



Youth Justice Board  
Bwrdd Cyfiawnder Ieuencid

# Youth Survey 2008: Young people in mainstream education

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## Acknowledgements

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## Summary of findings

This is a summary of the key findings from the 2008 Youth Survey, carried out for the YJB by Ipsos MORI. In total 4,750 pupils aged 11 to 16 took part in the study from 194 schools across England and Wales. The research was conducted between 21 January and 11 April 2008.

The 2008 Youth Survey examines many different aspects of the lives of young people who attend mainstream schools, from truancy and drug-taking to offending levels, punishments and their own experiences of being a victim of crime. This initial summary chapter highlights some of the key findings to emerge from the 2008 Youth Survey, further details of which can be found in the subsequent chapters.

### *Offending patterns*

The majority of young people (68%) in mainstream education say that they had not committed a criminal offence in the 12 months prior to taking part in the 2008 Youth Survey. While 23% say they have offended, this represents a significant decrease from 2005 (27%) and 2004 (26%).

Year-on-year the Youth Survey findings show that, in the main, young people who have offended are committing low-level crime, the most common offence being travelling on a bus, train or tube without paying a fare (committed by 53% of pupils who self-report offending). When similar types of offences are grouped together, the categories with the highest proportion of young people self-reporting offending of this type are 'anti-social behaviour' and 'theft/stealing' (79% and 71%, respectively).

A higher proportion of boys admit to having committed an offence (27%) than girls, with the number of female offenders declining since 2005 (18% in 2008 compared to 21% in 2005).

Consistent with previous survey findings, offending levels appear to peak at the ages of 15–16. However, overall there has been a slight upward shift in the age that young people commit their first offence. They are now more likely to be between 12 and 13 years old, compared to 11 and 12 years old as seen in 2005. Consistent with previous years though, boys are typically younger when they first offend; nearly half (44%) of those who report offending say they first did so before the age of 12 compared with just over a quarter of girls (26%).

In line with previous years, young people who report offending are most likely to commit a criminal offence with their friends (64%) rather than on their own (20%). Only a very few commit offences with their siblings (2%) or someone else (2%).

When asked which of a range of circumstances related to offence/s committed in the past 12 months, young people most commonly cite boredom (25%), in line with the 2005 and 2004 surveys<sup>1</sup>. There have been increases in those citing being drunk or

<sup>1</sup> In previous surveys this question has been in a different place in the questionnaire and has the following wording: "Which of the following, if any, applied to you when you committed the offence/s in the last year?" This means the results are not directly comparable.

drinking alcohol (20% in 2008 versus 16% in 2005) or peer pressure (18% in 2008 versus 14% in 2005) as reasons for committing an offence in the last year.

### ***What offences are young people committing?***

In line with the findings from the 2004 Youth Survey, in 2008 the most common offences committed by young people who admit offending are:

- fare dodging (53% of self-reported offenders, compared with 56% in 2005 and 50% in 2004)
- stealing from shops (45%, an increase from 40% in 2005 and 35% in 2004)
- hurting someone who did not subsequently need medical attention (42% compared with 46% in 2005 and 43% in 2004)
- damaging someone else's property (39% versus 37% in 2005, and 34% in 2004)
- graffiti (33% compared with 36% in 2005, and 35% in 2004)
- stolen anything in school (33%, an increase from 30% in 2005 and 29% in 2004).

Although boys report being the main culprits of threatening or assaulting behaviour overall (61% compared with 53%), it is girls who are significantly more likely to threaten others specifically through voicemail or text message (26%, compared to 19% of boys), while boys admit to more physical threats and abuse.

The 2008 Youth Survey is the first time young people were asked if they have used mobile phones in committing offences:

- one in five young people who self-report offending (22%) have sent a voicemail or text message to someone on their mobile phone in order to scare, harass or threaten them
- one in six young people who self-report offending (16%) have used a mobile phone to video or photograph someone while they were being assaulted ('happy slapping').

The number of times young people in mainstream education who self-report committing an offence appears to be tailing off since its peak in 2004, despite the range of offences having slightly increased; young people who offend committed an average of 18 offences in 2008, as was the case in 2005, compared to 19 in 2004. The proportion of young people in 2008 who say they have committed an offence five times or more in the past 12 months shows a significant rise from 2004 (from 41% in 2004 to 45% in 2005, and finally, to 46% in 2008) and continues the trend which has been developing since 2002.

Overall, 83% of pupils aged 15-16 who say they have offended admit anti-social behaviour offences (compared to 77% by 11-14-year-olds). In addition, a greater proportion of pupils aged 15-16 admit to committing drug offences, compared to 11-14-year-olds (33% versus 16%, respectively). Conversely, 62% of 11-14-year-olds admit to committing threatening or assaulting behaviour (compared to 52% of 15-16-year-olds) and 73% of younger pupils admit to committing theft or stealing offences, compared to 66% of 15-16-year-olds.

### ***Level of detection***

Half of all young people (49%) who admit offending in the last 12 months say that they were caught by the police for at least one offence; a significant increase from 2005 (29%) and 2004 (26%).

Since 2000 there has been a steady decline in the numbers claiming that being caught would stop them (either a great deal or a fair amount) from committing future offences. A quarter of young people (26%) in 2008 state that being caught for an offence has not deterred them at all from committing future offences. Overall the main deterrents helping to stop young people committing crime remain consistent with previous years – worry about how their parents will react and fear of being caught.

Detection rates appear to vary by region, but it is notable that detection rates have risen in all regions since 2005. The North East and South West remain in the top three regions with the highest detection rates, but the considerable increase in detections in the West Midlands since 2005 means that it is now the region where the most offenders are caught, despite having lower levels of offending compared to other areas. Around half of young people in Yorkshire and Humber (55%), Wales (52%) and East Midlands (52%) do not get caught, despite these areas having relatively high rates of offending.

### ***What happens when young people are caught offending?***

The types of disposals young people who admit offending typically receive are:

- Final Warnings (32% compared to 36% in 2005)
- being made to apologise to the victim (25% versus 27% in 2005)
- reprimands (19%, down from 28% in 2005)
- being contacted by a youth offending team (YOT) (8% versus 14% in 2005).

### ***Numbers reoffending after being caught***

More than six in ten young people (65%) claim to have committed other offences after being caught, compared to 62% in 2005. Similar to previous years, the less serious offences such as fare dodging and shoplifting remain some of the most common offences committed by young people who reoffend, although there has been a rise in offences, such as damaging something belonging to someone else and threatening or assaulting others.

Eight in 10 young people (80%) who have played truant 10 or more times have offended again since being caught, compared to 68% of those who have played truant one to nine times and 53% of those who have never played truant.

For those who did not commit further offences, the main reasons given were because they knew they had been wrong (31%) and they did not want to get caught by the police again (31%).

### ***Prevalence of weapon carrying***

Young people were shown a list of potential weapons, such as penknives and BB guns, and asked whether they had carried one in the last year. The findings show that nearly half (47%) have not carried any of the weapons listed. The two most common weapons young people report carrying are a penknife (17%) and a BB gun (15%), although these

have both seen a significant decrease since 2005 (penknife 24%, BB gun 21%). The proportions carrying a flick knife (6%) and kitchen knife (4%) have remained stable since 2004.

The most common reason given by young people for carrying a knife is for use in sports or similar activities (32%). However, 30% say they carried a knife for protection and 11% in case they got into a fight. The most common use suggested among those who have carried a gun was for hobbies, activities and sports (39%).

Boys are predominantly more likely to admit to carrying a knife or gun than girls. Almost half of boys (45%) say they have carried a knife or gun, compared with 16% of girls.

There is evidence to show that whether or not a young person has committed a criminal offence is linked to whether or not they also carry a weapon. More than half of young people (57%) who admit to having committed a criminal offence report carrying a weapon, compared to only one in five young people (21%) who have not committed a crime. Young people who have been the victim of an offence themselves are also more likely to carry a weapon. Two in five young people who have been a victim of an offence (40%) claim to have carried a weapon, compared to just under one in five (19%) of those whom have not.

Regional differences between the proportions of young people who have carried a weapon also exist. More than one in three young people in Wales (35%) and the North East (35%) report having carried a weapon, while Yorkshire and Humber has the lowest proportion of youths who admit to having carried a knife or gun (26%). The regions with the highest incidence of penknife carrying are the South West (21%) and Wales (20%), whereas BB gun use is most prevalent in the North East (18%), South East (17%) and South West (17%).

### **Group membership**

Four in five (82%) young people consider themselves to be part of a group (defined in this survey as three or more people – including themselves), while only 12% say they are not. The most commonly cited characteristics of a group were having a name (15%) or territory (10%), while the least commonly cited characteristics were having a set of rules (5%) or clothing associated with the group (5%).

Overall, more than half of young people who consider themselves to be part of a group think that their group views criminal behaviour as unacceptable (55%). This compares with one in five (19%) who claim their group feel crime is sometimes acceptable, and only 3% saying it is always acceptable.

When asked about the behaviour of their group in the previous 12 months, over half say their group had hung around in public spaces (57%). Nearly one in six refers to their group threatening others, creating graffiti, or breaking and damaging things in the past year (17% reporting each activity). In relation to more serious offending, 13% of young people say their group has used force or violence against other people and 9% report their group having carried knives.

Just over a third of young people (34%) who claim to be part of a group also report personally carrying a knife, compared to only 15% of those who are not in a group. Furthermore, the proportion carrying a knife increases to 56% for those whose group views criminality as acceptable compared to 25% that do not.

### ***Experience of crime***

Overall, young people's level of concern about being a victim of crime has declined compared to previous years. In particular, there has been a significant decline in the overall concern about physical assault and theft between 2008 and 2005. Similar to previous years, girls tend to be more worried about physical assault, theft, bullying and racism than boys, despite less commonly being a victim of crime.

Over the last 12 months, around half of young people (51%) have been the victim of an offence, which is in line with previous years (50% in 2005 and 49% in 2004). However the numbers who have been a victim where the perpetrator was under the age of 18 has decreased to 69% in 2008 from 74% respectively for 2005 and 2004, as has the number of young people who have been victimised by a group with members under the age of 18. This decline is reflected across the offences listed apart from being racially abused, which increased slightly in 2008.

Young people speak of predominantly being victimised in school, although many also experience similar offences in the area where they live. Overall, levels of victimisation in these locations have declined since 2005 and 2004, with the exception of mobile phone theft.

### ***Are young people drinking and taking drugs?***

Three in five (59%) young people in mainstream education admit to having tried alcohol at least once in their lives and 37% said they had drunk alcohol in the past month (a significant decrease from 2005 and 2004). The numbers admitting to smoking tobacco (11%) and cannabis (5%) in the last month is relatively constant and those using Class A substances remains very low.

Half (52%) of young people said there were people they could go to who could sell or give them drugs, and of these, 28% said these people would be mostly under 18 years old.

