

**A Preliminary Review of the SPHE Needs Analysis
Survey (2000-2001)**

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Introduction

This report presents summary results of the Needs Analysis Survey conducted in the ten SPHE / Health Board regions in the school year 2000-2001. Table 1 shows the number of schools in each Health Board region which returned data. Completed or partially complete questionnaires were received from 489 schools. Department of Education and Science (DES) statistics indicate that there were 750 second-level schools in 2000-2001, therefore this represents a return rate of 65.2 percent. Return rates per region cannot be calculated since no data is available on the number of second-level schools within each region. However, it can be seen that the Southern (81) and South Eastern (77) regions collected data from the largest number of schools and the South Western (17) region the fewest.

Table 1: Number of schools in each Health Board region returning completed or partially completed questionnaires

Health Board Region	Number of schools returning data	Percent
East Coast	42	8.6
Midland	51	10.4
Mid-Western	68	13.9
North-Eastern	49	10.0
North-Western	30	6.1
Northern	26	5.3
South-Eastern	77	15.7
South-Western	17	3.5
Southern	81	16.6
Western	48	9.8
Total	489	100.0

Unfortunately, due to differences in how data from the returned questionnaires were collected, recorded and stored, data from four health board regions (Midland, Mid-Western, North-Eastern and Southern) is not included in the current analysis.

However, data from all ten regions will be presented in a series of ten regional reports (to follow). This preliminary analysis is therefore based on data for 240 schools from six regions (East Coast, North-Western, Northern, South-Eastern, South-Western and Western).

Two important caveats should be noted at the outset. First, survey results can be biased. This generally becomes more of a problem as the response rate drops, since there is a danger that those who make returns do not represent the population of interest in general. For example, in the present case it is possible that completed survey forms were returned more often from schools where SPHE was already being taught or where staff had a positive attitude toward the subject. The second caveat is that survey results should not be used to infer causal relationships between variables. Such causal relationships may exist but can only be confirmed through additional current or future studies. To conclude, the results presented here should be regarded as indicative, rather than definitive of the position of SPHE with regard to schools at the time the survey was implemented.

Analyses are broken down into three key areas,

- Provision of SPHE
- Policy development
- Level of training and training needs

Provision of SPHE

Schools were asked to indicate whether or not they provided SPHE to students in first to third-year. Table 2 shows the number and percentage of schools which were providing SPHE to students in the Junior Cycle at the time of the survey. It is clear that more schools provided the subject at first year (153, 66.5%), than at second (133, 57.8%) or third year (109, 47.4%). This pattern is presumably due to the recent introduction of the subject to a number of schools. However it seems that in a number of schools SPHE was provided only to first-year students and not carried on afterward.

Table 2: Was the school providing SPHE for students in 1st – 3rd Year?

	1 st Year		2 nd Year		3 rd Year	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	153	66.5	133	57.8	109	47.4
No	77	33.5	97	42.2	121	52.6
Total	230*	100	230	100	230	100

*Data was missing for ten schools

Two-in-five (42.9%) schools provided SPHE across all three years. Almost two-thirds of schools (158, 65.8%) provided SPHE to students at at least one year level (Table 3). However, just over one-third of schools did not provide the subject at all. In later analysis schools are divided between SPHE schools (those providing the subject at at least one year level) and non-SPHE schools (schools which did not offer the subject).

Table 3: Number of years at which school was providing SPHE for students (1st – 3rd Year)

	Frequency	Percent
All 3	103	42.9
Any 2	27	11.3
Any 1	28	11.7
None	82	34.2
Total	240	100

There is some evidence to suggest that smaller schools (in terms of total enrolment¹) were a little less likely to offer SPHE than larger schools (Table 4). It can be seen that as school size increases the percentage of school which did not offer SPHE decreased while the percentage of schools providing the subject increased, from 62.5 percent of small school (0-299) to 69.7 percent of large schools (600+). It is worth noting that the proportion of very small schools (0-199) teaching SPHE was 51.6 percent (16 of 31).

Table 4: School size (enrolment) by whether or not SPHE provided

Enrolment (n)	Non-SPHE schools		SPHE schools		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
0-299	24	37.5	40	62.5	64	100.0
300-599	35	34.3	67	65.7	102	100.0
600+	20	30.3	46	69.7	66	100.0
Total	79	34.1	153	65.9	232*	100.0

*Data on school size was missing for 8 schools.

Policy Development

Schools were asked whether or not they had developed policy in a number of key areas. Tables 5a and 5b show the responses for SPHE (5a) and non-SPHE (5b) schools. More than 70 percent of SPHE schools had developed a policy in regard to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), just over half (51.5%) had developed policy regarding substance misuse, while fewer than half (44.1%) had developed policy regarding child protection. The relative proportions of non-SPHE schools having policies in these areas are in all cases lower (RSE, 42.6%; substance misuse, 44.1%, child protection 26.5%). However, the great majority, 19 out of 20, of both SPHE and non-SPHE schools have policy developed in other areas, e.g. anti-bullying.

¹ Data was collected on the total numbers of students enrolled in the school rather than on the numbers in the Junior Cycle.

Table 5a: Are policies for the following issues developed (SPHE schools)?

	RSE		Substance Misuse		Child Protection		Other e.g. anti-bullying etc.?	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	96	70.6	70	51.5	60	44.1	132	95.0
No	40	29.4	66	48.5	76	55.9	7	5.0
Total	136*	100.0	136	100.0	136	100.0	139**	100.0

*Data was missing for 22 schools

**Data was missing for 19 schools

Table 5b: Are policies for the following issues developed (non-SPHE schools)?

