity or exercise' which 'like food or sleep is a necessity for healthy being' and sought to promote healthy lifestyles for young people, preventing the use of alcohol and other drugs and reducing the number of new cases of HIV and AIDS and other diseases which can be sexually transmitted. The Health Education Authority's (1992) work with 16- to 19-year-olds reinforced the importance of such work with young people reporting that 'substantial numbers of young adults are smoking regularly, drinking to excess and eating unhealthy

foods. In addition, significant numbers are experimenting with drugs and failing to practise safer sex.'

Given the range of interests in the research and the tremendous scope in terms of issues that **could** be covered, a major challenge for the questionnaire design was to produce a document of usable length. The questionnaire was to be administered across the ability range of students and, although an hour was generally available for completion, the document needed to be accessible even to those young people who had difficulties with the written word. The questionnaire drew upon other relevant studies, notably Keys and Fernandes (1993) for school issues and Balding (1994) for items relating to health.

The 16-page questionnaire covered five main areas:

*School life*

attitudes to school, discipline, truancy, parental views and homework.

*Aspirations*

plans after school-leaving, employment, continuing education, personal relationships.

*Health*

exercise, food, weight, smoking, alcohol, drugs, sex education.

*Out-of-school time*

leisure, finances, current employment (paid and unpaid).

*Concerns and support services*

self-esteem, perspectives on racism, police, sexuality, problems encountered and who to turn to, undisclosed problems, information requests.

The final section of the questionnaire requested background data on those completing it — male/female, Year 8/Year 10, ethnic origin, religious affiliation, parents' newspaper readership, language spoken at home and family structure.

The questionnaire was piloted in two secondary schools outside Newham, selected because the ethnic mix and levels of achievement in public examinations of their students matched those in the four sample schools. Several questions were amended as a result of the pilot study.

### **The sample**

Four secondary schools were selected for the research, three of them from the City Challenge area. (There are 14 secondary schools in Newham, one of which has changed to grant-maintained status.) It was decided that students in Years 8 (aged 12-13) and Year 10 (aged 14-15) would be included in the work, so that comparisons could be made across the age range. Data were collected by questionnaires completed in school and **all** Year 8 and Year 10 students attending school on the day of administration were included. A total of 1160 students took part in the research. Seventy per cent were female and 30 per cent male (given that two of the schools only took female students). Fifty-three per cent were from Year 8 and 47 per cent from Year 10. With regard to ethnic origin, 37 per cent were classified as White, 22 per cent as Black, 30 per cent as Asian and 11 per cent as of Mixed origin (or other). Young women classified as Black or Mixed/Other were slightly over-represented in the study compared with those who were White or Asian.

### **Administering the questionnaire**

Administrators, employed by the NFER, took the questionnaires into school and supervised their completion, offering help to students as required. All respondents were assured of the strictly confidential nature of the study and were asked not to write their names on the questionnaires. It is to the credit of the young people involved that the vast majority of them approached this task willingly and conscientiously and none of the questionnaires completed was unusable. It was clear that many of the respondents gave considerable thought to their responses and the administrators were asked to clarify precisely what was required on numerous occasions.

While the response rate on some questions was low, the overall results may be regarded as a meaningful account of the situation in Newham. The results are similar to those from other studies (some of which are presented below) and they follow the patterns common sense would suggest, eg no one reported using heroin and the most commonly available and used drug was cannabis. Also, young women were more likely to express a desire to lose weight than were young men. The findings allow these and other trends to be more accurately pinpointed and for realistic levels of prevalence to be identified.

## THE CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY — NEWHAM

Situated on the eastern side of Central London, Newham is one of the 33 boroughs of Greater London. The Department of the Environment's (DOE) Index of Local Conditions (1991), which measures relative levels of deprivation across all areas of England, ranked Newham as the most deprived authority. Looking at smaller units within the authority (enumeration districts, EDs), the DOE's calculation was that 56 per cent of EDs in Newham came within the seven per cent of most deprived EDs in England. Newham has a population of 212,170 with 18,939 children aged 0-4 years and 32,893 between 5 and 15 years (OPCS, 1991). The most recently available figures (OPCS, 1993) estimate an increase in these age bands — to 21,200 for children aged 0-4 years and 36,700 for those between 5 and 15 years.

Most of the residents would be described as working class. A ten per cent sample of residents aged 16 and over, established to measure social class as defined by occupation, showed that few residents were in professional occupations and many were in manual and partly skilled employment. Table 1 shows this breakdown.

