

# Illegal drug use falling amongst young people



The TellUs 4 survey contains the data used by government to measure the prevalence of drug use by young people. The survey was administered by the National Foundation for Educational Research on behalf of the DCSF and carried out in schools across England.

The headline figures from the survey reveal that substance misuse has risen by 0.5% in the last year, up from 9.3 to 9.8 per cent.

The DCSF’s statistical release says:

*For substance misuse (NI 115), Tellus4 shows a slight increase in the proportion of young people frequently using drugs, alcohol or volatile substances in comparison to the reweighted Tellus3 figures. Some minor changes were made between Tellus3 and Tellus4 to improve the clarity of the question but the findings are still considered to be comparable.*

There is considerable regional variation; the East Midlands seeing the biggest rise (1.4%) while Yorkshire and Humberside saw a fall of 1.5%.

## Positive News

There appears to be some positive news in the survey’s findings. The DCSF say:

- Cannabis use has fallen (4 per cent this year compared to 5 per cent last).
- 9 per cent of pupils had ever tried drugs in TellUs 4, compared to 11 per cent last year

Other results from the survey include:

- 51% said they had never drunk an alcoholic drink.
- 68% have never been drunk, but 5% say they have been three or more times.
- 77% have never smoked, and 10% have only smoked once.
- Only 2% said they had taken volatile substances in the last 4 weeks.
- Only 2% said they had taken drugs other than cannabis or solvents in the last 4 weeks.

The Children’s Minister, Dawn Primarolo, [says](#):

*“Overall there is much to celebrate in the latest TellUs survey. Reductions in young people experiencing bullying, smoking and taking drugs*

Region	Tellus3 (new weighting)	Tellus 4	Change (ppts)
East Midlands	9.0%	10.4%	1.4
South East	8.7%	9.8%	1.1
London	5.6%	6.5%	0.9
South West	10.0%	10.9%	0.9
East of England	8.8%	9.5%	0.7
England	9.3%	9.8%	0.5
North East	12.1%	12.5%	0.4
West Midlands	9.5%	9.8%	0.3
North West	11.2%	11.0%	-0.2
Yorkshire and the Humber	12.3%	10.8%	-1.5

*along with a great response to parks and play areas show Government action is really taking effect...*

*“Through the national Healthy Schools Programme, PSHE curriculum and the SEAL programme, we want all schools to support young people and to give them the confidence to speak up if they are facing difficulties. Beyond the school gate we are determined to help health, education and social services to work better together for the benefit of all children, young people and their families.”*

Just over 253,000 children and young people in Years 6, 8 and 10 took part in Tellus4. The DCSF will be publishing the Tellus4 Research Report at the end of March. It will provide detailed analysis of the data collected, draw some conclusions and compare this year's data with that from the relevant re-weighted Tellus3 data.