



Pros	Cons
Flexible user group - pupils, parents and student versions	May need explaining as easy to complete wrong way round, eg not true for certainly true
Used internationally - and available in many languages	Lots of questions in dull-looking format
Robustly tested	Reasonable literacy level required
Updated (in spite of 2005 date on paper)	
Free	
Score can be compared to national average	
Online scoring system and automatic report generation	

### Hints & Tips:

- Encourage your students to be honest when completing the form - and explain why you are asking them to complete the questions
- Be with the students when they complete the questionnaire as reflection on statements may generate distress for some.
- Use the online scoring system to generate a PDF summary of the results, but
- To present students' results in a visual way (the PDF report is all text), you may wish to set up a spreadsheet for the scores, so that bar charts can be produced.



# SDQ worked example

## Scoring

Whilst it is easiest to use the online scoring system on the [website](#) to generate scores and results, it is helpful to know how the scores are generated. We have therefore included the manual scoring system, too, for guidance.

### 1. Manual Scoring

A scoring sheet is available on the [website](#) (also PDF 2). Each item is scored as 1, 2 or 3 depending on which column is ticked. "Somewhat True" is always scored as 1 but the scoring of "Not True" and "Certainly True" varies with the item.

For each of the categories - emotional, conduct, hyperactivity, peer and prosocial - the maximum score is 10.

**The higher the score, the greater the difficulty EXCEPT for pro-social** which is scored as a strength, with a higher score indicating a greater strength in this area.

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Scoring the Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire for age 4-17

The 25 items in the SDQ comprise 5 scales of 5 items each. It is usually easiest to score all 5 scales first before working out the total difficulties score. 'Somewhat True' is always scored as 1, but the scoring of 'Not True' and 'Certainly True' varies with the item, as shown below scale by scale. For each of the 5 scales the score can range from 0 to 10 if all items were completed. These scores can be scaled up pro-rata if at least 3 items were completed, e.g. a score of 4 based on 3 completed items can be scaled up to a score of 7 (5/3\*7 rounded up) for 5 items.

Table 1: Scoring symptom scores on the SDQ for 4-17 year olds

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
<b>Emotional problems scale</b>			
ITEM 3: Often complains of headaches... (I get a lot of headaches...)	0	1	2
ITEM 6: Many worries... (I worry a lot)	0	1	2
ITEM 10: Often unhappy, downhearted... (I am often unhappy...)	0	1	2
ITEM 16: Nervous or clingy in new situations... (I am nervous in new situations...)	0	1	2
ITEM 26: Many fears, easily scared (I have many fears...)	0	1	2
<b>Conduct problems scale</b>			
ITEM 5: Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers (I get very angry)	0	1	2
ITEM 7: Generally obedient... (I usually do as I am told)	2	1	0
ITEM 12: Often fights with other children... (I fight a lot)	0	1	2
ITEM 18: Often lies or cheats (I am often accused of lying or cheating)	0	1	2
ITEM 22: Steals from home, school or elsewhere (I take things that are not mine)	0	1	2
<b>Hyperactivity scale</b>			
ITEM 2: Restless, inoperative... (I am restless...)	0	1	2
ITEM 10: Constantly fidgeting or squirming (I am constantly fidgeting...)	0	1	2
ITEM 15: Easily distracted, concentration wanders (I am easily distracted)	0	1	2
ITEM 17: Thinks things out before acting (I think before I do things)	2	1	0
ITEM 25: Sees tasks through to the end... (I finish the work I am doing)	2	1	0
<b>Peer problems scale</b>			
ITEM 6: Rather solitary, tends to play alone (I am usually on my own)	0	1	2
ITEM 11: Has at least one good friend (I have one good friend or more)	2	1	0
ITEM 14: Generally liked by other children (Other people my age generally like me)	2	1	0
ITEM 19: Picked on or bullied by other children... (Other children or young people pick on me)	0	1	2
ITEM 23: Gets on better with adults than with other children (I get on better with adults than with people my age)	0	1	2
<b>Prosocial scale</b>			
ITEM 1: Considerate of other people's feelings (I try to be nice to other people)	0	1	2
ITEM 4: Shares readily with other children... (I usually share with others)	0	1	2
ITEM 9: Helpful if someone is hurt... (I am helpful if someone is hurt...)	0	1	2
ITEM 17: Kind to younger children (I am kind to younger children)	0	1	2
ITEM 20: Often volunteers to help others... (I often volunteer to help others)	0	1	2

Following scoring you can determine:

PDF 2 Manual SDQ scoring sheet

- A **"total difficulties" score** - generated by summing scores from all of the categories **except the prosocial** scale, resulting in a score out of 40. It categorises these scores as "Close to Average", "Slightly Raised", "High" or "Very High" compared to the national average for that age group

**The higher the total score, the greater the total difficulties**

- A **risk factor** - Low, Medium or High.