The findings demonstrate a clear link between offending behaviour and alcohol and drug use. A significantly higher proportion of young people who have committed an offence say that they have taken a substance (86%) than those who have not committed an offence (51%). This applies to all substances, including alcohol (84% versus 50%), tobacco (48% compared to 9%), cannabis (31% versus 3%) and higher classification drugs.

### ***Prevalence of truancy***

Truancy levels among young people have remained relatively constant. A quarter of young people in mainstream education (24%) say that since starting school they have played truant, compared with three in five (63%) who say they have never done so.

The survey findings suggest that young people who have committed a crime in the last year are more likely to have played truant (50%) than young people who have not offended (15%).

## Introduction

This report presents the findings for the Youth Survey 2008 carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the YJB.<sup>2</sup>

### **Objectives**

The overall aim of the research is to examine the experience of crime, both as offenders and victims among 11–16-year-old young people in mainstream education. It also sets out to measure what has changed for young people in England and Wales since the 2005 and 2004 Youth Survey and, where applicable, to compare findings with the Youth Surveys Ipsos MORI has conducted annually for the YJB from 1999–2008. In particular, the research looked at:

- the levels of offending among young people, the types of crimes committed and the circumstances in which the crimes take place
- the consequences of offending, reoffending and the deterrents to doing so
- the consequences of being caught committing a crime
- the carriage of weapons and the circumstances in which they are used by young people
- young people's concerns about their own safety, their experiences of being a victim of crime and the circumstances in which the incidents took place
- young people experience of groups, and how this affects offending behaviour
- the levels of, and reasons for, truancy among young people
- the prevalence of alcohol and drug-taking among young people.

### **Methodology**

Self-completion questionnaires were completed by young people during interviewer-supervised classroom based sessions at 194 schools across England and Wales. A total of 4,750 pupils across year groups 7–11 (aged 11–16) completed questionnaires. The research was conducted between 21 January and 11 April 2008.

### **Sampling**

It should be noted here that although sampling was conducted to produce a representative sample of middle and secondary state schools in England and Wales (excluding special schools and sixth form colleges), the sample does not necessarily cover a representative cross-section of young people in England and Wales as the sampling was conducted at school, rather than on an individual level. In addition,

<sup>2</sup> A 'topline' questionnaire marked up with the results of the survey and computer tabulations are available separately.

although the sample drawn was representative at school level, not all schools invited to participate actually did so, meaning that the representativeness may have been reduced.

To address the issue of the representativeness of the sample of young people in this research, data have been weighted by gender, age and region according to data supplied by the Department for Education and Skills ([DfES] – now the Department for Children, Schools and Families [DCSF]) and the Welsh Office.

The overall response rate from schools to participate in the 2008 Youth Survey was 30%, which is in line with response rates from previous years.

Appended are further methodological details, the sample profile and a note on statistical reliability.

### ***Comparing data over time***

Where appropriate in the report, reference is made to previous surveys of young people conducted annually on behalf of the YJB from 1999 to 2005. The trend data is used to indicate topline changes in key measures over time and different years have been used to illustrate trends depending on the question and visible pattern of data. As the same schools did not take part in the survey year-on-year, care should be taken when comparing results between survey years as the data describes trends rather than tracks a cohort's attitudes and behaviours. The provision of trend analysis is a key reason why this survey has been commissioned over the years and it is therefore important to show how the findings have changed over time in this report.

### ***Question wording***

Over time some questions have been altered and therefore cannot be trended with absolute reliability, particularly the list of offences which young people may commit. This is noted in the appropriate sections of the report and explanations are provided in footnotes to indicate that any comparisons should be treated with caution.

### ***Presentation and interpretation of data***

In tables where percentages do not add up to 100% this is due to multiple answers, to computer rounding the decimal points up or down or to the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'No response' categories. Throughout the tables an asterisk (\*) denotes a value greater than zero, but less than 0.5%.

Unweighted sample bases are quoted throughout the report.

Please note that this report will generally only draw on significant and statistically reliable differences in the data. Data differences that are not statistically significant will be clearly highlighted within the text. Significant differences over time are indicated by an asterisk (\*) beside the figure within tables.

It is not unusual with self-completion surveys for there to be questions that generate substantial item non-response from respondents, i.e. when data on particular items are missing for a respondent. Typical explanations for item non-response include the order of questions (e.g. questions at the end of a survey are more likely to suffer from non-response), whether a question is sensitive (e.g. participation in crime) or demanding of the respondent (e.g. requiring a respondent to think back over a long time period to give their answer). Item non-response is evident within this survey with notable absences

(over 10%) of a stated answer at certain questions, particularly around number of times offences were committed, reasons behind behaviour and weapon possession/usage. Where this is the case, it will be noted in the report, and results will also be given on all valid answers (i.e. only those who actually gave an answer to the question).

### ***Finding your way around the report***

The report begins with an executive summary of the key findings to emerge from the research, followed by a detailed discussion of the main findings.

Throughout the report, tables and charts are included in order to present the data.

In addition, the appendices contain detailed information on methodology, a profile of young people who participated in the survey and information on statistical reliability.

### ***Acknowledgements***

Schools today are extremely busy and under great pressure from a variety of sources, including requests to participate in research studies such as this. As such, we would like to thank the school staff who facilitated this particular research, as well as all the pupils who took part.

Ipsos MORI would also like to thank Nisha Patel and Tamara Walker of the YJB for their help and involvement in developing this project.

# 1 Young people today

In order to place the findings from the 2008 Youth Survey in context it is important to examine the demographic profile of the young people who take part in the research.

This first chapter details both the demographic profile of the participants in the 2008 survey and that of the households in which they live.

## Demographic profile

The gender, age and ethnic profile of young people participating in the 2008 survey is shown in Tables 1.1a and 1.1b below. As a result of weighting the data to known profiles of young people in mainstream secondary schools<sup>3</sup>, the age and gender profile has remained similar over previous Youth Surveys.

**Table 1.1a: Profile of young people – age within gender**

	<b>All</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
<b>Base: All young people</b>	<b>(4,750)</b>	<b>(2,354)</b>	<b>(2,352)</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Age			
11	19	18	20
12	19	19	19
13	18	18	19
14	19	18	19
15	17	18	16
16 <sup>4</sup>	7	8	7

**Table 1.1b: Profile of young people – ethnicity within gender**

	<b>All</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
<b>Base: All young people</b>	<b>(4,750)</b>	<b>(2,354)</b>	<b>(2,352)</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Ethnicity			
White	84	85	83
Black or Black British	4	3	4
Asian or Asian British	7	7	7
Mixed	3	3	3
Other	2	1	2

<sup>3</sup> Each year the data for this survey have been weighted by gender, age and region according to data supplied by the DfES and the Welsh Office. The data are based on mid-academic year estimates of young people's ages.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to remind readers that this research study was conducted in school, part-way through an academic term. As such the proportion of young people aged 16 is roughly half that of the other age groups and it is not representative of young people of that age group who have left compulsory education.

## Home life

Nearly all (97%) young people in mainstream education live in a household with a mother or stepmother present, while four in five (80%) say they live with a father or stepfather. Just over half live with a brother (56%) or a sister (54%), while only 9% say they live with somebody else.

**Table 1.2: Profile of young people – household composition**

<b>Base: All young people</b>	<b>(4,750)</b>
	<b>%</b>
My mother	95
My stepmother	2
My father	68
My stepfather	12
Living with a foster parent	
Foster mother	1
Foster father	1
Living with a sibling	
Brother	56
Sister	54
Living with somebody else	9

The majority of young people in mainstream education say their parents are in work. Almost three-quarters report that their mother/stepmother/foster mother works either full or part-time (72%) and 83% say that their father/stepfather/foster father is employed either full or part-time; just 4% say their father/stepfather/foster father is unemployed.

## 2 Offending behaviour

This section examines offending levels among young people in mainstream education over the past six years. In addition, the profile of young people who say they have offended is discussed, alongside the types of offences most commonly committed and the reasons given for offending.

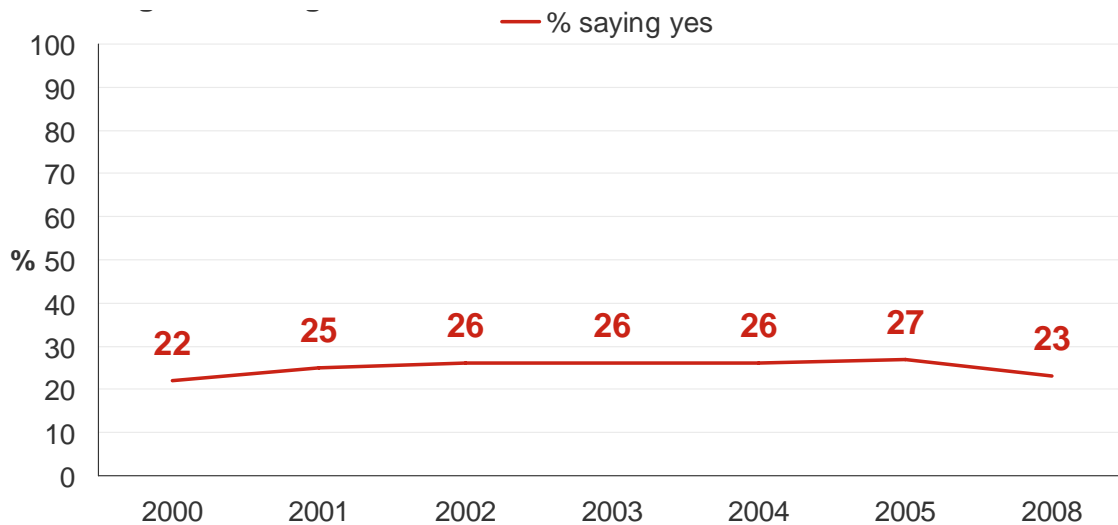
### Offending levels

As in previous years, the majority of young people (68%) in mainstream education say that they had not committed a criminal offence in the 12 months prior to taking part in the 2008 Youth Survey. This proportion has increased since 2005 (62%) and 2004 (65%).

