

INFORMATION  
ANALYSIS  
DIRECTORATE



# Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitude Survey 2016

## Health Modules



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

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# Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitude Survey 2016

## Health Modules

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Statistics and research for the **Department of Health** is provided by **Information Analysis Directorate (IAD)**. It comprises four statistical sections: Hospital Information, Community Information, Public Health Information & Research and Project Support Analysis.

IAD is responsible for compiling, processing, analysing, interpreting and disseminating a wide range of statistics covering health and social care.

The statisticians within IAD are out-posted from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) and our statistics are produced in accordance with the principles and protocols set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

#### **About Public Health Information and Research Branch**

The role of Public Health Information and Research Branch (PHIRB) is to support the public health survey function and to provide support on public health issues within the Department. The head of the branch is the Principal Statistician, Mr. Bill Stewart.

In support of the public health survey function, PHIRB is involved in the commissioning, managing and publishing of results from departmental funded surveys, such as the Health Survey Northern Ireland, All Ireland Drug Prevalence Survey, Young Persons Behaviour & Attitudes Survey, and the Adult Drinking Patterns Survey.

PHIRB provides support to a range of key DoH strategies including Making Life Better, a 10 year cross-departmental public health strategic framework as well as a range of other departmental strategies such as those dealing with suicide, sexual health, breastfeeding, tobacco control and obesity prevention. It also has a key role in supporting the Alcohol and Drug New Strategic Direction 2011-2016, by maintaining and developing key departmental databases such as, the Drug Misuse Database, Impact Measurement Tool and the Census of Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services, which are all used to monitor drug misuse and treatments across Northern Ireland.

The branch also houses the NI Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System which covers a range of different health inequality/equality based projects conducted for both the region as well as for more localised area levels.

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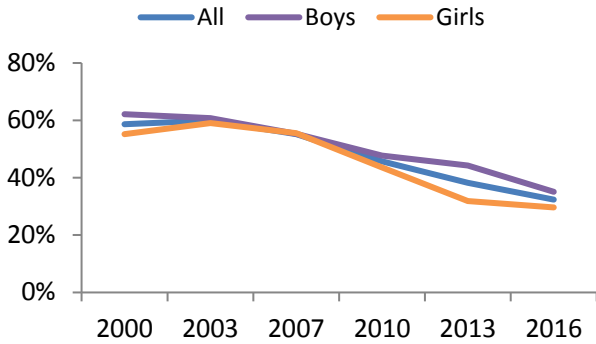
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# Key findings

Since 2000, there has been a decline in the proportion of young people reporting that they smoke and drink alcohol.

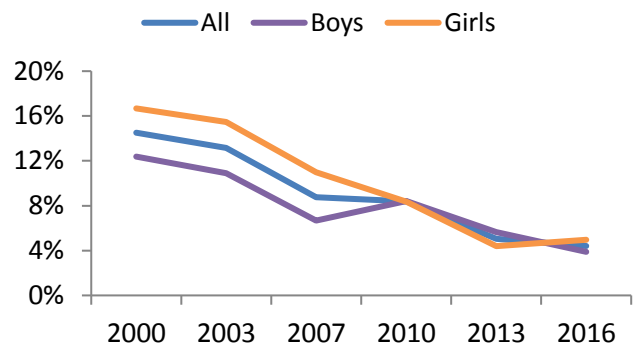
## Alcohol

Proportion of young people reporting to have ever taken an alcohol drink



## Smoking

Proportion of young people that are current smokers



## Medicines

**3 out of 5** young people have taken an antibiotic in the last 12 months.

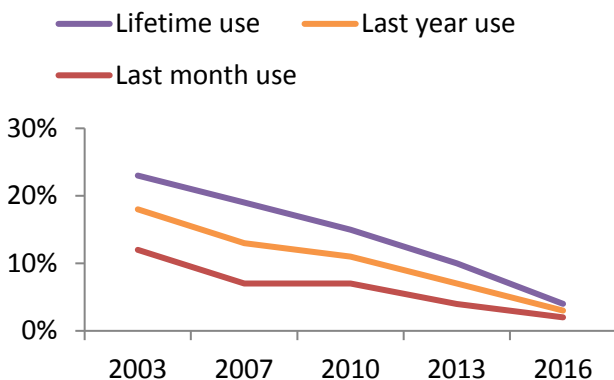
**Half** of young people (47%) believed that antibiotics work on colds and flu.

## Physical Activity

**1 in 8** young people reported doing the recommended 60 minutes of moderate physical activity during every day of the last week; boys (17%) were twice as likely as girls (8%) to attain this.

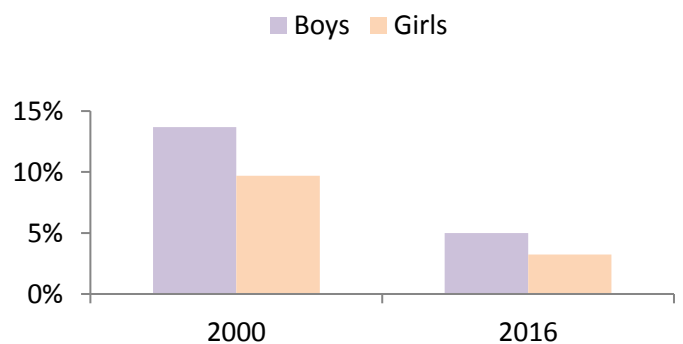
## Drugs & Solvents

Proportion of young people reporting having taken drugs



## Sexual Health

Proportion of young people reporting having had sexual experience, including sexual intercourse



## Nutrition



Under a fifth of young people (17%) indicated that they ate the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, an increase from 15% in 2007.

There was no difference between boys and girls.



# Introduction

The Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (YPBAS) is a school based survey carried out among 11-16 year olds. It is commissioned jointly by a number of government departments and includes questions on a wide range of topics. Six rounds of the survey have now taken place: 2000, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016. This report presents an overview of the health-related topics from the most recent survey in 2016 and includes comparisons with previous surveys where appropriate.

The fieldwork for the survey ran between October to December 2016. A total of 6,831 children completed the survey. Due to the high level of interest amongst policy makers on the views and behaviours of young people, topics were split across two questionnaires to accommodate additional questions.

Findings in this report have been weighted by year group, sex and religion in order to reflect the composition of the Northern Ireland post-primary population.

Please note that only differences that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level are reported.

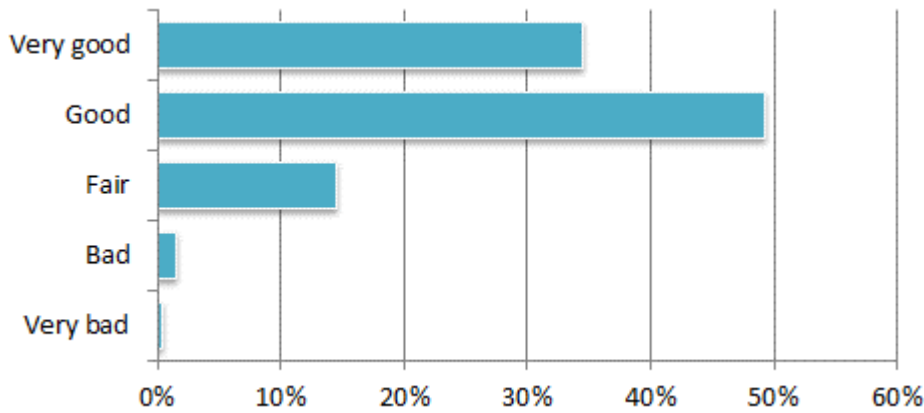
The Central Survey Unit of Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) are responsible for carrying out this survey. A technical report and information on other topics included in the survey are available online at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/young-persons-behaviour-attitudes-survey>


Findings in this Department of Health report may differ from findings published by other government departments due to differences in methodology.

*Please note that the questions on drugs and solvents changed in 2016 and thus may not be directly comparable with previous years.*

# General Health

In general, how would you say your health is?

