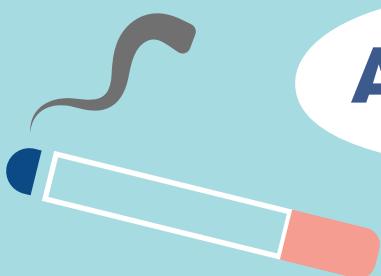


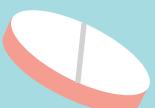
DRUG USE,



ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION,



SMOKING AND VAPING



AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE:

**BREAKING THE BARRIERS
TO ACCESSING SUPPORT**



THE MIX

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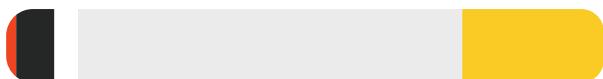
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Introduction

Illegal drug use is common among young people, and yet it remains a taboo topic in our society.

Social stigma and fear from criminalisation surrounding drug use and drug and alcohol addiction, discourages many young people from seeking help. As a result, many are suffering in silence rather than looking for support, risking harsh consequences to their mental and physical health.



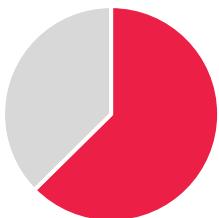
Meanwhile, drug-related mortality rates continue to grow. In 2020, there were 4,561 deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales, the highest number since records began in 1993. This is 3.8% higher than the number of deaths registered in 2019. Two-thirds of registered drug poisoning deaths in 2020 were related to drug misuse¹. Drug-related mortality rates have also been rising in Scotland, Northern Ireland and across Northern Europe in recent years.²

More needs to be done to ensure that young people with alcohol or drug issues seek and receive support and that appropriate support is available to them. The Mix conducted research in August 2021 to better understand the scale of the problem and what can be done to ensure that young people who need help access the support.

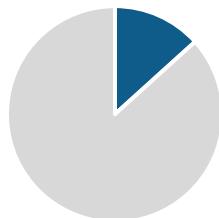
¹ Deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales: 2020 registrations

² Drug-related Deaths in Scotland in 2020 | National Records of Scotland (nrscotland.gov.uk)

Research by The Mix with young people aged 16 to 25 has found that:



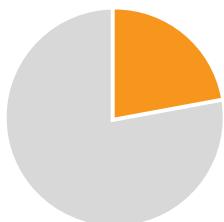
Around 2 in 3 (62.6%) of 16 to 25 year olds have consumed alcohol in the past month.



Tobacco or cigarettes have been used by 13.3% of young people in the past 30 days, which means that there are around 1.1 million smokers who are young people.



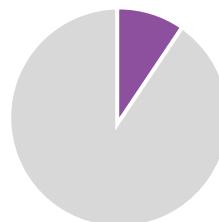
Almost 1 in 10 young people (8.9%) have vaped in the past month, equating to over 700,000 young people.



Over 1 in 5 (22.1%) 16 to 25 year olds have taken an illegal drug (drug category A, B or C)³ in the last year, which equates to around 1.8 million people.



Over 1 in 10 (10.8%) young people aged 16 to 25 have taken a class A drug⁴ in the past year, which equates to over 855,000 young people, this is far higher than the official statistics suggest (7.4%)⁵



1 in 10 (9.5%) young people have abused anti-depressants in the past year; this equates to over three quarters of a million young people.

The survey shows that drug use has fallen over the pandemic period, most likely due to fewer opportunities to take drugs being available because of lockdown restrictions. However, it is highly likely that now, with the country opening up and restrictions being lifted, a rise in drug use can be expected again.

The research also shows that:



14.5%

Only 14.5% of young people who had experienced challenges with taking substances accessed support to help them deal with the challenges experienced.

³ The following drugs were included in the surveys: cocaine; ecstasy/ MDMA; LSD, magic mushrooms/ psilocybin; heroin; methadone; amphetamines; cannabis, ketamine; mephedrone; tranquillisers; anabolic steroids)

⁴ Class A drugs included in the surveys: Cocaine ; Ecstasy/ MDMA ; LSD, Magic mushrooms/ Psilocybin; Heroin; Methadone

⁵ Office for National Statistics: Drug misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2020

This means that there are **over 2 million young people** who had experienced challenges as a result of taking drugs, alcohol or smoking who did not access support to help them cope with their challenges.

Stigma around drug use would discourage over 2 in 5 (42.0%) young people from accessing support services if they needed them.

There are at least **760,000 young people who are currently being failed by existing support**. These young people indicated that they would have accessed support to help them cope with their challenges caused by substance use if improvements were made.

We are releasing our research in order to raise awareness of this issue and to call for improvements in support. We'd like to encourage media, and other institutions including schools or universities, to help promote non-judgemental discussion about drug use and help young people with substance use issues to recognise the problem and access support.

We also want to help point young people and those who care for them in the direction of existing services they can turn to for support, such as those we offer at the Mix. We want young people to know they can and talk about their substance use issues.



"Drug problems can be really difficult to face but it does not make you a bad person. If you are struggling then you should never have to feel alone. If someone you know is struggling, don't judge. Remember that kindness is contagious."

- Young person

Gathering our data

Data has been collated by YouGov on behalf of The Mix. The research surveyed a total of 2,006 young people aged 16 to 25 and was undertaken between 5 – 10 August 2021.

This survey was carried out online; figures have been weighted, and are representative of all UK 16 to 25 year olds.

Where we have quoted young people, the quotes are taken from our own survey we carried out in partnership with Amy Winehouse Foundation, who helped us shape the questions.

The Mix specialises in providing non-judgemental anonymous support for young people across the UK, on issues relating to mental health, as well as education, drugs, homelessness and money, to name a few. Our aim is to better the lives of our young people, to signpost them to key support services.



We undertook this survey with the aim of gaining a better understanding of how widespread the use of substances is which are causing addiction, from alcohol, tobacco/cigarettes and vaping to drug use.⁶ To gain a full picture we asked young people about their substance use in the 30 days (a month) prior to the survey, in the year prior to the survey, and at any point in the respondent's lifetime (use ever). We also wanted to better understand how coronavirus epidemic and consequent lockdowns impacted young people in relation to drug use, and what can be done to improve existing support to encourage young people to access it if needed. The spreadsheet with survey data can be found on The Mix website.

⁶ Including : cocaine; ecstasy/ MDMA ; LSD, magic mushrooms/ psilocybin; heroin ; methadone ; amphetamines; cannabis, ketamine; mephedrone; tranquillisers ; anabolic steroids ; inhalants, diet pills and anti-depressants.

Use of alcohol, tobacco/ cigarettes, vaping and drugs

Prevalence of alcohol, tobacco, cigarettes and vaping and who is using them

While around 2 in 3 (62.6%) of 16 to 25 year olds have consumed alcohol in the past month, almost 3 in 4 (74.6%) had consumed it in the past year, with over 4 in 5 (81.0%) doing so at least once during their lifetime.

Drinking among young people is associated with their background and working status



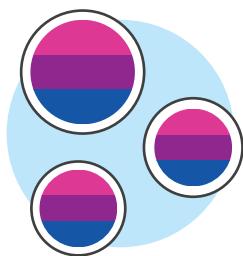
Young people from working class backgrounds⁷ (51.9%) are far less likely to have drunk alcohol in the past 30 days compared to their peers from wealthier backgrounds (65.7%)



Those working full time (72.6%) are far more likely to have drunk alcohol in the past 30 days than young people working part time (61.4%), full-time students (61.8%), unemployed young people (52.1%) or those not working (28.6%)

**30
days**

Young adults aged 21 to 25 are somewhat more likely to have drunk alcohol in the past 30 days (65.3%) than 16-to 20-year-olds (59.5%)



Bisexuals (70.1%) are more likely to have drunk alcohol in the past 30 days compared to heterosexuals (63.8%)



Looking at the UK regions, young people from North of England (66.3%) are the most likely to have drunk in the past 30 days, with young people from London being the least likely (57.7%)

⁷ The survey split respondents into ABC¹ and C²DE grades based on occupation; these can be taken to equate to middle class and working class, respectively

Tobacco or cigarettes have been used by 13.3% of young people in the past 30 days, which means that there are around 1.1 million smokers who are young people. Over 2 in 5 (21.9%) smoked tobacco or cigarettes in the past year, with over one third (34.5%) trying them at least once in their life.