This is the risk of the student developing a mental health disorder **based on national averages** for that age group.



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# Erasmus+

# SDQ worked example

## 2. Online scoring

The website has an online scoring system which enables you to enter the results from each questionnaire. It then automatically generates a PDF summary report containing:

- A total difficulties score (termed "overall stress")
- Scores for each of the categories, including pro-social
- An impact score (out of 10) if the impact supplement is used, and
- Risk factors for potential disorders

An example is given below. (SDQ was also completed by the parent, not shown)

Conduct difficulties (max 10)

Total difficulties (max 40)

### Teacher SDQ for 4-17 year olds, informant = teacher, completed 7th December 2015

Score for overall stress	8	(0 - 11 is close to average)
Score for emotional distress	3	(0 - 3 is close to average)
Score for behavioural difficulties	0	(0 - 2 is close to average)
Score for hyperactivity and concentration difficulties	2	(0 - 5 is close to average)
Score for difficulties getting along with other young people	3	<b>(3 - 4 is slightly raised)</b>
Score for kind and helpful behaviour	9	(6 - 10 is close to average)
Score for the impact of any difficulties on the young person's life	0	(0 is close to average)

Pro-social strengths (max 10)

### Parent SDQ for 4-17 year olds, informant = parent, completed 7th December 2015

Score for overall stress	7	(0 - 14 is close to average)
Score for emotional distress	1	(0 - 4 is close to average)
Score for behavioural difficulties	0	(0 - 3 is close to average)
Score for hyperactivity and concentration difficulties	3	(0 - 5 is close to average)
Score for difficulties getting along with other young people	3	<b>(3 is slightly raised)</b>
Score for kind and helpful behaviour	6	<b>(6 is slightly low)</b>
Score for the impact of any difficulties on the young person's life	1	<b>(1 is slightly raised)</b>

Peer difficulties (max 10)

Impact score (max 10)

### Diagnostic predictions

Any disorder	Low risk
Emotional disorder (anxiety, depression etc.)	Low risk
Behavioural disorder	Low risk
Hyperactivity or concentration disorder	Low risk

Risk of mental disorder

### Comments added

Teacher: *Quiet young man, become a popular member of group. Continues to worry about change and gets distracted easily. V kind and considerate, supported many students voluntarily.*

Young person: *Sometimes bullied*



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# SDQ worked example

## Analysis & Presentation

In the UK, we set up a spreadsheet to record the SDQ scores for each pupil so that the results could be presented in a variety of ways.

We used the **classroom teacher's assessment** for quantitative analysis of total difficulties but included parents' and students' SDQ results to determine overall risk factors.

The example given below illustrates the SDQ scores for students before (Sep 2015) and after (Dec 2015) a weekly programme of outdoor learning. We used a traffic-light colour coding system to quickly identify major difficulties for each student and highlight changes. This information could then be used to determine **which type of activities** from the [activity bank](#) may be most appropriate for individuals or the group as a whole.

Pupil name		Pro-Social strengths	Hyperactivity difficulties	Emotional difficulties	Conduct difficulties	Peer difficulties	TOTAL difficulties (excl PS) max 40	Diffs before	Diffs after	
	Sep-15	4	10	5	3	1	19	19		
	Dec-15	6	6	1	0	0	7		7	
	Sep-15	5	5	6	4	8	23	23		
	Dec-15	9	2	1	0	5	8		8	
	Sep-15	5	3	7	0	8	18	18		
	Dec-15	9	2	3	0	3	8		8	v high / v low (PS)
	Sep-15	4	7	4	2	5	18	18		high / low (PS)
	Dec-15	9	5	0	0	1	6		6	slightly raised / lowered (PS)
	Sep-15	3	8	4	3	2	17	17		close to average
	Dec-15	9	3	1	1	0	5		5	
	Sep-15	4	10	5	1	7	23	23		
	Dec-15	8	8	0	0	3	11		11	
	Sep-15	5	2	5	0	5	12	12		
	Dec-15	7	2	1	0	3	6		6	