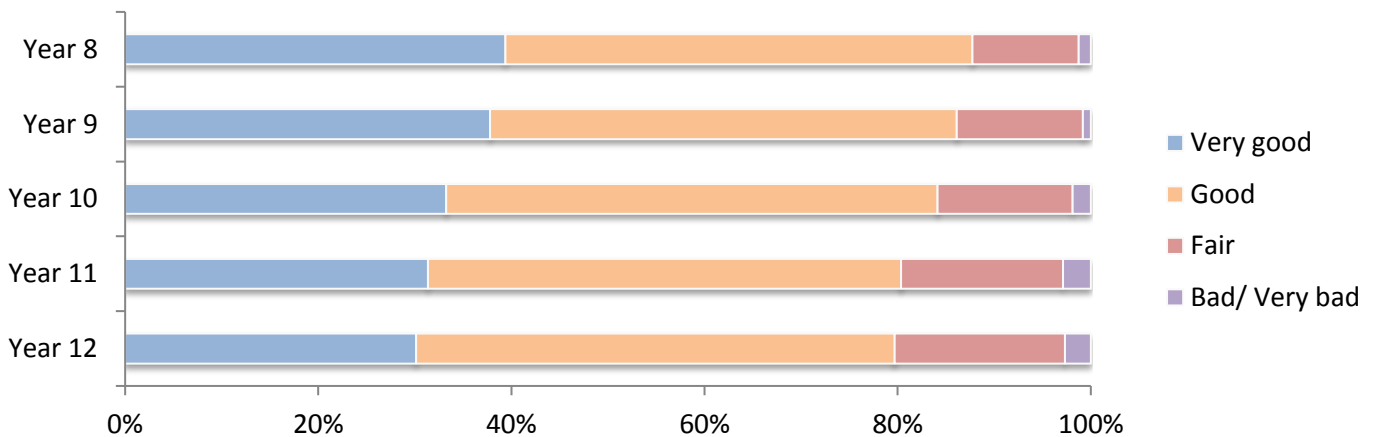


 **84%** report good or very good health

**2%** report bad or very bad health 

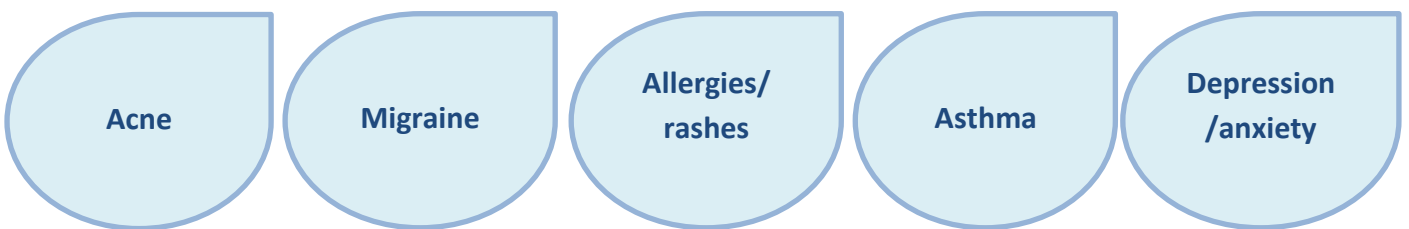
The majority of young people (84%) rated their health as good or very good, with no difference found between boys (83%) and girls (84%). A difference was noted across the year groups, with older children tending to rate their health less positively.

Self-reported health by school year group



**One in four** young people reported having a long-standing illness/condition. Girls (27%) were more likely to report an illness than boys (21%), as were those in the older year groups.

The most frequently reported conditions were:



# Mental Health & Wellbeing

## Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (Years 10, 11 & 12)

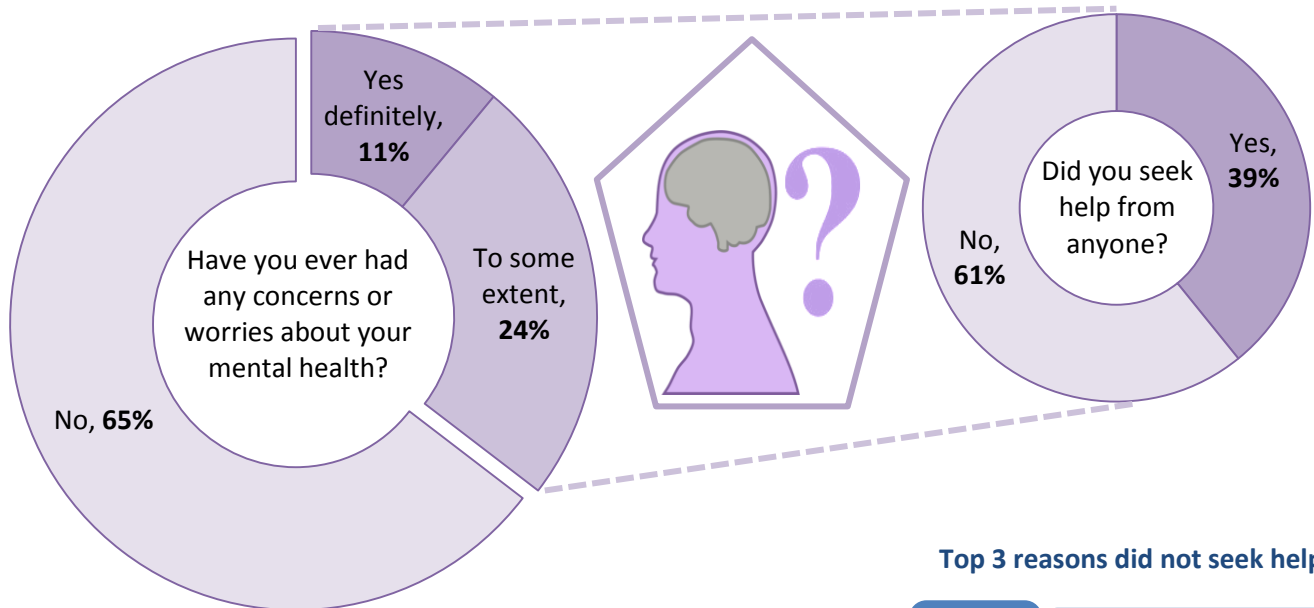
The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale asks people to indicate how often they felt a certain way; such as being optimistic, useful, relaxed etc; From these responses a score is then assigned indicating level of mental wellbeing (minimum score of 7 and a maximum of 35); the higher an individual scores, the better their level of mental wellbeing. The average scores in 2016 are the same as the findings from the previous survey in 2013.

Average Score	
All respondents	24
Boys	25
Girls	24

## Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (Years 8 & 9)

Average Score	
All respondents	45
Boys	46
Girls	45

The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale was developed to measure emotional and psychological wellbeing in children aged 8 to 15 years. Each item on the scale is rated and an overall score is calculated (minimum score of 12 and a maximum of 60); the higher an individual scores, the better their level of mental wellbeing.



### Proportion that ever had concerns about mental health

Boys	31%	Girls	40%
Year 8	18%	Year 12	53%

Of those seeking help, the most common sources of help were:

- Family member (73%)
- Friend (42%)
- GP (24%)
- Staff at school (22%)

**13% had sought help from CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services)**

### Top 3 reasons did not seek help

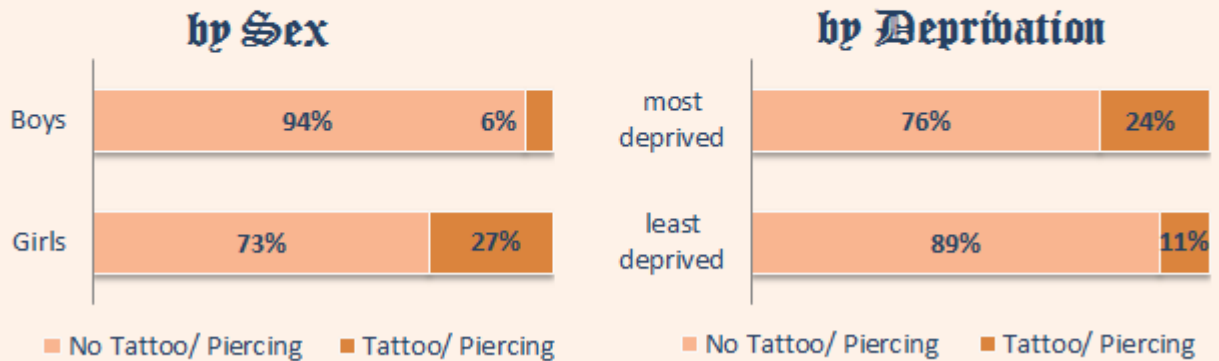
- 60%** • I could handle things on my own
- 28%** • I felt unable to speak with anyone
- 27%** • I was too embarrassed