The gradual increase in offending behaviour among young people in mainstream education, which had held since 2000, has been halted as the numbers of young people admitting to offending has significantly decreased in 2008, as can be seen in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1: Offending levels trends**

*Have you committed any criminal offence in the last 12 months? This may range from something like fare dodging (not paying for a train ticket) to stealing something.*



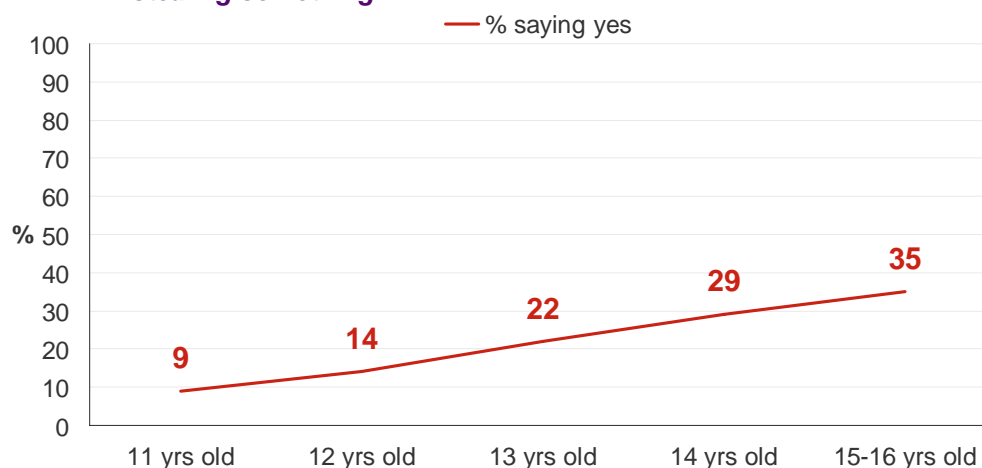
Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

### Profile of offenders

Similar to findings from previous years, pupils in mainstream schools who report committing a criminal offence are more likely to be older than those who have not offended. In the 2008 survey, offending levels appear to peak at the ages of 15–16, which is consistent with the 2005 and 2003 surveys. In contrast, the 2004 survey showed that offenders were more likely to be 14-year-olds. The chart below, Figure 2.2, shows how the likelihood of offending increases steadily by age.

**Figure 2.2: Offending levels by age**

*Have you committed any criminal offence in the last 12 months? This may range from something like fare dodging (not paying for a train ticket) to stealing something.*



Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

Although 15–16-year-olds are most likely to have committed an offence, the proportion of pupils in that age range having done so has reduced from 41% in 2005 to 35% in 2008. Indeed, all the age ranges decreased, with the exception of 13, reflecting the overall drop in self-reported offending rates, as shown in Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1: Profile of offenders by age**

*Have you committed any criminal offence in the last 12 months? This may range from something like fare dodging (not paying for a train ticket) to stealing something.*

Base: All who have committed an offence in the last 12 months	2008 (1,154)	2005 (1,576)	Change 2005–08
	%	%	+%
11 years old	9	18	-9*
12 years old	14	17	-3*
13 years old	22	24	-2
14 years old	29	33	-4*
15–16 years old	35	41	-6*

Young people who offend are also more likely to be male; one in four boys (27%) say they have committed an offence in the past 12 months, compared with one in five girls (18%). This compares to the findings from 2005 which showed that 33% of males and 21% of females had offended.

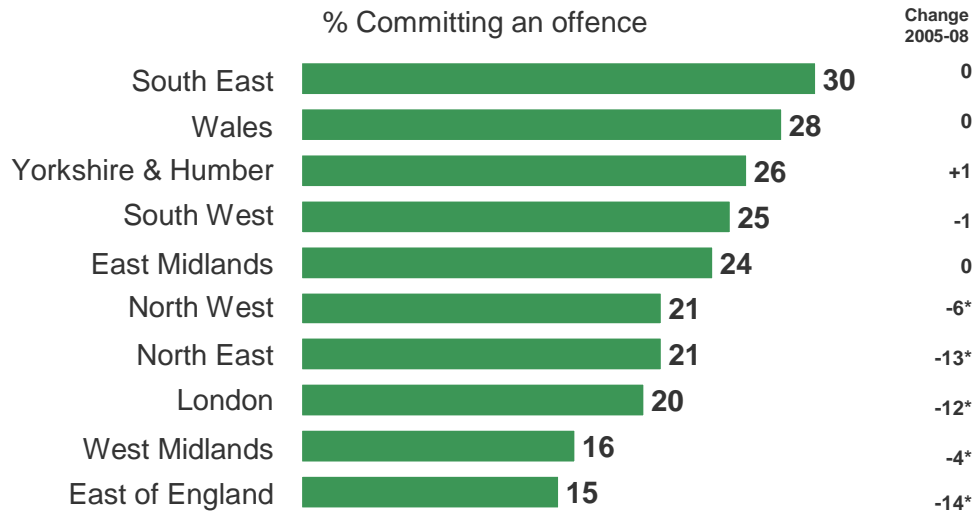
A quarter (24%) of White young people in 2008 reported offending in the last year compared to 27% in 2005, while 18% of black and ethnic minority young people say they have offended, compared to 27% in 2005. Asian young people are particularly unlikely to have committed an offence, with 80% saying they have not committed an offence in the last 12 months – a significantly higher proportion than White (68%) and Black (62%) pupils.

The findings also indicate some regional difference between pupils who have committed an offence and those who have not (see Figure 2.3). Three in 10 young people who live in the South East (30%) admit to committing an offence, compared

with 15% in the East, and 16% in the West Midlands. There are significant decreases for London (32% in 2008 versus 20% in 2005), North East (34% versus 21%) and East (29% versus 15%).

**Figure 2.3: Offending levels by region**

*Have you committed a criminal offence in the last 12 months? This may range from something like fare dodging to stealing something.*



Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

Differences also are shown to exist between young people who are part of a group<sup>5</sup> and those who are not. A quarter of young people (26%) who claim to be part of a group admit to committing a criminal offence in the past 12 months, compared to one in 10 (9%) who are not part of a group.

### ***The age at which young people first offend***

There has been a slight upwards shift in the age young people are tending to commit their first offence. They are now more likely to be aged between 12 and 13, compared to 11 and 12 years old in 2005. Consistent with previous years, boys are typically younger when they first offend; nearly half (46%) say they first offended before the age of 12 compared with just over a quarter of girls (29%). As found in previous surveys, there is a significant minority (9%) who report they committed their first offence when they were seven years old or younger, which is a greater proportion than those who say there were 15 or 16 when they first committed an offence (6%).

It is worth noting that in 2008 a higher proportion of young people reported they either did not know or were unable to remember when they committed their first offence (14%), than in previous years (10% in both 2005 and 2004), which may account for some differences.

<sup>5</sup> A 'group' is defined in this survey as being made up of three or more people (including the young person).

**Table 2.2: The age at which young people first offend**  
*How old were you when you committed an offence for the first time?*

Base: All who have committed an offence in the last 12 months	2008	2005	Change
	(1,154)	(1,576)	2005–08
	%	%	+%
7 years old or younger	9	11	-2
8 years old	4	5	-1
9 years old	6	7	-1
10 years old	10	8	+2
11 years old	11	12	-1
12 years old	13	14	-1
13 years old	14	13	+1
14 years old	10	10	0
15 years old	5	4	+1
16 years old	1	*	+<1
Don't know/can't remember	14	10	+4*
11 and under	39	43	-4*
12 and over	43	41	+2

### Committed offences

#### Type of offence

As in similar years, offences have been analysed according to typology, whereby similar offences are grouped together<sup>6</sup>, although the typology groupings have been amended from previous years due to the inclusion of new offences in the questionnaire.

**Table 2.3: Different types of crime committed by offenders**

Base: All who have committed an offence in the last 12 months	(1,154)
	%
Anti-social behaviour	79
Theft / stealing	71
Threatening or assaulting	58
Drugs	23
Other offences	9

Overall, the typologies with the highest incidence of young offending behaviour are 'anti-social behaviour' (79%), and 'theft/stealing' (71%). Fifty-eight per cent of young people who say they have committed an offence report to have threatened or assaulted

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix A for details of typology groupings. As typology groupings have changed across survey years, this may affect trend data and therefore this should be considered to be indicative only.

others in the last year. Young people were asked for the first time in 2008 if they used mobile phones in committing offences:<sup>7</sup>

- one in five young people who self-report offending (22%) have sent a voicemail or text message to someone on their mobile phone in order to scare, harass or threaten them
- one in six young people who self-report offending (16%) have used a mobile phone to video or photograph someone while they were being assaulted ('happy slapping').

'Drugs' was the fourth most reported type of offending behaviour (23%). Compared to 2005, however, those who admitted to buying drugs for their own use has significantly increased from 17% in 2005, while those who are selling drugs has remained consistent at 8% across in 2005 and 2008.

### **Single offences**

Following the trend from both 2004 and 2005, the most common offences committed by young people are:

- travelling on a bus, train or underground without a ticket (53%)
- stealing from shops (45%)
- hurting someone who did not subsequently need medical attention (42%)
- damaging someone else's property (39%)
- graffiti (33%).<sup>8</sup>

The types of offences that have been found to be most likely committed by young people in mainstream education are those defined by the YJB as 'less' or 'fairly' serious, rather than 'very' serious.<sup>9</sup>

Table 2.4 below provides a list of all offences included in the questionnaire and shows the percentages of young people committing each one. Statistically significant differences between 2005 and 2008 are highlighted by an asterisk.

<sup>7</sup> These offences are new options for 2008, and therefore no comparison to previous survey data can be made.

<sup>8</sup> The list of offences used in the questionnaire was agreed by YJB and have been used in previous Youth Surveys. Although these definitions could arguably be open to interpretation, the nature of quantitative surveys means that full explanations and definitions are not possible.

<sup>9</sup> The YJB defines types of offences by levels of severity – 'very serious', 'fairly serious', and 'less serious'. 'Very serious' offences are those such as carrying a knife or gun, selling drugs, or drunk driving, while those that are 'fairly serious' are offences such as stealing from a shop or school. Lastly, 'less serious' offences are those such as writing or spraying graffiti or buying drugs for your own use (please refer to Appendix A for a full list of defined offences).

