

# Healthwatch Herefordshire Crucial Crew Report A Flying Start to High School June 2019



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| Level | Person, place or thing | Makes me feel like this   |
|-------|------------------------|---|
| 5     |                        | This could make me lose control!<br> |
| 4     |                        | This can really upset me.<br>        |
| 3     |                        | This can make me feel nervous.<br>   |
| 2     |                        | This sometimes bothers me.<br>       |
| 1     |                        | This never bothers me.<br>           |

## Introduction

One of Healthwatch Herefordshire's top three priorities for 2018-19 is children & young people's mental health. Our crucial crew work forms part of our engagement towards this priority. Crucial Crew is a school's safety day coordinated by the West Mercia Police every year for all year six children in the county. There are ten workshops delivering various safety messages for the children throughout the day they attend, which are:

- Herefordshire & Worcestershire Fire & rescue - Water safety
- Herefordshire & Worcestershire Fire & rescue - Fire safety
- Strong Young Minds - Mindfulness
- 2Gether Mental Health Trust - Five steps to wellbeing

- Network Rail - Rail safety
- HOPE Support Services - Safety online
- Healthwatch Herefordshire - Starting High School
- Herefordshire Council - Bus Safety
- Dogs Trust - Safety around dogs
- Western Power - Electrical Safety

Crucial Crew runs for two weeks allowing all the children in their last year of primary school a chance to attend for a day and take part in all ten workshops. This is a total of 1,775 10-11-year old pupils across Herefordshire.

The Healthwatch workshop consisted of 2 exercises, all 1,676 children took part in both exercises.

- Exercise 1 - West Midlands Air Ambulance Pod
- Exercise 2 - Make a Flying Start to High School

Each group of children took part in an activity where they looked at how to make a flying start at high school. With the help of suggestion cards, the group firstly discussed what they thought about going up to high school, they were asked if there was anything they were anxious or worried about as well as what they think others around them may feel worried or anxious about. They were given suggestion cards of "issues" to look at and discuss and then rate them as to whether they thought they were the types of things young people would be concerned about. They then rated them on a scale from 1 to 5 (as seen below):

The group then discussed possible solutions to these issues that may help them or others around them, again, using suggestion cards to help them. They rated what they thought would be the top 5 solutions to help young people at this stage in their life.

Whilst this activity was taking place, each of the children went and explored the Air Ambulance Pod, discovering the roles of people that operate the air ambulance as well as exploring the cab.

Once the activity was over, the children had the opportunity to look around the gazebo which was decorated with resources from 'Action for Happiness', again, giving the children ideas and top tips of how they can help to look after their mental health.

### The key messages were:

- Emphasizing that although we have focused on issues and difficulties, going to high school is a great new adventure with lots of new and exciting challenges and fun things.
- If you find things a bit much or need help, remember we all struggle at different parts of our lives - it's not unusual - and it's Ok and important to ask for help.
- Peer support and helping each other is powerful.
- It is important to understand that everyone is different and what you find hard, others may find easy. Be kind to each other and look after people in your year.
- The teachers are there to help you and every problem look smaller when you take a helicopter view of it.

## Results

This exercise was delivered to groups of around 20 children 90 times over two weeks. The data represents how each group rated the issues and solutions they were presented with.