# Tattooing & Piercing (year 11 & 12 only)



One in six respondents have a tattoo or piercing (other than earlobes)

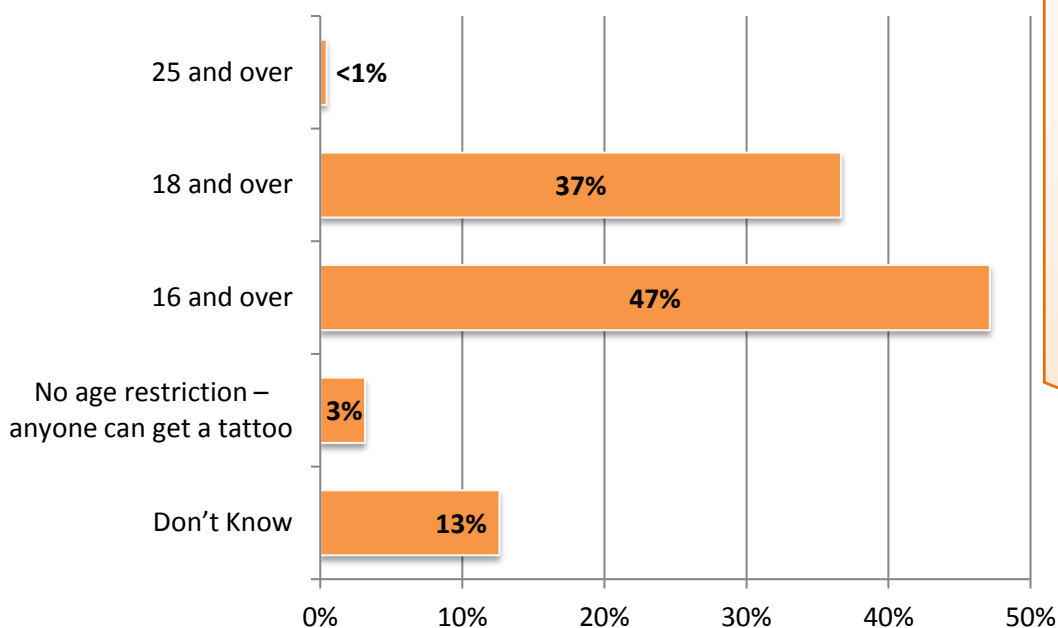


**2 in 5** respondents were aware that tattooing/ piercing businesses must be registered with their local council.

**87%** got their tattoo/ piercing at a registered premises.

## Do you know if there is an age restriction on getting a tattoo?

Current legislation states that you must be aged 18 or over to get a tattoo; three in five respondents were not aware of this restriction.



Almost a third of those getting a tattoo or piercing had suffered problems such as pain or infection afterwards; of these, a quarter sought medical advice (e.g. pharmacist, GP or A&E).

# Medicines

**3 out of 5**

have taken an antibiotic in the last 12 months



## Prescription

- **58%** of respondents had been prescribed a medicine in the past 12 months.
- **71%** were being used to treat an acute illness; the remainder were used to treat long term conditions.

**Do you think the following statements are true, false or don't know?**

■ True ■ False ■ Don't know

If you take antibiotics when you don't need them drug-resistant bacteria can develop and spread to other people



If you take an antibiotic when you don't need it then you can become resistant to the antibiotic



Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections



Antibiotics work on colds and flu



It is okay to stop taking an antibiotic when you feel better



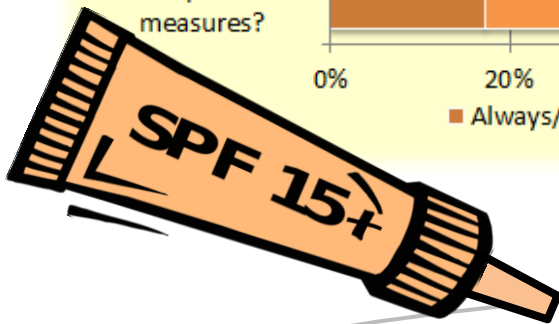
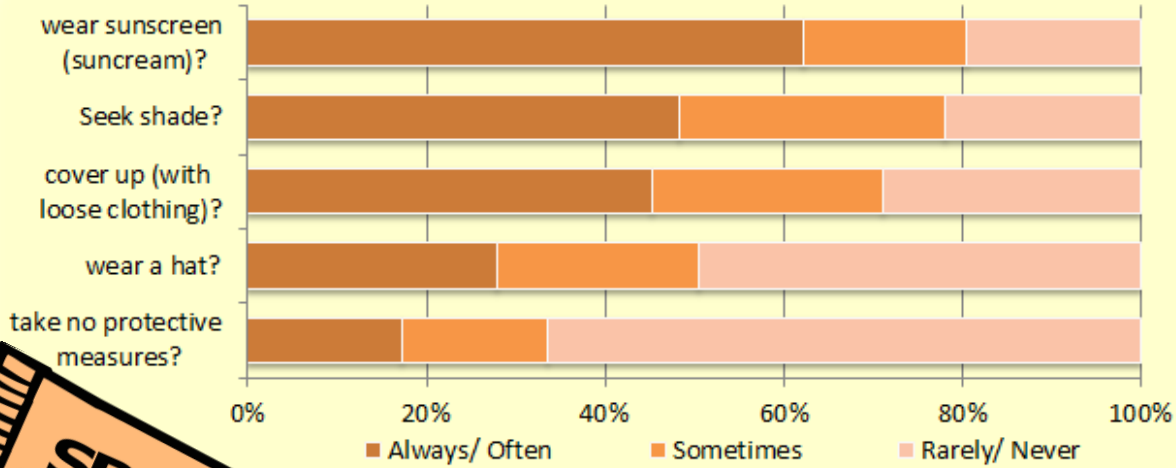
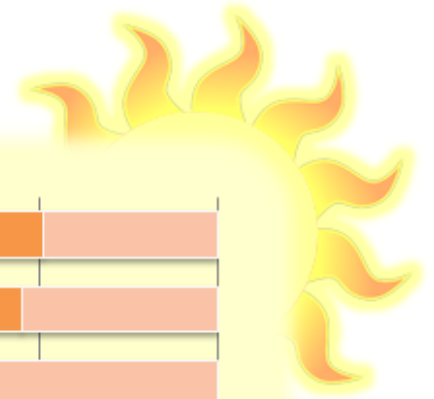
Half of respondents (52%) would like more information about how to use medicines safely and appropriately.

- **3 in 10** respondents reported knowing very little or nothing at all about the risks of taking medicine bought on the internet.
- **2%** of respondents had used the internet to buy medicines.
- **4%** had used medicine bought on the internet at least once.



# Care in the Sun

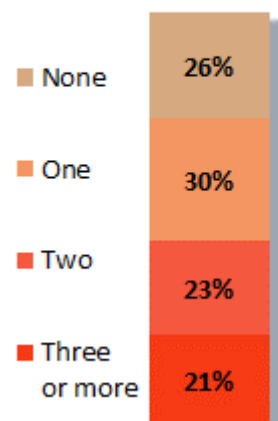
If you are spending more than 30 minutes outdoors during the summer, on a sunny day, do you...



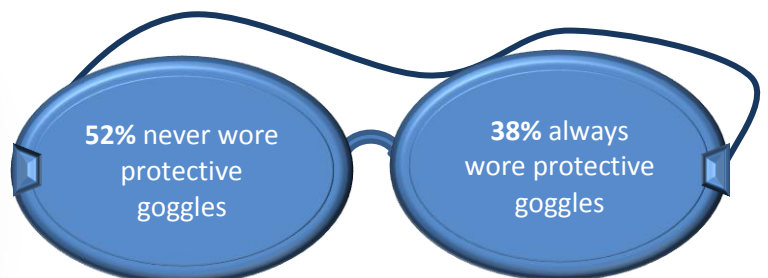
**More than two-thirds** of respondents (71%) reported using sunscreen when sunbathing abroad in a warm country.  
**One in five** (22%) reported using it when sunbathing in this country.  
**Less than one in ten** (7%) reported never using it.

