

***Comme le MCC, et le signataire, l'annoncent depuis déjà deux ans.***

***Une fois encore, les premiers et les seuls.***

***Le décèlement précoce, c'est ça ! Observer, comprendre, ce qui vient vers nous de l'avenir.***

***Savoir prendre les devants.***

***Xavier Raufer*** septembre 2012

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## ***Drugs are 'going out of fashion' as figures show dramatic fall in usage since 1996***

Annual crime survey shows decline in use of so-called legal highs

Heroin usage has stabilised at a low level with 0.1 per cent of the population thought to be taking it

Cannabis is still the most popular drug, with about 2.3million people using it last year

Illegal drug taking could be 'going out of fashion' as new Home Office figures reveal a continuation in comparatively low level usage.

The 2010-11 annual crime survey for England and Wales shows a decline in the use of so-called legal highs such as mephedrone and herion usage has stabilised at 0.1 per cent of the population. However the number of people using methadone, which is prescribed by doctors as an alternative to heroin, has gone up from 0.1 per cent to 0.2 per cent over the last two years.

Just under one in five people aged 16 to 24 (19 per cent) say they had used an illicit drug in the past year – the lowest level since the survey began in 1996. Overall an estimated 3million people, one out of every ten people aged 16 to 59, have taken an illicit drug in the past year, signalling that usage has remained at the low it reached in the previous year. Illicit drug use in England and Wales is on a downward curve, with latest annual Home Office figures confirming the long-term trend that they might simply be 'going out of fashion'

Cannabis, classified as a Class B drug, is still the most popular drug, with about 2.3million people using it in the past year. Powder cocaine is the second most prevalent illegal drug at 700,000 - there are also half a million ecstasy users and 300,000 people take amophatamines. Cannabis usage among the 16-24 age bracket has fallen sharply from 26 per cent in 1996 to 15.7 per cent last year. The figures also show that the percentage of young people taking cocaine has also dropped from its peak of 5.5 per cent in 2009-10 to 4.2 per cent.

Figures published on Thursday even record a decline in recently banned so-called 'legal highs' such as mephedrone and Spice (synthetic cannabis) Cannabis remains the most popular drug, with about 2.3 million people using it in the past year Even the party drug ecstasy has seen a decline in usage from 4.4 per cent in 2008-09 to 3.3 per cent in the newly published statistics.

Harry Shapiro, editor of Druglink magazine said that for the first time since the 1960s there was clear downward trend in usage. He said an increase in the availability of drug treatments coupled with a struggling economy had been factors in causing a reduction in drug usage.

In this month's issue, published on Thursday by Drugscope, an independent centre of drugs experts, Mr Shapiro says: 'Drug use having become more normalised in society, might then be just as prey to fashion as any other cultural artefact. Drugs don't appear to be 'cool' these days as they once were,' writes Shapiro.'To suggest, as some do, that we are currently going to a drug hell in a handcart is just a wilful refusal to acknowledge the facts'.

He also attacked politicians who claimed that drug use is getting out of control for their own political benefits. The figures also show a stable low-level use of heroin at 0.1% of the population

The figures also reveal that 16 is the most common age at which people start taking cannabis, with first trying cocaine and ecstasy users most likely to be 18. While most have stopped smoking cannabis by the time the age of 18, and cocaine or ecstasy by 25 a small minority continue to use cannabis throughout their lives, with some reporting they were still using the drug at 59. //