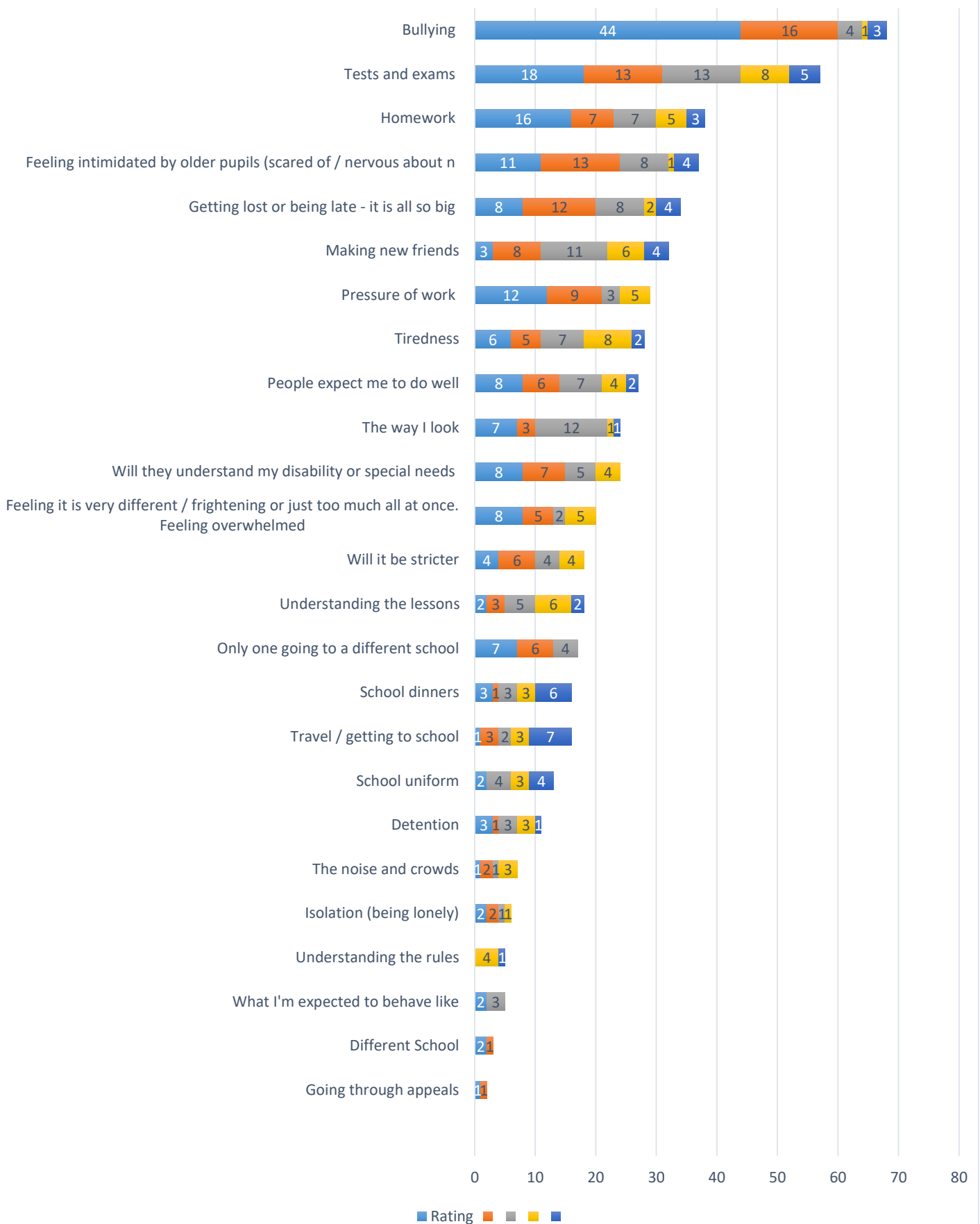
### Top Issues

| Issues   | Rating |    |    |   |   |
|--|--------|----|----|---|---|
|  | 5      | 4  | 3  | 2 | 1 |
| Homework (3rd)   | 16     | 7  | 7  | 5 | 3 |
| Making new friends   | 3      | 8  | 11 | 6 | 4 |
| Bullying (1st)   | 44     | 16 | 4  | 1 | 3 |
| Travel / getting to school   | 1      | 3  | 2  | 3 | 7 |
| Will they understand my disability or special needs (=6th)                                   | 8      | 7  | 5  | 4 |   |
| Feeling intimidated by older pupils (scared of / nervous about n (5th)                       | 11     | 13 | 8  | 1 | 4 |
| Pressure of work (4th)   | 12     | 9  | 3  | 5 |   |
|  | 1      |    |    |   |   |
| Getting lost or being late - it is all so big (=6th)   | 8      | 12 | 8  | 2 | 4 |
| Tiredness  | 6      | 5  | 7  | 8 | 2 |
| People expect me to do well  | 8      | 6  | 7  | 4 | 2 |
| School uniform   | 2      |    | 4  | 3 | 4 |
| School dinners   | 3      | 1  | 3  | 3 | 6 |
| Understanding the rules  |        |    |    | 4 | 1 |
| Feeling it is very different / frightening or just too much all at once. Feeling overwhelmed | 8      | 5  | 2  | 5 |   |
| Understanding the lessons  | 2      | 3  | 5  | 6 | 2 |
| Will it be stricter  | 4      | 6  | 4  | 4 |   |
| The noise and crowds   | 1      | 2  | 1  | 3 |   |
| The way I look   | 7      | 3  | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| Tests and exams 2nd  | 18     | 13 | 13 | 8 | 5 |
| What I'm expected to behave like   | 2      |    | 3  |   |   |
| Peer Pressure  | 2      | 5  | 6  | 2 |   |
| Detention  | 3      | 1  | 3  | 3 | 1 |
| Only one going to a different school   | 7      | 6  | 4  |   |   |
| Isolation (being lonely)   | 2      | 2  | 1  | 1 |   |
| Going through appeals  | 1      | 1  |    |   |   |
| Different School   | 2      | 1  |    |   |   |