- 3 in 4** > agree or strongly agree that they look better with a tan.
- Half** > agree or strongly agree that having a tan makes people look healthier.
- 58%** > disagree or strongly disagree that people who tan are damaging their skin.

In the past year how many times have you had sunburn?

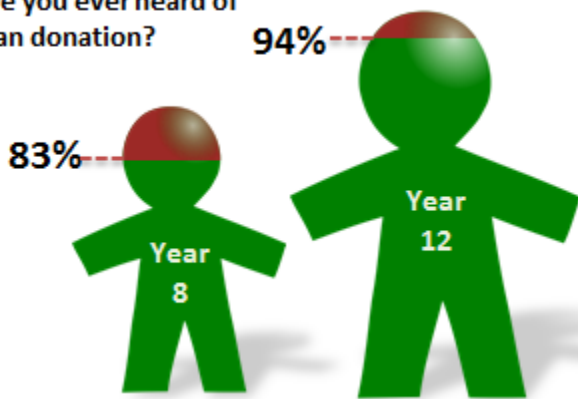


**Less than a tenth** of respondents (8%) had used a sunbed; of these, **26%** had used one in a tanning salon and **21%** had done so in their own home.



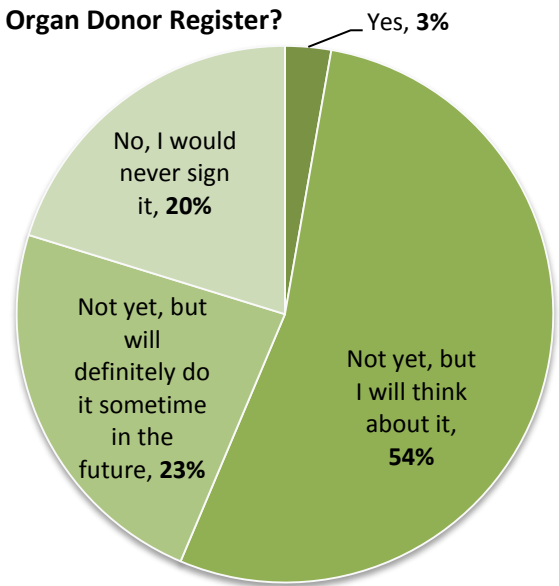
# Organ Donation

Have you ever heard of organ donation?



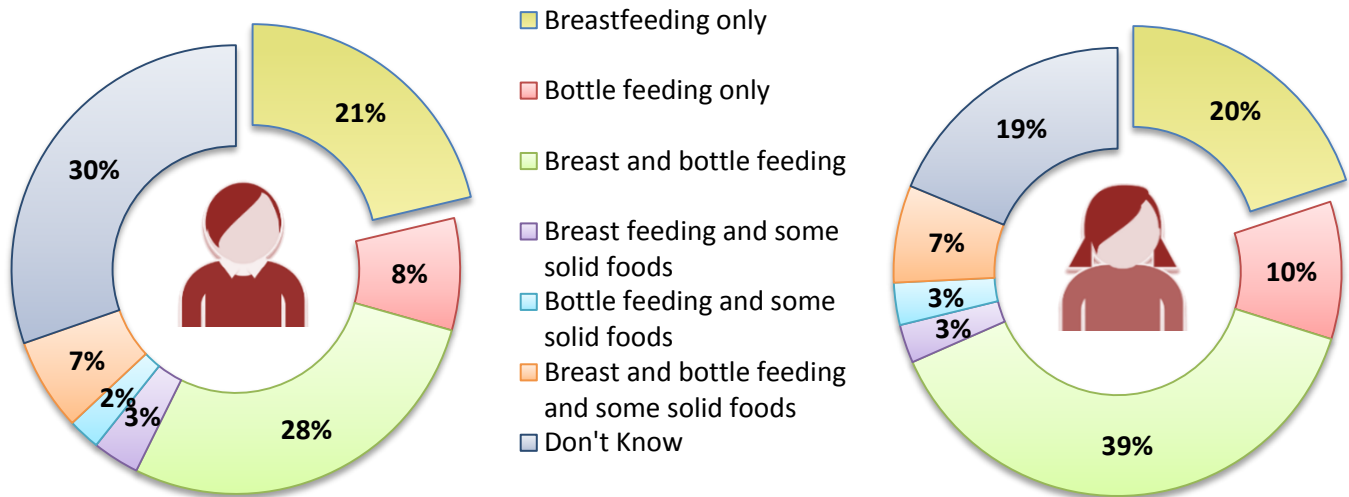
Proportionally fewer year 8 respondents than year 12 respondents had heard of organ donation; boys (87%) were less likely to be aware of organ donation than girls (93%).

Have you put your name on the NHS Organ Donor Register?



# Breastfeeding

What do you think is the healthiest way to feed a 3 month old baby?



What do you first think of when you see a woman breastfeeding her baby?



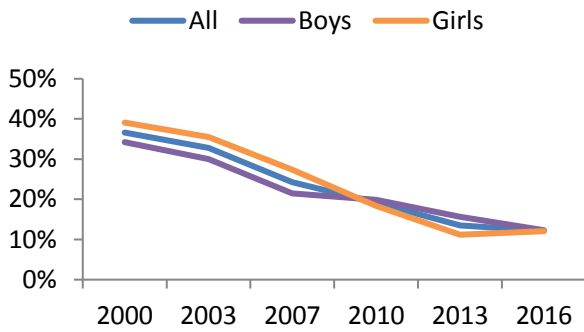
	All	Boys	Girls	Most Deprived	Least Deprived
I feel uncomfortable	17%	19%	16%	21%	19%
I think it is a nice thing for a mum and baby	10%	8%	12%	11%	12%
I think it is just a normal part of life	54%	49%	60%	48%	54%
I have never seen anyone breastfeeding	18%	23%	13%	21%	15%

# Smoking

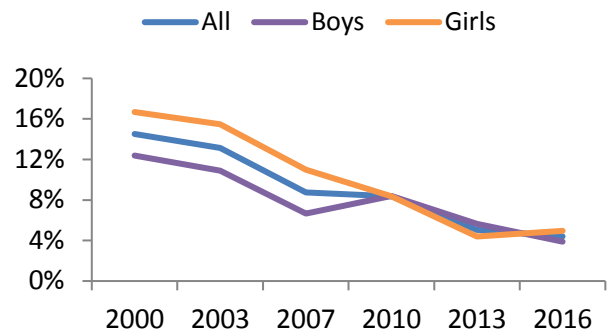
## Long-term trend

Since 2000, there has been a decline in both the proportion of young people ever having smoked and in the proportion of current smokers.

Proportion of young people that reported ever having smoked



Proportion of young people that are current smokers



## Recent findings

In 2016, 4% of young people were current smokers with no significant difference between boys (4%) and girls (5%).

Comparing 2016 with the previous findings in 2013, whilst the rate overall and the rate for girls has remained level, the rate for boys has fallen from 6% to 4%.