The Mix's data for smoking in the past 30 days shows that:

15.1%

21- to 25-year-olds are slightly more likely (15.1%) to smoke than young people aged 16 to 20 years (11.3%)

16.4%

Bisexuals (16.4%) and young people identifying with 'other' sexuality (19.7%) are more likely to smoke than heterosexuals (12.8%)

18.5%

In terms of employment, young people who are not working (18.5%) are the most likely to smoke while full-time students are the least likely to smoke (10.6%)

19.0%

Yorkshire and the Humber has the highest prevalence of young smokers (19.0%) out of the UK regions, with Northern Ireland and East Midlands having the lowest prevalence (around 10% each)

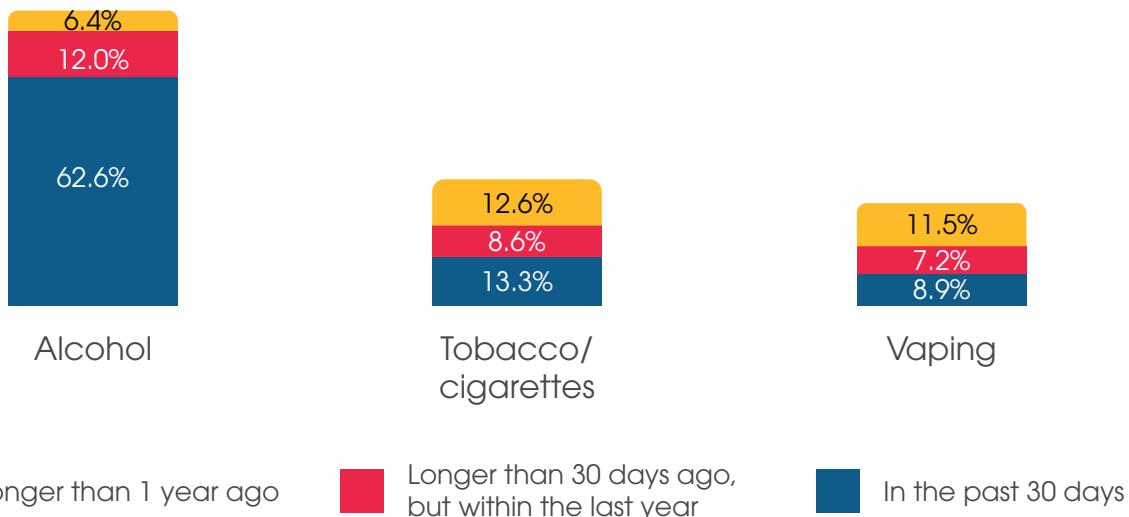
Despite vaping being relatively new to the market, it has been widely accessible and almost 1 in 10 young people (8.9%) have vaped in the past month, which equates to over 700,000 young people. Some 16.2% have vaped in the past year, with over a quarter (27.7%) of young people ever doing so.

Vaping is more popular among 16- to 20-year-olds, with 10.7% having vaped in the past 30 days compared to 7.3% among 21-25-year-olds. This is somewhat surprising as for the remaining substances, use tends to be higher among the older age group.

Vaping prevalence varies widely region by region. While young people in the North East are the most likely to have vaped in the past 30 days (18.2%), those in East of England (2.8%) and Scotland (4.3%) are the least likely.

Prevalence of alcohol, smoking and vaping

% of 16-25 year olds



Illegal drugs are common

Class A, B and C drug usage and who uses them

Over 1 in 5 (22.1%) 16 to 25 year olds have taken an illegal drug (drug category A, B or C)⁸ in the last year, which equates to around 1.8 million people. Almost 2 in 5 (36.9%) have taken an illegal drug at least once in their lifetime, with over 1 in 10 (10.6%) taking it in the past 30 days.

Men (24.0%) are slightly more likely than women (20.2%) to have taken an illegal drug in the last year. Out of the UK regions, young people from Scotland (29.1%) were by far the most likely to have taken an illegal drug in the past 12 months. This is perhaps not surprising as Scotland has Europe's highest per capita rate of drug deaths; more than three times higher than the rest of the UK.

⁸ The following drugs were included in the surveys: cocaine; ecstasy/ MDMA; LSD, magic mushrooms/ psilocybin; heroin; methadone; amphetamines; cannabis, ketamine; mephedrone; tranquillisers; anabolic steroids)

Importantly, there appears to be a link between **sexuality and illegal drug use**. While less than a fifth of heterosexuals (19.2%) have taken an illegal drug in the past year, around under a third (31.5%) of bisexuals and 29.0% of gays or lesbians have done so, with well over a third (34.7%) doing so among those selecting 'other' sexuality.



29.0% of gays or lesbians have taken an illegal drug in the past year



Around under a third (31.5%) of bisexuals have taken an illegal drug in the past year



Less than a fifth of heterosexuals (19.2%) have taken an illegal drug in the past year

In terms of age, 21 to 25 (23.7%) year olds were slightly more likely than 16 to 20 (20.4%) year olds to have taken an illegal drug in the past 12 months.

The Mix figures show that class A drug usage is higher than the official government data suggests

The Mix survey shows that over 1 in 10 (10.8%) young people aged 16 to 25 have taken a class A drug in the past year, which equates to over 855,000 young people. In comparison, according to the 2020 Crime Survey for England and Wales⁹ only 7.4% of 16-24-year-olds have taken a class A drug in last 12 months.

According to the data discussed later in the survey, **drug usage among young people decreased rather than increased over the pandemic period**.

Therefore, it is unlikely that the difference in the data is due to increased drug consumption. Rather, it is more likely that difficulties connected to data collection on drug use due to their illegality lead to underestimates.

Almost 2 in 10 young adults aged 16 to 25 (18.3%) have taken a class A drug at least once in their lifetime, with 4.4% doing so in the past 30 days.

⁹ Office for National Statistics: Drug misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2020



12.9% of males have taken a class A drug in the past year



8.6% of females have taken a class A drug in the past year

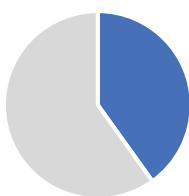
Males (12.9%) are far more likely than their female (8.6%) counterparts to have taken a class A drug in the past year. Yorkshire & the Humber (15.4%) and Northern Ireland (14.8%) have the highest prevalence of class A drug users. Bisexuals (13.7%) and those selecting 'other' sexuality (20.4%) were far more likely to have taken a class A drug compared to heterosexuals (9.4%).

Inclusion of other drugs in the survey

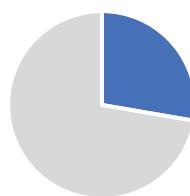
Apart from collecting information on the class A, B and C drugs, the Mix survey looked at usage of inhalants. It also collected data on use of diet pills and anti-depressants not used in line with prescription or used for non-medical purposes as these can be addictive.

Almost 1 in 3 (30.7%) young adults aged 16 to 25 have used drugs

included in the survey in the past year, with almost half of young adults (47.1%) taking drugs at least once in their lifetime. Almost a fifth (17.1%) have taken one or more drugs surveyed in the past 30 days.



Scotland stands out from the other UK regions for its high drug usage (40.1%) in the past year



Heterosexuals (27.7%) were far less likely to have had any drug in the past year, compared to gays or lesbians (42.4%), bisexuals (39.1%) or those identifying with 'other' sexuality (42.1%)



Young people aged 21 to 25 (33.4%) were more likely to have had any drug in the past 12 months than 16- to 20-year-olds (27.7%)

Which are the most commonly used drugs?

Cannabis is the most commonly used drug among young people aged 16 to 25, with 7.4% having used it in the past month, 18.2% in the past year, and 33.1% at some point in their life.

Anti-depressants – taken for non-medical purposes or not in line with GP prescription - are the second most used drug in our research, with 6.7% of young people having used them in the month prior to the research.

1 in 10 (9.5%) young people have abused¹⁰ anti-depressants in the past year; this equates to over three quarters of a million young people, which is a staggering figure. The pandemic impacted the mental health of young people hard, and with limited access to mental health services, prescriptions for antidepressants increased. However, it is a worrying trend to see that such a large number of young people abuse anti-depressants. Overall, some 16.0% have abused anti-depressants at some point in their life.

Cocaine is the next most used drug, with 2.7% of young people using it in the 30 days prior to the research. In the past year, it has been used by 6.9% of young people, with 12.9% ever taking it at some point in their life.

Ketamine (1.6%), ecstasy (1.5%) and inhalants (1.4%) were the next most widely used drugs in the past month. However, ketamine (6.3%) and inhalants (6.5%) have been far more commonly used in the past year than ecstasy (4.8%). Inhalants (16.8%) fall among the most used drugs when looking at their usage among young adults at any point in their life, with ecstasy (12.6%) and ketamine (11.5%) having been used by over 1 in 10 young people at some point in their life.

Diet pills or laxatives (not taken in line with prescription) are also fairly commonly used by young people, with 2.0% reporting their usage in the past month, 5.3% having used them in the past year and 10.8% ever taking them.