**Table 1      Social class and economic position of head of household \***

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(10% sample)  
n= 8,174

		%
I	Professional etc. occupation	3
II	Management and technical	21
III (N)	Skilled occupation — non-manual	25
III (M)	Skilled occupation — manual	20
IV	Partly skilled occupation	19
V	Unskilled occupation	7
	Armed forces	1
	On a Government scheme	2
	Occupation inadequately described or not stated	2

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\* Where the head was economically active

Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (1991)

Newham is a multiracial area. A breakdown of the population by ethnic origin is given in Table 2.

**Table 2 Ethnic group of Newham residents**

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n= 212,170	
	%
White	58
Black Caribbean	7
Black African	6
Black other	1
Indian	13
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	1
Other Asian	3
Other	1

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Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (1991)

### **Education**

Census data for a ten per cent sample of the workforce (14,917) aged 18 and over in Newham showed that less than one per cent had a higher degree, five per cent a degree, and three per cent a diploma or its equivalent (OPCS, 1991). Looking at the Department for Education (DFE) league tables for success in public examinations, Newham was placed 99th in the list of local education authorities, although further value-added analyses taking into account the social background of the population suggested a more positive outcome, placing Newham in 41st position (Hugill, 1994). The Report of the Independent Inquiry into Educational Achievement in Newham (Hegarty, 1989) stated that 'there have been, and still are, substantial problems in Newham's educational provision', noting however that 'there is also very great potential'. The most recent DFE figures (1993) for some aspects of school performance in the sample schools are presented in Table 3. Tables 4 and 5 contain further details of the four sites studied.

**Table 3 Examination results and unauthorised absences in the sample schools**

	GCSE: % in age group obtaining the following			Candidates studying for vocational qualifications or units awarded by C&G and RSA			Candidates entered for fewer than 2 A- levels or AS equivalent		Candidates entered for 2 or more A- levels or AS equivalent		Rates of unauthorised absence		
	5 or more Grades A-C	5 or more Grades A-G	1 or more Grades A-G	Number entered	% achieving all qualifications or units attempted	Number entered	Average point score	Number entered	Average point score	Number of pupils compulsory school age	% of pupils missing one or more half days	% of half days missed	
School A	11	64	97	22	59	-	-	-	-	696	49	5.7	
School B	27	76	87			-	-	-	-	No information received	No information received	No information received	
School C	12	57	83	40	100	3	2.7	9	5.3	719	4	0.4	
School D	41	91	98	33	100	7	1.6	32	7.5	856	68	2.4	

Source: Department for Education (1993)

**Table 4**      **The four schools in the sample**

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	<b>Number in study</b>
School A	258
School B	386
School C	219
School D	297
	<hr/> 1160

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Source: Current study

**Table 5**      **Ethnic background of students**

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	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Mixed/Other</b>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
School A n = 207	27	17	48	8
School B n = 367	20	19	49	12
School C n = 202	82	11	4	3
School D n = 287	36	35	11	18

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Source: Current study



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### School life

- Life in school was viewed positively. A majority of young people said they liked being at school and very few felt it to be a waste of time. The percentages were lower for liking being in school than in another recent study (Keys and Fernandes, 1993).<sup>1</sup>
- Few Newham students felt that school was a waste of time.
- Parental aspirations for success in school in Newham were said to be as high as those found by Keys and Fernandes (1993).
- Less than one in five young people felt that their school was too strict (although nearly half of them felt there were too many rules). Comparisons with Keys and Fernandes (1993) are limited because of the slightly different options used, but it would appear that the Newham students were less likely to think discipline was about right and that there were the right number of rules.
- Relatively few young people said they had been bullied in recent times, (a lower percentage than in Keys and Fernandes, 1993). However, the minority of students in Newham who have experienced fairly frequent unpleasantness (particularly young men) is of concern. Comparisons with other studies are difficult because of the different categorisations used, but the Newham figures here appear to be relatively low. Smith (1991), for example, found that being bullied 'sometimes'/'now and then' or more often was reported by 18 per cent of secondary school students; while being bullied 'once a week' or more often was reported by eight per cent. Similarly, Whitney and Smith (1993) found that ten per cent of secondary school students reported being bullied sometimes or more and four per cent, once a week or more.
- Nearly one-quarter of young people reported having played truant (which is comparable to the figures from Key and Fernandes, 1993) and for a small minority this was a significant issue. One-third of those who have not truanted would like to do so.