**12%** of respondents reported having smoked tobacco at least once.

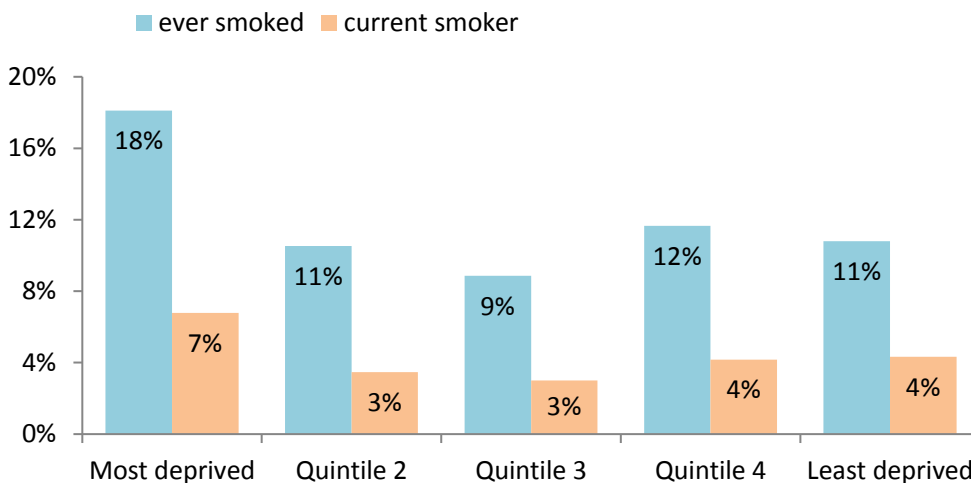


**2 in 3** of those who smoke at least once a week, have tried to quit smoking at some stage.



**3 in 4** Respondents who had smoked, had smoked their first cigarette aged 14 or under.

Smoking status by deprivation quintile



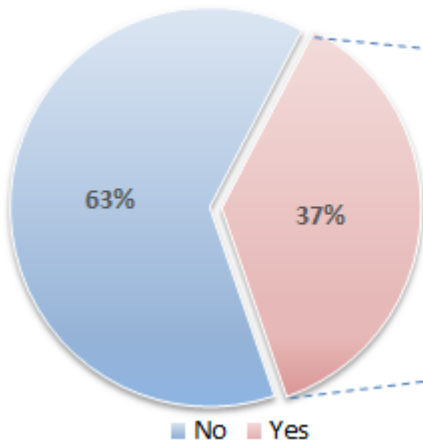
Young people in the most deprived areas were more likely to report ever having smoked than respondents in any other quintile.

# Smoking (continued)

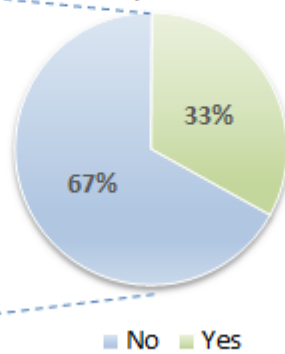
**46%** of those who smoke regularly reported trying their first cigarette because their friends smoked.

**1 in 4** reported trying their first cigarette because they had easy access to cigarettes.

Do any adults in your household smoke?



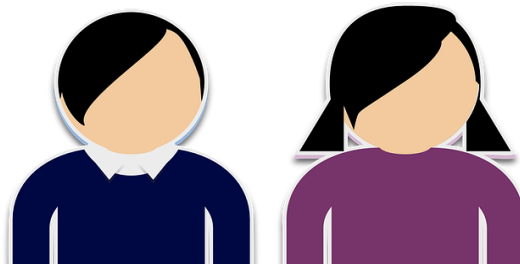
Do the adults smoke inside your home?



**One in eight** children live in a household where an adult smokes inside the home.

The majority of children (94%) had heard of e-cigarettes. Of these children, 76% of boys and 84% of girls had never used them.

Have you ever used e-cigarettes?



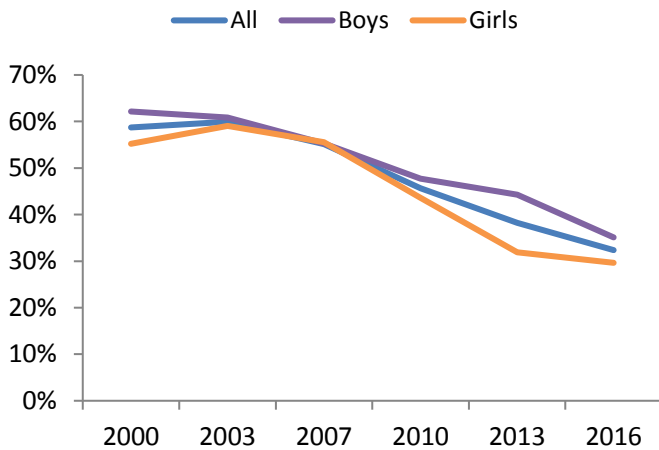
Used in the last week	7%	4%
Used in the last month	12%	8%
Used in the last year	20%	14%
Ever used	24%	16%
Never used	76%	84%

# Alcohol

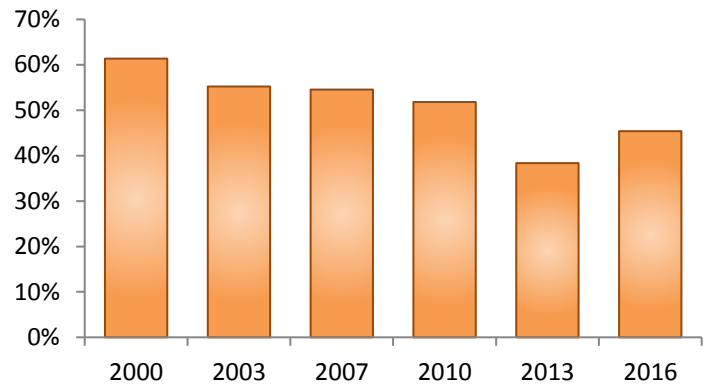
## Long-term trend

Since 2000, there has been a decline in both the proportion of young people ever having drunk alcohol and the proportion of those who drank that report having been drunk.

Proportion of young people reporting to have ever taken an alcohol drink




Proportion of those that drink that report having been drunk



## Recent findings

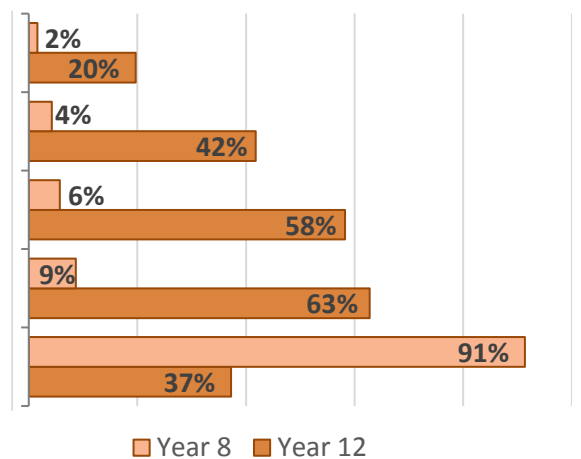
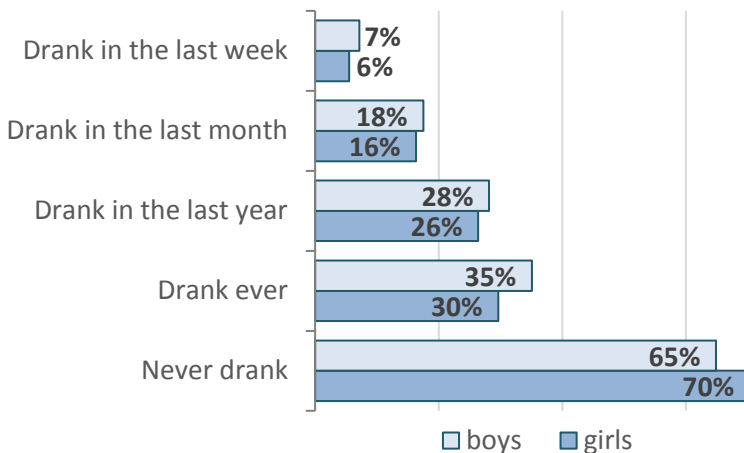
**1 in 3** respondents reported having taken an alcoholic drink



Of the respondents who had tried alcohol, **HALF** reported having their first drink aged 13 or under

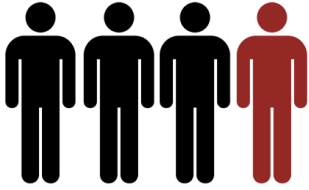
Boys (35%) were more likely to have taken a drink than girls (30%); and those in Year 12 (63%) were more likely to have done so than those in Year 8 (9%).