**Table 2.4: Offences committed by young people in mainstream education (2008 only)  
And what offence/s, if any, have you committed in the last 12 months?**

**Base: All young people who have committed a criminal offence in the last 12 months**

	2008	2005	Change 2005–08
	<b>(1,154)</b>	<b>(1,576)</b>	
	%	%	+%
Anti-social behaviour	79	N/A <sup>10</sup>	N/A
Travelled on a bus, train or underground without paying your fare	53	56	-3
Damaged or destroyed, on purpose or recklessly, something belonging to somebody else	39	37	+2
Written or sprayed graffiti on walls, buses, trains, seats, shelters	33	36	-3
Set fire to anything on purpose (e.g. building, car, furniture)	22	27	-5*
Theft/Stealing	71	N/A	N/A
Stolen anything from a shop, supermarket or department store	45	40	+5*
Stolen anything in school	33	30	+3
Stolen anything from your home or the place where you live	26	22	+4*
Bought, sold or held on to something you believed to be stolen	25	30	-5*
Taken away a bicycle without the owner's permission	12	12	0
Stolen money from a gas or electricity meter, public phone, vending machine or any other type of machine	9	14	-5*
Stolen anything from a car	7	9	-2
Been a passenger in a car that was taken without the owner's permission	7	11	-4*
Sneaked or broken into a house or a building intending to steal something	6	9	-3*
Stolen a mobile phone from another person	8	7	+1
Stolen an iPod or other MP3 player*	7	N/A	N/A
Snatched anything from a person, like a purse or bag	3	4	-1
Taken a car, motorbike etc. without the owner's permission	4	8	-4*
Used or sold a stolen credit card, chequebook, cash card	3	3	0
Threatening or Assaulting	58	N/A	N/A
Hurt someone, but they did not need medical treatment	42	46	-4*
Threatened/assaulted others in public	31	23	+8*
Sent a voicemail or text message to someone on your mobile phone in order to scare, harass or threaten them in some way**	22	N/A	N/A
Threatened or been rude to someone because of their skin colour, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because	18	N/A	N/A

<sup>10</sup> This analysis (i.e. what proportion of respondents had committed an offence categorised as anti-social behaviour) was not run in 2005, therefore comparable figures cannot be given.

of a disability they have**			
Used a mobile phone to video or photograph someone whilst you or someone else assaulted them ('happy slapping')**	16	N/A	N/A
Beat up or hurt someone not in your family, causing them to need medical treatment	12	16	-4*
Beat up or hurt someone in your family, causing them to need medical treatment	8	4	+4*
Physically assaulted someone because of their skin colour, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because of a disability they have**	4	N/A	N/A
Drugs	23	N/A	N/A
Bought drugs for your own use	21	17	+4*
Sold drugs to someone else	8	8	0
Other offences	9	N/A	N/A
Driven a car or bike when you were drunk or over the limit	9	11	-2
Other	7	7	0
None of these	-	3	-3*

\*\* These are new options for 2008

Although the offences most likely to be committed by young people have been categorised as 'less' or 'fairly' serious, there are some notable shifts and trends emerging between the proportion of young people who are carrying out certain offences compared with the 2005 and 2004 surveys:

- there has been a reduction in the proportion being a passenger in a car taken without the owner's permission (7% in 2008 versus 11% in 2005, 12% in 2004)
- the proportion of young people who have threatened or assaulted others in public has risen by eleven percentage points since 2004 (31% in 2008 versus 23% in 2005, 20% in 2004)
- fewer have hurt someone not in their family enough to cause them medical treatment (12% versus 16% in 2005), but there has been an increase in those who have done this to someone within their family (8% versus 4% in 2005)
- almost half of young people who self-report offending admit to having shoplifted in 2008 (45%), which represents a significant increase on the 40% in 2005 and 35% in 2004
- a quarter of young people who self-report offending admit to having bought, sold, or held on to something they thought was stolen in 2008 (25%), which is similar to 2004 data (24%), although signifies a significant decline from 2005 (30%)
- an increasing proportion of young people who say they have offended report stealing from school; 33% in 2008, compared to 30% in 2005 and 29% in 2004

- the proportion who have stolen from their home has also risen, with 26% in 2008 reporting having done so in the past 12 months, compared to 22% in 2005 and 2004.

### **Frequency of offending**

It is possible to gain a better understanding of young people's involvement in offending behaviour by analysing the number of times they say they have committed a crime.

In 2008 the proportion who say they have committed five or more offences shows a significant rise from 2004 (from 41% in 2004 to 45% in 2005, to 46% in 2008) and continues the trend which has been developing since 2002 (see Table 2.5 below).

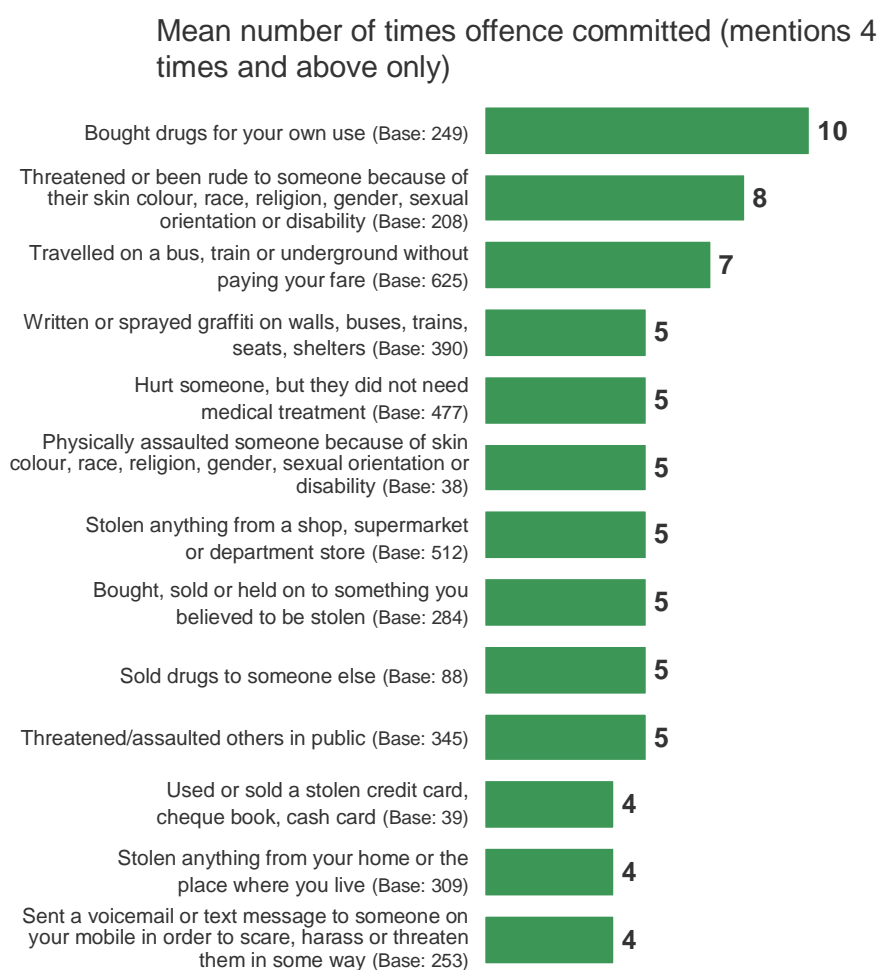
**Table 2.5: Frequency of offending**

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>
<b>Base: All who have committed an offence in the last 12 months</b>	<b>(1,154)</b>	<b>(1,574)</b>	<b>(1,295)</b>	<b>(1,338)</b>	<b>(1,489)</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
1 offence	18	17	19	21	25
2 offences	12	13	13	16	15
3 offences	11	11	12	11	11
4 offences	9	11	10	8	9
5 or more offences	46	45	41	39	34

Pupils who self-report offending and who claimed to have committed a particular criminal offence in the last 12 months were asked how many times they committed that offence. The findings provide a measure of which offences are most frequently carried out among those who say that they have committed them. Figure 2.4 below shows the most habitually committed offences, defined by the average number of times these were carried out.

The most frequently committed offence is buying drugs for personal use. The average number of times drugs were bought for personal use in the last 12 months by young people is 10 times. Other offences committed most frequently by young people are threatening or being rude on diversity grounds (eight times in last year) and fare-dodging (seven times in last year).

**Figure 2.4: Average number of times offence is committed**  
*How many times have you committed this offence in the last 12 months?*



Base: All young people who have committed a criminal offence in the last 12 months (base varies), 21 January - 11 April 2008

### ***Differences between types of young people***

In line with findings from previous Youth Survey reports, there are variations in the demographics of young people committing crime.

#### **Gender differences**

Similar to previous Youth Surveys, 2008 findings are showing that boys are more likely to commit more aggressive offences, whereas girls are more likely to commit less aggressive offences, such as writing or spraying graffiti and travelling on public transport without a ticket.

Consistent with previous years, boys who say they have offended are much more likely to say they have:

- carried a knife or gun (45% compared to 16% of girls)
- caused damage or destroyed someone else's property (45% compared with 30% of girls)
- bought, sold or held on to something they believed to be stolen (28% compared to 20% of girls)

- hurt someone who did not need medical attention (45% compared with 37% of girls)
- beat up or hurt someone not in their family who did need medical attention subsequently (15% compared with 8% of girls).

While girls who say they have offended are more likely to say they have:

- written or sprayed graffiti (37% compared with 31% of boys), a decline from 43% of girls in 2005
- travelled on public transport without paying a fare (59% compared to 49% of boys)
- been a passenger in a car that was taken without the owner's permission (10% compared with 6% of boys)
- sent a voicemail or text message to someone on their mobile to scare, harass or threaten them (26% compared to 19% of boys).

The gap between the frequency of offending by boys and girls has lessened compared to previous years. For instance, in both 2004 and 2005, more boys than girls committed five or more different types of offences (49% of boys and 34% of girls in 2005; 45% of boys and 38% of girls in 2004), while the 2008 data shows no significant difference between the two groups (47% of boys compared to 44% of girls). Furthermore, the difference between the boys and girls committing just one offence actually shows more girls than boys offending (21% compared to 17%).

**Table 2.6: Different types of offence committed by offenders by gender**

<b>Table shows top eight offences where the findings differ significantly between boys and girls in mainstream education</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Difference: boys versus girls</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>+%</b>
Base: All young people	(2,354)	(2,352)	
Carried a knife/gun	45	16	+29*
Base: All who have committed an offence in the last 12 months	(681)	(458)	
Damaged or destroyed, on purpose or recklessly, something belonging to somebody else	45	30	+15*
Travelled on a bus, train or underground without paying your fare	49	59	-10*
Hurt someone, but they did not need medical treatment	45	37	+8*
Written or sprayed graffiti on walls, buses, trains, seats, shelters	31	37	-6*
Taken away a bicycle without the owner's permission	14	10	+4*
Ranked by gender differences in offending			

### **Age differences in types of offending behaviour**

There are also clear differences between the types of offending behaviour by age. Younger pupils who have offended are more likely to take part in theft or stealing (73% of 11–14-year-olds who self-report offending versus 66% of 15–16-year-olds) and threatening or assaulting behaviour (62% versus 52%, respectively). Conversely, older pupils are more likely to take part in anti-social behaviour (83% of 15–16-year-olds who have committed an offence versus 77% of 11–14-year-olds) and drug offences (33% versus 16%, respectively).

**Table 2.7: Different types of crime committed by offenders by age**

<b>Table shows typologies of offences<sup>11</sup> by age</b>	<b>11–14 years</b>	<b>15–16 years</b>
<b>Base: All who have committed an offence in the last 12 months</b>	<b>(694)</b>	<b>(440)</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Anti-social behaviour	77	83
Theft/ stealing	73	66
Threatening or assaulting	62	52
Drugs	16	33
Other offences	9	10

### **Regional differences in types of offences committed**

Regional variations are apparent in the types of offences young people are committing. For instance, the greatest proportion of young people committing drug-related offences are in the North West (31%) and Yorkshire and Humber (29%), compared with 15% in London and 16% in the East of England. Young people in the East are more likely to take part in anti-social behaviour, with 88% of young people who self-report offending in this area admitting to this, compared to 73% in the North West and 74% in the South West.

Theft or stealing offences are most likely to occur in the North East (86% of those admitting offending report this), which contrasts with 65% of those in the South East and 66% in Wales.