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<sup>1</sup>This study was based on a nationally drawn sample of students in Year 7 and Year 9. Although the Newham sample contains a higher proportion of females and students from ethnic minorities, it was considered useful to compare the findings with those from the national sample. The figures for the relevant questions from Keys and Fernandes (1993) are compared here with those from the current study.

- Schools should facilitate examination success according to the vast majority of students (as in Keys and Fernandes, 1993), although there were mixed views on the extent to which they should have a vocational focus (with young men being more supportive of this work-related input).
- Relations with peers in school were generally harmonious and few students felt lonely in school. There were mixed views on the ease with which students spoke in front of teachers (a particular concern for Asian students), as there were about peers speaking ill of them (again a greater concern for Asian students).
- There were mixed views on the level of racism exhibited by peers and although there were differences in opinion between ethnic groups these were not dramatic. Nearly half felt that staff worked to discourage racism (although interestingly there were no differences between ethnic groups).
- Homework was generally agreed to be important for success and the amount said to be done compared favourably (notably for Black and Asian students) with the data from Keys and Fernandes (1993). Parents were largely involved in monitoring progress (although their impact decreased for older students).
- Female students were more likely to report a substantial commitment to homework (two hours and upwards per day) than males (as reported in Balding, 1994)<sup>2</sup> and this heavier investment was more apparent in Year 10 than Year 8.
- Access to reasonable facilities to do homework was not a problem for a majority of students, although one-fifth of them do not have a quiet place to go.

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<sup>2</sup>This study of 11 to 16 year olds is one of a series produced each year using an opportunity sample.

## **Aspirations**

- Aspirations for post-school education were said to be high and compared favourably with the national picture presented by Keys and Fernandes (1993) (although obtaining a job as soon as possible was more of an issue for White male students). Large numbers of young people professed a desire to go on to higher education and even more parents were said to want this for them (a higher percentage than in the national sample).
- Many young people said they had decided which type of work they would like to pursue and most reported needing qualifications for this work.
- There were concerns about the supply of appropriate jobs, and students gave a mixed picture of whether other factors (insufficient qualifications or experience, racism, sexism and loyalty to an area) would affect their prospects. However, two-thirds of young women felt that sexist attitudes would impede their chances of employment. Most respondents did not feel under family pressure to stay at home (although this was rather more of a concern for Asian students).
- Most young people anticipated establishing a long-term relationship with a partner, although few of them wanted to do so before the age of 21.
- Even more felt at this stage that they wanted a family and, as with a permanent relationship, the mid-20s were seen as the optimum time for this commitment.

## **Health**

- More than half of the young people would like to exercise more and this was something that many of them did not set time aside for. Lack of access to facilities was reported by one-quarter of them.
- Only one in five of the young people said they chose 'healthy' food for more than half the time and the same proportion said that they very rarely did (if at all).
- Less than half of the young people were happy with their present weight and most of those who were discontented would like to lose weight. These proportions were more striking when female students were compared with males. More than half the females would like to lose weight, and only one-third of them were content with their current state.

- There were differences between how young people viewed their own weight and how they felt others viewed them, and again there were clear gender differences. The need for weight gain was stated by a minority of males, and weight loss was the goal for females. Of concern was the fact that while more than half of the females wanted to lose weight, two-thirds of them did not feel that others thought they should. Indeed there were 23 young women who wanted to lose weight but thought others felt they should **gain** it.
- Nearly half of the young people have smoked to some extent, although only a small minority smoke occasionally or regularly (a lower percentage than the ten per cent for regular smokers and six per cent for occasional smokers found in another study with 11 to 16-year-olds, (Lader and Matheson, 1991). Asian students were significantly less likely to have smoked. As in Balding's (1994) study, smoking was more common among young women than young men.
- A minority (13 per cent) were still open to the possibility that they might smoke later in life even if they did not now.
- Having a smoker in their home increased the chances of young people trying smoking and sustaining it.
- Nearly two-thirds have drunk alcohol although only a small minority described themselves as regular drinkers. Again, the pattern for Asian students was one of less indulgence.
- Nearly one-quarter said they had been offered at least one drug and more than half of these had tried at least one (figures that mirror Balding's (1994) data). Cannabis was the dominant drug used. Asian students were, again, less likely to be involved.
- Year 10 students were generally more knowledgeable than those in Year 8 about drugs, and the older ones on the whole more likely to think that drugs were always unsafe (as found by Balding, 1994).
- There were disparities between where young people received their sex education from and where they felt they **should** get it from, notably in relation to parents, friends, television, magazines and clinicians. These mismatches reflected Balding's (1994) data.