## Have you ever taken an alcoholic drink (not just a taste or a sip)?

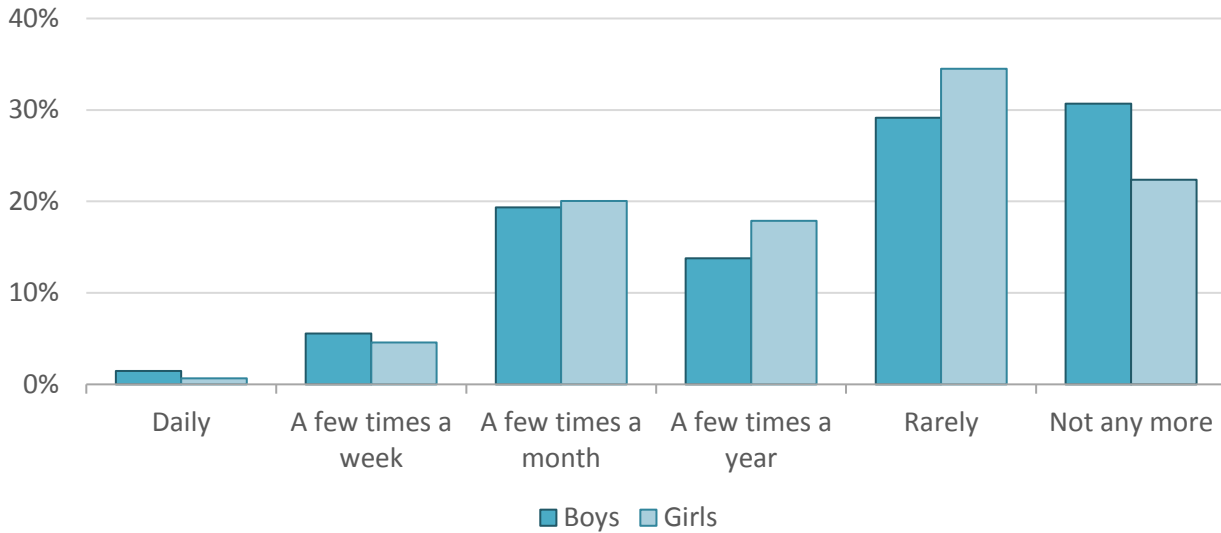


# Alcohol (continued)

At present, how often do you drink alcohol?

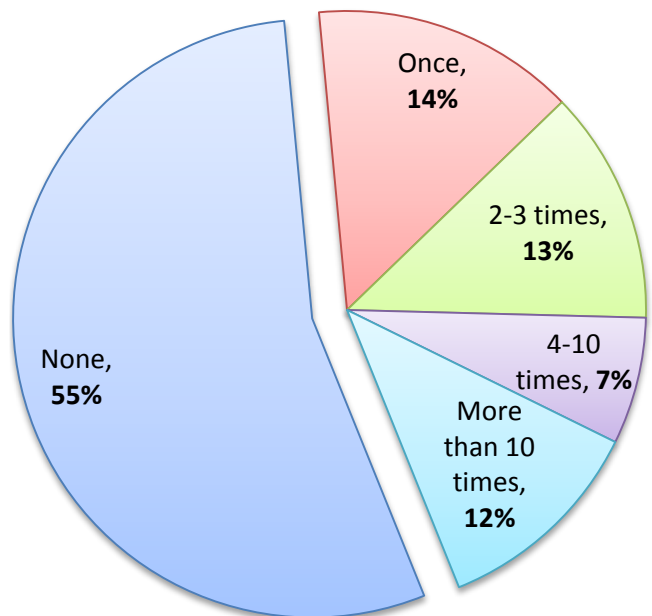


**1 in 4** of those who reported having taken a drink (26%), stated they currently drink alcohol a few times a month or more.



Almost half of those respondents (45%) who reported having drunk alcohol, reported drinking so much that they were drunk on at least one occasion.

The number of times those who have drunk alcohol have been drunk

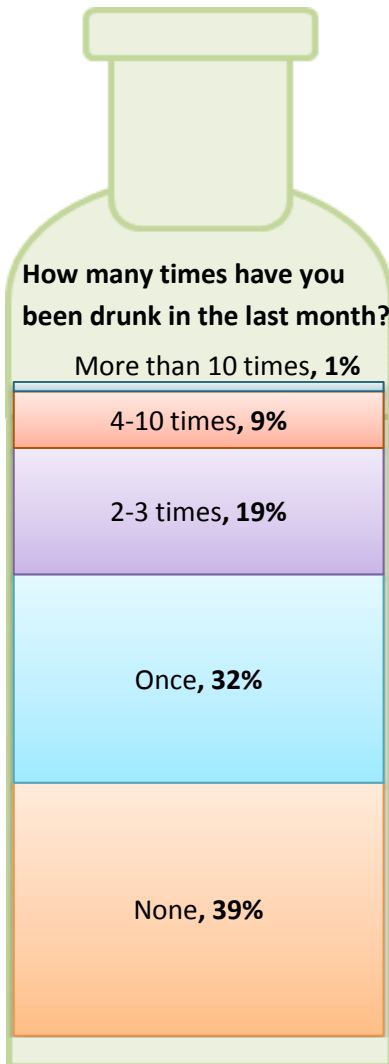


Of those who had drunk alcohol, **1 in 6** (16%) reported that they had deliberately tried to get drunk in the last month.



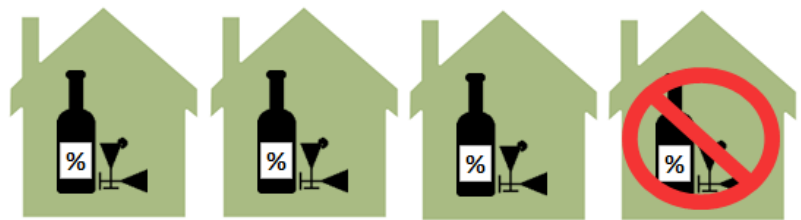
# Alcohol (continued)

A small number of young people (361 respondents) reported being drunk on one or more occasion. Of these, 6 in 10 (61%) reported having been drunk at least once in the last month.



As a result of drinking alcohol have you ever...	Once	More than once
been sick (vomited)	15%	14%
done something you later regretted	17%	11%
been in trouble with parent(s) or other family member	17%	8%
had an argument	13%	11%
had a fight	9%	5%
ended up in a situation where you felt threatened/unsafe	7%	4%
posted/wrote something on a social networking site like Facebook or Twitter that you wished you hadn't	5%	3%
been in trouble with the police	5%	2%
been in trouble with local people	4%	3%
had to be seen by a doctor	2%	2%
been in trouble at school	1%	2%

**3 in 4** respondents reported living in a household where at least one adult drank alcohol.

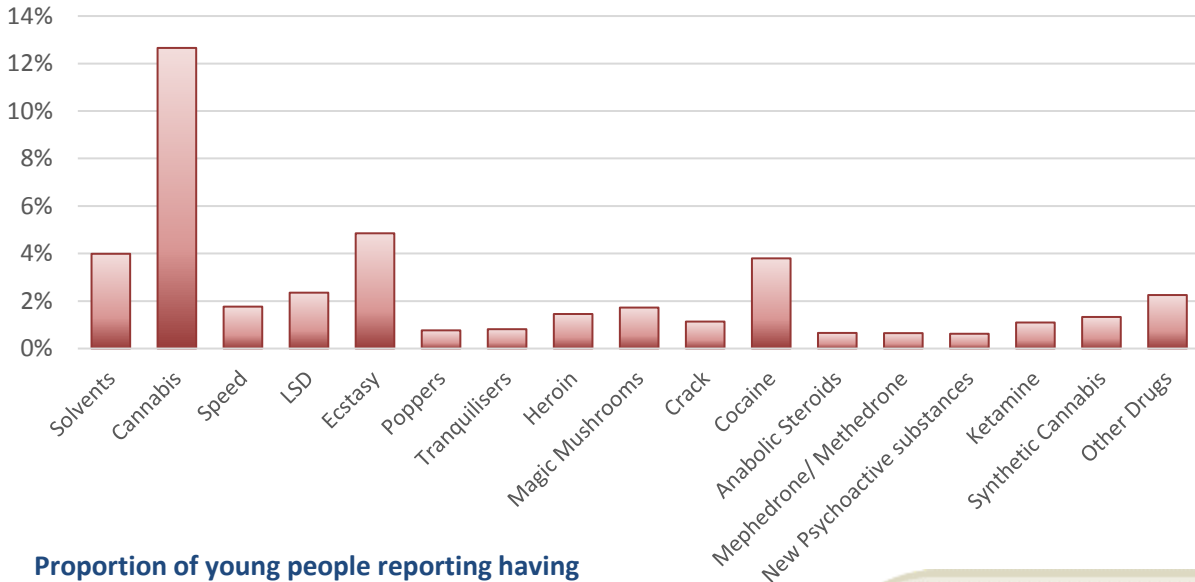


Three-quarters of young people (77%) reported receiving education about alcohol at school, 17% at a youth club and 9% somewhere else; 15% had not received education on alcohol.

