

The wellbeing of adolescent males and females in NEL – The Adolescent Lifestyle Survey (ALS) 2021

Contents by section:

1. Demographics
2. Diet and Exercise
3. Mental Health
4. Substances and Gambling
5. Sexual Health
6. Activities Online
7. Bullying
8. Safety, The Local Area, and the Future



What is the ALS and who took part?

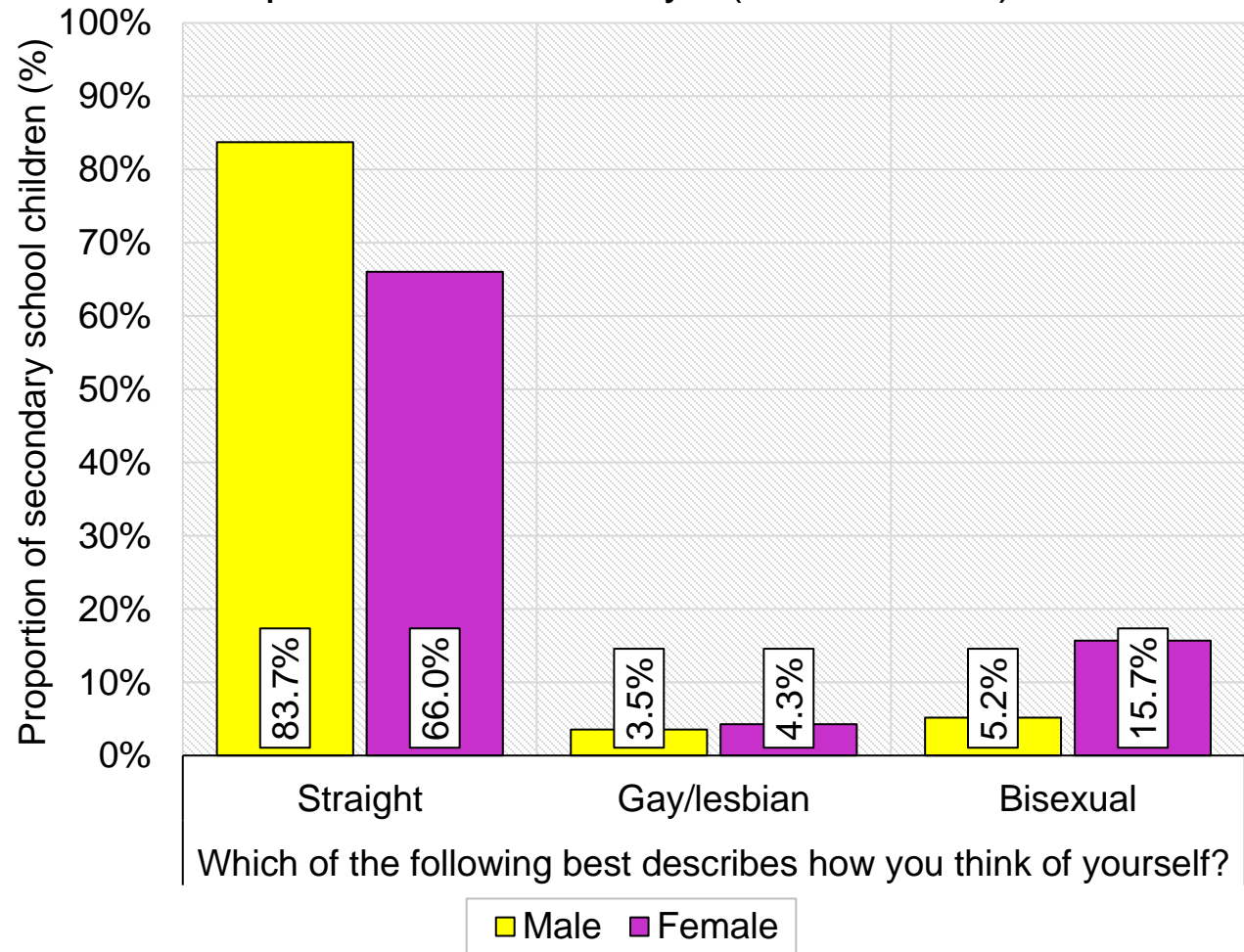
- The Adolescent Lifestyle Survey (ALS) is an online survey of secondary school pupils in school years 7 to 11 (ages 11-16) in North East Lincolnshire
- It is completed in classrooms under exam conditions
- It has been carried out every 3-4 years since 2004; the 2021 ALS was completed in October and each school received their results in November
- This report focuses on the pupils who responded to the question 'what is your sex.' This question referred to sex assigned at birth and is distinct from the question on gender identity. A summary for LGBT respondents can be found [here](#), and the overall summary is [here](#).
- Respondents can be broken down as follows:
 - 7988 children took part in the survey, providing 7,146 completed responses.
 - 7,116 children answered the question on what their sex was; 3,644 said male (51.2%), and 3,472 said female (48.8%).

*The questions on Sexual Health – including the one on sexuality but not the one on period poverty – were only asked of years 9-11.

Key Points:

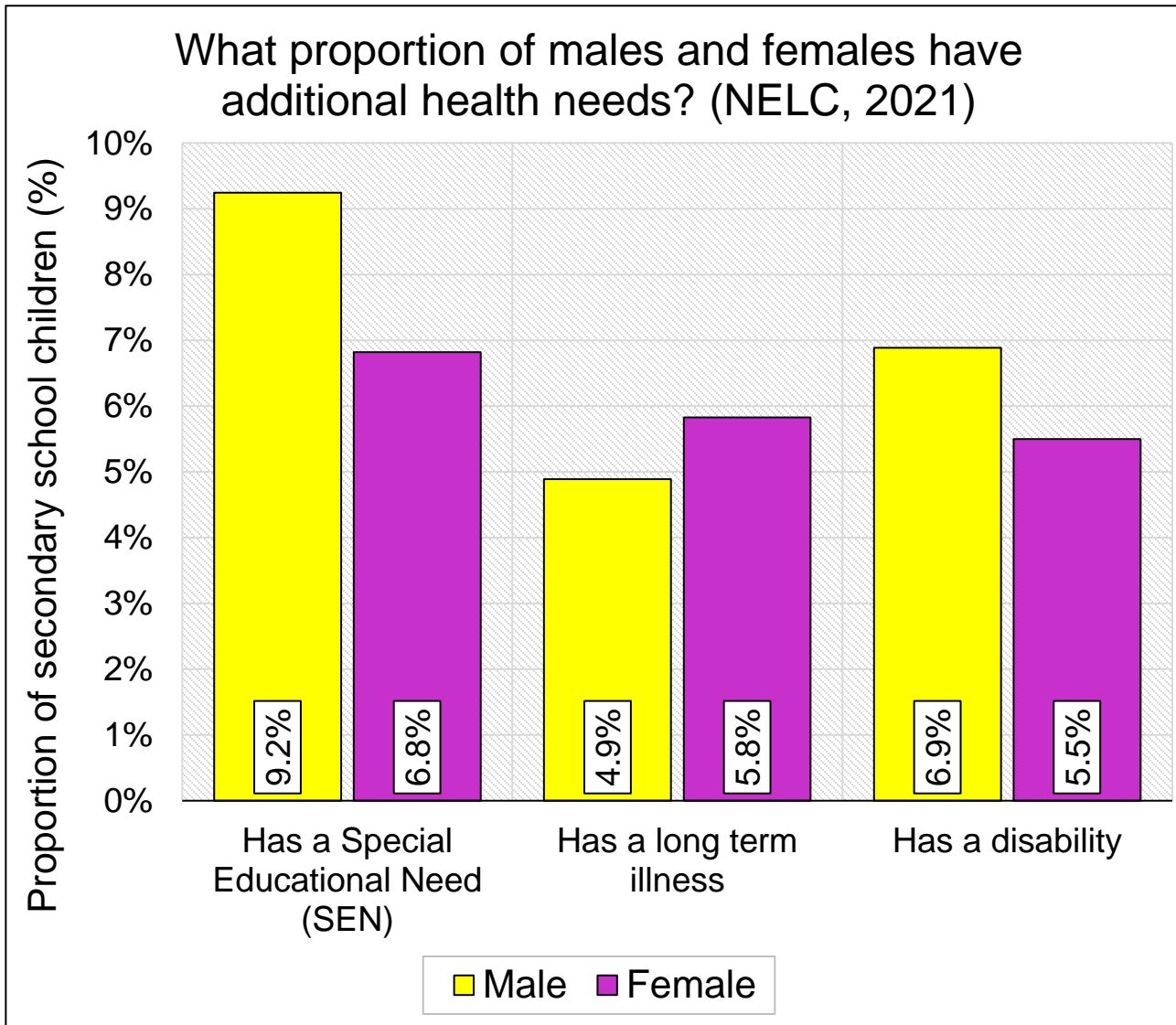
- 16.3% of males identified with a sexuality that was not straight, rising to 34% of females.
 - Less than a third of females said they eat breakfast every day, compared to 48.6% of males.
 - 22.9% of males meet the NHS' guidelines for physical activity in children and young people* but that falls to 12.8% of females.
 - Less than four-in-ten females are happy with their weight – 57% want to lose weight.
 - Females' mental health was worse than males' per *every* emotional wellbeing question. E.g., 51.9% of females said they often felt 'sad or tearful,' compared to 24.4% of males.
 - When they have a problem that worries them or they feel stressed, 10% of females 'usually' or 'always' cut or hurt themselves, and 4.9% of males do likewise.
 - 52.3% of females worried 'a lot' about the way they look since the start of the pandemic, compared to 21.7% of males.
 - Of the 41% of females who had had a whole alcoholic drink, 9.8% had got *really* drunk twice in the last four weeks. These figures were 39.1% and 4.9% for males.
 - Males gamble much more than females, with 8.1% of males 'purchasing coins to level-up or skin betting' at least weekly for the last year, relative to 2.4% of females.
 - Of those who have periods, 11.2% had not had enough money for sanitary products at some point in the last year.
 - 46.2% of females had seen images online that made them uncomfortable, relative to 30.6% of males.
 - 55.9% of females want to go to college/university after school, falling to 35.9% of males.
 - 43.9% of females were bullied in the last year, compared to 34% of males.
 - 48.7% of females thought their local area was a good place to live for young people, but 57.6% of males thought it was.
- * [Physical activity guidelines for children and young people - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

How did males and females respond to the question on sexuality? (NELC, 2021)



- Male and female respondents were about evenly spread by schoolyear, though year 9 was slightly overrepresented, with 21.8% of all males and 21.6% of all females. And – unexpectedly – 53.7% of year 10 was male.
- 92.6% of male respondents’ first language was English, compared to 93.6% of females. With 112 speakers making up approx. 1.6% of males and females, Polish was the second-most popular first language.
- 86.6% of males were White British, compared to 87.8% of females. With 282 children – and those who self-described this – white other is the second most populous ethnic group, making up 3.3% of males and 4.8% of females.
- On sexuality – 16.3% of males were not straight, relative to 34% of females. And three times as many females as males were bisexual. Also, 7.6% of females said they did not know their sexuality, compared to 3.6% of males.

