

The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD)

'ESPAD' is a study of drinking, smoking and illicit drug use amongst representative samples of 15 and 16 year old teenagers in a number of European countries.

Alcohol consumption amongst European teenagers has remained fairly stable since 1995 at about 80% of all students. The 2007 survey indicated a small fall in the UK overall total from 91% to 88%. However, more UK teenagers reported high levels of binge drinking and intoxication, and ranked third highest in relation to alcohol-related relationship, sexual and delinquency problems.

The UK ranked 7th in relation to the percentage of teens who had 'binged' (consumed five or more drinks on at least one occasion) in the past 30 days. A total of 54% of UK teenagers had reportedly done this.

In 2003 it was revealed that teen girls in the UK were more likely than boys to have binged in the previous 30 days. The 2007 survey shows this trend continuing with girls more likely than boys to be binge drinkers in the UK, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

UK teenagers ranked third highest (after Denmark and the Isle of Man) in relation to self-reports of having been drunk in the past 30 days. A total of 33% of UK teens reported such recent intoxication.

The fact that some teenage girls are binge drinking even more than boys suggests that in the UK and elsewhere a profound social change has been taking place. It is now socially acceptable for females to drink heavily or to become intoxicated. This may reflect factors such as greater female social and economic empowerment and changing social roles as well as the marketing practices of the beverage alcohol industry.



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Timescale
Ongoing