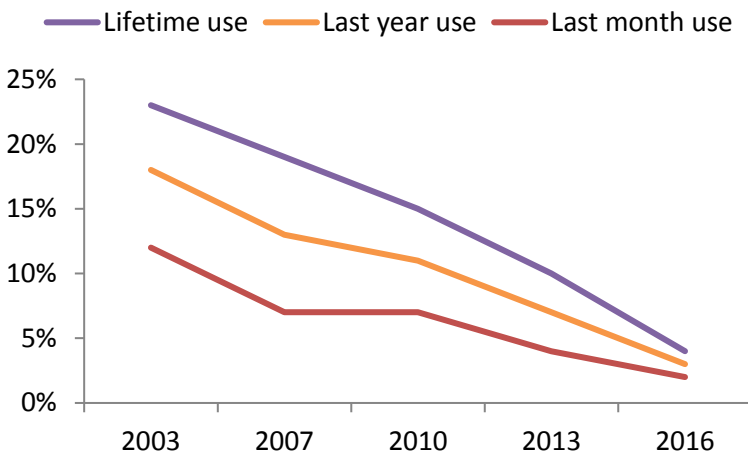
3 in 4 (77%) stated that the education they had received made them less inclined to drink alcohol.

# Solvents & Drugs

The majority of respondents (**84%**) indicated that they had never been offered any drugs or solvents; the chart below details the proportion of respondents that had been offered drugs, by drug type. *Please note that the questions on drugs and solvents changed in 2016 and thus may not be directly comparable with previous years.*



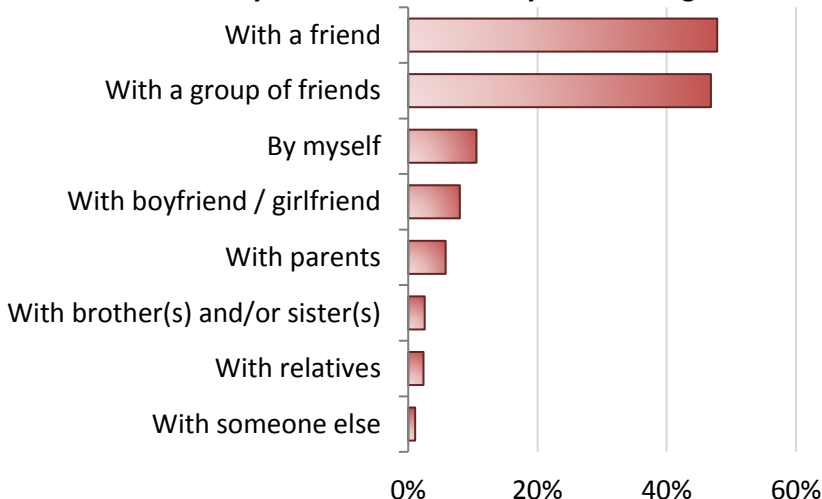
**Proportion of young people reporting having taken drugs or solvents**



**1 in 5** of those offered drugs were first offered drugs when they were aged 12 or under

The proportion of young people reporting ever having taken drugs has fallen from 23% in 2003 to 4% in 2016.

**Who were you with the last time you took drugs?**



**Four in five** had received education on the use of drugs in school during the last school year.

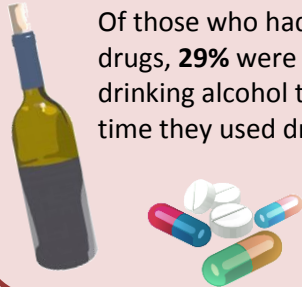
The majority (**93%**) felt that the education they received had made them less inclined to take drugs or solvents.

## Solvents & Drugs (continued)

Please note that the questions on drugs and solvents changed in 2016 and thus may not be directly comparable with previous years.

As a result of taking drugs have you ever...	Once	More than Once
Been in trouble with parent(s) or other family member	20%	7%
Been sick (vomited)	18%	5%
Done something you later regretted	11%	10%
Had an argument	11%	6%
Had a fight	9%	3%
Ended up in a situation where you felt threatened/unsafe	4%	7%
Been in trouble with local people	8%	2%
Been in trouble at school	5%	4%
Posted/wrote something on a social networking site like Facebook or Twitter that you wished you hadn't	5%	4%
Been in trouble with the police	3%	5%
Had to be seen by a doctor	3%	2%


Base: 125 respondents



Of those who had used drugs, **29%** were also drinking alcohol the last time they used drugs.

**1 in 20** young people who have taken drugs or solvents (4%) have felt like they needed to get help or treatment because they were using drugs.

**One in a hundred** young people reported living in a household where an adult takes drugs inside the home.



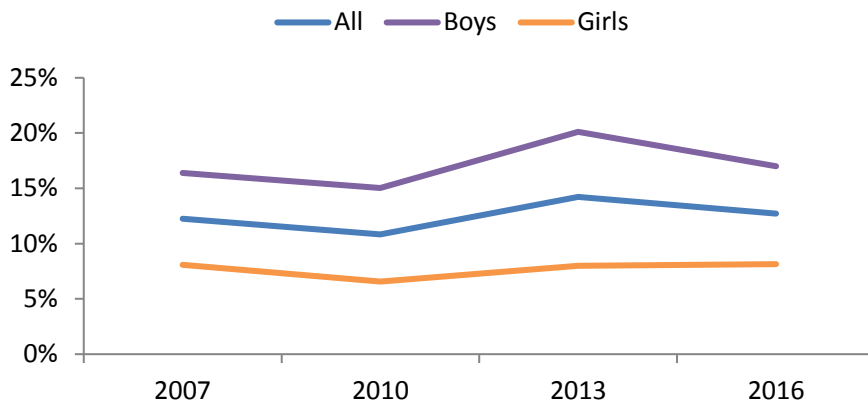
When asked their views on using cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, similar results were found for boys and girls and between the most and least deprived quintiles. The only significant differences were between boys and girls on taking cannabis and sniffing glue.

Proportion that think it's ok for someone their age to...	Overall	Boys	Girls	Most Deprived	Least Deprived
Smoke cigarettes once a week	12%	12%	12%	14%	11%
Drink alcohol once a week	23%	25%	22%	22%	25%
Get drunk once a week	10%	10%	9%	12%	11%
Sniff glue once a week	5%	4%	6%	4%	6%
Take cannabis once a week	5%	7%	4%	6%	8%
Take cocaine once a week	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%

# Physical Activity

Current UK guidelines state that, “All children and young people (5-18 years) should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day.” The number of young people who report attaining this has remained relatively stable since 2007, with boys (17%) twice as likely to attain this as girls (8%).

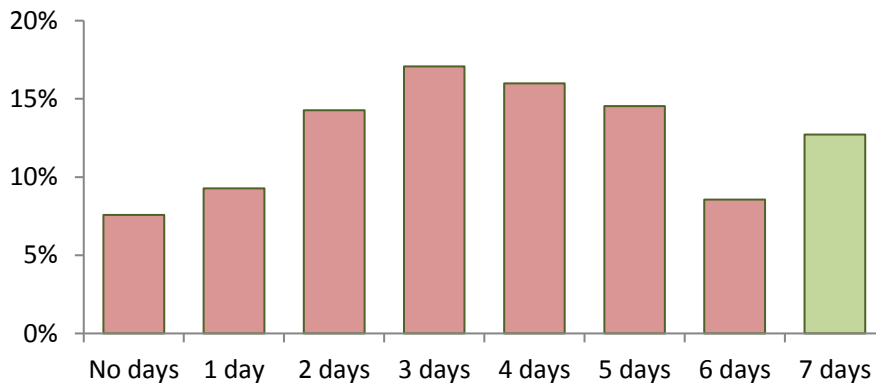
Proportion of young people doing 60 minutes every day



