

# Fact Sheet



Life Education Centres

## **Drugs (other than alcohol and cigarettes) December 2008**

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Among 11 – 15 year olds:

- 25% of pupils have ever taken drugs.
- 17% of pupils reported taking drugs in the last year.
- Prevalence was similar among boys and girls and increased with age, from 6% of 11 year olds to 31% of 15 year olds.
- Pupils were most likely to have taken cannabis.
- 61% of pupils who had taken drugs in the last year had taken only one type of drug.
- 5% of pupils said they usually took drugs at least once a month.
- 36% of pupils had ever been offered drugs. They were most likely to have been offered cannabis (22%).
- Pupils' first drug use was most likely to be sniffing volatile substances (51%). This was most common overall, particularly among pupils who first tried drugs at an early age.
- Pupils whose first experience of drugs was at the age of 14 or 15 were most likely to have first tried cannabis.
- Pupils were most likely to have received the first drugs they took from a friend of the same age. The most common reason they gave was "To see what they (drugs) were like".
- Pupils who had taken drugs more than once were most likely to have taken cannabis on the most recent occasion (45%).

Drug use, smoking and drinking among young people in England in 2007, Elizabeth Fuller (Editor), A survey carried out for the NHS Information Centre by the National Centre for Social Research and the National Foundation for Educational Research, 2008.

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- In 2007, 1,241 children under the age of 16 were hospitalised after taking drugs – a rise of 45 per cent compared to 1996 - 97.
- The number of teenagers needing hospital treatment because of drugs was nearly 10,000 – an increase of 10% in a year.

NHS Information Centre figures, reported by Children & Young People Now, 15 August 2008.

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- About 1 in 5 pupils in Year 10 (four times as many as in Year 8) have tried at least one drug.
  - Up to 14% of 14 - 15 year olds have mixed drugs and alcohol "on the same occasion".

Young People into 2007 - Legal and Illegal Drugs, Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU), 2007.

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- There are an estimated 332,000 problem drug users in England.
  - Class A drug use generates an estimated £15.4 billion in crime and health costs each year, of which 99% is accounted for by problem drug users.
  - Between a third and a half of acquisitive crime is estimated to be drug-related.

Drugs: protecting families and communities: The 2008 drug strategy, First Edition, Home Office, 2008.