Locality does not seem to have an impact on how likely young people are to behave in a threatening manner or commit assault, with similar proportions across all regions reporting carrying out such an offence.

### **Partners in crime**

In line with previous years, young people who say they offend are most likely to commit a criminal offence with their friends (64%) rather than on their own (20%). Only very few commit offences with their siblings (2%) or someone else (2%). As with previous years, girls are committing more crime with someone else compared to boys (67% versus 62%).

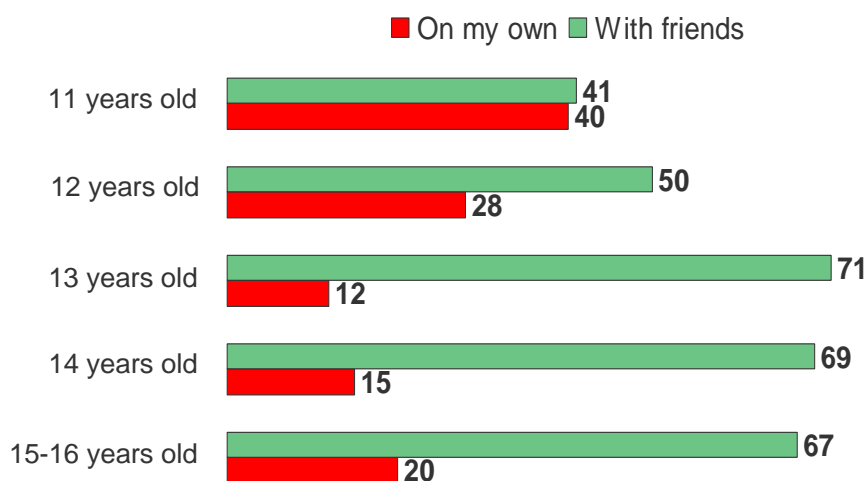
<sup>11</sup> See Appendix A for details of typology groupings.

**Table 2.8: Who offences are committed with**  
*Who do you usually do this offence/these offences with?*

	2008 (1,154)	2005 (1,576)	2004 (1,295)	2003 (1,338)
<b>Base: All who have committed an offence in the last 12 months</b>				
	%	%	%	%
On my own	20	19	20	22
With my friends	64	65	62	61
With my brother/sister	2	3	3	2
With someone else	2	3	4	2
Don't know	4	4	5	3

Younger pupils who offend are more likely to offend on their own, while older pupils are more likely to commit offences with friends, as figure 2.5 highlights.

**Figure 2.5: Partners in crime by age**  
*Who did you usually do this offence/these offences with?*



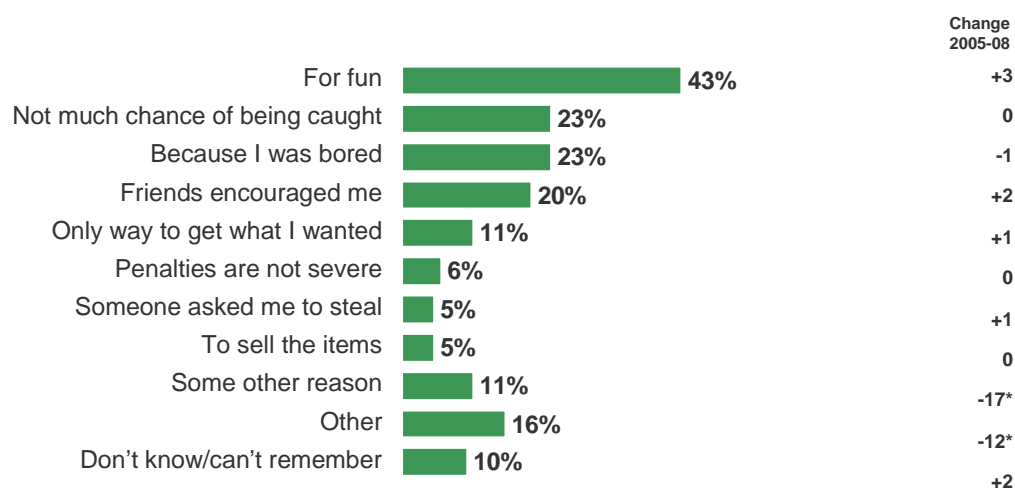
Base: All young people who have committed a criminal offence in the last 12 months (1,154), 21 January - 11 April 2008

## **Circumstances of offending**

### **First offence**

In line with past years, the most common reason reported by young people for committing their first offence is that it was 'for fun' (43%). Both boredom (23%) and the perception of a low likelihood of being caught (23%) were also cited as reasons by around a quarter, while peer pressure was mentioned by one in five (20%) young people. That said, 2008 has seen a slight increase in the proportion of young people who did it both 'for fun' and due to peer pressure. It is worth noting that a significant decline can be seen in 2008 in those first-time offenders who committed the offence 'for some other reason' (11% in 2008 compared with 28% in 2005 and 29% in 2004), which could impact on the increase in offences being committed both for fun and due to peer pressure.

**Figure 2.6: Circumstances of offending**  
*Thinking back to the first time you committed an offence, why did you do it?*



Base: All young people who have committed a criminal offence in the last 12 months (1,154), 21 January - 11 April 2008

While the most common reason for committing their first offence is ‘for fun’, this is more likely to be cited by those who consider themselves to be part of a group (44% compared with 28% who are not in a group), where crime is seen as being acceptable by that group (57% compared to 43% overall), and/or who claim to carry a knife or gun (49%, compared to 43% overall) and are able to obtain drugs (46% compared with 43% overall).

Older pupils aged 15–16 are more likely than their younger counterparts to say that they committed their first offence because there was not much chance they would be caught (28% compared to 20%) or because of boredom (26% compared to 21%). This differs from 2005, when older pupils admitted to committing their first offence due to boredom.

Females and/or those that are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups are more likely than males and/or those from a White background to say that they committed their first offence because it was the only way they could get what they wanted (22% compared with 11% overall for BME groups, and 15% compared with 11% for females).

### **Recent offences**

When asked which of a range of circumstances related to offence/s committed in the past 12 months, young people most commonly cite boredom (25%), in line with the 2005 and 2004 surveys.<sup>12</sup>

Being drunk or having been drinking alcohol when committing an offence in the last year has increased from 16% in 2005 to 20% in 2008. Girls in particular said this applied to them, with a quarter (25%) stating they were drunk or had been drinking when they committed the offence/s in the last year compared to 16% of boys.

<sup>12</sup> In previous surveys this question has been in a different place in the questionnaire and had the following wording: “Which of the following, if any, applied to you when you committed the offence/s in the last year?” This means the results are not directly comparable.

There has also been an increase in those citing peer pressure (18% in 2008 versus 14% in 2005) as a circumstance for committing an offence in the last year.

It is worth noting, as in previous years, nearly half of young people (48%) have given no specific circumstance for committing an offence; three in ten (28%) say that none of the given circumstances applied to them, and one in ten either did not know (10%) or did not answer the question (10%).

**Table 2.9: Circumstances of offending**  
*Which of the following, if any, applied to you when you committed the offence/s in the last year?*

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>Base: All who have committed an offence in the last 12 months</b>	<b>(1,154)</b>	<b>(1,576)</b>	<b>(1,295)</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
I was bored	25	24	21
I was drunk/had been drinking alcohol	20	16	17
I was influenced by my friends	18	14	14
I was playing truant from school when I committed the offence	12	13	12
I wanted to impress my friends/people I was with	9	9	9
I was on drugs	7	6	7
I had been excluded from school at the time when I committed the offence	3	5	4
I/my family needed the money	2	3	3
None of these	28	27	25
Don't know	10	10	8

### 3 Outcomes of offending

This section of the report examines detection rates, the consequences of being caught and the level of reoffending.

#### *Likelihood of being caught*

Half of all young people who admit offending in the last year say that they were caught by the police (49%), indicating the highest incidence of detection levels since 2000 (please refer to Figure 3.1).

The trend data further shows that the proportion of young people who say they were not caught for committing a crime has continued to fall from 66% in 2004 to 62% in 2005 and to 46% in 2008.

**Figure 3.1: Detection rates**

*Have you ever been caught by the police for the offence/s you have committed in the last 12 months?*



Base: All young people in school who have committed a criminal offence in the past 12 months (1,154), 21 January - 11 April 2008

#### *Variations in likelihood of being caught*

##### **Demographic factors**

There is no significant difference between the proportion of males and females who report self-offending and say they have been caught by the police in the past 12 months (50% and 47%, respectively). This is unlike previous survey years, where boys were more likely than girls to have been caught.

It appears that those who carry a weapon or are in a group that thinks crime is acceptable are more likely to be caught offending. Three in five (61%) young people who say they have offended and who have been caught by the police have carried a weapon, as opposed to only 29% of those who have never carried a gun or knife<sup>13</sup>. Over

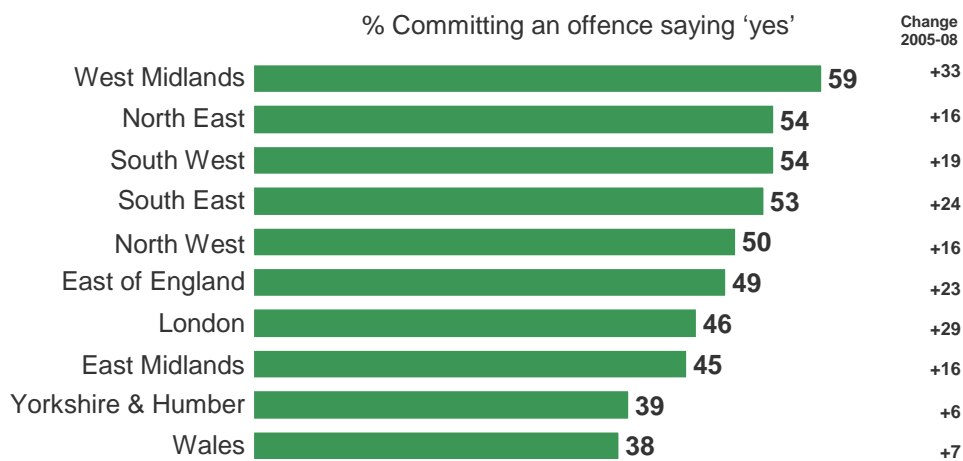
<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that the 61% mentioned here were not necessarily caught for weapon carrying, nor were necessarily carrying a weapon when they were caught.

half (55%) of young people who self-report offending and who are part of a group where committing crime is acceptable have been caught, as opposed to only 40% of those who are part of a group where crime is not seen as acceptable.

### **Regional variations in detection rates<sup>14</sup>**

Detection rates appear to vary by region, but it is notable that detection rates have risen in all regions since 2005, although not all significantly. The North East and South West remain in the top three regions with the highest rates of detection, but the considerable increase in detections in the West Midlands since 2005 means that it is now the region where the highest proportion of offenders are caught, despite having lower levels of offending compared to other areas. Around half of young people in Yorkshire and Humber (55%), Wales (52%) and East Midlands (52%) do not get caught, despite having relatively high rates of offending.