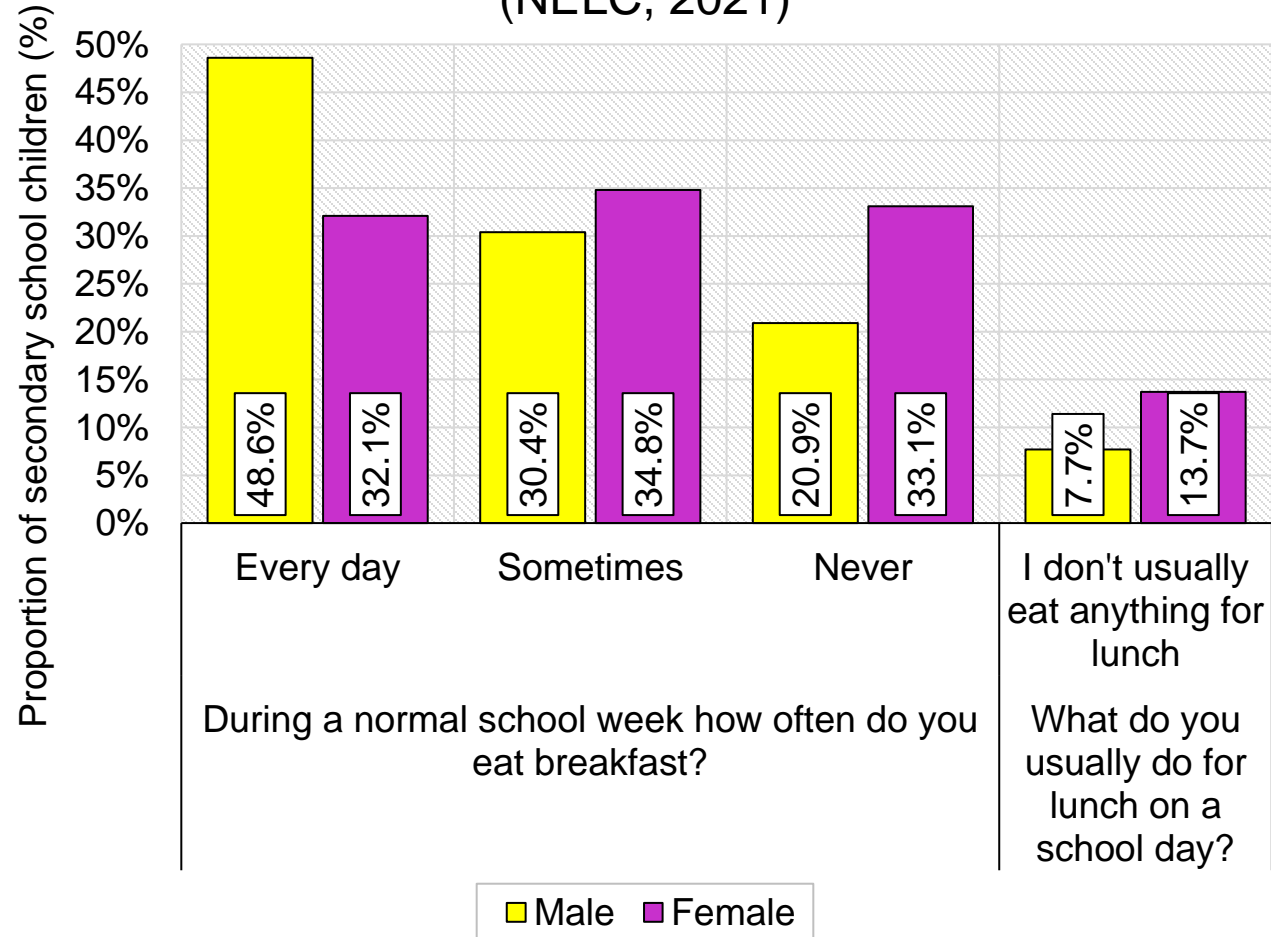
1.a Demographics



- Of the 320 males with SEN in 2021, 154 received support (49.7%); of the 226 females with SEN, 99 received support (44.8%).
- Of the 168 males with a long term illness, 94 received support (57%); of the 192 females with a long term illness, 109 received support (57.4%).
- Of the 238 males with a disability, 123 received support (52.8%); of the 181 females with a disability, 112 received support (62.2%).
- 17.9% of males and 15.5% of females care for someone at home with a serious illness or health condition. Of the total of 1,166 secondary-school-age carers, 79 males and 80 females said they provided *more than two* hours of care every day.

1.b Demographics

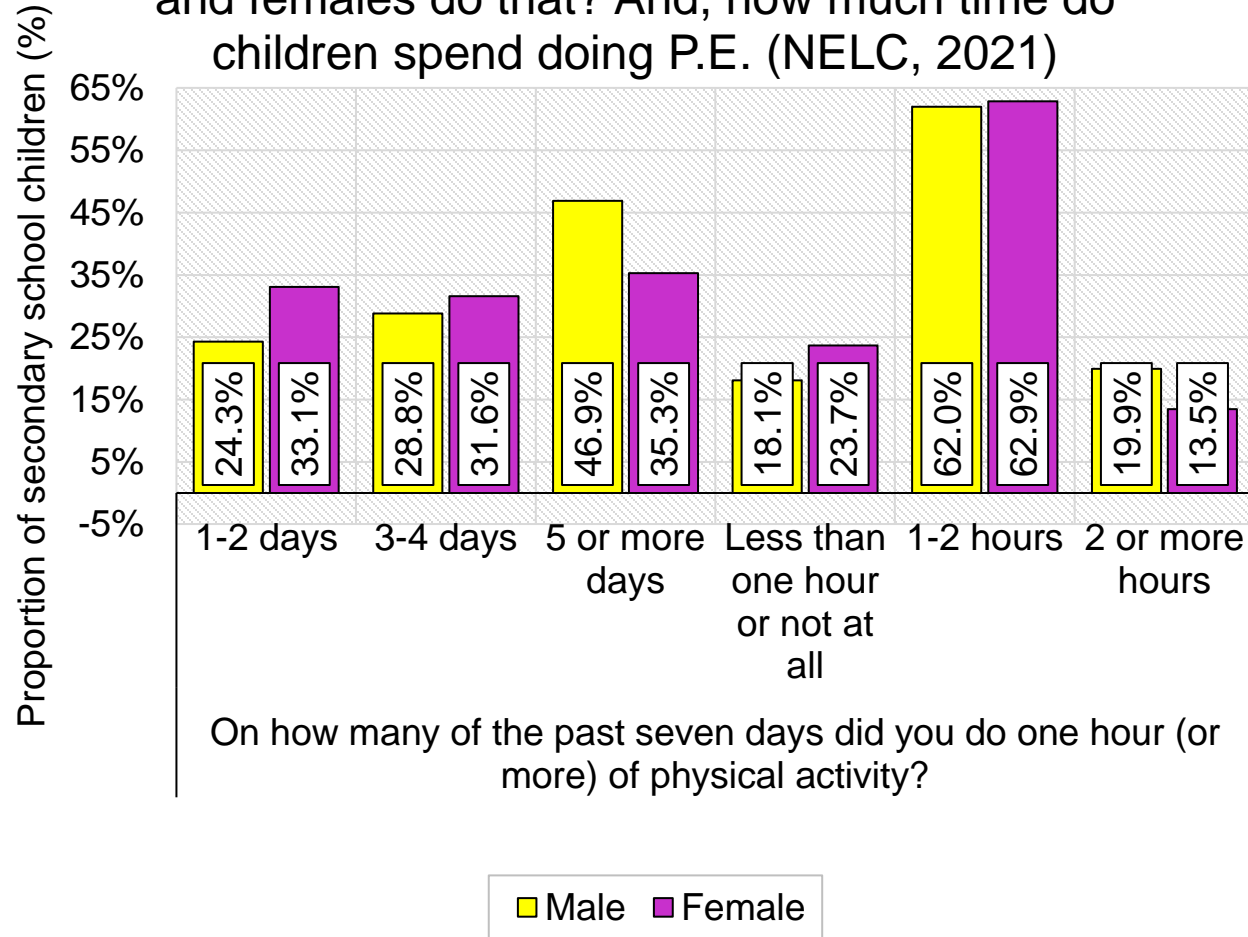
What proportion of males and females eat breakfast and what proportion eat lunch? (NELC, 2021)



- Of the children who said they 'never' eat breakfast, not being hungry was the most popular reason why for males and females. For males this was followed by 'don't have enough time,' while the second most popular reason for females was 'eating breakfast makes me feel sick'. 26 females and 8 males used the 'other' option to say they did not eat breakfast because they do not like to eat or because it hurt their mental health (inc. due to an eating disorder) or self-image.
- On what children did for lunch – just over four-in-ten had a pack-up and just under that had a school meal. 3.8% of males and 2.9% of females got lunch from a shop, café, or takeaway. More females did not eat, and 42 females and 13 males used the 'other option' to say they only eat lunch sometimes or *only* have snacks.
- Of the children who said they 'don't usually eat anything for lunch,' 'don't like eating in front of people' and 'because I am unhappy with my weight' were the most common options for females, but 'I am not hungry at lunch' was by far the most popular for males.

2.a Diet and exercise

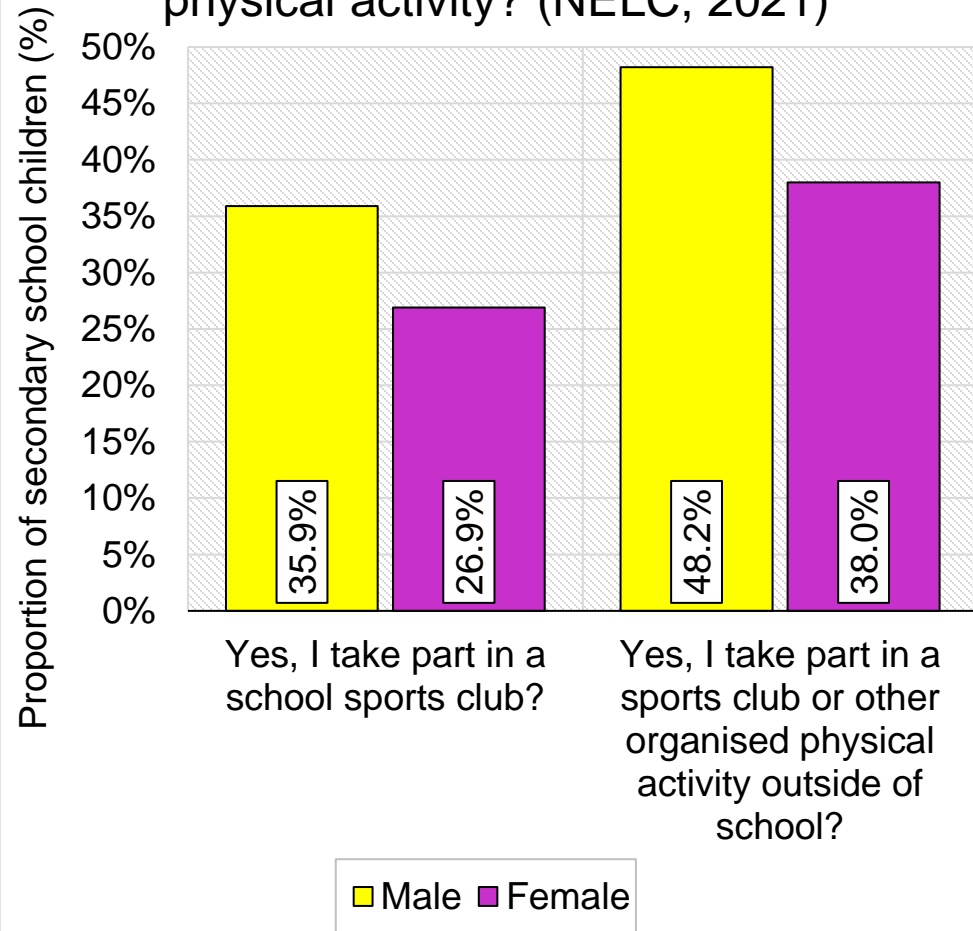
Of the 5,862 children who exercise for an hour a week or more, on how many days do males and females do that? And, how much time do children spend doing P.E. (NELC, 2021)