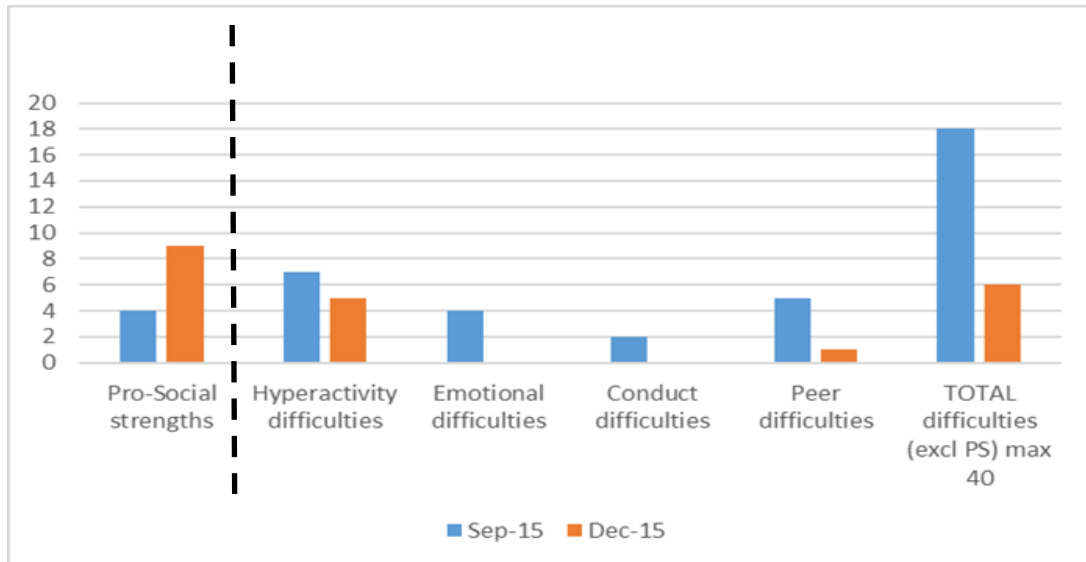
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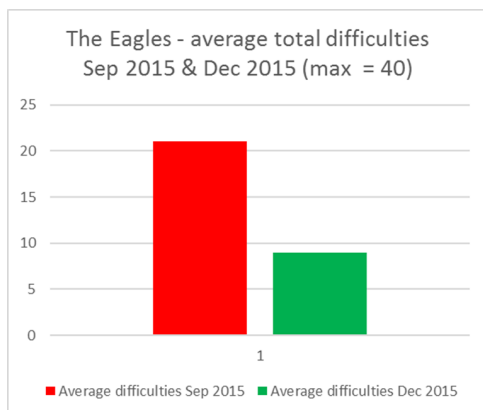
# SDQ worked example

## Analysis & Presentation

Difficulties for individual students can be represented as bar charts using the data from the spreadsheet.



The example above shows how a student's total difficulties decreased following a programme of outdoor learning (Sep - Dec 2015) and how their pro-social strengths increased.



Group difficulties can also be charted to illustrate change following an intervention or other style of programme.



# SDQ worked example

## Analysis & Presentation

### Risk factors - getting professional support

Where the SDQ results indicate a **high risk** of mental health disorder (as in the example below) specialist, **professional assistance** may be needed to support the student's emotional well-being and minimize risk of disorders developing.

#### Diagnostic predictions

Any disorder	<b>HIGH risk</b>
Emotional disorder (anxiety, depression etc.)	<b>HIGH risk</b>
Behavioural disorder	Low risk
Hyperactivity or concentration disorder	Low risk

In the above instance, the student attended the Nurture unit at the high school, rather than mainstream classes, to help reduce the student's anxieties and fears. The SDQ tool, in combination with discussions with parents and teachers, allowed a well-informed decision to be made to effectively meet the student's needs.



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