- There was some uncertainty about the transmission of diseases that could be sexually transmitted and about self-protection from HIV/AIDS.

#### **Out-of-school time**

- Two-thirds of young people reported watching television for three or more hours per day (the percentages reporting such extensive viewing were higher than in Keys and Fernandes, 1993).
- More than half of the students had regular access to computer games, and one in five males reported playing for three or more hours a day.
- Many young people had access to a fairly large sum of money (either as an allowance or wages).
- For a minority of students there was a substantial commitment to work outside school (five or more hours each week).

#### **Concerns and support systems**

- The students' views on the extent to which they would like to change aspects of themselves presented a mixed picture, although females were more likely to want to do so than males.
- Less than one in five felt that the police were there to support them (nearly half were uncertain), and less than half of them (notably males) would want to continue a friendship with someone whom they knew to be homosexual.
- Students reported considerable concerns about various aspects of their lives, and again the relationships within families were well represented. Young women were more likely than their male peers to worry significantly about school work, health, friendships, family and their appearance. It was the Asian students who worried the most about racism.
- Mothers were the people most likely to be approached to discuss each of the listed problems (school work, health, friendships and family). It was less than a third who would share any of these problems with their father and even fewer who would enlist the support of other family members. Fathers only played a significant role in regard to problems with school work (when nearly one-third of the students said they would turn to them). Friends were the most frequently cited support system and more than

one-quarter said they had no one they could talk to about any problems with friends or family.

- A sizeable minority felt unable to share a problem of concern to them, and family matters were prominent again.
- Only about one in ten had made contact with a 'helping' organisation. However, more than half of those who had had found it helpful.
- The students were almost exactly divided into those who felt there were sufficient contact points for young people who wanted information or advice and those who felt that there were not.
- Students would welcome further details on a wide range of topics relating to their health and lifestyle.

## KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THE STUDY AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- Parental aspirations (and those of the young people themselves) were higher than would have been predicted from the take-up of post-school education in Newham to date. Far more students were expected (and indeed expected themselves) to go on to further and higher education than has happened in the past. Clearly a great deal is asked of schools by students and parents in Newham.
- Whilst there are no major concerns about the level of discipline in school, it may be worth reflecting on the view that there are too many rules.
- For a small minority (notably young men), being bullied is an issue that needs consideration.
- Truancing is part of school life for a substantial minority of young people, particularly as they get older, and many would like to take time out. There is clearly scope for improving the various strategies employed to deal with this problem.
- Students from an Asian background appeared to be quite different from other ethnic groups in a number of important ways. They use less alcohol, tobacco and other drugs than their peers and showed a different pattern of response to sexual matters.
- Only a minority stated confidently that racism was not shown by peers in school, which suggests that further effort on this issue could be beneficial. There would also seem to be scope for development, given that more than half were not convinced that staff actively discourage racism.
- The decline in parents' role in monitoring homework for older students suggests that other strategies may be needed to ensure adequate levels of completion.
- Young men's apparent lack of commitment to homework (in many cases) might be improved by targeted strategies.
- A significant minority do not have a quiet venue for homework and may benefit from the provision of homework clubs of some kind.

- The expressed desire (particularly by young women) for more exercise would suggest that there is merit in widening the opportunities and the range and level of exercise available. Access to appropriate facilities and activities may serve to enhance the general level of fitness of these young people.
- There would appear to be scope for focusing on the merits and advantages of 'healthy' food given the (sometimes worrying) lack of regard these students have for making healthy choices. It has been reported (HEA, 1992) that 20 per cent of 16- to 19-year-olds would have liked more education on food and diet.
- The concerns about weight loss (and to some extent the need for gain) raise important issues about how young people feel on this matter which has such serious implications for their health. There needs to be more work with them on the value of a healthy diet and a balanced approach to achieving their optimum weight. For some individuals, these data ring warning bells about the potential for eating disorders (reinforced by evidence from a study of pupils from middle schools (mean age 9 year 11 months) which reported that dissatisfaction with body shape and a desire for thinness were disturbingly prevalent amongst the females in the sample (Hill et al., 1994). Recent work with 16- to 19- year-olds (HEA, 1992) found that over a third of those who were of normal weight believed they were overweight.
- Although the figures for smokers are small, they are indicative of a potential problem. Indeed, almost 90 individuals in this study could not break the habit. A related study (HEA, 1992) found that the majority of young smokers had tried to give up, which suggests that it is 'not a casual indulgence but an addiction'. The figure for smokers in the current study equates with the reported prevalence of eight per cent for 11- to 15- year-olds (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1991), although the Government's proposals sought to reduce this by one-third by 1994. The data here would support the Government's (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, op. cit.) call to encourage the avoidance of smoking in the household. There is evidence that non-smoking children with two parents who smoke have cotinine (a by-product of smoking) levels equivalent to children who smoke seven cigarettes a week (Lader and Matheson, 1991).
- Relatively large minorities of young people have access to drugs and have used them. For virtually all drugs, Year 10 students were more convinced they were unsafe, which suggests that the message has been getting home. Work with 9- to 15-year-olds (HEA, 1992) found that 15 per cent had been offered some type of drug, which