¹⁰ In this report, abuse is defined as occurrences where pills were taken either for non-medical purposes or not in line with GP prescription

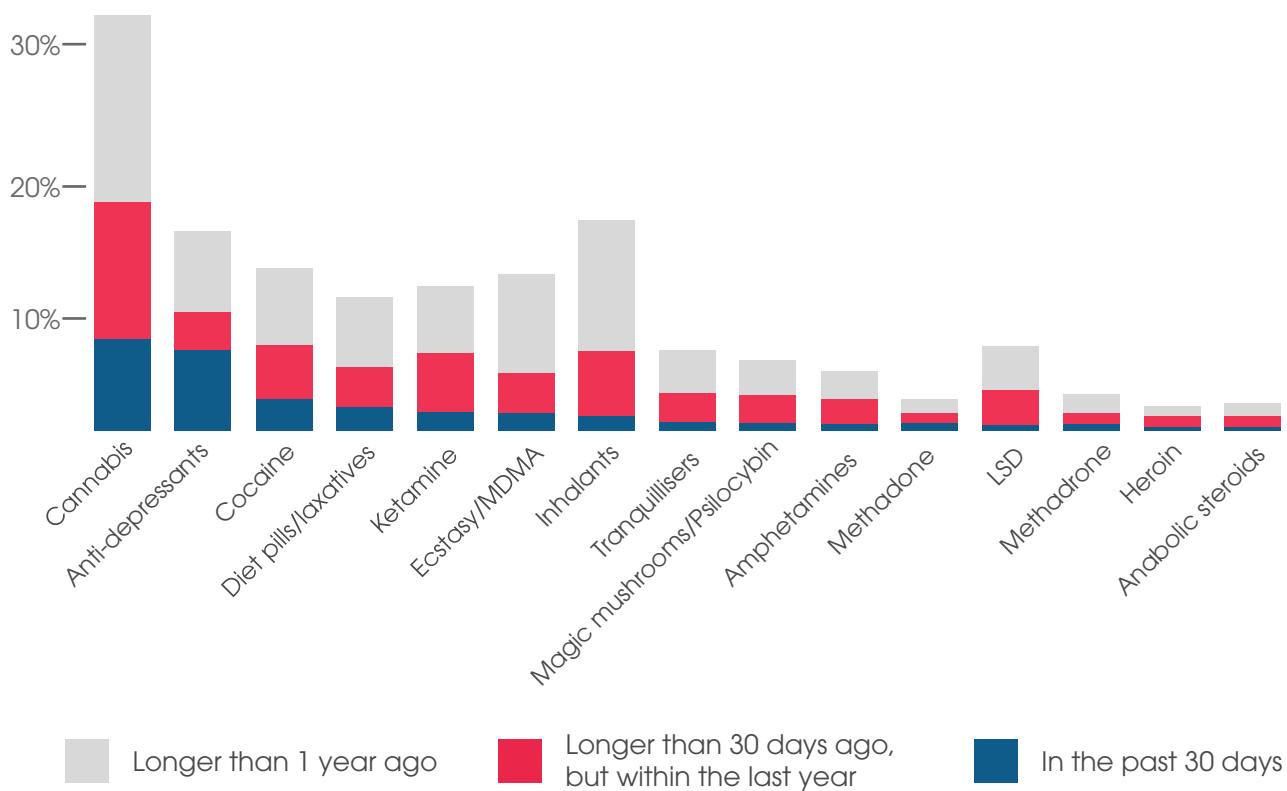
Tranquillisers (0.9%), magic mushrooms (0.8%) and amphetamines (0.7%) have been each used by just under one percent of young people during the past 30 days. In the past year, both magic mushrooms and tranquillisers have been used by 3.1% of young people, with 2.7% having used amphetamines.

Tranquillisers have been used by 6.6% of young people at least once in their life, magic mushrooms by 5.7% and amphetamines by 4.9%.

Methadone (0.6%), LSD (0.6%), mephedrone (0.6%), heroin (0.5%) and anabolic steroids (0.4%) are the least used drugs when looking at the 30-day period. Out of these drugs, LSD has been the most widely used in the past year (3.3%), followed by methadone (1.5%), mephedrone (1.5%), heroin (1.3%) and anabolic steroids (1.2%). Similarly, when looking at usage at any point in life, LSD has been used by 6.8% of young people, followed by mephedrone (2.9%), methadone (2.5%), anabolic steroids (2.1%) and heroin (2.0%).

Drug use among young people

% of 16-25 year olds

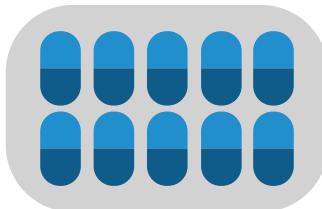


The Mix's data shows higher drug use than existing reports

The Mix's data from August 2021 was compared to the data from the 2019/20 Crime Survey for England and Wales. Although this data is not directly comparable as they are using slightly different methodology and relate to 16-24 year olds in England and Wales only, they can provide some indication of trends.

First, looking at the usage of drugs at any point during respondents' lifetime, The Mix's data indicates higher drug usage among young people than the CSEW 2019/20 data. The figures are higher for all the illegal drugs.

The Mix's figures are particularly higher for **Ketamine**, which shows the usage to be (11.5%); twice as high as that indicated by CSEW 19/20 survey (5.6%). According to The Mix's data, the usage is around twice as high also for tranquilisers, LSD and mephedrone.



For **heroin** and **methadone** the figures are particularly surprising, as the prevalence according to the CSEW 19/20 survey is 0.1% and 0.2% respectively, while the The Mix's survey shows it to be far higher, at 2.0% for heroin and 2.5% for methadone. Also, anabolic steroids appear to be underreported in the CSEW 19/20 survey (0.5%) compared to the The Mix's figures (2.1%).

Although the The Mix figures are substantially higher, as mentioned earlier, it is likely that behind these differences lies the fact that the illegality of illicit drug use means understanding true usage is difficult and leads to underestimation. Additionally, the figures may also be slightly higher because Scotland, with its higher drug prevalence is not included in the CSEW figures, however, the Scottish population account for only a very small proportion (8.1%) of the UK's 16-25 year olds.



Use of drugs ever in respondent's lifetime			
	The Mix 2021	CSEW 19/20	% Difference
Any cocaine	12.9%	10.0%	2.9%
Ecstasy	12.6%	10.1%	2.5%
LSD	6.8%	3.6%	3.2%
Magic mushrooms	5.7%	4.5%	1.2%
Heroin	2.0%	0.1%	1.9%
Methadone	2.5%	0.2%	2.3%
Amphetamines	4.9%	4.6%	0.3%
Cannabis	33.1%	32.6%	0.5%
Ketamine	11.5%	5.6%	5.9%
Mephedrone	2.9%	1.4%	1.5%
Tranquillisers	6.6%	2.4%	4.2%
Anabolic steroids	2.1%	0.5%	1.6%

When the data on illicit drug usage for the past year is compared to CSEW 19/20, a similar trend appears. The Mix's data shows a far higher usage of anabolic steroids, tranquillisers, mephedrone, ketamine, amphetamines, methadone, heroin, magic mushrooms and LSD in comparison to the SCEW 19/20 survey.

Taken in the last year	The Mix 2021	CSEW 19/20	% Difference
Any cocaine	6.9%	5.3%	1.6%
Ecstasy	4.8%	4.0%	0.8%
LSD	3.3%	1.0%	2.3%
Magic mushrooms	3.1%	1.2%	1.9%
Heroin	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Methadone	1.5%	0.1%	1.4%
Amphetamines	2.7%	0.7%	2.0%
Cannabis	18.2%	18.7%	-0.5%
Ketamine	6.3%	3.2%	3.1%
Mephedrone	1.5%	0.2%	1.3%
Tranquillisers	3.1%	0.8%	2.3%
Anabolic steroids	1.2%	0.3%	0.9%

Yet again, a similar trend appears when the usage in the past 30 days is compared between the surveys, with The Mix's data showing far higher prevalence for all drugs included in the survey apart from cannabis.

Taken in the last year	The Mix 2021	CSEW 19/20	% Difference
Any cocaine	2.7%	1.4%	1.3%
Ecstasy	1.5%	0.6%	0.9%
LSD	0.6%	0.2%	0.4%
Magic mushrooms	0.8%	0.2%	0.6%
Heroin	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%
Methadone	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%
Amphetamines	0.7%	0.1%	0.6%
Cannabis	7.4%	8.5%	-1.1%
Ketamine	1.6%	0.9%	0.7%
Mephedrone	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%
Tranquillisers	0.9%	0.1%	0.8%
Anabolic steroids	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%

The pandemic has led to a decrease in drug consumption

While the data above shows drug consumption being higher than the official estimates suggest, our research indicates that it has decreased during the coronavirus pandemic.

