

PRESS RELEASE

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New resource reveals latest trends in young people's health and lifestyle

The latest trends in young people's health and lifestyle have been published by the Association for Young People's Health (AYPH) in *Key Data on Adolescence 2015*.

This is the 10th edition of *Key Data on Adolescence*, which was first published in 1997. Since then new trends have emerged and there have been unexpected developments. Some of the most remarkable trends include:

- * New forms of substance misuse, including legal highs, have emerged since 1997. Reports in 2013 estimate as many as 500,000 young people aged 15-24 may have experimented with legal highs and more than 73 new psychoactive substances were identified in 2012 alone.
- * E-cigarettes did not exist, even in our ninth edition of *Key Data on Adolescence*. Now they are used by somewhere between 1 in 5 to 1 in 12 secondary school students.
- * Cigarette smoking has fallen dramatically. Current rates are now one third of what they were in our first edition. In 1997 15% of girls and 11% of boys aged 11-15 were regular smokers, compared to 4% and 3% in 2014.
- * Teenage pregnancy rates have halved in England, falling 48% since 1998 to a record low in of 24.3 conceptions per 1000 females aged 15-17 in 2013.

Mental health continues to be a major concern. In 1997 we noted the rising rates of suicide in young men. But the rates fell in the late 1990s and have been stable since 2005. However, data are now available on hospital admissions for self-harm and showed a total of 41,921 10-24 year olds were admitted to hospital in 2014 for self-harm through either cutting, poisoning and other methods. This is thought to represent around one in eight incidents so is just the 'tip of the iceberg'.

There are currently 11.7 million young people aged 10-24, forming one fifth of the population. Nearly two million 10-19 year olds live in the most deprived areas of England and nearly one in five 19-24 year olds are not in education, employment or training. One fifth of 11-15 years olds are obese.

Co-author Dr Ann Hagell of AYPH said: 'Data on young people's health and lifestyle are absolutely essential in improving health outcomes and designing and commissioning the right services. Plotting the trends is hugely helpful in understanding where the need lies.

"But it is absolutely critical that we get better data, especially on mental health problems, and that data are broken down in to different age groups as there is a huge variation between younger and older adolescents."

Key Data on Adolescence 2015 is supported by the National Child and Maternal Health Intelligence Network, part of Public Health England, and provides vital information for commissioners, researchers, and policy-makers. It can be downloaded free from the AYPH website www.ayph.org.uk.

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