

NHS the Information Centre

Smoking, drinking and drug use among school children on the decline, says new report

Smoking, drinking and drug use among school children is on the decline, says a report from The NHS Information Centre out today.

It shows:

The percentage of 11 to 15-year-olds who had ever taken drugs stood at 22 per cent in 2009, compared to 29 per cent in 2001 (the first year in which the current method of measuring drug use was used).

The percentage who had tried smoking at least once was 29 per cent – the lowest figure since the survey began in 1982 when it was 53 per cent, and

The percentage who had ever drunk alcohol was 51 per cent in 2009 compared to 61 per cent in 2003 from when the current downward trend in alcohol use began.

But while, overall, smoking, drinking and drug use has been declining among the age group, the report shows usage becomes more common as children get older.

For example, in 2009, only one in 50 11-year-olds had taken drugs in the last month compared to nearly one in five 15-year-olds, three per cent of 11-year-olds had drunk alcohol in the past week compared to 38 per cent of 15-year-olds, and one per cent of 11-year-olds had smoked in the past week compared to 20 per cent of 15-year-olds.

The report; Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2009, details findings from an annual survey which took place across 247 English secondary schools and surveyed nearly 7,700 pupils aged 11-15, representing an estimated population of around 3.1 million pupils.

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