



Source: BBC News - 23 July 2009

## Rise in Class A drug use - survey

***There has been a 3% increase in the use of Class A drugs in England and Wales, Home Office figures show.***

The British Crime Survey found almost four in every 100 people used a Class A drug in 2008-09 despite the overall use of illicit drugs remaining stable.

The survey found increases in use of cocaine, ecstasy, tranquilisers, anabolic steroids and ketamine.

The long-term fall in drugs is partly down to a fall in the use of cannabis in England and Wales.

According to the figures from the 2008-09 survey, almost 40% of people have used illegal drugs at some point - and about one in 10 had done so during the last year.

The use of all illegal drugs has been falling since 1996 but effectively stable over the last year.

### **DRUG USE CHANGES 07/08 - 08/09**

Up: Class A, Stimulants

Down: None

Stable: All drugs overall, Hallucinogens, Opiates, Cannabis

Source: Home Office/British Crime Survey

But despite the long-term decline, almost four in 100 people used a Class A drug during the year, up 3% on the previous year.

The rise confirms an underlying upward trend and supports a United Nation's analysis that the UK has the greatest number of Class A drug users in Europe.

Cannabis remained the drug most likely to have been used - 8% of those surveyed - with cocaine powder coming next at 3% of the population.

In all, the BCS estimates that 11.9m people have ever used illicit drugs - with about 2m having done so in the last month.

### **Young consumption**

Among people aged 16 to 24-years-old, the use of any illicit drug fell from almost 30% of the group in 1996 to 23% in the last year.

While long-term use of Class A drugs remains stable, among under-24s there was a rise from 6.9% to 8.1% last year.

Ecstasy use among young people remains at about 4%. It has been falling since 1996, the year after Essex student Leah Betts died after taking the drug, sparking a nationwide media campaign.

Approximately 900,000 young people use a drug every month, according to the survey, representing about 13% of all 16-24s in England and Wales.

Last month, the United Nations World Drug Report found that UK had more cocaine users than any other European country.

In its annual review of the trade, the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said there were an estimated 860,000 cocaine users in England and Wales and a further 140,000 in Northern Ireland and Scotland combined.