## Top Solutions

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1st  | Discuss with parents  |
| 2nd  | Try to think positive   |
| 3rd  | Asking teacher for help   |
| 4th  | Friends / Peer Support  |
| 5th  | Find a safe adult   |
| 6th  | Think about the good things that can happen and not just the bad things                     |
| 7th  | Try mindfulness to stay calm  |
| 8th  | Celebrate who you are   |
| 9th  | Find someone else that looks like they are struggling and see if you can support each other |
| 9th  | Remember 5 ways to wellbeing or 10 actions for happiness                                    |
| 10th | Write it down and break it up into parts you can deal with                                  |
| 11th | Go to my doctor   |
| 12th | "Take a helicopter view"  |
| 12th | Have a good cry   |
| 12th | Try a few ideas and experiment  |
| 13th | Look it up on the internet  |
| 14th | Find someone that looks like they are coping and ask their advice or help                   |
| 15th | "Man-Up"  |
| 16th | Read a book about it  |
| 17th | Get angry / storm out and kick up a stink   |
| 18th | Ignore it for a few weeks it might get better   |
| 18th | Listen to a self-help audio clip  |
| 19th | Bottle it up and get on with it   |

## Children & Young People's Issues



## Comments

The graph explains the issues that young people felt were of most concern and how they rated them.

It clearly shows the issues that most children felt were of highest concern; these being Bullying; Tests & Exams; and Homework.

It is also worth mentioning that the Healthwatch staff and volunteers who ran the sessions, commented that although some of the issues were only mentioned by a couple of individuals, these young people rated the issue highly, for example, there were only a couple of young people commented about being the only one going to a different school or going through an appeals procedures, but for these individuals, this was a big concern for them. Therefore, it is worth looking at each of these issues, individually.

A notable consistent response was that the children were cautious about looking online for help and information. Their awareness of mis information on the internet and online safety was high.

The top 5 solutions that young people highlighted in this exercise are mainly around finding trusted adults that they can share their concerns with, whether they are the parents, the staff at school or just a safe adult.

During the activity, we also highlighted to the children the resources from the Action for Happiness initiative, this linked very well to the solutions we had discussed and was useful to give young people some tips on how they can help to manage their own wellbeing.

## Recommendations

- More help to tackle the issue of Bullying. Talking more to young people about the effects on an individual and the impact it can cause.
- Talk to young people about what they can expect from high school in terms of tests, exams & homework so they are prepared as well as letting them know what they can do if they begin to experience difficulties with these issues.
- Consider how to support individuals who may feel anxious about individual scenarios, e.g. being the only person going to a different school.
- More schools to use the 'Action For Happiness' resources to enable young people to help manage their own mental health. This could contribute to preventive measures to avoid the situation of young people needing to access services for support with their mental health.
- Teachers and school staff to reflect on the sorts of issues highlighted in the graph above that effect young people, including those issues that concern a few but in a serious way and think about what they might do to detect and address the issue.
- More teachers and school staff to attend a Herefordshire schools mental health forum to discuss and share good practice on young people's mental health.

## Acknowledgments

Thank you to all the schools who took part - your voice counts!

We would also like to thank the police and fire service for coordinating the crucial crew event.

Thank you to our volunteers Megan and Kim for helping us with this event.

And finally, thank you to the West Midlands Air Ambulance for bringing their pod for the children to explore.

**If you have found this report useful and have used it to make a difference or influence your work, please let us know.**

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