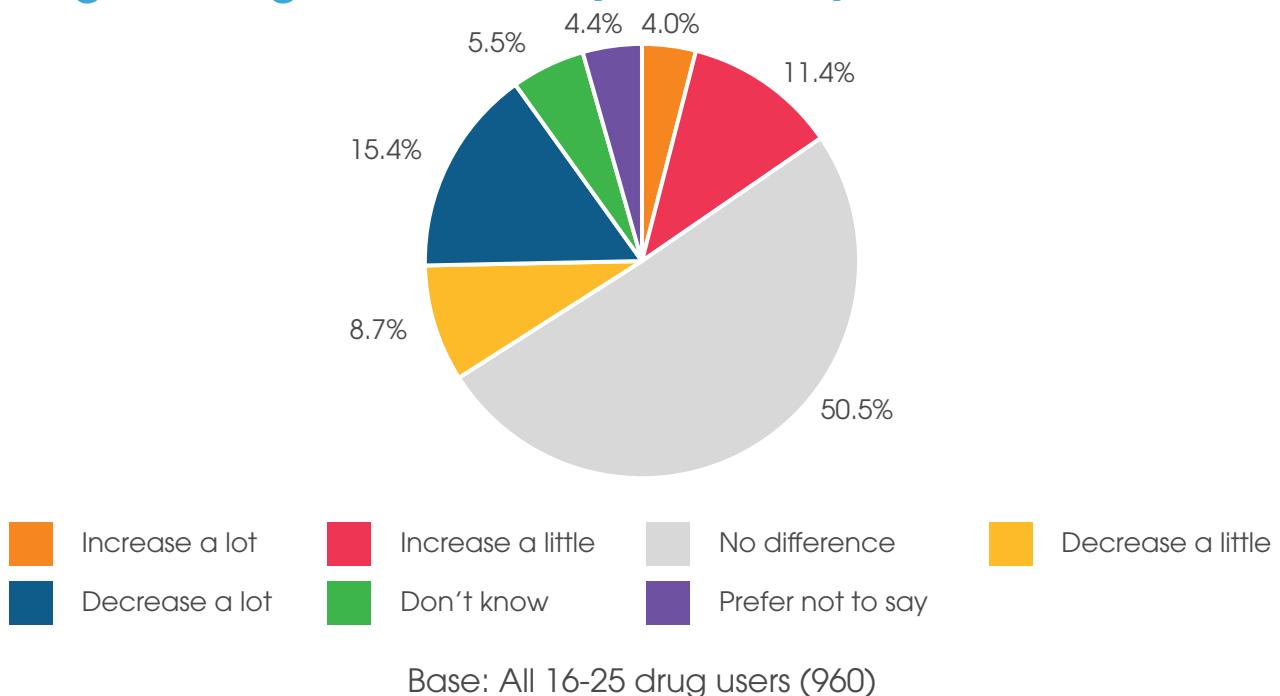
With many places where young people use drugs closed over most of the pandemic period, including parties where 34.9% of 16-25 year old drug users typically use drugs, and pubs, clubs and bars where 23.2% use drugs, there were fewer opportunities for drug taking. A young person's own home or friends' home is the most popular location for drug consumption (51.0%); but with restrictions on movement and visiting other households, this option was also less available.

It is likely that sourcing drugs has also become more difficult during the pandemic. While according to our research, friends (41.5%) are the main source of drugs for drug users, restrictions on movement and socialising in larger groups of people meant that friends were not able to meet as often as they would have done otherwise. Similarly, with move to online teaching, some of the 12.9% of young people who typically source drugs through fellow students might have also found it more difficult. Equally, this meant that over the pandemic period there was less peer pressure than in other years to take drugs.

Our data shows that around 1 in 5 (18.9%) young people (aged 16-25) who have ever taken a drug use a drug dealer, with 14.8% sourcing their drugs through a GP or doctor's surgery. Some 6.0% get their drugs from shops that sell over-the-counter medicine, with 1 in 20 (4.6%) getting them through the dark web. A smaller number source them through home (4.1%), family (3.7%) and social media (3.6%).

Among those who have ever taken at least one drug, the proportion of young people whose drug consumption decreased over the coronavirus period (24.1%) is far higher than those whose consumption increased (15.4%). The data points to a substantial decrease as 15.4% said that their consumption had decreased a lot, with an additional 8.7% selecting a little. In stark contrast, 11.4% said that their drug use had increased a little, with only 4.0% selecting a lot.

Change in drug use over the pandemic period



Age plays an important role in the pattern of drug consumption over the pandemic period, with drug use among the 16- to 20-year-olds actually increasing, and among the 21- to 25-year-olds falling sharply.

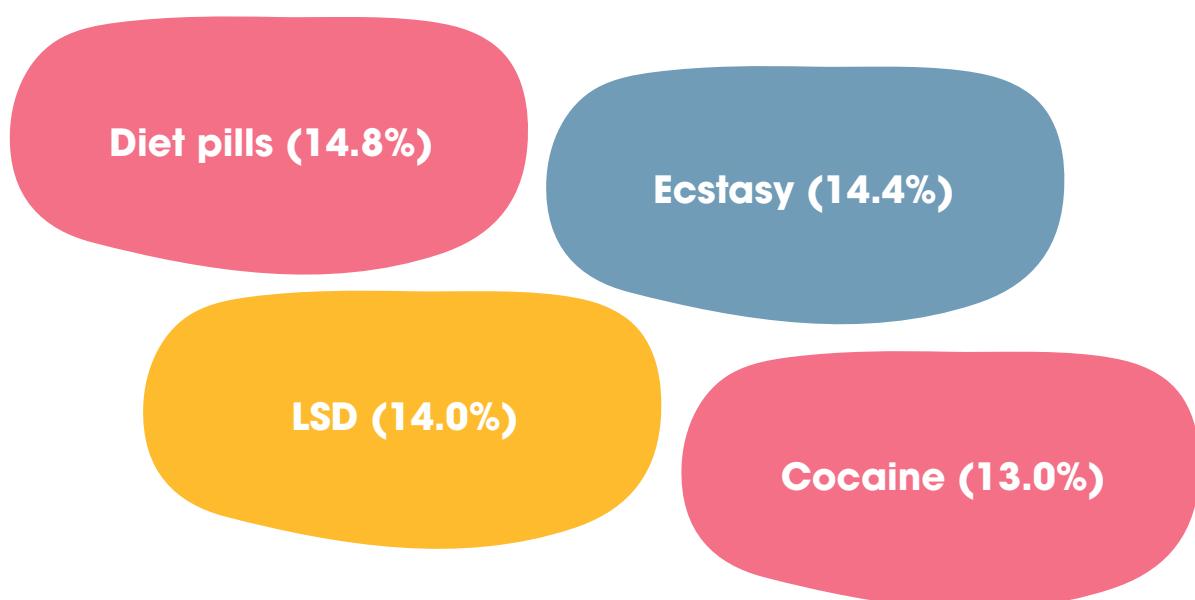
Among young people aged 16 to 20 years, a larger number said that their consumption had increased (20.1%) than decreased (18.1%). In sharp contrast, while 12.6% of the 21- to 25-year-olds said their consumption had increased, more than twice as many said that it had decreased (27.7%).

In terms of frequency, **the majority of drug users take drugs less often than monthly** (57.4%), with 6.3% taking them monthly, 7.4% weekly, another 7.3% daily and 1.8% multiple times per day. It should be noted that an additional 19.9% of respondents were not able to answer the question or chose not to answer it.

The most common drugs taken daily or multiple times a day are antidepressants and tranquilisers.

Over a quarter (28.0%) of young people who have abused antidepressants in the past year take drugs at least daily; this may indicate a **high level of addiction** to anti-depressants. Daily abuse of antidepressants may suggest addiction as people find it difficult to function normally without using the drug.

Over 1 in 5 (20.7%) of those who have taken tranquilisers take drugs at least daily, 19.6% among those taking magic mushrooms, and 19.2% among those taking amphetamines. The proportion was somewhat smaller for the remaining drugs:



Why do young people take drugs and other substances?

"It's okay to explore and try things - your safety is paramount at all times though :)"

- Young person

Motivations for taking substances

As might be expected, having fun is by far the main reason for taking drugs, alcohol or other substances (52.7%). Relaxation (33.5%) and desire to experiment or try new experiences (29.8%) are the next most common reasons, each selected by around a third, with around 1 in 5 wanting to get 'high' (18.7%).



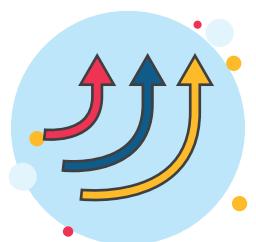
Having fun



Relaxation



New experiences



Wanting to get
'high'

Peer pressure is also a strong motivation, with just under 1 in 5 (17.8%) wanting to fit in or doing it because of their friends. Importantly, almost 1 in 5 (17.1%) take drugs or other substances to make them feel better because of a poor mental health issue or emotional distress, with more than 1 in 10 (12.3%) wanting to escape from problems in their life.

