

11 June 2009

Coverage

United Kingdom

Theme

Social and Welfare

Fewer young men exceed drink guidelines

The number of young men drinking more than the recommended daily limit of alcohol has fallen significantly over the past decade, according to a report published today by the Office for National Statistics.

Focus on Young People shows that the proportion of young men aged 16 to 24 in Great Britain who drank more than four units of alcohol on at least one day in the previous week has fallen from 52 per cent in 1998 to 44 per cent in 2007.

But the report shows that the proportion of women in the same age group reporting that they drank more than three units of alcohol on at least one day in the previous week has fallen by a much smaller margin, from 42 per cent in 1998 to 40 per cent in 2007.

As a result, the number of young women drinking more than the recommended daily limit has now reached a similar level to that of young men.

However, statistics from the report – which brings together a range of data on young people in the UK – also show that young males are still at greater risk than females in other aspects of daily life.

For example, young men are much more likely to be involved in road accidents than young women. In 2007, 32 per cent of car driver deaths in Great Britain were people aged between 17 and 24. The number of drivers who were killed or seriously injured in 2007 was nearly three times higher for young males than young females. The statistics show 1,815 young male drivers were killed or injured compared with 665 young female drivers.

Young males are also more likely to be convicted of a crime than young females. In 2007, the number of young adults aged between

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18 and 20 in England and Wales entering prison under sentence was 13,800. Men accounted for 93 per cent of these entrants.

However, young men are more likely to participate in sport or exercise than young women. In 2007/08, 73 per cent of young men aged 16 to 24 in England participated in sport or exercise as a free-time activity, compared with 44 per cent of young women.

Differences also emerge between young men and women in terms of how they spend their leisure time. The most common leisure activities carried out by young men aged 16 to 24 in their free time in England in 2007/08 were watching television (83 per cent) and listening to music (82 per cent). The most common activities for young women were spending time with friends and family (87 per cent) and shopping (85 per cent).

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. To access information on all the topics covered by *Focus on Young People* go to:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=15232>
2. Department of Health advice is that men should not regularly drink more than 3 to 4 units of alcohol per day, and women should not drink more than 2 to 3 units per day. Harmful drinking is considered to be twice the recommended daily amount.
3. A prisoner received into prison to serve a sentence may have previously been on remand after conviction prior to sentence and before that as a remand prisoner awaiting trial. First receptions count a prisoner once in the relevant time period in which they were first received. Data excludes police cells.
4. **National Statistics** are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2009.