was reported as an estimated 600,000 young people in that age group in Britain. As with the current study, solvents and cannabis were the most likely substances to have been used. These figures reinforced the need to consolidate education on solvents, given that the number of deaths from their abuse rose from 26 in 1980 to 89 in 1987 (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1991). A study of 16- to 19-year-olds (HEA, 1992) emphasised the 'scope for facilitating greater understanding of individual drugs, either in schools or other settings' to supplement other, potentially damaging, sources of information.

- The HEA report (1992) based on work with 9- to 15- year-olds concluded that 'much of the reason for starting smoking or drinking or experimenting with drugs stems from peer pressure [and] it would seem that teenagers need help in resisting this pressure, by learning refusal skills and self-confidence skills. A higher profile of alcohol and drugs education both in school and at home also appears to be needed as teenagers themselves recognise their ignorance and vulnerability in these areas and indeed express a desire to know more.' A report based on 16- to 19-year-olds (HEA, 1992) found that 76 per cent of them agreed that young people do not know enough about the damages of drinking. The work with 9- to 15-year-olds (HEA, 1992) estimated that in an average week about 3,000 children under 16 exceed the safe alcohol limits recommended for adults.
- Young people's preferences for source of sex education suggests possible ways forward. Parents, schools and clinicians all have a vital role to play as far as students are concerned, and need to be offered guidance and support in carrying out this potentially demanding work. Balding (1994) wrote of work with parents to develop a cooperative programme of sex education across the five years of secondary education, initiated because of the number of young people identified as **wanting** sex education from their parents.
- More input is required concerning sexually transmitted diseases and awareness of them. Work with a slightly older age group (16-19) reported that 'most young people are aware of the risk of AIDS during unprotected intercourse, [but] despite this the majority of people do not show signs of being particularly willing to make some adjustment to their lifestyle. Young people don't appear to be taking the threat of AIDS personally as they don't see their own behaviour and lifestyle as a relevant issue' (HEA, 1992).

- The amount of time spent on television/computer game use, especially by young males, is of concern.
- There are students with strong feelings about a whole range of issues and concerns, the strength of which indicates the need for a range of supportive sources to be available to them.
- The need for a wide dissemination of material concerned with health in its widest sense was highlighted.

The evidence from this study is that while there is considerable scope for developing the services available to young people in Newham, there is also a good deal of optimism and ambition amongst this sector of the population. Newham is undoubtedly an area with significant socio-economic deprivation and there are particular challenges to be met by those who seek to facilitate the healthy growth and development of Newham's youth. While both service providers and the young people themselves have to deal with these very difficult circumstances, these findings highlight their sense of purpose and their willingness to rise to the challenge. What is striking about the comparison with the nationally drawn sample (Keys and Fernandes, 1993) is how similar the results are. There are relatively small differences in attitudes to school, and parental aspirations for success are of the same order. Despite the fact that the national sample contained students across the socio-economic spectrum, the picture presented by Newham students compares favourably with that from this cross-section. The Newham data on the extent of bullying and truancy and the commitment to academic success stand up robustly to the nationally based figures.

What also comes through from the Newham study is the range of unmet needs these young people have. The case for more investment in health education and for pinpointing the optimum channels to deliver sex education is presented here. The doubts, insecurities and worries that many young people in Newham are dealing with (often in isolation) emerge clearly from these findings. The desirability of supporting the services created to meet these needs comes through these data. It is hoped that the findings will be of value to those developing services for young people in Newham in that they highlight priorities and allow the recipients' views to enter the debate. The way ahead lies in acknowledging the achievements and strengths of both the services and the consumers in Newham, while also developing a responsive system that listens to what the latter have to say.

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## **Health and Well-being in the 1990s - a Study of Young People's Attitudes and Behaviour in the London Borough of Newham**

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