	RSE		Substance Misuse		Child Protection		Other e.g. anti-bullying etc.?	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	29	42.6	30	44.1	18	26.5	65	95.5
No	39	57.4	38	55.9	50	73.5	3	4.4
Total	68*	100.0	68	100.0	68	100.0	68	100.0

*Data was missing for 14 schools

Level of Training and Training Needs

Table 6 shows the number of teachers teaching SPHE and the number of teachers trained to do so in SPHE and non-SPHE schools. Just over half (367 of 678, 54.1%) of teachers teaching in the SPHE schools were trained to deliver the subject. The data suggests that at the time of the survey (2000-2001) a substantial proportion (45.9%) of teachers teaching SPHE had no specific training. However, these figures should be treated with some caution due to the high instance of missing data. For example, 34 of the SPHE schools did not give a figure for the number of teachers teaching the subject. However, 18 of these same schools listed teachers who had been trained. Fifty-eight teachers in non-SPHE schools were listed as having training in SPHE.

Table 6: Number of teachers teaching SPHE, number of trained teachers and number of untrained teachers

	Teachers teaching SPHE (n)	Trained teachers (n)	Untrained teachers (n) ²
SPHE schools (n=158)	678	367 (54.1%)	311 (45.9%)
Non-SPHE schools (n=82)	-	58	-

Schools were asked about the training needs for principals and staff. Table 7 shows the response for whether or not they felt information sessions for schools principals were required. Just over half of schools (53.5%) felt that they were. However, it is apparent that there was a difference between schools where SPHE was already taught and those school not providing the subject. There was a greater demand for information sessions for principals in non-SPHE schools, where almost two-thirds (62.7) of schools indicated a need. This differs from the situation in SPHE schools, where responses were almost equally divided (48.9% Yes, 51.1% No).

Table 7: Training needs - Information sessions for school principals? by whether SPHE currently taught in school

	SPHE taught		SPHE not taught		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	64	48.9	42	62.7	106	53.5
No	67	51.1	25	37.3	92	46.5
Total	131*	100	67*	100	198	100

*Data missing for 27 schools

** Data missing for 15 schools

Three-quarters (75.8%) of schools indicated that information seminars were required for the whole staff. (Table 8). Once again the demand for this training is greater from schools which were not currently providing SPHE to their students. Nine out of ten (88.1%) of such schools indicated the need for whole staff seminars. Demand in

² The questionnaire did not ask about the number of untrained teachers teacher the subject. This figure is inferred from the number of teachers teaching SPHE and the number of trained teachers.

SPHE schools was also comparatively high with seven out of ten (69.5%) schools indicating the need for such training.

Table 8: Training needs - Information seminars for whole staff? by whether SPHE currently taught in school

	SPHE taught		SPHE not taught		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	91	69.5	59	88.1	150	75.8
No	40	30.5	8	11.9	48	24.2
Total	131*	100	67*	100	198	100

*Data missing for 27 schools

** Data missing for 15 schools

Over 90 percent of schools (92.4%) stated that there ought to be personal development training for new teachers (Table 9). There is irrespective of whether or not SPHE is taught in the school or not.

Table 9: Training needs - Personal development training for new teachers? by whether SPHE currently taught in school

	SPHE taught		SPHE not taught		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	122	93.1	61	91.0	183	92.4
No	9	6.9	6	9.0	15	7.6
Total	131*	100	67*	100	198	100

*Data missing for 27 schools

** Data missing for 15 schools

Table 10 shows the breakdown of responses on whether schools felt that there should be personal development training for experienced SPHE teachers. Overall 69.4 percent of school felt that there was a need for such training. However, there was a clear difference between SPHE schools and non-SPHE schools. More than four out of five (82.3%) of SPHE schools felt that there was a requirement for such training. However, this figure dropped to less than half (43.9%) of schools which did not teach SPHE at the time of the survey.

Table 10: Personal development training for experienced SPHE teachers? by whether SPHE currently taught in school

	SPHE taught		SPHE not taught		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	107	82.3	29	43.9	136	69.4
No	23	17.7	37	56.1	60	30.6
Total	130	100	66	100	196	100

*Data missing for 28 schools

** Data missing for 16 schools

Key Points

Results from six of the ten SPHE/Health Board regions, encompassing 240 schools, were analysed. Findings for three areas were focussed on – level of provision, policy development and level of training/ training needs. The key findings are outlined below.

- Almost two-thirds of schools in the six regions dealt with in this summary report taught SPHE to at least one year group in the Junior Cycle. However, the proportion offering the subject dropped between first (66.5%) and third-year (47.4%). Fewer than half the schools (43%) provided the subject across all three years.
- Larger schools were more likely to teach the subject than smaller schools.
- Schools which taught SPHE were more likely to have developed policy with regard to the key areas of RSE, substance abuse and child protection than non-SPHE schools.
- The great majority of schools (over 95%) had developed policy on other issues such as ways to deal with bullying. This was so regardless of whether SPHE was taught in the school.

- A substantial proportion (45.9%) of teachers teaching SPHE appear not to have had any training in the subject area.
- Analysis of training needs shows a difference of emphasis between schools which taught SPHE and those which did not.
- Just over half of schools expressed a need for information sessions for school principals. This figure rose to two-thirds for non-SPHE schools.
- Three-quarters of schools expressed a need for information seminars for the whole staff. This figure approached 90 percent for non-SPHE schools.
- The need for personal development training for new teachers was endorsed by more than 90 percent of schools, regardless of whether they provided SPHE.
- The demand for personal development training for experienced SPHE training was much greater in SPHE schools (82.3%) than non-SPHE schools.