

New data from the British Crime Survey on drug-related crime

25 January 2008

Quarterly figures up to September 2007 were released this week from the British Crime Survey (BCS).

The number of offences rose from 46,200 in July-September 2006 to 55,700 in July - September 2007, a 21 per cent increase from the same quarters in 2006 to 2007.

However, the BCS report accompanying the figures states that "the increases [in drug offences] in this and previous quarters coincided with increases in the police use of powers to issue cannabis warnings."

DrugScope's chief executive, Martin Barnes, responded to the figures with the following statement:

"The British Crime Survey data indicates a 21 per cent increase in drug offences. However, the Home Office research clearly suggests a link between this overall increase and the introduction and growing use of police powers to issue cannabis warnings.

"Of course, without a formal analysis of the figures, it's difficult to be precise as to the reasons for the increase. But evidence shows that cannabis use has continued to fall since reclassification and since then warnings have been the appropriate police response to cannabis possession in the majority of cases.

It's also important to remember that statistics relating to drug enforcement can reflect changes in levels or types of enforcement activity rather than reflecting increases in prevalence or drug dealing.

DrugScope continues to support the policy of cannabis warnings for those found in possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use.

For more information please contact Ruth Goldsmith in the DrugScope press office on 020 7940 7517 (07736 895563 out of hours) or at press@drugscope.org.uk

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