- 667 males receive Free School Meals (FSM) (18.6%), compared to 726 females (21.1%).
- The highest proportion of males (36.6%) said school dinners had got better in the last year, while the highest proportion of females (39.1%) said they had stayed the same.
- Males said they eat less fruit and vegetables – just over a half eat less than three portions a day, compared to 47.2% of females. Only a tenth of males and females eat five or more.
- 53.3% of females said they want to 'eat more healthily,' relative to 47.6% of males, though more males than females said they 'already eat healthily'. Six-in-ten males said they exercise enough to stay healthy, while the figure for females was just under half.

2.b Diet and exercise

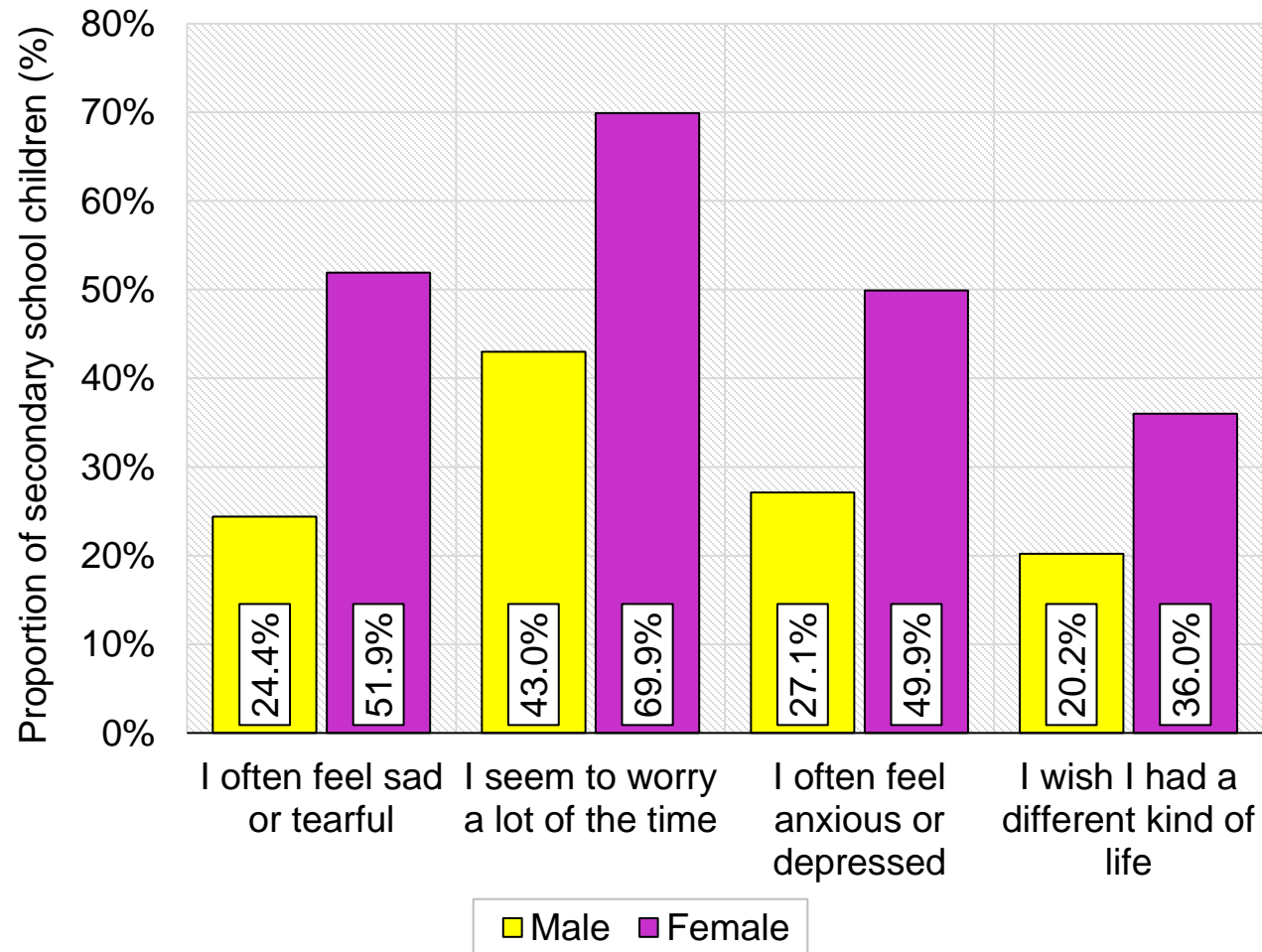
What proportion of males and females take part in organised physical activity? (NELC, 2021)



- More than one-in-ten females said they had not exercised for an hour or more in the last week, relative to 8.3% of males. Overall, males exercise much more (see previous chart), with almost one-in-four males doing one or more hours a day, seven-days-a-week, relative to 12.8% of females. And 5.4% of females do no P.E. at all, compared to 3.7% of males.
- But a much higher proportion of males enjoy P.E., with over a third saying lessons were 'very good,' compared to 19.2% of females. Most females (39%) said lessons were 'OK'.
- On what would help them to be more active, most males and females picked 'things are fine', but 'more time' was also popular among both.
- 1,011 children drink energy drinks daily or 'most days;' males are more likely to have 3+ when they do drink them.
- Just under two-thirds of respondents had been to a dentist in the last year; 10.6% of males did not have one, relative to 9.3% of females.

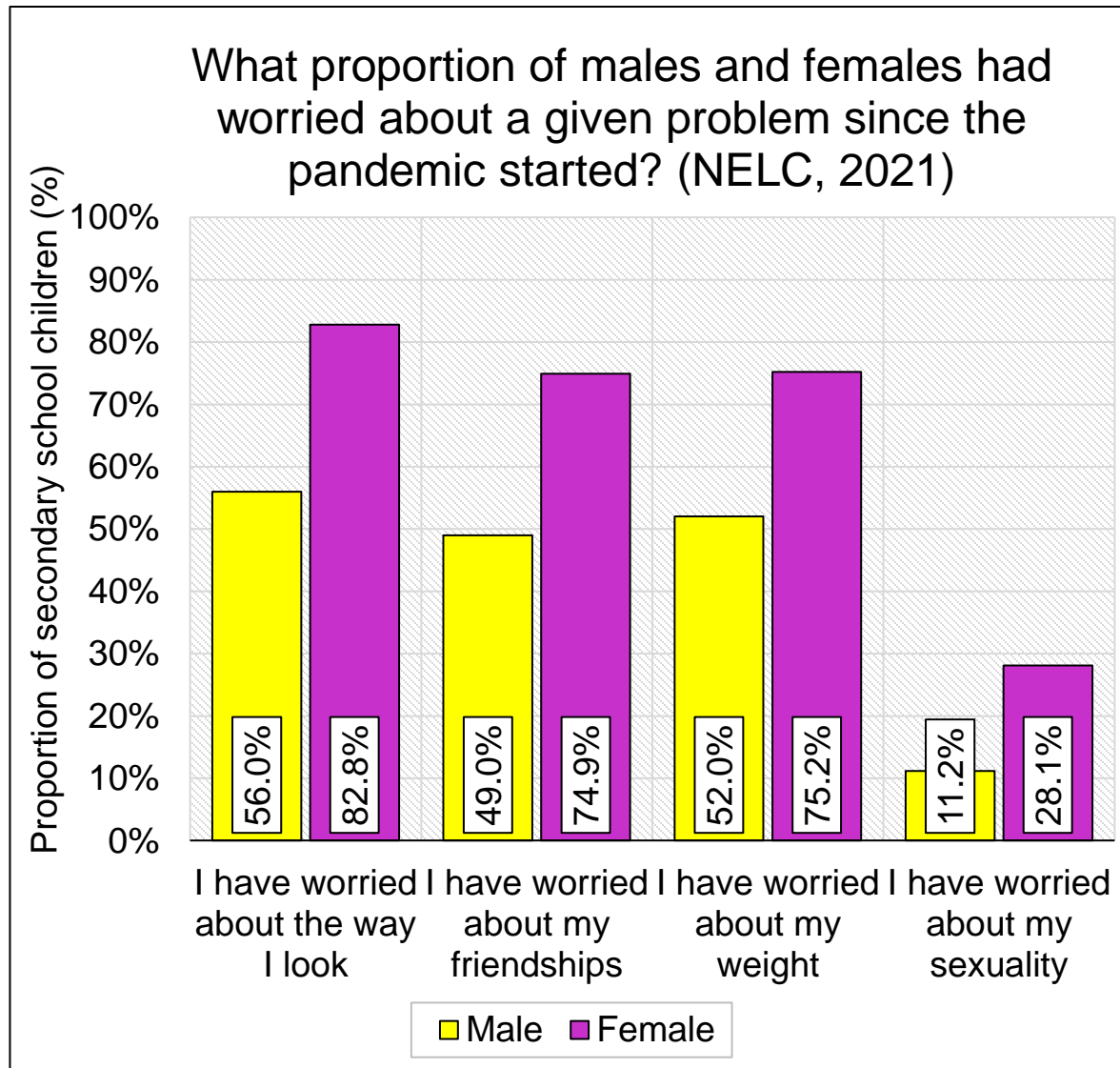
2.c Diet & exercise

How did males and females respond to the emotional wellbeing questions? (NELC, 2021)



- Males' mental health is overwhelmingly better than females' (see left), with the results of all ten emotional wellbeing questions indicating females have a worse standard of mental health – the average figure for responses indicating positive mental health for males is 75.2%, relative to 60.5% for females. Males may not be as willing to indicate negative feeling, however.
 - The chart shows the four greatest gaps, but there are others, e.g., while 66.1% of males 'feel they have a lot to be proud of,' only half of females do, and while 81.3% of males 'usually feel happy about life,' less than two-thirds of females do.
- 57% of females said they want to lose weight, compared to 40.8% of males; 11.9% of males said they would like to put on weight – more than double the proportion of females.
- The average of the proportions of males that would keep one of six problems to themselves was 50.7%. This was 48.6% for females. This includes figures of 67.9% and 59.7% for males and females, respectively, that would hide a problem with 'body changes and growing up'.

