

# Young Persons Behaviour and Attitudes Survey 2022

## Substance Use (Smoking, Alcohol & Drugs)

### Summary of key findings

#### Smoking

- In 2022, fewer than one-in-ten young people reported ever having smoked (8%) with 2% indicating that they currently smoke. This represents a decrease since 2000, when around two-fifths (37%) reported ever having smoked and 15% were current smokers. Those who smoke at least once a week are described as regular smokers and this proportion has fallen from 12% in 2000 to 1% in 2022.
- Boys (9%) were more likely to report ever having smoked than girls (6%) and young people living in the most deprived quintile were more likely to report ever having smoked (11%) than those in the least deprived quintile (5%).
- Those in the older age-groups were more likely to report ever having smoked and more likely to be regular smokers; a fifth of those in Year 12 (21%) reported ever having smoked however the proportion indicating they were regular smokers was smaller at 3%.

#### E-cigarettes

- The majority of young people (95%) had heard of e-cigarettes, with a fifth having used an e-cigarette at least once (21%). Those in the older year groups were more likely to report ever having used, with findings ranging from 6% of those in Year 8 to 44% of those in Year 12.
- A similar proportion of boys and girls indicated they use e-cigarettes now (9%) and within this group 6% were classed as regular e-cigarette users, that is, they use e-cigarettes at least once a week.
- There was a notable difference across the school years with those in the older age-groups more likely to report e-cigarette use; the proportion of those in Year 12 that indicated they currently use e-cigarettes increased from 10% in 2016 to 24% in 2022 and the proportion classed as regular e-cigarette users increased from 6% to 17% in the same time period.

#### Alcohol

- In 2022, around a third (31%) of young people reported ever having drunk alcohol; this is similar to the previous survey finding of 29% in 2019 though is around half the rate found in the 2000 survey (59%).

- Boys were more likely to report having taken a drink (33%) than girls (29%) and those in Year 12 (64%) were more likely to have done so than those in Year 8 (11%).
- Around half (46%) of those young people that reported drinking alcohol indicated they had been drunk at least once. The proportion was similar for boys (45%) and girls (47%), down from 61% and 62% respectively in 2000. Again, there was a difference found across the school years, ranging from a fifth of those in year 8 (19%) to three-fifths of those in year 12 (63%).

## Drugs

- In 2022, 4% of respondents reported ever using drugs; this is a similar rate to the finding in the previous surveys of 2016 (4%) and 2019 (5%).
- Boys (5%) were more likely to report having used drugs than girls (3%).
- The likelihood of both being offered a drug and taking a drug increased with age, with 6% of those in Year 8 reporting they had ever been offered a drug compared with 27% in Year 12. Similarly, fewer than 1% of those in Year 8 reported ever taking any drug compared with 10% in year 12.
- Cannabis was the drug most commonly offered to and used by young people, with 10% of young people indicating they had been offered it and 3% reporting they had ever taken it. Those in the older age-groups were more likely to indicate this with 9% of those in Year 12 reporting they had ever used cannabis.

## Attitudes

- Respondents were asked their opinion on whether certain behaviours are '*ok for someone your age*'. Around a third (30%) indicated that it is ok for someone their age to drink alcohol once a week, 14% to smoke cigarettes once a week, 8% to sniff glue once a week and 6% thought it was ok to take cannabis once a week.