"It (drug taking) doesn't often help in the long term, it can actually make things worse."

- Young person

For 1 in 20 young people (5.0%) it is a habit, with a small number taking substances as part of sexual experience (3.3%), to improve performance at school, university or work (2.7%) or to be better at sports (1.2%).

Motivations for taking substances



Base: All 16-25 substance users (1693)

Motivations for substance use are influenced by gender, age, sexuality, region and working status

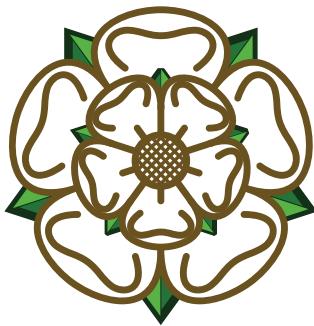
In terms of gender differences, **women are more likely to take substances to make them feel better** because of a mental health issue or emotional distress (18.8%) compared to men (15.4%). While men (3.7%) are twice as likely as women (1.8%) to use drugs to improve their educational or work performance.

In terms of UK regions...



In Scotland, peer pressure is a stronger driver for taking substances, with almost 1 in 4 (24.2%) young people doing it to fit in or because of friends.

In London, young people are more likely to take substances to escape from problems in their life (16.0%) than in any other region.



In Yorkshire & the Humber and the North East young people are more likely than in other regions to take drugs to improve their performance at school, university or work (around 5%).



Working status has a bearing on motivations too. Unemployed young people are far more likely to take substances to escape problems in their life (19.7%) and to make them feel better because of their mental health issues (24.0%) than other groups.

Similarly, sexuality plays a role too. With hate crime currently rising, it may not come as a surprise that compared to heterosexuals, bisexuals are more likely to take substances to escape problems in their life (20.8%) and to make them feel better because of their mental issues or emotional distress (26.1%), with 25.1% doing so among gays or lesbians. Bisexuals (8.0%) and gays and lesbians (7.5%) are almost twice as likely as heterosexuals (4.0%) to take substances because it is a habit.

Interestingly, age plays a role too, with 21- to 25-year-olds being more likely to take substances to make them feel better because of mental health issues (19.4%) than 16- to 20-year-olds (14.2%), and also to escape problems in their life (13.8% v 10.5%).

"It is easy to give in to peer pressure and you need to take yourself out of situations where you can be pressured."

- Young person

Benefits connected to substance use

Around half of young people who had used one or more substances in the past experienced some benefits connected to using substances. New experiences (28.3%), new friendships (18.4%) and improvement in mental wellbeing (16.6%) are the top three benefits experienced.

Around 1 in 10 young people (11.1%) said they had gained a new mindset, with 7.2% having better sex as a result. A smaller number experienced improvement in physical wellbeing or look (3.4%), better performance at work (2.8%), better performance at school or university (2.6%) and better performance at sports (1.4%).

Interestingly, bisexuals are more likely than any other group to experience improvement in mental wellbeing as a benefit (24.2%).

Benefits experienced as a result of using substances

New experiences	28.3%
New friendships	18.4%
Improvement in mental wellbeing	16.6%
I've gained a new mindset	11.1%
Better sex	7.2%
Improvement in physical wellbeing/I look better	3.4%
Better performance at work	2.8%
Better performance at school or university	2.6%
Better performance at sports	1.4%
Dont know / can't recall / prefer not to say	11.3%
Other	4.8%
I have no experienced any benefits as a result of using these substance(s)	37.8%

Base: Those ever using any substance (1693)

Challenges experienced due to substance use

While around half of substance users reported experiencing one or more benefits, 1 in 3 had experienced some challenges as a result of using drugs, alcohol, smoking or vaping.

Most commonly, the substance users experienced challenges with mental health (13.8%), sleeping (13.0%) and with their energy levels or motivation (11.1%). Around 1 in 10 reported challenges with their physical health (8.9%), 6.6% experienced problems with their friends and 4.8% with their studies.

Importantly, 1 in 20 substance users (4.7%) experienced challenges when attempting to stop using drugs, alcohol or smoking which may indicate addiction. A smaller number experienced challenges with their family relationships (4.2%), sexual relationships (3.2%) and with their work (2.8%).

Challenges experienced as a result of using substances

With my mental health	13.8%
With sleeping	13.0%
With my energy/motivation	11.1%
With my physical health/body	8.9%
With my friends	6.6%
With my studies	4.8%
When attempting to stop using drugs and/or alcohol	4.7%
With my family relationships	4.2%
With intimate/sexual relationships	3.2%
With my work	2.8%
Other	1.4%
Don't know/can't recall/prefer not to say	8.2%
I have not experienced any benefits as a result of using these substance(s)	58.0%

Base: Those ever using any substance (1693)

Breaking the barriers to accessing support

“Our lives are precious, no matter how bad things may seem right now, and we should never let drugs take over the short yet beautiful time we have.”

- Young person

Only 14.5% of young people who had experienced challenges with taking substances accessed support to help them deal with the challenges experienced.

This means that there are over 2 million young people who had **experienced challenges** as a result of taking drugs, alcohol or smoking who did not access support to help them cope with their challenges.

Accessing support appears to be influenced by young person's background and age

15.3%

Young people from wealthier backgrounds (ABC1 social grades) (15.3%) are more likely to have accessed support than young people from working class backgrounds (C2DE social grades) (11.2%)

16.4%

Young adults aged 21 to 25 (16.4%) are more likely to have accessed support than 16- to 20-year-olds (11.7%)

As we can see, only a very low proportion of young people who experience challenges with substance use access support and more needs to be done to encourage them to access support in order to avoid negative consequences of addiction. This section provides important insights into barriers to accessing support and how access to support could be improved.

Reasons why young people do not access support

The main reason for not accessing support given by over half of those who have experienced challenges (55.2%) is feeling that they do not need support as that they can deal with them on their own. While this may be true for some, it is very likely that there are many young people trying to deal with their challenges on their own who would benefit from accessing support.



Another popular reason for not accessing support is that young people do not believe that it would help them (15.9%). This represents a serious barrier to accessing support and more needs to be done to help young people understand how support can help them, and the different types of support available.

14.3%

A large proportion (14.3%) think that they do not need support as they don't think it's that bad as "everyone does it", which, yet again, may provide a false comfort.

Further important barriers to accessing support are connected to attitudes in society.

Around 1 in 10 young people who had experienced challenges did not access support because of fear that people would **overreact** if they found out about their habit (9.0%). Similarly, some young people are worried about stigma attached to drug or alcohol use (6.2%) or about how their parents (6.1%) or school/university (5.4%) or friends (2.6%) would react. More needs to be done to promote open and non-judgemental discussion about drug use in society.

Additionally, 6.9% lack confidence to access support, which may be also connected to attitudes in the society, with 6.0% worrying about legal consequences connected to drug use and another 6.1% not knowing what options are available to them. 1 in 20 (4.6%) said that there was no appropriate support available, with 3.6% thinking that no one would understand them.

Interestingly, men are even more worried than women about what their parents would think (8.5%), how would their school/ work or university react (7.5%), and that people would overreact (11.3%). Men also are more likely to say that they do not feel able or confident to access support (9.2%) and to think that it would not help them (19.2%).

Reasons for not accessing support

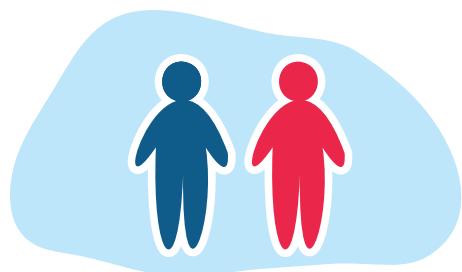
I do not need support, I feel I can deal with it on my own	55.2%
I don't think it would help me	15.9%
I don't think it's that bad as everyone does it	14.3%
I think people will overreact and make it worse	9.0%
I do not feel able/confident to do it	6.9%
I was worried about the stigma attached to drug and/or alcohol use	6.2%
I do not know what options are available to me	6.1%
I was worried about how my parent(s) would react	6.0%
I was worried about the legal consequences (i.e with the law/police)	5.4%
There was no appropriate support available	4.6%
I don't think anyone would understand me	3.6%
I was worried about my friend(s) would react	2.6%
Other	13.8%
Don't know/prefer not to say	11.9%

Base: All 16-25 substance users who have not accessed support for challenges (507)

When all the respondents were asked whether stigma around drug use would discourage them from accessing support services if they needed them, **it became clear that stigma around drug use is a very important barrier preventing many young people from accessing support services.** Over 2 in 5 (42.0%) young people agreed that stigma around drug use would discourage them from accessing support services if they needed them.



Gays or lesbians (53.8%), bisexuals (50.5%) and others (52.5%) were more likely to agree than heterosexuals (38.8%). This is important as they are also more likely to have used drugs in the past year.