**Figure 3.2: Detection rates by region**  
*Have you ever been caught by the police for the offence/s you have committed in the last 12 months?*



Base: All young people who have committed a criminal offence in the last 12 months (1,154), 21 January - 11 April 2008

### **Detection rates for different offences<sup>15</sup>**

Detection rates also vary according to the offence committed and, as in previous years, are higher for those committing more serious crimes. Offences that have the highest detection rates are taking a car or motorbike without permission (82%), stealing a mobile phone from another person (80%) and stealing an iPod or other MP3 player (80%).

Table 3.1 below shows the levels of detection for each offence typology and illustrates that young people are most likely to be caught for 'other offences' (driving a car or bike

<sup>14</sup> For the purposes of this report 'detection rates' simply refer to the proportion of young people who say they have been caught by the police for an offence they have committed in the 12 months previous to the research taking place. We do not, however, know the proportion of the offences which are detected.

<sup>15</sup> Young people were asked one catch-all question to establish whether they had been caught by the police for an offence in the 12 months previous to the research taking place. Clearly some young people commit more than one offence but data were not collected on how many times they were caught. This should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings.

when drunk or over the limit) and ‘drugs’, which have the greatest proportion of detections (72% and 62%, respectively).

**Table 3.1: Detection rates**

*Have you ever been caught by the police for the offences you have committed in the last 12 months?*

**Table shows offenders caught by police by offence typologies committed over the 12 months**

	<b>2008</b>
<b>Base: All who have committed a criminal offence in the last 12 months</b>	<b>(1,154)</b>
	<b>%</b>
Anti-social behaviour	51
Theft/stealing	52
Threatening/assaulting	60
Drugs	62
Other offences	72

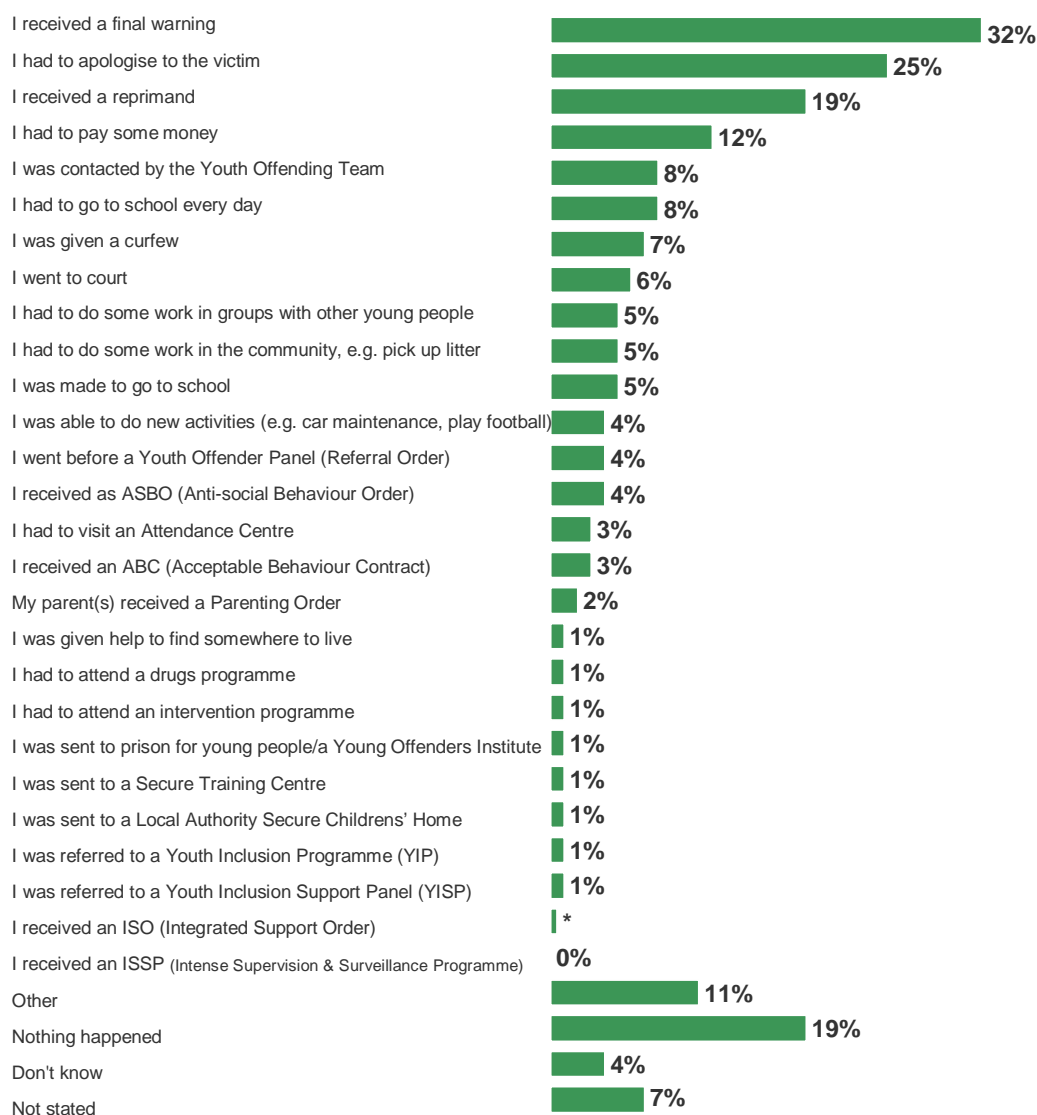
### ***Consequences of being caught***

As in previous years, a Final Warning is still the most common type of disposal given to young people who have offended (32%), although the use of this disposal has continued to decline from 36% in 2005 and 41% in 2004.

The other most common consequences were having to apologise to the victim (25%) and receiving a Reprimand (19%). However, incidences of receiving a Reprimand have also declined in 2008 (19% compared to 28% in 2005 and 22% in 2004), along with those who were contacted by a youth offending team (YOT) (8% in 2008, compared to 14% in 2005). Incidences where nothing happened have gone up in 2008, with just under one in five (19%) of those admitting offending receiving no consequences compared to 14% in 2005 and 10% in 2004. It is worth noting that the proportion of respondents who did not state an answer has increased in the 2008 survey from only 3% in both 2004 and 2005, to 7% in 2008.

Young people in the East Midlands who have been caught offending are more likely than average to be contacted by the YOT (18% versus 8% overall) or made to pay some money (27% versus 12%). The South West region favours apologising to the victim more than the average (37% versus 25%). Young people in the East of England who had offended are more likely to report that nothing happened to them than the regions overall (34% versus 19%).

**Figure 3.3: Outcome of being caught by the police**  
*Which of the following things, if any, have happened to you since you were caught by the police?*



Base: All young people who have been caught by the Police for any offences committed in the last 12 months (546), 21 January - 11 April 2008

### **Attitudes towards punishments**

A quarter of young people admitting offending stated that being caught for an offence had not deterred them at all from committing future offences (26%). As can be seen in the table below, since 2000 there has been a steady decline in the numbers claiming that being caught would stop them (either a great deal or a fair amount) from committing future offences.

**Table 3.2: Attitudes towards punishment***And how much has being caught stopped you from doing this again?<sup>16</sup>*

	2008	2005	2004	2003	2001	2000
<b>Base: All young people caught by the police for offence committed in last 12 months</b>	<b>(546)</b>	<b>(446)</b>	<b>(342)</b>	<b>(291)</b>	<b>(382)</b>	<b>(149)</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal/a fair amount	37	40	40	44	48	52
A little/not at all	48	53	54	49	46	42

Detection is likely to have more of an impact on young people who belong to a group. A third (33%) of young people who belong to a group where crime is seen as being acceptable claim that being caught would not stop them at all from committing future offences (compared to 13% in groups where crime is seen as unacceptable and 26% who do not belong to a group).

### **Levels of re-offending**

Levels of reoffending are similar to 2005 and 2004, but represent an increase from 2003 (as can be seen in Table 3.3).

The figures show that there had been a steady increase in the proportion of young people who reoffended since 2001. However, this increase seems to have tailed off in 2005; the increase in 2008 thus continues the trend from 2001 to 2004. More than six in 10 young people (65%), claim to have committed other offences after being caught, compared to 62% in 2005.

**Table 3.3: Levels of reoffending***And did you commit any other offences AFTER you were caught by the police?*

	2008	2005	2004	2003	2001
<b>Base: All young people who have been caught by the police for an offence committed in the last 12 months</b>	<b>(546)</b>	<b>(446)</b>	<b>(342)</b>	<b>(291)</b>	<b>(382)</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	65	62	63	57	50
No	28	31	31	31	40
Don't know	3	4	4	8	7

Furthermore, group membership appears to affect reoffending levels. Nearly twice as many young people who consider themselves to be part of a group have reoffended compared to those who do not consider themselves to be part of a group (67% compared to 35%). Young people who are part of a group where crime is seen as acceptable are

<sup>16</sup> Due to the rewording of this question in 2002 we are not able to compare the findings from that year. This question was not asked in 1999. In 2000, the question was worded "And how much has being caught, and its consequences, deterred you from doing this again?"

significantly more likely to have reoffended than those who are part of a group which views crime as unacceptable (76% compared to 51%).

There is also a link between the amount of times a young person plays truant and reoffending. Eight in 10 young people (80%) who have played truant 10 or more times have offended again since being caught compared to 68% of those who have played truant one to nine times and 53% of those who have never played truant.

### **Offences committed after being caught by the police**

The types of offences that young people commit after being caught by the police are similar to the offences reported to have been committed in the last year. Similar to previous years, the less serious offences, such as shoplifting and fare dodging, remain the most common offences committed by young people who reoffend (49% and 41%, respectively), although offences such as damaging something belonging to someone else (42%) and threatening or assaulting others in public (41%), have risen in 2008.

There are few significant differences between groups of pupils when the overall offence typologies are examined. The exceptions to this are for drugs, where reoffenders are more likely to be older (50% of 15–16-year-olds admit reoffending, compared to 25% of 11–14 years olds) and female (41% of girls versus 29% of boys repeat drug offences).