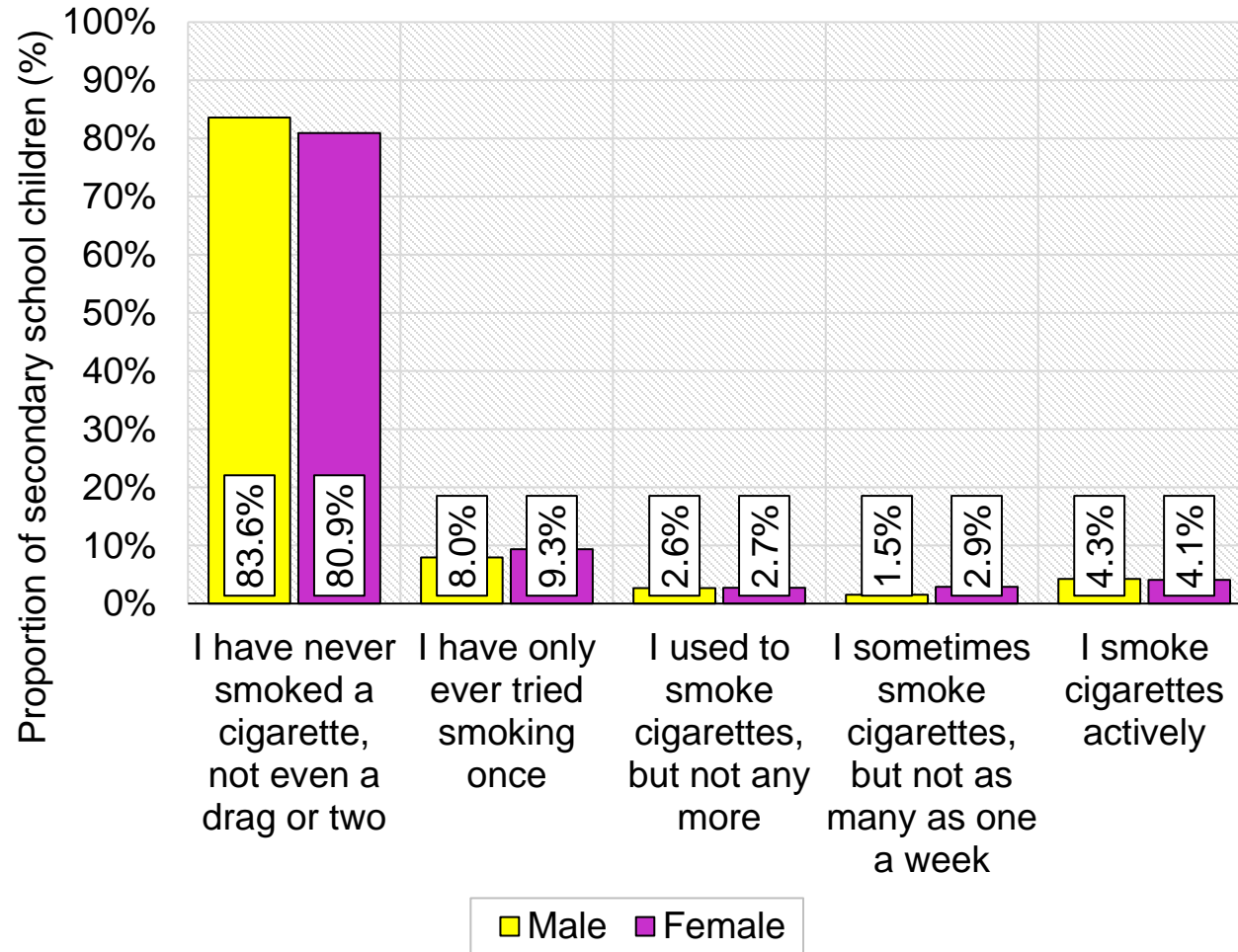
3.a Mental health



- On what they do about it if they have a problem, the highest proportion of males 'usually' or 'always' 'watch more TV/play computer games' (this figure is 62.5%, but it drops to 38.5% for females), and 58.8% listen to music, rising to 70.3% of females – their highest proportion. Females' second-most popular response was 'think carefully about the problem by yourself' at 44%
 - 288 respondents 'usually' or 'always' smoke cigarettes, 306 drink alcohol, 1803 eat or drink more, and 493 'cut or hurt themselves'. All these were more popular among females, with almost a third of females eating or drinking more, and twice as many females as males cutting or hurting themselves'
- The results of all 13 problem-based questions show females worry more about them all; the chart shows the four largest gaps, but another gap is exposed in males' and females' biggest worry (in terms of whether they worried about an issue at all), as 69.5% of males and 85.9% of females have worried about 'Schoolwork/exams'.
 - Also, on worrying about 'the way [they] look,' 52.3% of females worried about that 'a lot' – more than the proportion that worried about 'Schoolwork/exams' a lot.

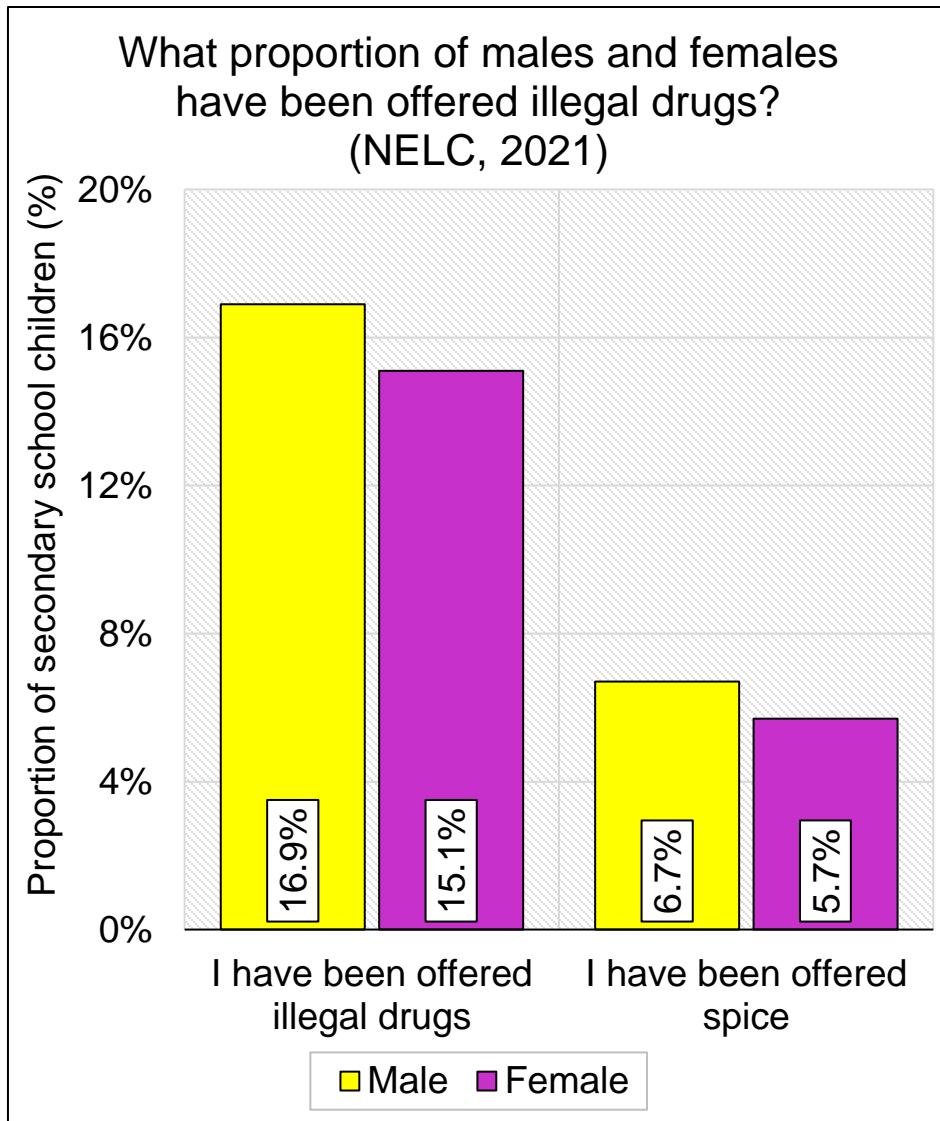
3.b Mental health

How often do males and females smoke cigarettes?
(NELC, 2021)



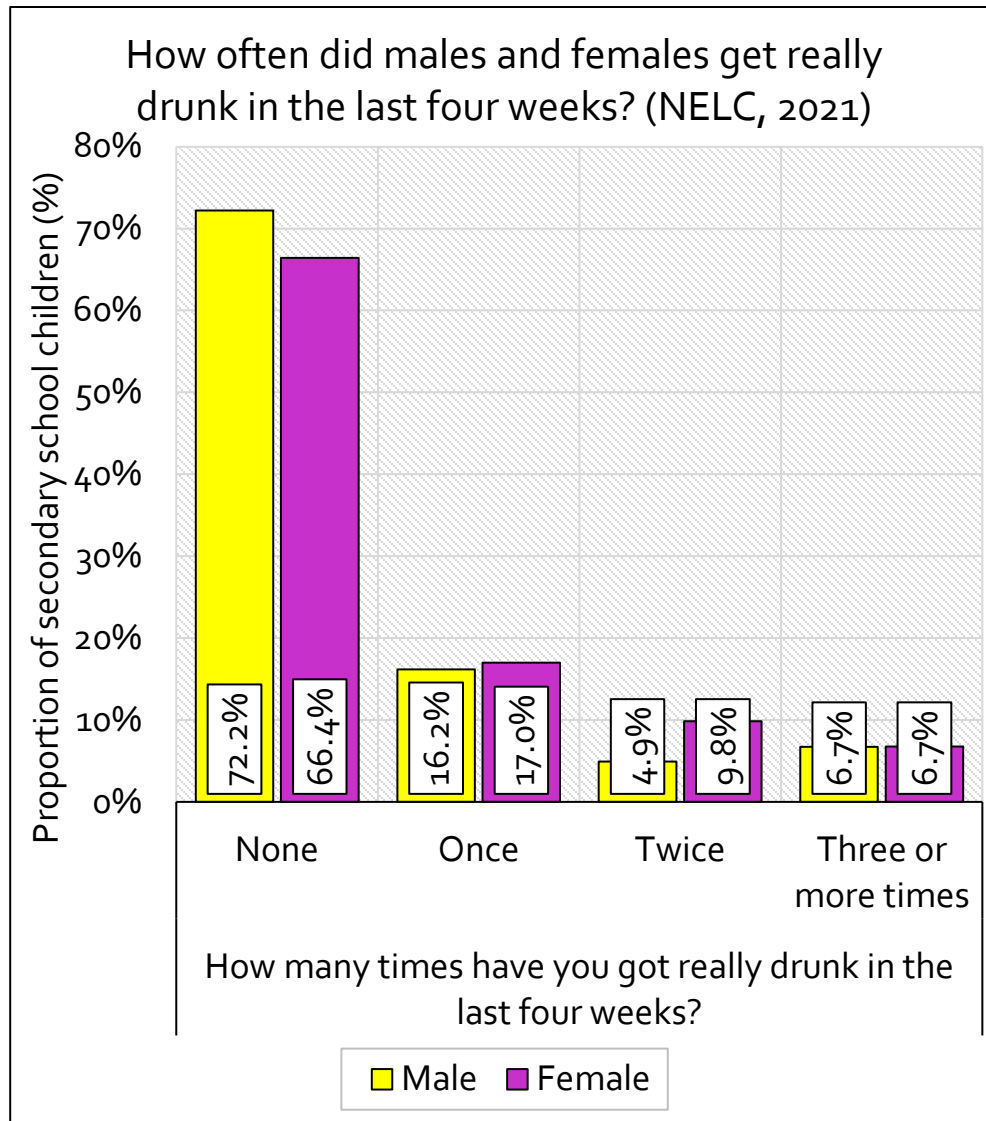
- The left chart presents the differences in smoking habits between males and females; females are more likely than males to have tried smoking and are more likely to smoke on a less frequent basis, with 3.4% of males smoking cigarettes every day, compared to 2.5% of females.
- In terms of E-cigarettes and vapes, most gaps are relatively small, with 77% of females and 77.7% of males having never smoked one. But regular use is more prevalent in females, with 8.5% of females smoking e-cigarettes or vaping actively (at least once weekly), relative to 6.9% of males.
- Just under four-in-ten live with a smoker, with a 1.1% gap between males and females.