Women are more likely to agree (45.0%) than men (39.1%)

Lack of awareness around support services is another important barrier preventing young people from accessing support services. 1 in 3 (33.5%) young people disagreed that they would know where to turn to for support if they were worried about their drug or alcohol use.

At least 1 in 10 young people (10.4%) disagree that they would seek help if they had a problem with drugs or alcohol that impacted themselves or someone else. An additional 16.8% selected do not know or prefer not to answer.

Men are more likely to disagree that they would seek help than women (12.4% v 8.3%)

In terms of sexuality, young people selecting 'other' sexuality are twice as likely to disagree (19.6%) that they would seek help than the other groups



Almost half of young people disagreed (46.1%) that there is enough support available to help young people with concerns about drug or alcohol use, and among those with 'other' sexuality the proportion rose to 67.8%.

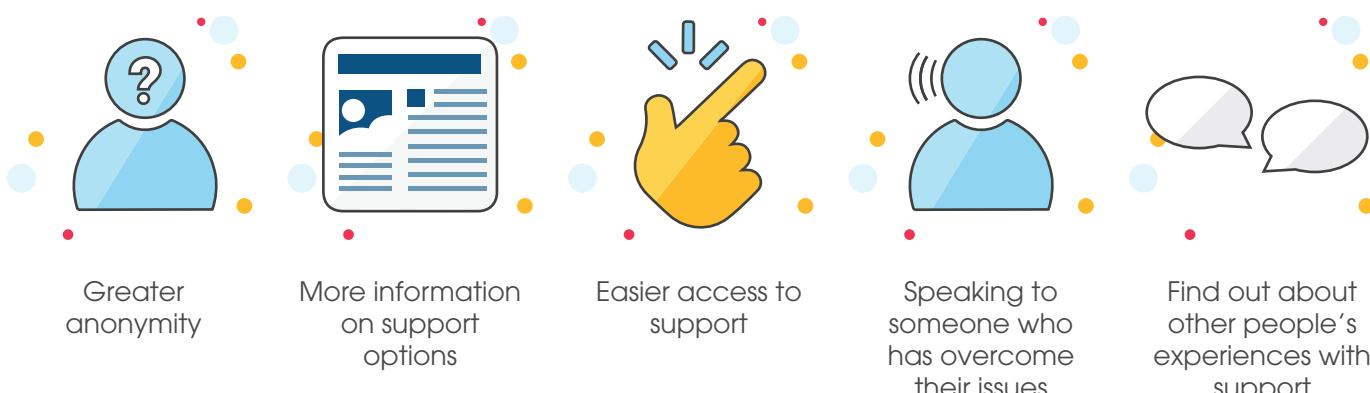
Motivations to access support

To better understand what can be done to encourage young people to access support when they need it, young people were asked what would motivate them to access support.

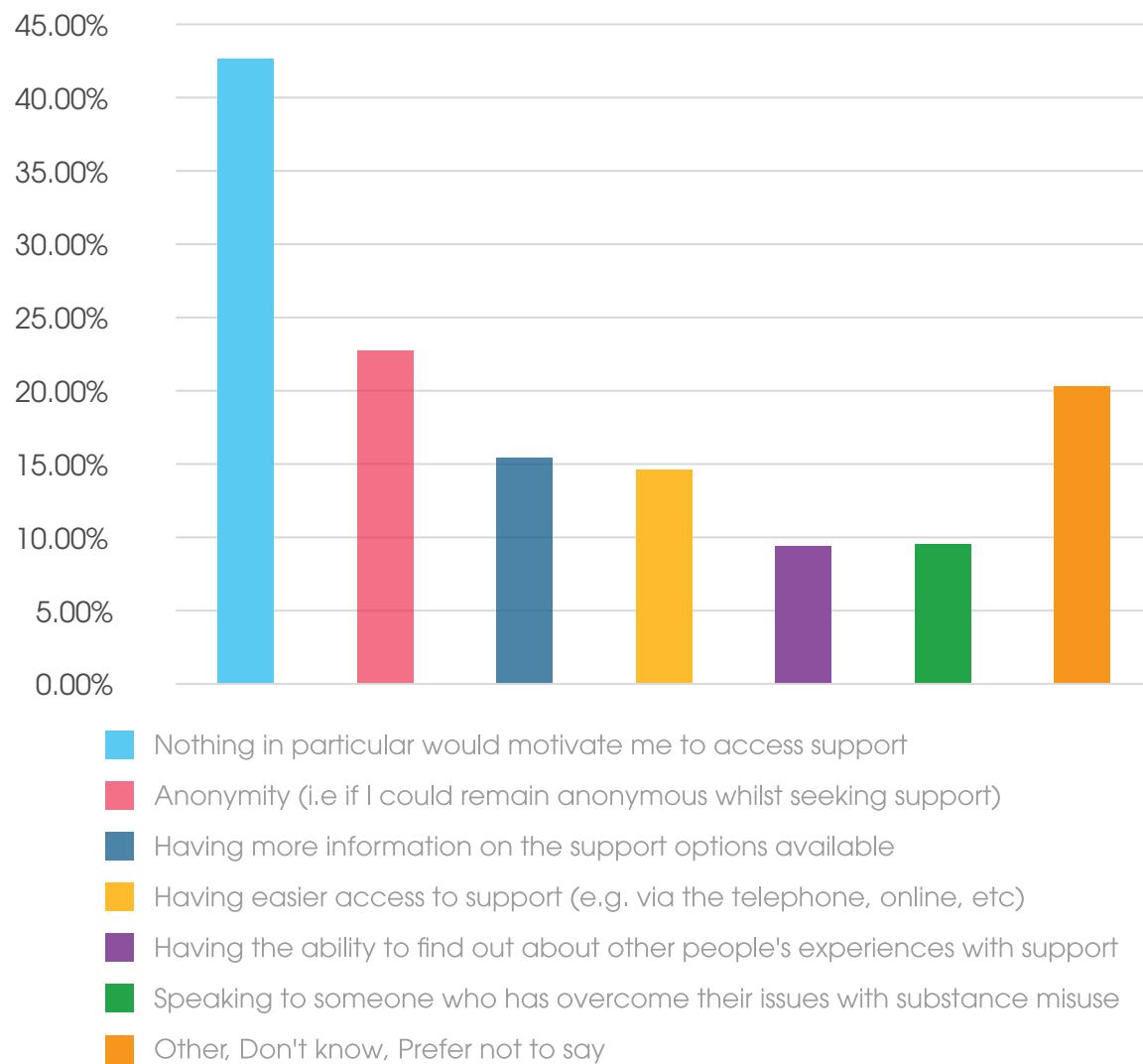
While **42.6%** of young people who had not accessed support said that nothing would motivate them to do so, others indicated that certain steps can be taken to motivate them to access support.

Young people who would have accessed support to help them cope with their challenges caused by substance use if improvements were made, account for 9.6% of the overall sample. This equates to at least **760,000 young people** who are currently being failed by existing support.

The following factors would motivate these young people to access support: greater anonymity for those seeking support (22.7%), having more information on the support options available (15.4%), easier access to support such as via the telephone, online(14.6%), being able to speak to someone who has overcome their issues with substance misuse (9.5%) and to find out about other people's experiences with support (9.4%).



Motivations to access support



Base: All 16-25 substance users who have not accessed support for challenges (507)

Drug usage among LGBTQ community and their attitudes to support

In terms of sexuality, bisexuals are the most likely to have taken illegal drugs (31.5%) in the past year followed by gays or lesbians (29.0%), with heterosexuals being the least likely to do so (19.2%). Moreover, bisexuals are almost twice as likely (17.3%) to have taken illicit drugs in the 30 days prior to the research as heterosexuals (9.1%), which points to more consistent drug use rather than one-off experiment.

It appears that drug taking is partly a coping mechanism for non-heterosexuals who are disproportionately more likely to experience mental health issues and have been recently experiencing elevated levels of hate crime.

Bisexuals are more likely to take substances than heterosexuals to escape problems in their life (20.8%) and to make them feel better because of their mental health issues or emotional distress (26.1%), with 25.1% doing so among gay or lesbian young people.



While improvement in mental wellbeing is one of the benefits experienced by almost a quarter of bisexuals who have taken substances in the past, bisexuals are more likely than other groups to have experienced challenges with mental health (18.3%), energy (15.6%), sexual relationships (6.8%), studies (8.0%) and work (5.5%) because of their substance use.

Our research shows that bisexuals (8.0%) and gays and lesbians (7.5%) are almost twice as likely as heterosexuals (4.0%) to take substances because it is a habit. Ultimately, almost 1 in 10 (8.2%) bisexual substance users experience challenges when attempting to stop, which is a sign of addiction.