**Table 3.4: Offences committed after being caught**  
*What offence/s did you commit after you were caught by the police?*

<b>Top 15 offences committed after a young person was caught by the police</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Base: All committing an offence after being caught by the police</b>	<b>(352)</b>	<b>(269)</b>	<b>(219)</b>	<b>(168)</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Stolen anything from a shop, supermarket or department store <sup>17</sup>	49	40	33	32
Damaged or destroyed, on purpose or recklessly, something belonging to somebody else	42	34	39	37
Travelled on a bus, train or underground without paying your fare	41	52	45	46
Threatened/assaulted others in public	41	32	27	28
Written or sprayed graffiti on walls, buses, trains, seats, shelters	40	46	51	44
Hurt someone, but they did not need medical treatment	34	41	37	38
Stolen anything in school	30	28	24	17
Bought drugs for your own use	30	27	34	38
Set fire to anything on purpose	26	33	23	30
Sent a voicemail or text message to someone on your mobile phone in order to scare, harass or threaten them in some way	22	41	37	N/A
Stolen anything from your home or the place where you live	20	20	12	12

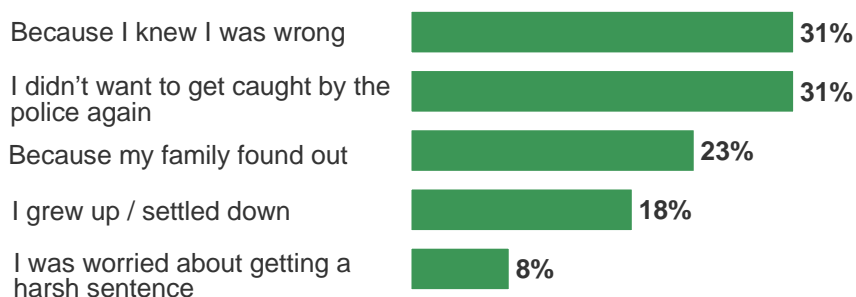
<sup>17</sup> In 2001, this part of Q11 read as “Stolen anything from any kind of shop”.

Bought, sold or held on to something you believed to be stolen <sup>18</sup>	17	24	28	23
Threatened or been rude to someone because of their skin colour, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because of a disability they have <sup>19</sup>	17	N/A	N/A	N/A
Used a mobile phone to video or photograph someone whilst you or someone else assaulted them ('happy slapping') <sup>20</sup>	16	N/A	N/A	N/A
Taken away a bicycle without the owner's permission	14	15	18	15

### Reasons for not offending after being caught

The most common reasons cited by young people for not committing further offences are realising their offending behaviour was 'wrong' (31%<sup>21</sup>) and not wanting to get caught by the police again (31%<sup>22</sup>). A quarter (23%) mention their family finding out as a reason for not going on to reoffend and one in five (18%) attribute the change to growing up or settling down.

**Figure 3.4: Reasons for committing no further offences after being caught**  
*If you have not committed any further offences since being caught, why is that?*  
 Mentioned by at least 5%



Base: All young people who have been caught by the police for any offences committed in the last 12 months and have not committed any further offences since being caught (157), 21 January - 11 April 2008

The data suggest a link between victimisation and being deterred from committing future offences. Young people who have been both victims of a criminal offence and have been caught committing an offence are less likely not to re-offend because of the fear of being caught than those who have not been victimised (38%, compared with 19%). Similarly, victimised young people are more likely than those who have not been

<sup>18</sup> In 2001, this part of Q11 read as "Bought, sold or kept anything else you thought was stolen".

<sup>19</sup> This question was asked for the first time in 2008.

<sup>20</sup> This question was asked for the first time in 2008.

<sup>21</sup> 36% when based on all valid responses (i.e. removing the 18 respondents who did not answer this question from the sample base).

<sup>22</sup> 35% when based on all valid responses (i.e. removing the 18 respondents who did not answer this question from the sample base).

victims to be deterred from repeat offending because they know it is ‘wrong’ (39% and 19%, respectively).

### ***Deterrents to offending***

Two in five young people (42%) say that worry about parent reaction is the biggest deterrent for young people committing crime, which represents an increase from 2005 (36%). Fear of being caught or being punished, as well as the type of punishment, are other aspects thought most likely to have an effect on stopping young people offending (36%, 23% and 24%, respectively).

**Table 3.5: Deterrents to offending**  
*Which two of these things do you think has the biggest effect on stopping young people from committing crimes?*

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>Change 2005–08</b>
<b>Base: All young people</b>	<b>(4,570)</b>	<b>(5,463)</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>+%</b>
Worry about how their parents will react	42	36	+6*
The fear of being caught	36	39	-3*
The type of punishment	24	24	0
The fear of being punished	23	22	+1
Getting a good education	12	9	+3*
The attitude of their friends	11	11	0
Having interesting things to do in their spare time	10	9	+1
Meeting the victim	8	10	-2*
Concern for the victims of the crime	8	8	0
Having a mentor/ someone to look out for them	5	6	-1*
Don't know	10	14	-4*

The data suggest some differences in what young people consider as deterrents to offending according to demographic factors. Significantly more BME pupils cite getting a good education (18% versus 10%) or having a mentor (8% versus 5%) as having a greater effect on preventing youth offending than White pupils. Amongst BME pupils, getting a good education is more commonly cited by Asian pupils (20% say this is a deterrent) than Black pupils (16%).

In terms of age, a greater proportion of the younger age group of 11–14-year-olds refer to the fear of being caught as being a considerable deterrent (37% compared to 34% of 15–16-year-olds). On the other hand, older pupils between 15 and 16 years old think having interesting things to do in their spare time has an impact of stopping young people from offending (14% versus 9% of 11–14-year-olds).

## 4 Fears and experiences of crime and bullying

This chapter explores young people's experiences of crime, where these crimes take place and who young people talk to about being a victim. It also looks at fear of crime among young people and perceptions of safety at school.

### *Young people's concerns*

Overall young people's level of concern about being a victim of crime has declined compared to previous years. This is particularly noticeable when comparing 2008 findings to those in 2000. However, in line with previous surveys, young people are more concerned about physical assault and theft than they are about bullying or racism. That said, there has been a significant decline in the overall concern about physical assault and theft between 2008 and 2005, continuing on from the slight decline over previous years, as seen in Table 4.1.

Girls continue to be more worried about physical assault, theft, bullying and racism than boys, despite less commonly being a victim of crime. Furthermore, also in accordance with previous years, younger pupils seem to be mostly concerned with bullying and racism but this concern diminishes as they get older.

**Table 4.4: Young people's concerns**  
*How worried are you about each of the following?*

	2008 (4,750)	2005 (5,463)	2004 (4,715)	2003 (4,963)	2002 (5,167)	2001 (5,263)	2000 (2,767)
Base: All young people	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Being bullied at school							
Worried	22	34	35	37	30	41	42
Not worried	73	61	61	58	65	55	56
Being the victim of a theft							
Worried	35	49	45	54	48	60	55
Not worried	57	44	48	40	44	33	41
Being physically assaulted							
Worried	36	52	47	55	51	62	57
Not worried	57	42	46	38	42	32	38
Being the victim of racism							
Worried	21	29	28	33	29	41	40
Not worried	71	62	63	58	61	51	53

### *Bullying*

The proportion of young people who are concerned about being bullied has also declined (22% in 2008 compared to 34% in 2005, and 35% in 2004). As with physical assault, it is younger pupils aged 11–14 years old who are the most concerned. One quarter of younger pupils (25%) are either 'fairly' or 'very' worried about being bullied, compared with only 13% of older pupils who are 15–16 years of age.

Worry about being bullied is higher among young people who claim to be in a group where crime is seen as unacceptable. Just over a quarter of young people whose group views crime as unacceptable report to be either 'fairly' or 'very' concerned about bullying (25%), compared to only 14% of those whose group sees criminal offending as acceptable.

### **Theft**

Fear of theft has decreased among young people from 45% in 2004 and 49% in 2005, to 35% in 2008.

Girls tend to show more concern about being the victim of theft. Over a third (37%) of girls report being either 'fairly worried' or 'very worried' about theft, while 32% of boys report the same levels of concern. Furthermore, 29% of boys report that they are 'not at all worried' about being a victim of theft, compared with 22% of girls.

### **Physical assault**

Concern about physical assault has declined significantly (36% in 2008 compared to 52% in 2005, and 47% in 2004). Consequently, more than half of young people report that they are not worried about the possibility of physical assault (57%), which is the highest proportion since the 2000 Youth Survey.

Younger pupils (those aged 11–14 years old) are more concerned than their older counterparts of the prospect of physical assault: 17% of younger pupils claim to be 'very worried' about physical assault, compared to 10% of 15–16-year-olds. Similarly, older pupils are less concerned than young ones, with the majority (67%) claiming to be either 'not very worried' or 'not at all worried', compared to 54% of 11–14-year-olds.

### **Racism**

Among young people in mainstream education, one in five (21%) say they are concerned about racism, the lowest levels of concern reported since 2000.

As with other crimes, girls are more concerned about being the victim of racism than boys, with just under a quarter (24%) claiming to be either 'fairly' or 'very' worried (compared to 18% of boys). Also as seen for other crimes, the profile of those who are concerned about racism is made up of younger pupils (those aged 11–14 years old), with 10% claiming to be 'very worried', and only 6% of 15–16 year olds feeling the same.

Additionally, Black and minority groups of young people are more concerned about racial abuse than are their White counterparts. Almost half (45%) of Black and minority ethnic pupils report being either 'fairly' or 'very' worried about racism, while only 16% of White pupils report the same levels of concern.

Those who have been victims of an offence are significantly more likely to be worried about being a victim of any of the listed offences. They are more worried about being the victim of theft (39% versus 30% non-victims), being physically assaulted (41% versus 31% non-victims), being the victim of racism (24% versus 16% non-victims) or being bullied (28% versus 15% non-victims).

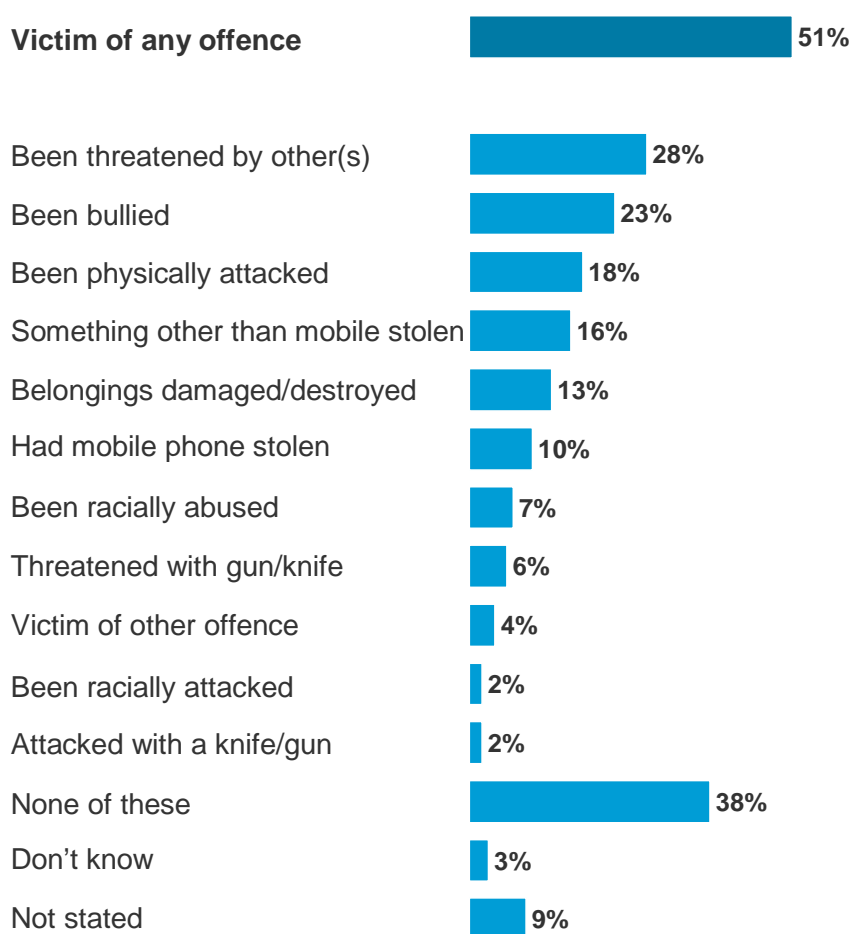
## Experience of crime

Over the last 12 months, just over half of young people (51%) have been the victim of an offence, which is in line with previous years (50% in 2005 and 49% in 2004). However, the proportion who have been physically attacked, had a mobile phone stolen from them or been racially abused has increased over the past three years.