4.a Substances & gambling



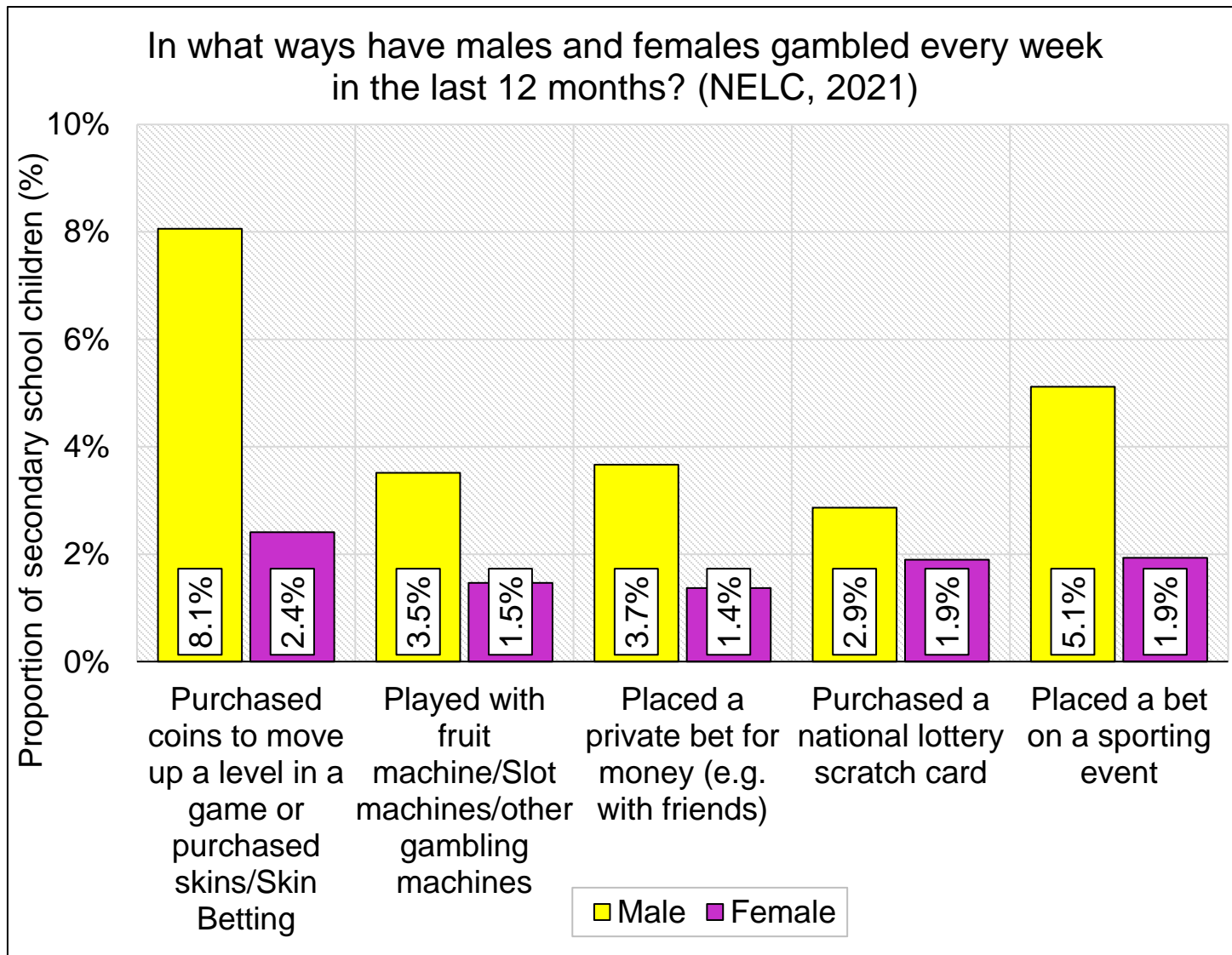
- It is predominantly males that use and see others using. 37.2% of males have seen someone use cannabis, compared to 30.5% of females; these figures are 14.2% and 12% for 'spice or similar' and 17.2% and 19.6% for cocaine. And 7.3% of males have tried or used cannabis, compared to 6.3% of females; these figures are 2.1% and 1.6% for 'spice or similar' and 2.1% and 1.7% for cocaine.
- Females have a better knowledge of where to get illegal drugs – 16.3% know where to get cannabis (edibles/sweets), compared to 14.1% of males, and 11.4% know where to get cocaine, compared to 10.5% of males.
- Both male and female respondents predominantly got their drugs from a dealer, followed closely by 'from friend(s)'. 36 males and 28 females said they got theirs from a stranger.
- Just under two-thirds of males and females knew where to go if they or someone they knew had concerns about an alcohol/drug problem.

4.b Substances & gambling



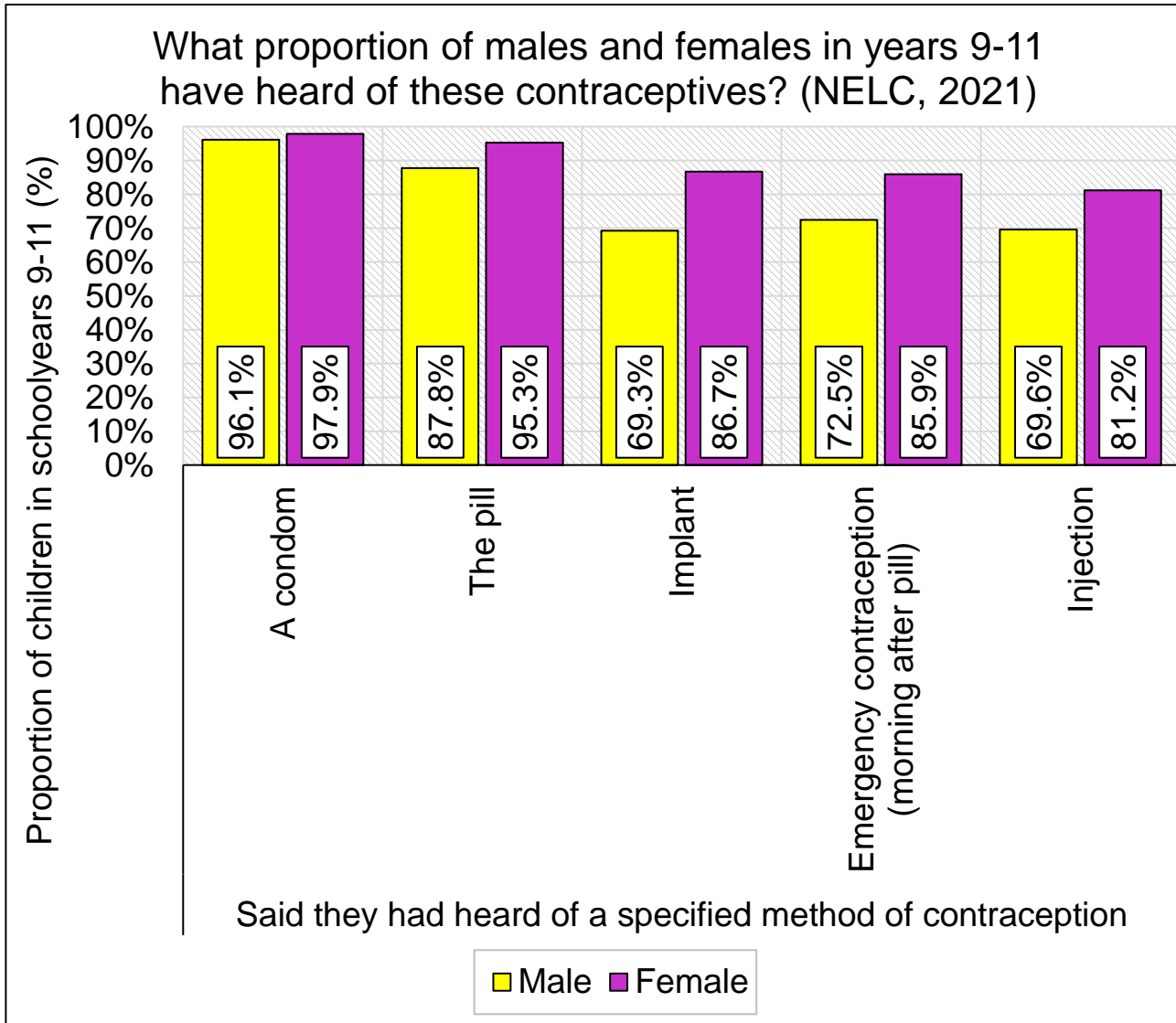
- 41% of females have had a whole alcoholic drink to themselves, relative to 39.1% of males. Other alcohol questions were only put to those who had had one.
- Like smoking, males tend to drink on a much more frequent basis, with 7.7% drinking more than once a week (including 3.9% who drink every day). These figures are 5.4% and 2.1% for females.
- Most respondents said they drink at home when asked where. The proportion of females that drank at a friend's home or at a park/street/beach was quite a lot higher than in males.
- Over one-in-five respondents live with adults who drink more than once a week. For males, this was 23.1%; 3.9% of males and females live with adults who drink daily.
- 9.3% of males said their 'parents don't know' when they drink alcohol, compared to 7.6% of females; Two-thirds said their parents always know.