## One and a half times

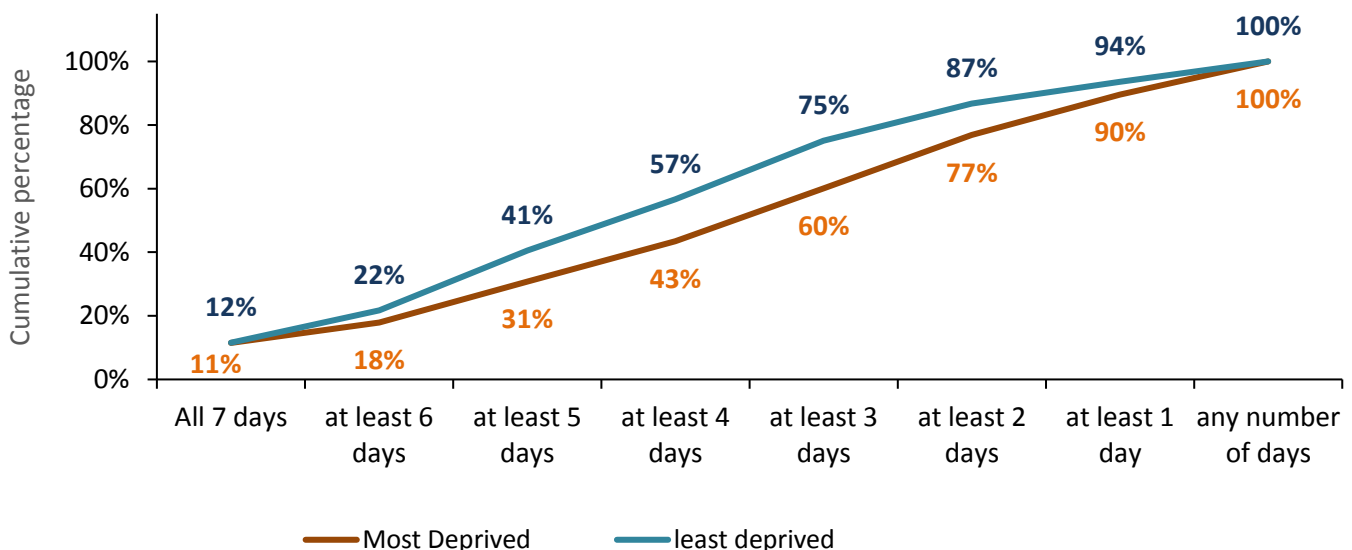
as many young people (**13%**) reported doing at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity during every day of the last week compared with those who reported not doing 60 minutes on any day of the week (**8%**).

Number of days young people do 60 minutes of physical activity



Although the number achieving 7 days of physical exercise is similar between the most deprived and least deprived quintiles, there are a **quarter fewer** from the most deprived achieving 4 days or more (43%) compared with the least deprived (57%).

Number of days doing 60 minutes physical activity by deprivation quintile



# Nutrition

## 5 A Day

Around three-quarters of young people (77%) thought you should eat five or more portions of fruit and vegetables each day to be healthy however under a fifth indicated that they did so.

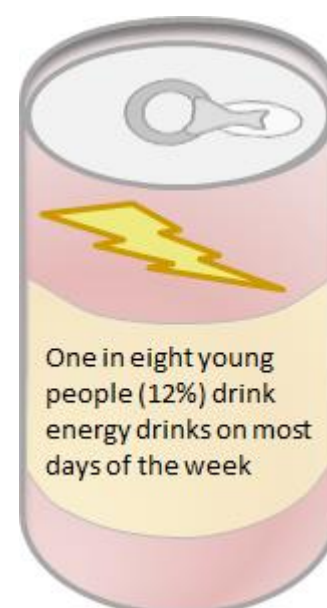


Under a fifth of young people (17%) indicated that they ate the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, an increase from 15% in 2007.

There was no difference between boys and girls.



Consumed on most days of the week	2000	2016	Change?
Fried food (e.g. sausages, bacon)	34%	39%	↑
Meat/meat dishes	42%	55%	↑
Vegetables & salad	62%	67%	↑
Rice/pasta	42%	50%	↑
Sweets/chocolate	84%	68%	↓
Buns/cakes	28%	16%	↓
Crisps	75%	40%	↓
Chips/fried potatoes	54%	38%	↓
Potatoes	57%	44%	↓
Meat products (e.g. sausage rolls)	60%	56%	↓
Beans/pulses	34%	26%	↓
Bread	95%	88%	↓
Fruit	77%	76%	-
Fish (not including fried fish)	19%	18%	-



Consumption of sugary fizzy drinks on most days of the week has decreased by **over a third**:

**65%** in 2007 - **36%** in 2016

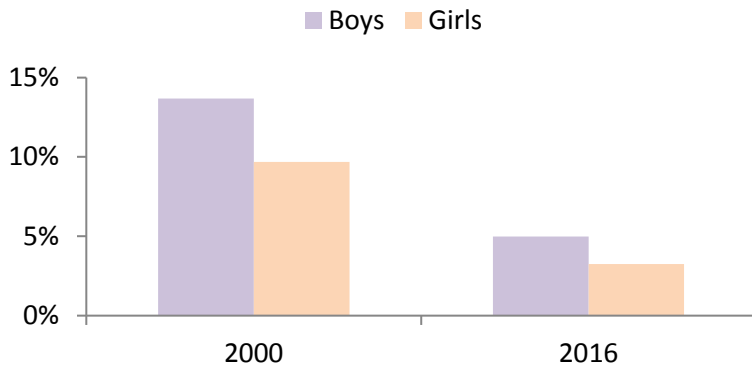
Consumption of diet drinks on most days of the week has **halved**:

**42%** in 2007 - **22%** in 2016

Drinks consumed on most days of the week by sex and deprivation quintile	Boys	Girls	Most Deprived	Least Deprived
Sugary fizzy drinks	40%	32%	56%	28%
Diet drinks	25%	19%	35%	21%
Energy drinks	15%	10%	23%	6%

# Sexual Health

**Proportion of young people reporting having had sexual experience, including sexual intercourse**

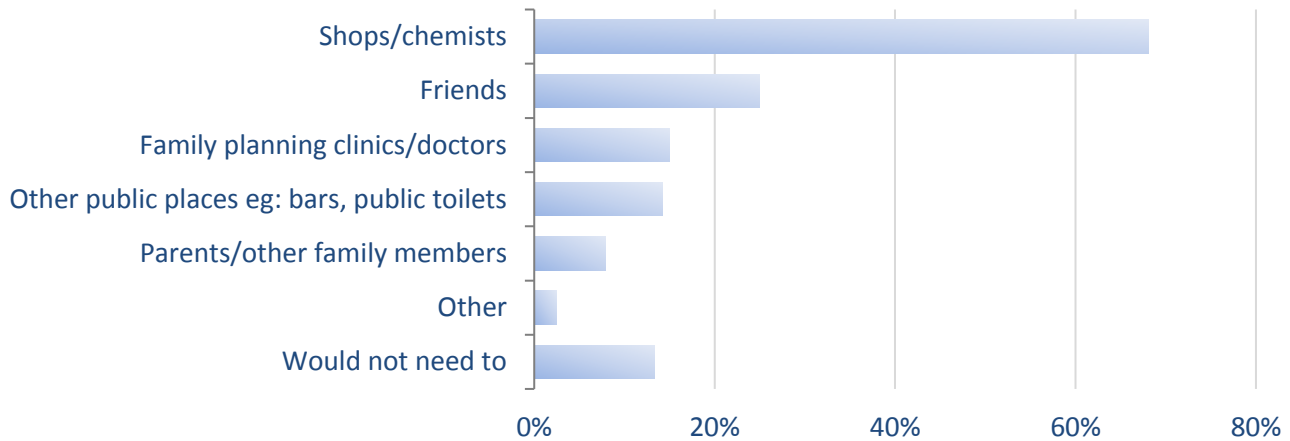


There has been a decline in the proportion of young people reporting having had sexual intercourse, from 12% in 2000 to 4% in 2016. Boys (5%) were more likely to report having had sexual intercourse than girls (3%), as were those in the older year groups (less than 1% of year 8 compared with 15% of year 12).

**2 in 3**

Year 11 & 12 respondents indicated that they would find it easy to get contraceptives

**If you needed to, where would you actually get your contraceptives? (year 11 & 12 only)**



If seeking advice about sexual health issues, young people said they were most likely to go to...

**Doctor/ GP – 68%**

**Family – 41%**

**Friends – 36%**