

Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People in England in 2014

Data Quality Statement

Background

This is the latest in the series of surveys of secondary school children in England which provides the national estimates of the proportions of young people aged 11 to 15 who smoke, drink alcohol or take illegal drugs. The focus topic of these surveys alternates between smoking and drinking in one year and drug use in the next year. The focus in the 2014 survey was on smoking and drinking.

Data Collection and Burden

Data were collected from pupils using a self-completion paper questionnaire. These were usually completed during a single school period, generally between 30 and 40 minutes in length. The time taken by individual pupils to complete the questionnaire was not recorded and it is not possible to estimate an average. However, the allotted time was sufficient for almost all pupils to answer the questionnaire in full.

Timeliness

This report is published annually. Information was obtained from 6,173 pupils aged between 11 and 15 in 210 schools throughout England in the Autumn term of 2014, and the results were published on 23 July 2015.

Accessibility

The report is published online and is available free of charge alongside all of the tables. It includes the main results from the survey. Additional information was collected by the survey and will be available in the full survey dataset from the UK Data Service, (<http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/>). The survey questionnaire is included in the appendices of this report. The Smoking, Drinking and Drug use Among Young People 2014 survey dataset will be sent to the UK Data Service for depositing within 3 months of publication.

Confidentiality

No personal/individual level information is received by the Health and Social Care Information Centre or contained in the report.

Comparability

The first survey in the series, carried out in 1982, measured the prevalence of smoking among pupils and described their smoking behaviour. Trends in smoking were monitored by similar surveys carried out every two years. Questions on alcohol consumption were added to the survey in 1988; the 1998 survey was the first to include questions on the prevalence of drug use. Since 2000, the survey has been carried out annually by the National Centre for Social Research and the National Foundation for Educational Research. Each survey now includes a core section of questions covering the following:

- pupils' experience of smoking, drinking and drug use;
- consumption of cigarettes and alcoholic drinks in the last week; and
- awareness and availability of specific named drugs.

Accuracy

As the data are based on a sample (rather than a census) of pupils, the estimates are subject to sampling error. Appendix B details how to calculate sampling errors for this survey, and includes true standard errors and design effects calculated for key survey estimates.

In general, attention is drawn to differences between estimates only when they are significant at the 95% confidence level, thus indicating that there is less than 5% probability that the observed difference could be due to random sampling variation when no difference occurred in the population from which the sample is drawn.