4.c Substances & gambling



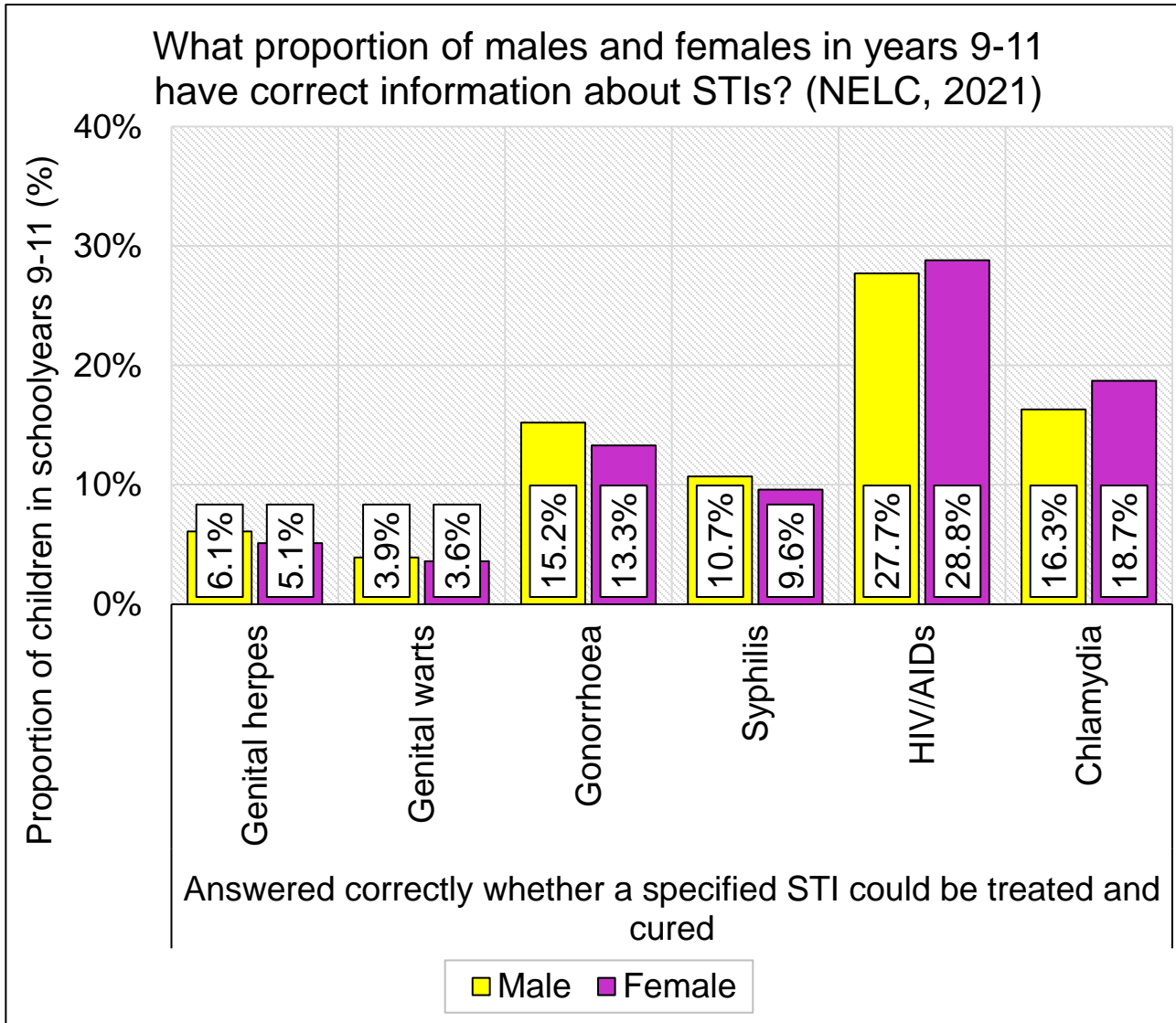
- Betting is predominantly a male issue. No more than 1% of females said they gambled in any of the specified ways every day, while at least 1.7% of males gambled in the specified ways every day, including 2.7% 'purchasing coins to move up a level [...].' 4.2% of males also used the 'other' option.
- Most males and females 'did not know' why they gambled. Males' second-most popular reason was 'to win money.'
- Slightly more females said they had been affected (2.9%) or may have been affected (2.9%) by gambling in the family (For males, these figures were 2.6% and 2.2%)

4.d Substances & gambling



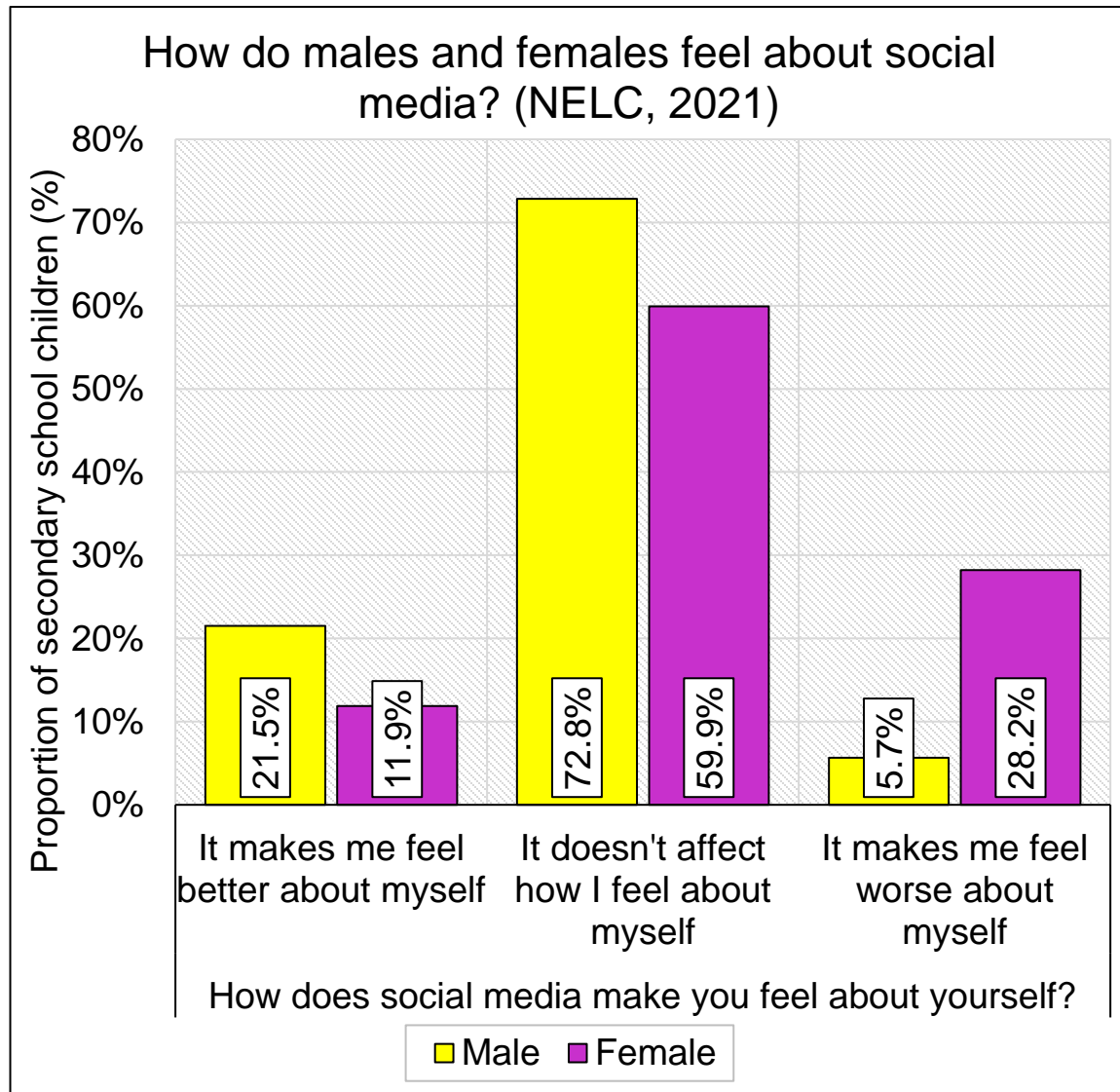
- 13.9% of males said they had ever had sex, relative to 12.6% of females.
- When asked what methods they had used to prevent pregnancy when they last had sex, most males and females said none (condom was a distant second, and it was a more popular response among males). This was only asked of straight and bisexual people.
- Less than half of the males and females responding knew where to access free condoms – for males, the proportion was 44.2%, and for females it was 46.6%.
- 14.3% of males had heard of the C-card scheme, and 3.5% had a C-card. These figures are 12.7% and 1.4% for females.
- This chart shows females were more aware of these contraceptive methods than males. Over 81% of females had heard of these methods, but only 69.3%-72.5% of males had heard of the implant, injection, and emergency contraception.

5.a Sexual health



- Females generally knew less about STIs than males, though less than two-in-ten answered correctly on any of the six STIs listed (see left) (except HIV/AIDSs). Also, between 34.4% and 34.9% of females also said they had 'never heard of' genital warts, genital herpes, and syphilis; this range was 30.8%-31.3% for males.
- If they or their partner wanted an abortion, 74.7% of males said they would know where to go, compared to 71.1% of females. In addition to the year group filter, this was only asked of straight or bisexual people who had had sex.
- The ALS also asked about period poverty, asking females from schoolyears 7 to 11 whether they or their families had ever not had enough money to buy sanitary products. Of those indicating they had periods, 11.2%, or 316 females had experienced this, of which 70 experience it 'every month' or 'most months'.