In light of this, it is clear that non-heterosexuals are more likely to need support around substance use than heterosexuals. Yet, stigma around drug use is an important barrier preventing them from accessing support services. Gays or lesbians (53.8%), bisexuals (50.5%) and those selecting 'other' sexuality (52.5%) are more likely to agree than heterosexuals that this is the case (38.8%). Additionally, bisexuals (8.0%) are far more likely to say than heterosexuals (4.0%) that they do not know what support options are available to them.

Clearly, it is important to ensure that appropriate non-judgemental support is available to young LGBTQIA+ people, with support services being well signposted, easily accessible and reassuring about the nature of the support.

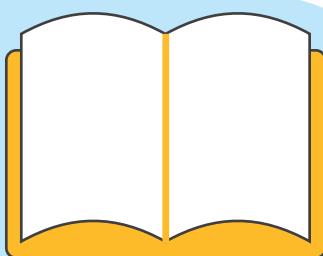
Drug usage among students and their attitudes to support

1 in 5 full-time students (19.7%) have used illegal drugs in the past year, with around 1 in 10 (8.1%) doing so in the past month. This is somewhat lower in comparison to young people who work (23.9% and 11.6% respectively).

The Mix research shows that drug consumption decreased among students over the pandemic period, with 22.8% of students who used drugs in the past saying it decreased and 17.4% indicating an increase. Some 3.2% experienced challenges when attempting to stop using drugs or alcohol, a common sign of addiction.



Overall, **3 in 10 of students** (29.7%) who had ever tried a drug experienced some challenges as a result of using substances. However, **only 1 in 10 (10.4%) of these have accessed support** to help them deal with the challenges. In comparison, 17.4% did so among young people who work. While over half (54.8%) feel that they can deal with challenges on their own, the second most common reason is that they think that it would not help them (17.1%). Clearly more targeted support is needed to encourage those in need of support to access it.



Students (45.1%) are more likely to agree than young people who work (40.1%) that stigma around drug use would discourage them from accessing support services if they needed them; this is one of the issues that need to be addressed to improve the support uptake.

Supporting young people with substance use issues: Response from The Mix

To gain a better understanding of what The Mix can do to improve its support for young people taking or considering taking drugs, we asked young people what kind of support they'd like The Mix to offer.

Social media resources (49.9%) were the most popular option. This was closely followed by factual information about substances (43.2%), talks and Q&As with people who have overcome drug issues (40.2%). The full breakdown can be seen below.

Types of support young people would like to see The Mix provide to young people taking or considering taking drugs

Social media resources (e.g Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	49.9%
Factual information about substances	43.2%
Talks and Q&As with people who have overcome drug issues	40.2%
Signposting to sources of support	35.2%
Face-to-face groups/chats	35.0%
Infographics that include information and data	34.8%
Video content	32.8%
Online group chats	30.7%
Interviews/Q&As and social media takeovers with experts	30.1%
Reels (i.e., short films)	23.9%
Article content (e.g., online, magazines etc.)	23.5%
Don't know/prefer not to say	22.7%

Base: all respondents (2,006)

Additionally, there are other things that can be done to increase the number of young people accessing support when they need it. Young people told us that **helping young people with substance use issues to recognise the problem and access support** should be the main priority (58.2%) for organisations like The Mix, working on a campaign focused on drugs and alcohol misuse.

The second priority they identified is providing information on drugs and alcohol so that people are aware of the risks, effects and consequences associated with their use and can make informed choices (52.7%), with just under half (48.9%) wanting the Mix to focus on helping young people understand how they can take drugs more safely, regardless of the legal status.

The Mix are taking action to improve its support for young people who are taking or considering taking drugs.

We are taking the following steps:



Updating The Mix's articles content on drugs and alcohol on our website and creating new content



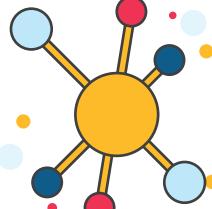
Launching a social media campaign where we will be sharing information and advice on drugs



Featuring experts with lived experience in a live webinar on our community



Producing a new drug information video



Creating a new drugs hub page that will link to all the drug resources



Launching a media campaign to promote our research



Training our staff and volunteers on drug support

As a result of The Mix's research findings, we know how important it is to recognise what a big role stigma around drug use plays in discouraging young people from accessing support services. To change this, The Mix is calling for:

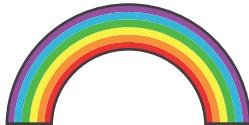
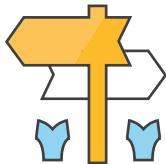


Media and other institutions including schools or universities to help promote non-judgemental discussion about drug use and help young people with substance use issues to recognise the problem and access support



Better access to support services for young people, be it online, via telephone or in person

Services to provide an option to remain anonymous for young people accessing the service



Better signposting to support services and resources such as those offered by The Mix in areas where young people might be seeking support, such as in school, at their GP or among peers

Non-judgemental support specifically tailored for young people from the LGBTQ+ community that recognises their distinctive experiences and needs

The Mix already has a large number of resources available around drugs and alcohol on its website. Young people have been making use of our forums and articles for a long time, helping them to find answers to things they often would not dare to ask if anonymity was not provided.

Which services offer support with substance use issues?

You can get in touch with these organisations for support, advice and information. They are there for anyone with substance use issues, or parents, carers or friends of those who are experiencing substance use issues:

The Mix

call 0808 808 4994 (7 days a week from 3pm to 12am)

access via themix.org.uk/

FRANK

call on 0300 123 6600 (7 days a week 24 hours a day)

access via talktofrank.com

Alcohol Change

Access via alcoholchange.org.uk/

Amy Winehouse Foundation

Access via amywinehousefoundation.org/

Icarus Trust

Access via icarustrust.co.uk/

Postscript360

Call on 0117 966 3629 (10am-4pm)
Access via postscript360.org.uk/

We are with you

Chat to someone online via webchat (Monday-Friday 9am-9pm and Saturday-Sunday 10am-4pm)

Access via wearewithyou.org.uk/

Drinkline

The number for England is 0300 123 1110 and for Wales is 0808 808 2234.

Access via alcoholconcern.org.uk

Release

Call 0207 324 2989 (Monday to Friday,
11am-1pm, 2pm-4pm)

Email them ask@release.org.uk or visit
www.release.org.uk

Drug Wise

Access at drugwise.org.uk

Drugfam

For those impacted by someone
else's addiction to drugs, alcohol

Call 0300 888 3853 (9am-9pm) any
day of the week.

Access via drugfam.co.uk/

Samaritans

Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans, or
email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply
within 24 hours

Crisis Messenger

Text "THEMIX" to 85258 to contact the
Shout Crisis Text Line

Appendix: Drug sheets

The section below shows the top 5 most common drugs and more information can be found in the survey data spreadsheet. This section includes information by drug on prevalence, demographic information of users, and benefits and challenges experienced as a result of using the drug. The questions about benefits and challenges experienced were asked only once during the survey, even of people who used multiple substances. For this reason, when looking at the particular drugs, only the benefits or challenges that were around twice as high as the average or higher were included in the tables below.

Cocaine (also known as Blow, Coca, Coke, Crack, Flake, Snow, Charlie, Gear and Soda Cot)

Who uses it?

- 6.9% of young people have used cocaine in the past year, with 2.7% doing so in the past 30 days
- Men (14.2%) are more likely to have used cocaine at some point in their life than women (11.2%)
- Young people from the wealthier backgrounds (3.0%) are almost twice as likely to have used cocaine in the past 30 days as their peers (1.6%) from working class
- Around 1 in 5 (18.5%) young people who work tried cocaine compared to only 7.8% among students
- Bisexuals are more likely to have ever tried it (17.8%) compared to heterosexuals (11.7%)
- 21- to 25-year-olds (18.3%) are more than twice as likely to have ever tried it than 16- to 20-year-olds (6.8%)

Benefits experienced

	Cocaine	Average
New experiences	64.40%	28.30%
New friendships	40.50%	18.40%
I've gained a new mindset	40.40%	11.10%
Improvement in mental wellbeing	31.10%	16.60%
Better sex	19.90%	7.20%
Better performance at school or university	9.00%	2.60%
Better performance at work	9.00%	2.80%
Improvement in physical wellbeing/ I look better	7.80%	3.40%
Better performance at sports	6.60%	1.40%
Other	1.30%	4.80%
Don't know/ can't recall/prefer not to say	4.40%	11.30%
I have not experienced any benefits as a result of using these substance(s)	8.90%	37.80%
Base	Those who used cocaine in the past year (139)	Those ever using any substance (1693)

Challenges experienced

	Cocaine	Average
With sleeping	41.2%	13.0%
With my mental health	33.5%	13.8%
With my energy/ motivation	25.5%	11.1%
With my physical health/ body	20.2%	8.9%
When attempting to stop using drugs and/ or alcohol	19.3%	4.7%
With my family relationships	13.6%	4.2%
With my studies	13.3%	4.8%
With my friends	10.7%	6.6%
With my work	9.3%	2.8%
With intimate/ sexual relationships	7.6%	3.2%
Other	0.8%	1.4%
Don't know/ can't recall/prefer not to say	5.0%	8.2%
I have not experienced any benefits as a result of using these substance(s)	24.7%	58.0%
Base	Those who used cocaine in the past year (140)	Those ever using any substance (1693)

Ecstasy/MDMA (also known as Pills, Mandy, Adam, Beans, Clarity, Disco Biscuit, E, Ecstasy, Eve, Go, Hug Drug, and Lover's Speed)

Who uses it?

