



28 July 2016

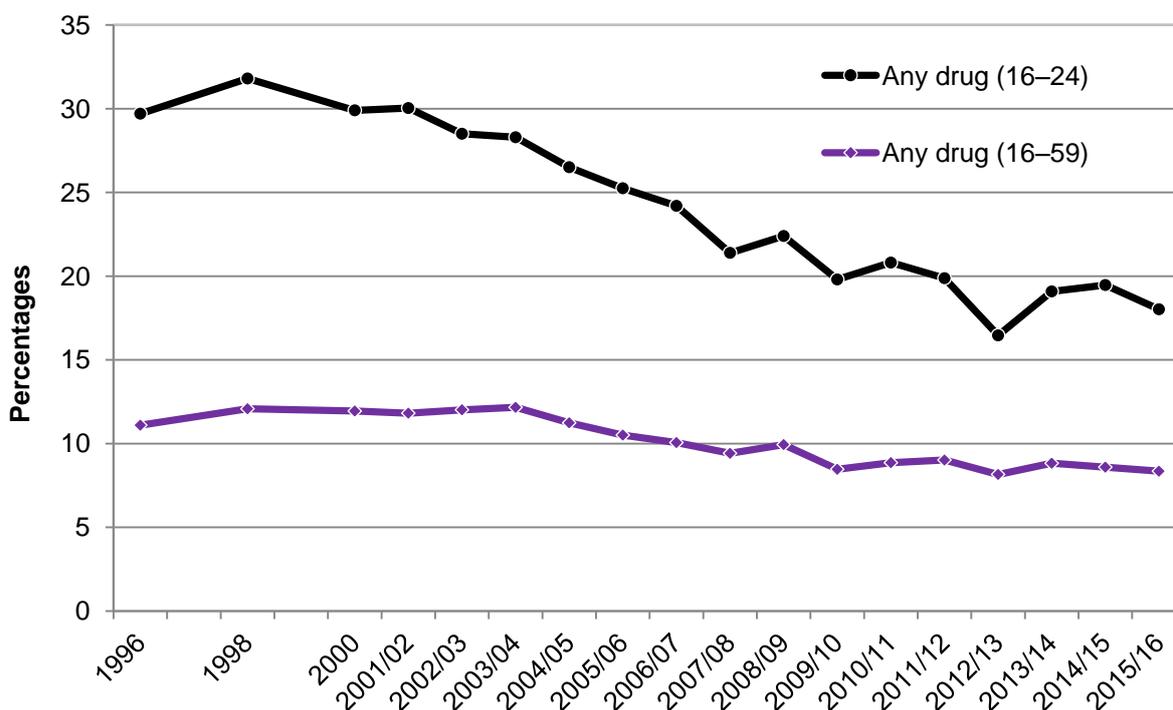
Statistical News Release – Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2015/16 Crime Survey for England and Wales

The latest National Statistics on illicit drug use in England and Wales are released today, based on self reported responses from the 2015/16 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

Key findings:

- **Around 1 in 12 (8.4%) adults aged 16 to 59 had taken an illicit drug in the last year.** This equated to around 2.7 million people. This level of drug use was similar to the 2014/15 survey (8.6%), but statistically significantly lower than a decade ago (10.5% in the 2005/06 survey). The trend in last year drug use among 16 to 59 year olds has been flat for seven years, since the 2009/10 survey.

Proportion of 16 to 59 and 16 to 24 year olds taking drugs in the last year, 1996 to 2015/16 CSEW



- **Around 1 in 5 (18.0%) young adults aged 16 to 24 had taken an illicit drug in the last year.** This proportion is more than double that of the wider age group, and equates to around 1.1 million people. This level of drug use was similar to the 2014/15 survey (19.5%), but again statistically significantly lower compared with a decade ago (25.2% in the 2005/06 survey).
- **Use of new psychoactive substances (NPS) in the last year is concentrated among young adults aged 16 to 24.** Around 1 in 40 (2.6%) young adults aged 16 to 24 took an NPS in the last year – more than three times the proportion among the wider age group (adults aged 16 to 59, 0.7%). This equates to around 162,000 young adults aged 16 to 24.

- As in previous years, **cannabis was the most commonly used drug, with 6.5 per cent of adults aged 16 to 59 having used it in the last year (around 2.1 million people)**, similar to the 2014/15 survey (6.7%), but showing statistically significant falls compared with a decade ago (8.7%) and the start of measurement in 1996 (9.4%).

Frequency of illicit drug use in the last year

- Estimates from the 2015/16 CSEW show that **3.3 per cent of all adults aged 16 to 59 were defined as frequent drug users** (having taken any illicit drug more than once a month on average in the last year). This equated to around 1.1 million people.
- **Young adults were more likely to be frequent drug users than 16 to 59 year olds.** The proportion of young adults aged 16 to 24 who were classed as frequent drug users was 4.7 per cent.
- Eight per cent of adults who reported using drugs in the last year said they had used drugs **every day**.

Perceived acceptability of use and ease of obtaining illicit substances

- **The majority (91%) of adults did not think it was ever acceptable for people of their own age to take either cocaine or ecstasy.**
- **Thirty eight per cent of adults aged 16 to 59 thought that it would be very or fairly easy for them personally to get drugs within 24 hours if they wanted them.**

Other findings from the 2015/16 CSEW include drug use by personal, household and area characteristics and lifestyle factors.

Notes

1. 'Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2015/16 Crime Survey for England and Wales' is available online via Gov.uk.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2015-to-2016-csew>
2. 'Statistics on Drug Misuse, England - 2016' is also published on 28 July 2016, by the Health and Social Care Information Centre and is available on their website.
<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/pubs/statdrugs16>
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.

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

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