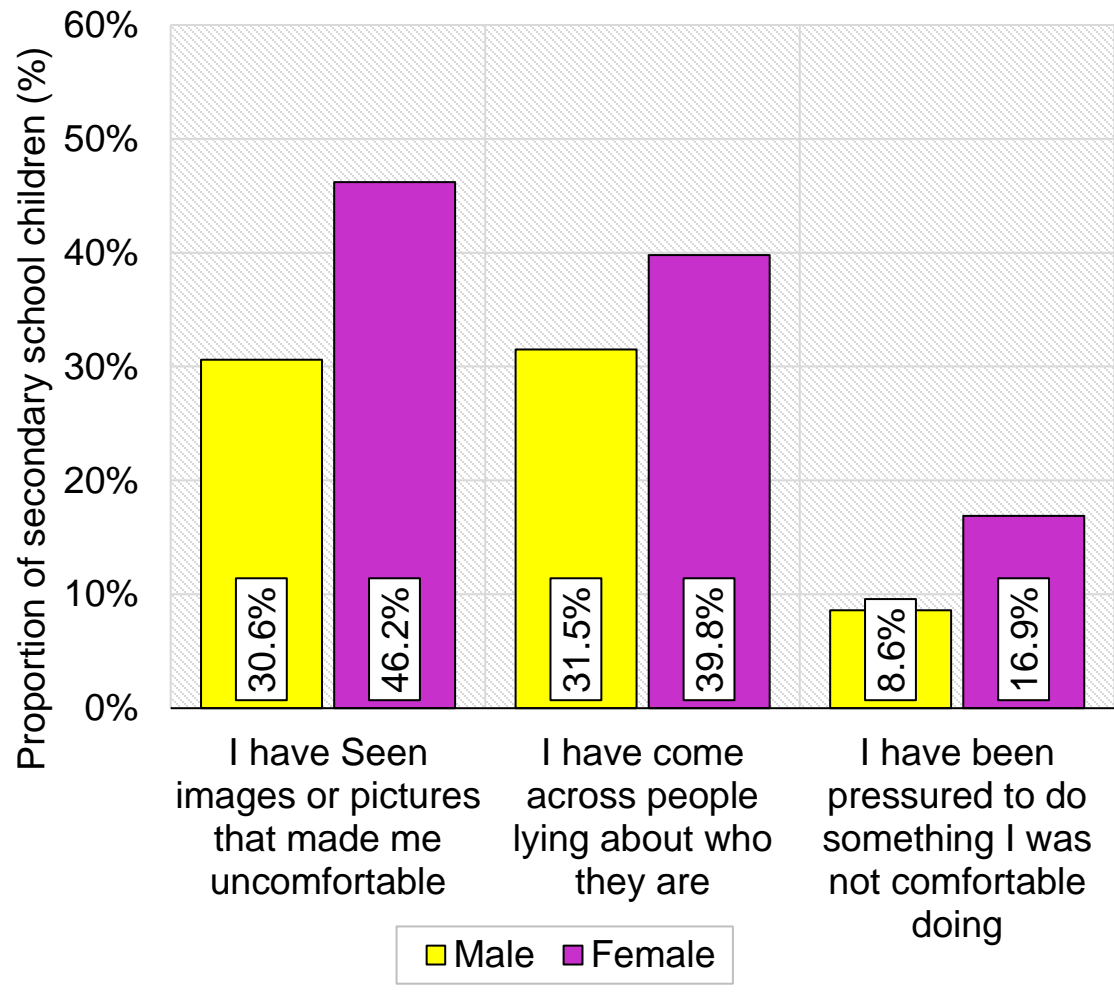
5.b Sexual health



- When asked how they access the internet, most males and females said mobile/ smartphone. The second-most popular choice for females is 'laptop or netbook', while it is 'other, e.g., media or games console,' etc. for males.
- 47.4% of females say they stay up late using the internet, chatting online, or gaming on a school night most days, compared to 45.1% of males. Only 14.8% of males and 13.9% of females say they never do this.
- On what apps are used, almost all responses chose YouTube. TikTok was a close second for males and females, but it is preferred by the latter; the same can be said of Snapchat – the third-most popular app for females (Instagram was the third-most popular among males). Most 'other' responses included WhatsApp.
- While most are not affected by social media, the proportion of negatively affected females is almost five times that of males.

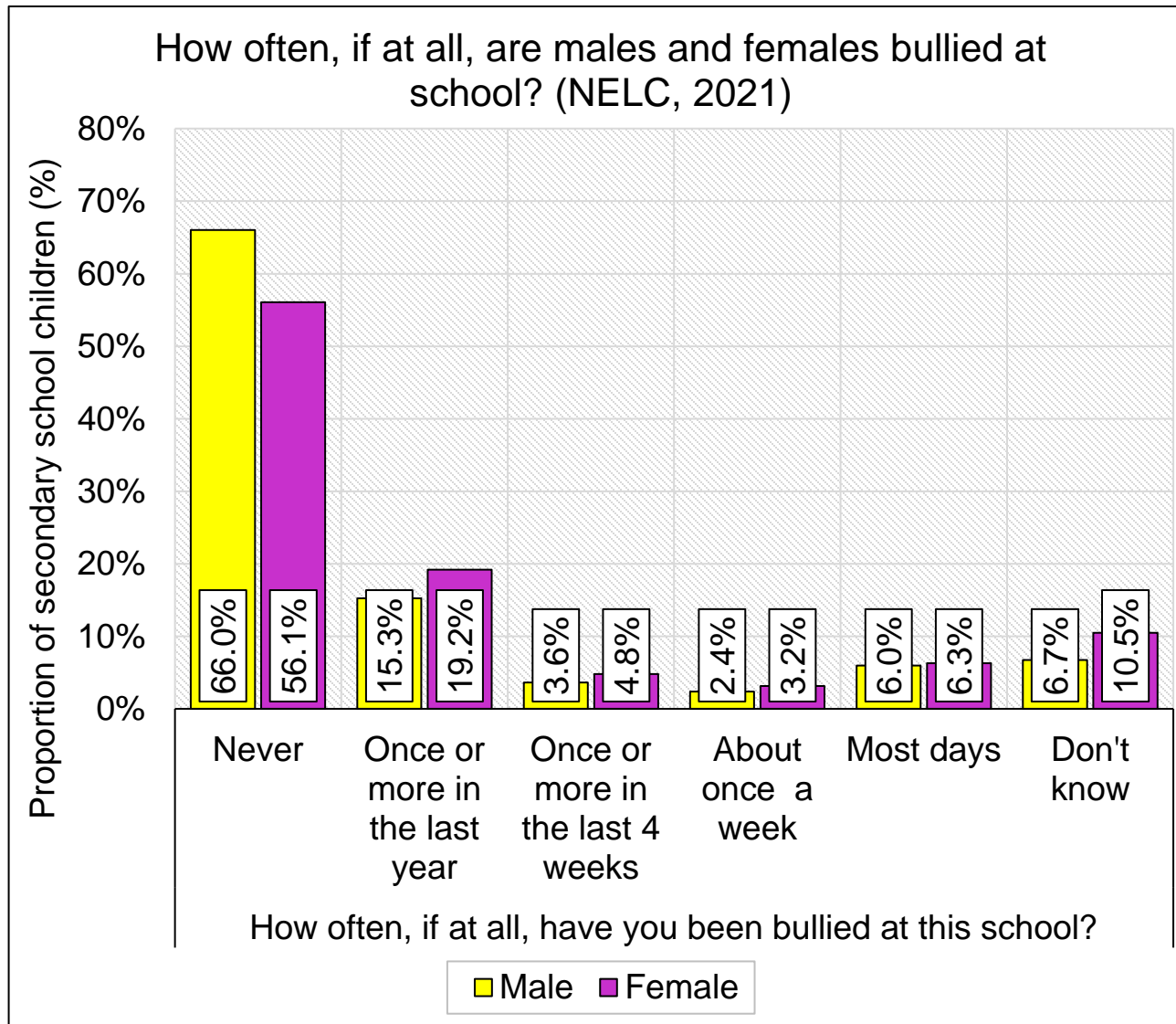
6.a Online safety

What proportion of males and females came across a given problem online? (NELC, 2021)



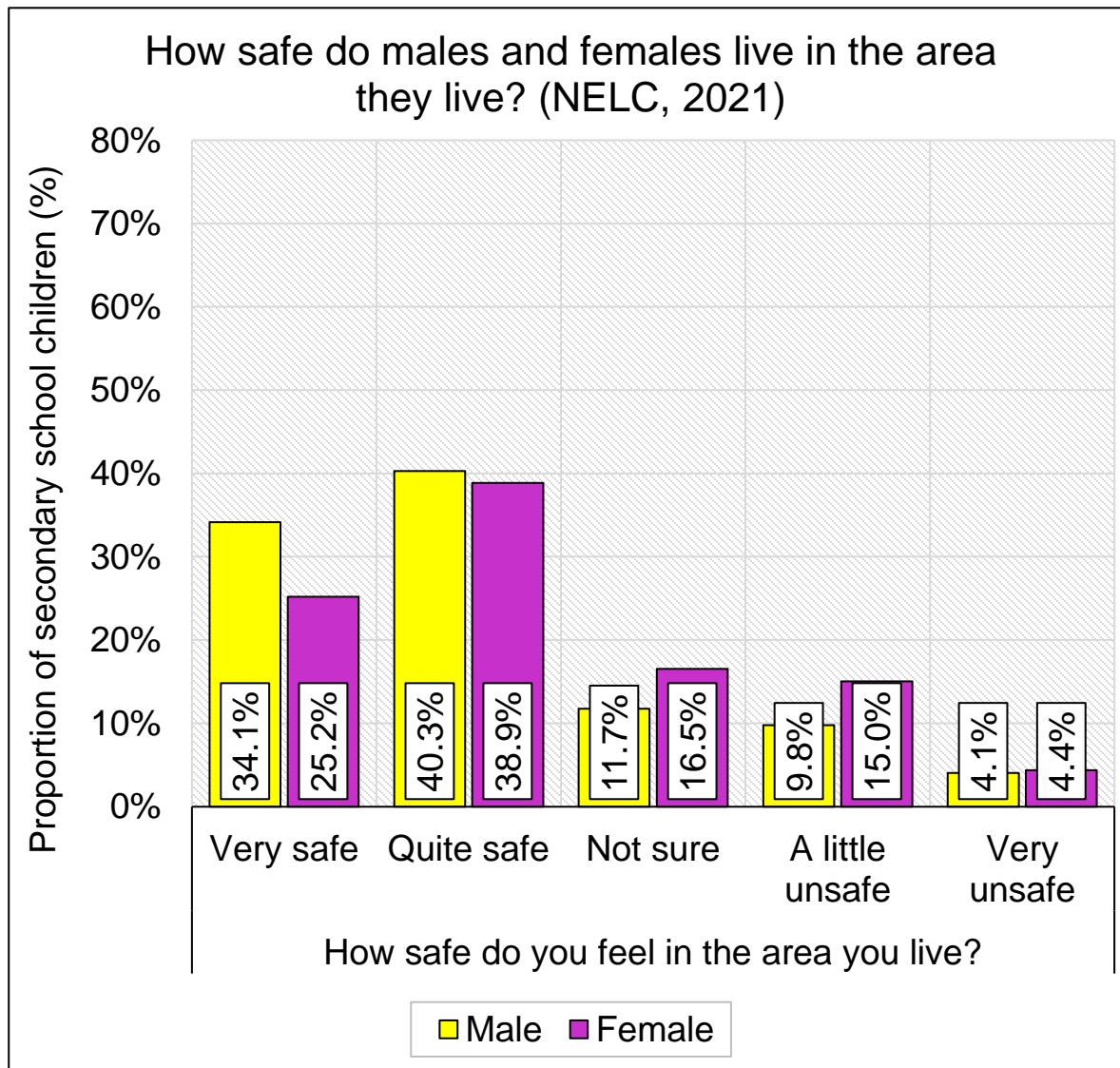
- When asked if they had come across any of a list of six problems on the internet, females were particularly affected by those in the chart. The only one affecting males more was 'met up with someone who you first met online' – picked by 11% of males and 9.8% of females.
- Over 30% of males and females had received abusive comments online. A similar proportion of females had 'sent, posted, or received intimate (nude/nearly nude) pictures or sent pictures [they felt] uncomfortable about,' compared to 17.2% of males. Also, 12% of females picked 'I'd rather not say,' relative to 6.6% of males. This question was asked of years 10 and 11.
- When faced with someone or something online that upset them in some way, the highest proportion of males and females said they did something on their computer, e.g., blocking or reporting it/them. Besides 'this has not happened to me,' the second-most popular response was 'I got help from family and/or friends which, like the most popular response, was also favored by females.

