



23 July 2015

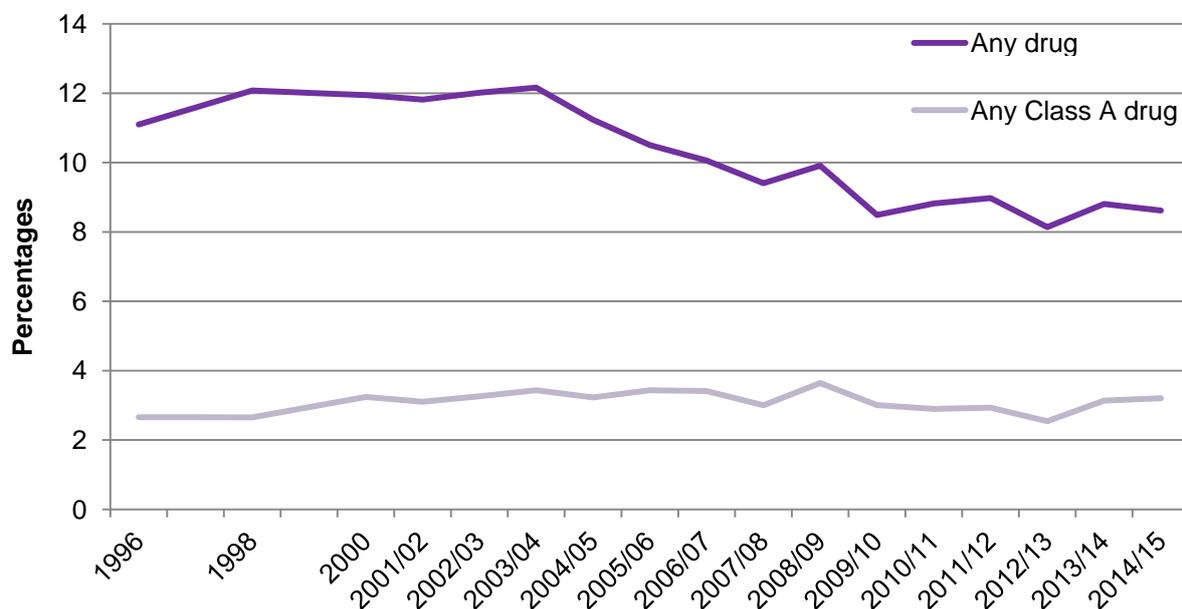
Statistical News Release – Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2014/15 Crime Survey for England and Wales

The latest National Statistics on illicit drug use in England and Wales are released today, based on self reported data from the 2014/15 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

Key findings:

- **Around 1 in 12 (8.6%) adults aged 16 to 59 had taken an illicit drug in the last year.** This equated to around 2.8 million people. This was similar to the 2013/14 survey estimate (8.8%, 2.9 million).
- According to the 2014/15 CSEW, **3.2% of adults aged 16 to 59 had taken a Class A drug in the last year**, equivalent to just over one million people. The long-term trend in Class A drug use has been broadly stable over the last few years, although there has been some fluctuation.

Proportion of 16 to 59 year olds taking drugs in the last year, 1996 to 2014/15 CSEW



- **Use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in the last year appears to be concentrated among young adults aged 16 to 24.** Around 1 in 40 (2.8%) young adults aged 16 to 24 took an NPS in last year, while fewer than 1 in 100 (0.9%) of 16 to 59 year olds had done so. This equates to around 174,000 young adults aged 16 to 24 and 279,000 adults aged 16 to 59.
- **The use of ecstasy in the last year increased among 16 to 24 year olds between the 2013/14 and 2014/15 surveys, from 3.9% to 5.4%.** This is an increase of approximately 95,000 young people.

Other findings from the 2014/15 CSEW

Frequency of illicit drug use in the last year

- Estimates from the 2014/15 CSEW show that **2.2% of adults aged 16 to 59 were classed as frequent drug users** (having taken any illicit drug more than once a month on average in the last year). Frequent drug users made up just over a third (36%) of the adults who reported drug use within the last year. The 2014/15 CSEW showed that 8% of adults who reported using drugs last year said they had used drugs every day.
- **Cannabis was the drug most likely to be frequently used, with 39% of cannabis users being classed as frequent users in the 2014/15 survey.** Tranquilisers were the second most likely drug type to be used (27% of users reported frequent use in the 2013/14 survey – the most recent data available on frequency of using drugs other than cannabis).

Illicit drug use by personal, household and area characteristics and lifestyle factors

- **Younger people are more likely to take drugs than older people.** The level of any drug use in the last year was highest among 16 to 19 year olds (18.8%) and 20 to 24 year olds (19.8%). The level of drug use was much lower in the oldest age group surveyed (2.4% of 55 to 59 year olds).
- **People living in urban areas reported higher levels of drug use than those living in rural areas.** Just under a tenth (9.1%) of people living in urban areas had used any drug compared with 6.5% of those living in rural areas. In addition, **higher levels of drug use are associated with increased frequency of visits to pubs, bars and nightclubs.**

Simultaneous polydrug and polysubstance use

- In the combined 2013/14 and 2014/15 surveys, **9% of respondents who used drugs in the last year said that the last time they used drugs, they used more than one drug at the same time.** This has increased significantly from 7% in the combined 2010/11 and 2011/12 surveys.
- **Mephedrone (68%), ecstasy (57%), amphetamines (50%), and tranquilisers (35%) were the drugs most likely to be used simultaneously with other drugs.** The lowest prevalence of polydrug use was found among those who had used cannabis the last time they had used drugs (9% of those who used cannabis last time used it alongside another drug).

Further information including Annexes on ‘Older drug users’ and ‘Drug use within generations over time’ can be found within the publication.

Notes to editors

1. ‘Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2014/15 Crime Survey for England and Wales’ is available online via Gov.uk.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2014-to-2015-csew>

2. ‘Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England – 2014’ is also published on 23 July 2015, by the Health and Social Care Information Centre and is available on their website.

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/pubs/sdd14>

3. The [User Guide to Drug Misuse](#) provides background information on the CSEW self-completion module on drug use, as well as classifications of different drugs and other information pertaining specifically to the Drug Misuse statistical collection. The [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#) (published by the Office for National Statistics) provides further information on demographic and area classifications, and statistical conventions and methodology.

4. Estimates of drug use among 16 to 59 year olds were re-weighted in line with the 2011 Census population estimates, for survey years from 2001/02 to 2012/13. The revised estimates were published in the 2013/14 release. Since then, the methodology for estimating numbers of drug users has been improved, leading to a further revision of the estimated numbers of drug users. The revised figures are shown in Table 1.04_back_series and Table 1.08_back_series in the [data tables](#). For further information, please see the Technical Annex.

5. While responsibility for the Crime Survey for England and Wales transferred to the Office for National Statistics on 1 April 2012, the Home Office has retained responsibility for analysis and publication of this Drug Misuse publication.

For all press enquiries, please contact the Home Office Press Office who will liaise with Home Office Crime and Policing Statistics:

Newsdesk - **020 7035 3535**

Monday - Friday: 07:00 – 20:00

Emergency media calls, out-of-hours: 07659 174 240

Please note: the press office deals with enquiries from the media only. Members of the public should phone **020 7035 4848**.