

Home Office release new drug use figures

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Overall drug use in England and Wales is at its lowest level in a decade, according to new figures released by the government today.

The Home Office's *'Drug Misuse Declared: Findings from the 2007/2008 British Crime Survey'* found that 9.3 per cent of 16 to 59 year olds reported using any illicit drug in the last year, compared to 12.1 per cent in 1998.

The survey also reported a decline in overall drug use from last year's figures. Alongside 'statistically significant' falls in the use of cocaine powder and ecstasy from 2006/2007, cannabis use continued to follow the downward trend of the previous five years. Opiate use within the general population remained stable, supporting evidence that the UK's heroin population is stabilising.

The data was collected as part of the British Crime Survey. The voluntary household survey of a sample of 16 to 59 year olds is considered the most comprehensive indicator of drug use in the general population. However, the data has limitations as it excludes certain sections of the population affected by substance misuse such as prisoners, homeless populations and young people in residential care.

Responding to today's report Martin Barnes, Chief Executive of DrugScope said:

"It is encouraging that the figures show a continuing downward trend in overall drug use among the adult population including cannabis which raises questions about the government's 'evidence-based' decision to reinstate the drug to Class B.

"Even so, it is important to avoid complacency. The use of cocaine powder, particularly among young people is a continuing cause for concern as the drug has become more affordable. Moreover, levels of drug misuse in this country remain high compared to most European countries.

"Therefore, it is essential that we stay focussed on addressing the serious drug problems faced by drug users, their families and communities."

The findings were published alongside new data reporting record number of drug seizures in England and Wales in the last twelve months. In light of the new statistics Home Office minister Alan Campbell said the government would "continue to focus our efforts on reducing the harm caused by illegal drugs through enforcement, education and treatment."

The minister also announced that a new £1 million FRANK campaign will soon be launched to inform young people of the risks attached to cocaine use.

For more information contact Andrew McNicoll at the DrugScope press office on 0207 520 7563 (07736 895 563 out of hours) or email andrewm@drugscope.org.uk

Related Links

[Home Office 'Drug Misuse Declared: Findings from the 2007/2008 British Crime Survey' \(opens in new window\)](#)

[Home Office Statistical releases \(opens in new window\)](#)

[Home Office Statistical Bulletin 'Seizures of Drugs in England and Wales 2006/07' \(opens in new window\)](#)