6.b Online safety



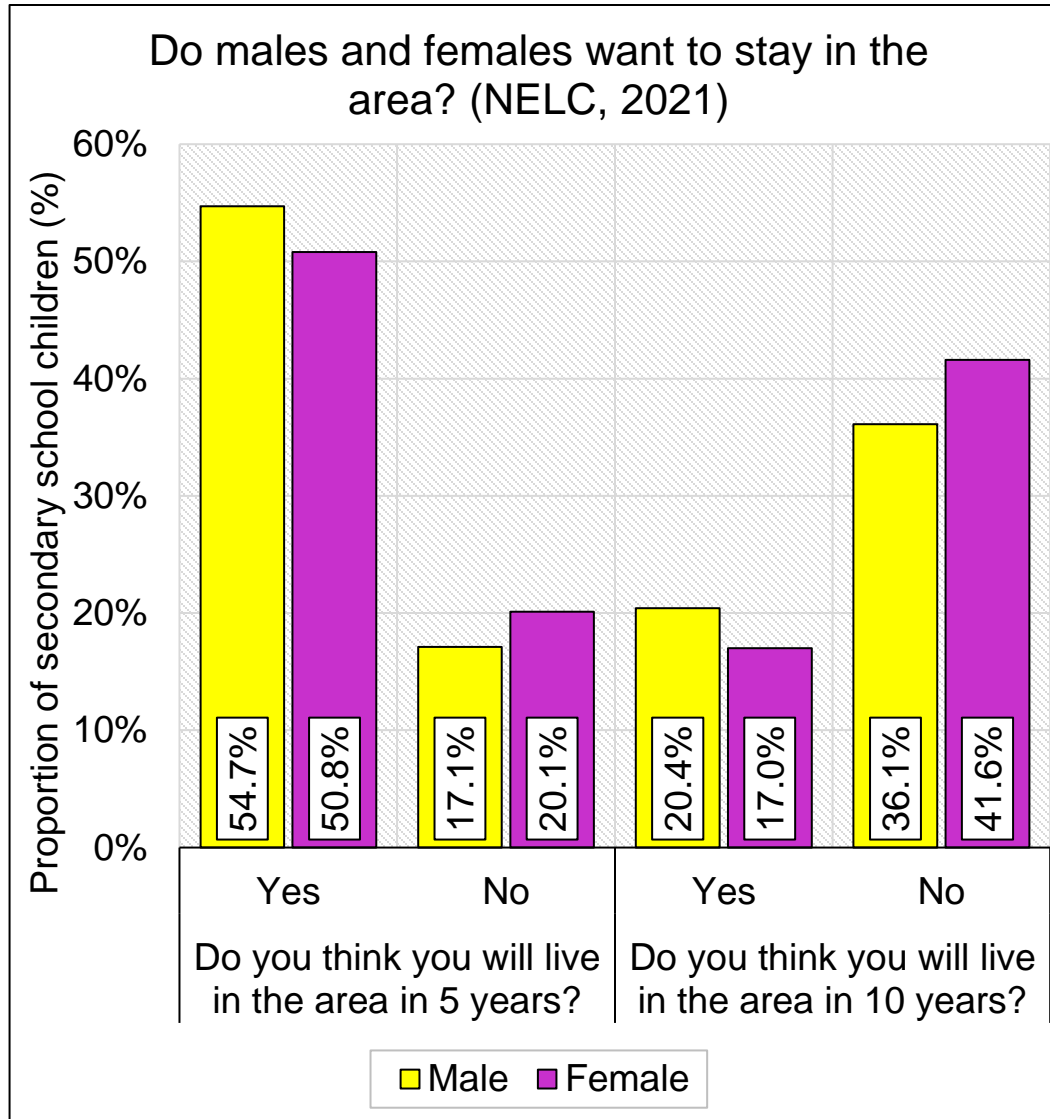
- 33.4% of females indicated they had been bullied in the last year, compared to 27.2% of males. Included in these figures are the 9.5% of females who were bullied daily or weekly, relative to 8.4% of males. More females also said they did not know if they had been bullied.
- Verbal/mental is by far the most common form of bullying, with 80.6% of males and almost nine-in-ten females experiencing it. Physical bullying was the second-most common form for males, while this was cyber for females.
- Most said the bullying had been in school. But it was also common for females in particular to have experienced bullying out of school and on the internet/social media.
- On those who had been bullied – females were affected to a greater extent than males in all but one case. 63.8% of females had felt afraid to go to school, 50.5% had been kept awake at night, 29.6% had hurt/cut themselves, and 26.6% had stopped going to school/missed lessons, the same figures for males are 43.7%, 26.4%, 12.7%, and 15.5%, respectively.

7 Bullying



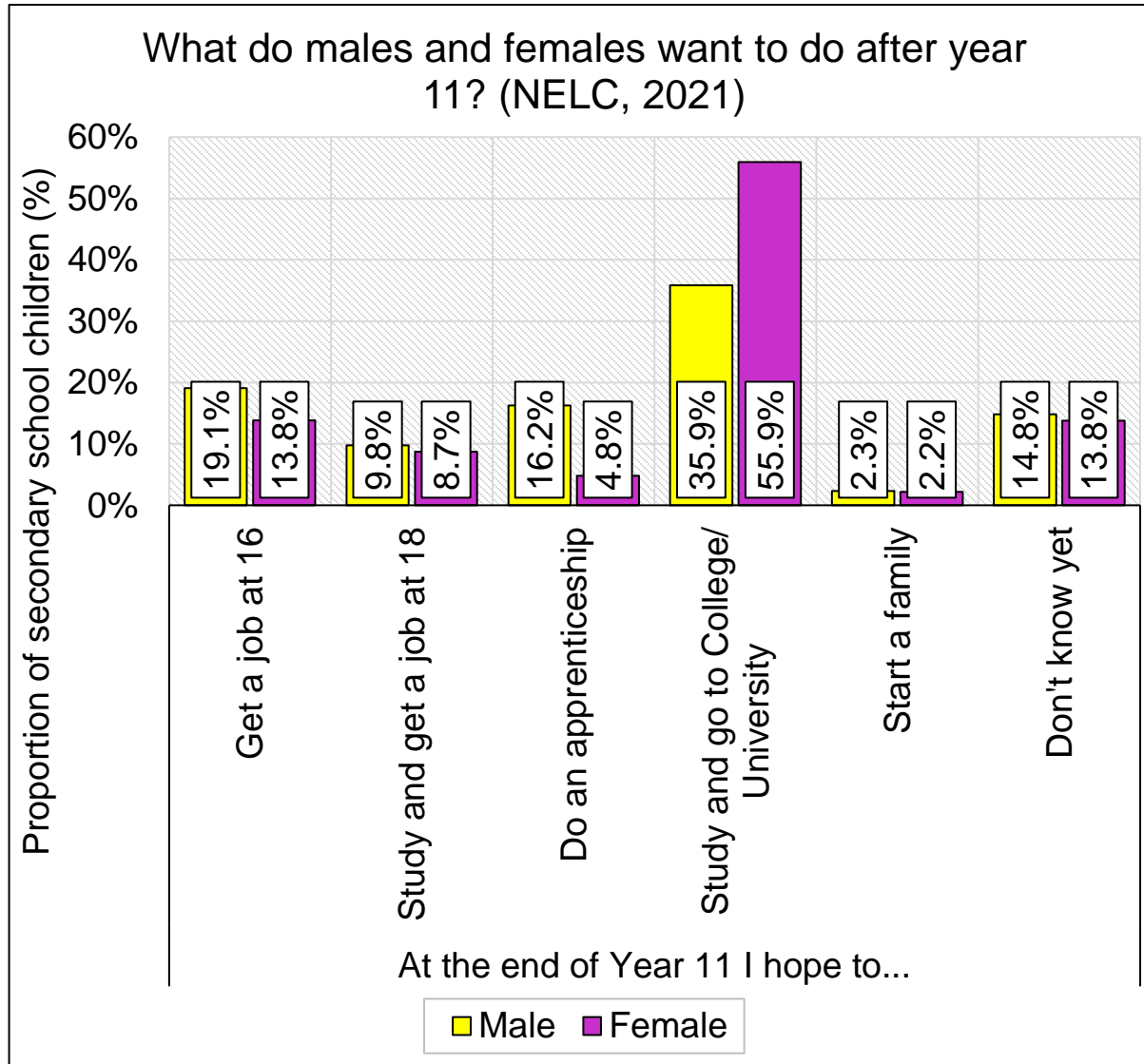
- Males broadly feel safer than females in the area they live, with 74.4% of males feeling 'quite safe' or 'very safe' and only 13.8% feeling 'a little unsafe' or 'very unsafe.' but these figures are 64.1% and 19.4% for females.
- Also, while 93.6% of males feel safe at home, only 88.3% of females do. And at 9.1%, the proportion of females who are 'not sure' if they feel safe is more than twice that of males.
- 17.4% of females have seen domestic violence, compared to 13% of males.
- 57.6% of females said they would call the police if a family member physically hurt them or another family member, compared to 53% of males. 13.5% of females and 18.5% of males said they would not.

8.a Safety, the local area, and education



- Males generally saw their area's outdoor areas/green spaces more positively, with 49.2% saying they were 'good' or 'very good,' relative to 42.4% of females. But 16.1% of males thought they were 'bad' or 'very bad', relative to 15.8% of females.
- On if the local area was a good place to live for young people, only 48.7% of females thought it was, relative to 57.6% of males. Around two-in-ten of both said no.
- On what made their local area a good place to live, males' and females' responses were similar. 'Lots of places to meet up with friends' was the most popular answer for both, followed closely by 'good parks/ outdoor areas.'
- While half of males and females said they will be in the area in five years, the highest proportion of males said don't know (43.5%) re. ten years, and the most popular answer for females is no (41.6%).
- On the *one* issue they wanted to see improved in NEL, males' most popular answer was 'reduce knife/violent crime,' while it was 'feeling safe on our streets' for females – picked by 28.6% of them.

8.b Safety, the local area, and education



- Most thought good grades were important – 81.7% of males and 81% of females said it was a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5 (5 being 'very important') and only 5.3% of males and 5.4% of females said 1 or 2.
- On their plans for after school, males and females had distinct preferences, with the proportion of females that picked 'study and go to college/university' being 20% higher than that of males, while males picked 'get a job at 16' and 'apprenticeship' in much greater numbers – the latter was over three times as popular among males.
- Re. the preferred topics for PSHE, the highest proportion of females said Mental health, and their second-most popular answer was 'Identity (sexual orientation, gender, etc.)'. The most popular answer among males was 'Drugs, alcohol, and smoking,' followed by 'Physical health (e.g., managing diet, exercise, etc.)'.
 - Most males and females said they would like to learn about these in 'weekly/biweekly PSHE lessons.'

8.c Safety, the local area, and education

Thank you for your
time.