

## Fewer teenagers drinking alcohol

There have been falls in the numbers of teenagers drinking, smoking and taking drugs in England, a survey suggests.



Between 2009 and 2010 the percentage of 11-15 year olds who had tried alcohol fell from 51% to 45%. And 27% of pupils said they had smoked at least once, while 18% had tried drugs.

The NHS Information Centre figures also suggested "a shrinking number think that drinking and drunkenness is acceptable".

The report surveyed 7,296 pupils from 246 schools.

The proportion of those drinking alcohol in the week before the study fell from a peak of 26% in 2001 to 13% in 2010.

When they did drink, six in 10 pupils said they consumed more than four units.

### Smoking

One in 20 pupils said they were a regular smoker and girls were more likely to smoke than boys.

Smokers were also more likely to have drunk alcohol or to have taken drugs.

In 2001, 29% of those surveyed said they had used other drugs. That figure has fallen to 18%.

The most commonly used drug was cannabis, taken by 8.2% of pupils.

The survey also suggested a shift in attitudes.

Between 2003 and 2010, the percentage of pupils saying it was "okay" for someone their own age to drink once a week went from 46% to 32%.

Tim Straughan, chief executive of the NHS Information Centre, said: "Our figures point to an increasingly intolerant attitude among young people in today's society when it comes to the use of

cigarettes, alcohol and drugs.

"As well as a reduction in the percentage who say they partake in these behaviours; a shrinking number think that drinking and drunkenness is acceptable among their peers."

The chief executive of Drinkaware, Chris Sorek, said: "These statistics are not just encouraging because they show a drop in the number of children who have tried alcohol, but also because they show a positive shift in attitudes.

"To see that fewer children are tolerant of their peers drinking is an early sign of a change in the nation's drinking culture."

A Department of Health spokesperson said: "There is no room for complacency. Dangerous drug use, alcohol misuse and smoking are still major problems that need to be tackled and we will continue to do so."

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