- 4.8% of young people have used ecstasy in the past year, with 1.5% doing so in the past 30 days
- Men are slightly more likely to have had it in the past year (5.5%) than women (4.0%)
- In terms of regions, young people from Northern Ireland are the most likely to have ever tried it (20.6%), while those from East Midlands (9.3%) and East of England (9.3%) are the least likely
- Young people who work (16.7%) are more than twice as likely to have tried it than students (7.8%)
- Bisexuals (18.4%) and young people identifying with 'other' sexuality (19.0%) are far more likely to have ever tried it than heterosexuals (10.9%) or gay or lesbian (11.7%)
- 21- to 25-year-olds are more than twice as likely to have ever tried ecstasy (17.7%) than 16- to 20-year-olds (6.9%)

Benefits experienced

	Ecstasy/MDMA	Average
New experiences	59.8%	28.3%
New friendships	48.7%	18.4%
I've gained a new mindset	41.8%	11.1%
Improvement in mental wellbeing	31.5%	16.6%
Better sex	22.7%	7.2%
Better performance at school or university	11.0%	2.6%
Better performance at work	10.9%	2.8%
Better performance at sports	9.9%	1.4%
Improvement in physical wellbeing/I look better	9.2%	3.4%
Other	0.9%	4.8%
Don't know/ can't recall/prefer not to say	8.6%	11.3%
I have not experienced any benefits as a result of using these substance(s)	5.2%	37.8%
Base	Those who used ecstasy/MDMA in the past year (95)	Those ever using any substance (1693)

Challenges experienced

	Ecstasy/MDMA	Average
With sleeping	34.3%	13.0%
With my mental health	27.2%	13.8%
With my energy/motivation	23.3%	11.1%
When attempting to stop using drugs and/or alcohol	18.0%	4.7%
With my physical health/body	17.6%	8.9%
With my studies	17.6%	4.8%
With my family relationships	16.3%	4.2%
With my work	9.2%	2.8%
With intimate/sexual relationships	6.7%	3.2%
I have not experienced any benefits as a result of using these substance(s)	22.7%	58.0%
Base	Those who used ecstasy/MDMA in the past year (95)	Those ever using any substance (1701)

Cannabis (also known as Weed, skunk, puff, edibles, bush, dope, draw, ganga, grass, hash, hashish, hemp, herb, marijuana, and pot)

Who uses it?

- 18.3% of young people have used cannabis in the past year, with 7.4% doing so in the past 30 days; and 33.1% having tried it at some point.
- Men are slightly more likely to have had it in the past year (19.4%) than women (17.0%)
- Young people from London (10.2%) and Scotland (10.7%) are far more likely to have used it in the past 30 days than in other regions
- Bisexuals (44.8%) and those with 'other' sexuality (40%) are more likely to have ever tried it than heterosexuals (31%) or gay or lesbian (34.9%)
- While the figures for usage in the past year are similar for both groups; 21- to 25-year-olds are almost twice as likely to have ever tried (40.8%) as 16- to 20-year-olds (24.5%)

Benefits experienced

	Cannabis	Average
New experiences	55.7%	28.3%
New friendships	31.5%	18.4%
Improvement in mental wellbeing/I feel better mentally	31.0%	16.6%
I've gained a new mindset	30.7%	11.1%
Better sex	17.7%	7.2%
Better performance at school or university	6.1%	2.6%
I have not experienced any benefits as a result of using these substance(s)	11.4%	37.8%
Base	Those who used cannabis in the past year (366)	Those ever using any substance (1701)

Challenges experienced

	Cannabis	Average
With sleeping	23.8%	13.0%
With my mental health	21.7%	13.8%
With my energy/motivation	20.0%	11.1%
When attempting to stop using drugs and/or alcohol	13.1%	4.7%
With my studies	10.9%	4.8%
With my family relationships	8.1%	4.2%
With my intimate/sexual relationships	6.0%	3.2%
With my work	5.4%	2.8%
I have not experienced any challenges with anything as a result of using these substance(s)	40.1%	58.0%
Base	Those who used cannabis in the past year (366)	Those ever using any substance (1701)

Ketamine (also known as Ket, Green, K, Special K, Super K, Vitamin K, Donkey Dust, and Horse Tranquilliser)

Who uses it?

- 6.3% of young people have used ketamine in the past year, with 1.6% doing so during 30 days prior to the research, and 11.4% having tried it at some point

- Men are more likely to have ever used it (14.4%) than women (8.5%)
- Young people from Northern Ireland (16.1%) and Yorkshire & the Humber (16.1%) are far more likely to have ever used it than in other regions
- Bisexuals (14.3%) and young people with 'other' sexuality (14.8%) are more likely to have ever tried than heterosexuals (10.0%)

Benefits experienced

	Ketamine	Average
New experiences	60.2%	28.3%
New friendships	40.7%	18.4%
I've gained a new mindset	38.5%	11.1%
Improvement in mental wellbeing	29.3%	16.6%
Better sex	19.9%	7.2%
Better performance at school or university	11.9%	2.6%
Better performance at work	11.4%	2.8%
Improvement in physical wellbeing/I look better	9.9%	3.4%
Better performance at sports	5.6%	1.4%
I have not experienced any benefits as a result of using these substance(s)	6.7%	37.8%
Base	Those who used Ketamine in the past year (127)	Those ever using any substance (1693)

Challenges experienced

	Ketamine	Average
With sleeping	37.8%	13.0%
With my mental health	29.4%	13.8%
With my energy/motivation	22.4%	11.1%
With my physical health/body	20.3%	8.9%
When attempting to stop using drugs and/or alcohol	15.3%	4.7%
With my studies	13.8%	4.8%
With my friends	13.1%	6.6%
With my family relationships	12.9%	4.2%
With my work	8.7%	2.8%
With my intimate/sexual relationships	8.2%	3.2%
I have not experienced any challenges with anything as a result of using these substance(s)	26.0%	58.0%
Base	Those who used Ketamine in the past year (127)	Those ever using any substance (1693)

Anti-depressants (e.g. Valium, Librium, Xanax, Prozac, Thorazine, GHB, Rohypnol, Zoloft, etc.)

Who uses them?

- 9.5% of young people have used anti-depressants in the past year, with 6.7% doing so in the past 30 days. 16.0% having used them at some point
- Women are twice as likely to abuse anti-depressants as men, with 8.7% doing so in the past 30 days compared to 4.7% of men
- Abuse of anti-depressants during the 30 days prior to the research was the most common in South West (10.1) and Northern Ireland (9.7%)
- Young people who are not working (9.6%) or are unemployed (8.4%) are more likely to have abused anti-depressants it the past month
- In terms of sexuality, those who selected 'other' sexuality (14.7%), gays or lesbians (13.4%) and bisexuals (12.2%) are far more likely to have abused anti-depressants in the past year compared to heterosexuals (7.8%)
- 21- to 25-year-olds are more likely to have taken it in the past year (10.8%) than 16-20-year-olds (8.0%)

Benefits experienced

	Anti-depressants	Average
Improvement in mental wellbeing	37.5%	16.6%
I've gained a new mindset	21.2%	11.1%
Better sex	13.7%	7.2%
Improvement in physical wellbeing/I look better	8.8%	3.4%
Better performance at school or university	7.2%	2.6%
Better performance at work	6.5%	2.8%
Better performance at sports	5.2%	1.4%
I have not experienced any benefits as a result of using these substance(s)	16.2%	37.8%
Base	Those who used anti-depressants in the past year (193)	Those ever using any substance (1693)

Challenges experienced

	Anti-depressants	Average
With my mental health	31.5%	13.8%
With sleeping	22.5%	13.0%
With my physical health/body	15.5%	8.9%
With my family relationships	12.8%	4.2%
With my studies	12.5%	4.8%
When attempting to stop using drugs and/or alcohol	10.3%	4.7%
With my intimate/sexual relationships	7.8%	3.2%
With my work	6.4%	2.8%
I have not experienced any challenges with anything as a result of using these substance(s)	33.7%	58.0%
Base	Those who used anti-depressants in the past year (193)	Those ever using any substance (1693)