The 2008 survey is the first time the option of being threatened with a knife or a gun was included in the survey and 6% of young people report this having happened to them in the last 12 months.

A significant proportion of young people report that they have not been a victim of any of the offences listed (38%).

**Figure 4.1: Experience of crime**  
*Have any of the following happened to you in the last 12 months?*



Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

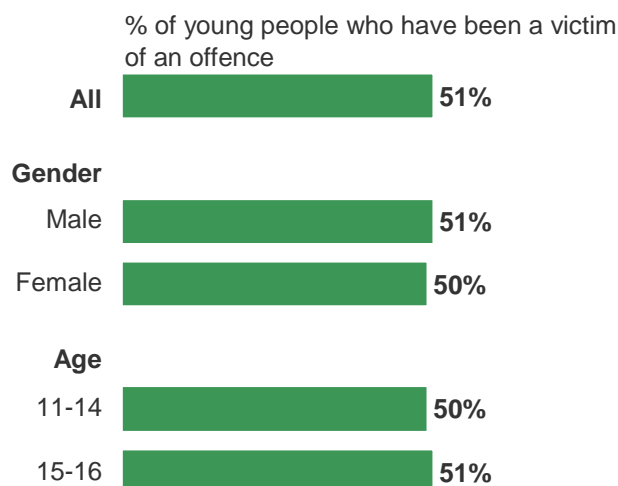
## Profile of victims

Looking at specific offences, girls are more likely to have been bullied than boys (27%, compared with 19% of boys). Bullying is also more likely to be perpetrated against pupils nearer the beginning of their secondary education, with victimisation of this type decreasing as they progress through school. For example, one in four pupils aged 11–14 (25%) say they have been bullied in the last 12 months, compared with one in five pupils aged 15–16 (18%).

Older pupils (15–16-year-olds) are more likely to have been threatened by others (33%), experienced a physical attack (20%), had a mobile phone stolen from them (12%) or been threatened by a knife or gun (8%) than their younger counterparts (26%, 17%, 10%, and 5%, respectively).

For all the offences listed, boys are just as likely, if not more likely, to be victims than girls, although as discussed above they are less likely than girls or younger pupils to be worried about being the victim of an offence.<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 4.2: Profile of victims of an offence – gender and age**



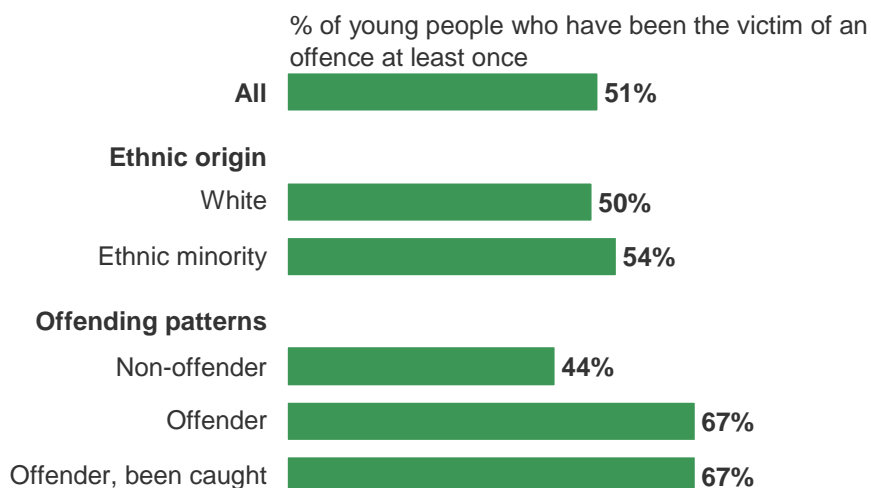
Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

Slightly more BME pupils have been the victim of an offence (54%) than white pupils (50%). Similar proportions of white pupils have been victims of threatening behaviour (28%) as their Black and minority (25%) peers, whereas BME pupils are more likely to have been racially abused than their White counterparts. One in six Black and ethnic young people say they have been racially abused (22%), compared with just 4% of White pupils. Racial attacks, although less common, are also experienced by a greater proportion of ethnic minority pupils (5%) than White pupils (2%), with Black pupils most likely to be a victim of this (7%).

As in previous years, those who have reported committing an offence are more likely to be a victim of crime. Two-thirds (67%) of those who have committed an offence have been the victim of a crime, compared with 44% of those who have not committed a crime. However, they are less likely to worry about being a victim of crime.

<sup>23</sup> Young people's concerns about crime are reported at the beginning of this section.

**Figure 4.3: Profile of victims – ethnicity and offending**



Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

### ***When the offender is another young person***

Young people who have been a victim of an offence in the last 12 months were asked, for each offence that they had experienced, whether it was committed by another young person under the age of 18. Among all young victims, the majority (69%) say that offences were committed against them by a young person under the age of 18. This is consistent with the findings from both the 2004 and 2005 Youth Surveys (each 74%).

Table 4.2 below shows, for each offence, the proportion of young people who say it was committed by another young person under the age of 18. Being threatened by others is the most likely offence to have been perpetrated by a young person; over a third (36%) of victims say this was the case. Just under a third of young people experienced bullying (31%), physical attacks (22%) or damage or destruction to their property (15%) by other young people.

As there is a notable proportion of young people who do not give an answer to this question, the results based on all valid responses are also included in the table below.

**Table 4.2: Offences carried about another young person**  
*And for each one that has happened to you, was this done by another young person under the age of 18?*

	2008	2008	2005	2004
Base: All who experienced each crime in the last 12 months	%	%	%	%
	(2,434)	(1,841)	(2,758)	(2,302)
	All valid responses			
Been threatened by other/s	36	48	41	39
Been bullied	31	41	34	36
Being physically attacked	22	30	22	19
Had something which belongs to you damaged or destroyed on purpose	15	20	19	20
Had something other than a mobile phone stolen from you	15	20	19	18
Had a mobile phone stolen from you	9	12	8	5

Been racially abused	8	11	6	5
Been threatened with a knife or gun**	7	9	N/A	N/A
Been racially attacked	2	3	1	1
Been attacked with a knife or gun**	2	2	N/A	N/A
Been the victim of an offence not mentioned above	3	4	2	3

\*\* These are new options for 2008

2008 findings show a smaller proportion of pupils who have been a victim of any crime have been threatened by another young person (36%) than in 2005 (41%), had been bullied (31% of all young victims of offences in 2008 compared with 34% in 2005, and 36% in 2004), had something damaged (15% versus 19% in 2005), or had something other than a mobile phone stolen (15% compared to 19% in 2005). For all other crimes and bullying, a similar proportion of young people in 2008 say this crime was perpetrated by another young person as they did in 2005 and 2004.

### ***Victim of an offence committed by a group of young people***

For the first time in 2005, young people were asked not only whether any offences or cases of bullying were carried out by another young person, but also whether any were committed by a ‘group’ of young people under the age of 18. Table 4.3 shows that there has been a decline in young people who have been victimised by groups of young people. For instance, just under a third of victims (28%) say that they have been threatened by a group of young people under 18 (compared to 34% in 2005), and almost as many that a group has bullied them (24% compared to 30% in 2005). In line with 2005, there has been a significant decline in numbers saying they had something other than a mobile phone stolen from them (9% in 2008 versus 12% in 2005). One in six (17%) say a physical attack was carried out by a group of young people (compared to 18% in 2005).

**Table 4.3: Offences carried out by a group of young people**  
*Were any of the following offences done to you by a group of young people under the age of 18?*

	<b>Committed by a group of young people in 2008</b>	<b>Committed by a group of young people in 2005</b>	<b>Change 2005–08</b>
<b>Base: All who have been a victim of an offence in the last 12 months</b>	<b>(2,434)</b>	<b>(2,758)</b>	<b>+%</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	
Been threatened by other/s	28	34	-6*
Been bullied	24	30	-6*
Being physically attacked	17	18	-1
Had something which belongs to you damaged or destroyed on purpose	10	13	-3*
Had something other than a mobile phone stolen from you	9	12	-3*
Had a mobile phone stolen from you	7	7	0
Been racially abused	6	6	0

Been racially attacked	2	3	-1*
Been the victim of an offence not mentioned above	2	2	0
None of these	20	22	0

### **Where the offence took place**

Young people are more likely to be victimised in school than elsewhere for each of the offences they have experienced, except for being physically attacked. This is particularly the case for racial abuse (43%) and being threatened by others (42%).

Victimisation also happens to a similar proportion of young people in their local area, with 42% threatened with a knife or gun and around two in five young people encountering physical attacks (38%) in the local vicinity.

Younger males are more at risk of being physically attacked at school than average. Pupils from a BME background are more likely than White pupils to suffer racial abuse within the school environment (51% compared to 33%).

Victimisation also happens to a similar proportion of young people in their local area, with 42% threatened with a knife or gun and around two in five young people encountering physical attacks (38%) in the local vicinity.

Older pupils are more likely to experience physical attacks (52%) or threatening behaviour (47%) in their local area than are younger pupils (33% and 34%, respectively). This could be reflective of the greater likelihood for older pupils to be out of their home and in their local area.

**Table 4.4: Where an offence took place**  
*For each one, where did it happen?*

	Base	At school	Travelling to/from school	Where live/local area	Elsewhere	Not stated
	N	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Base: All who have been a victim of each offence in the last 12 months</b>						
Physically attacked	(851)	37	17	38	22	-
Threatened by others	(1,327)	42	18	38	26	-
Mobile phone stolen	(492)	37	7	26	19	-
Had something else stolen (other than mobile)	(747)	39	5	26	21	-
Racially abused	(317)	43	17	21	25	-
Racially attacked	(108)	37	16	24	23	-
Belongings damaged or destroyed on purpose	(625)	39	8	31	18	-
Bullied	(1,100)	76	20	20	14	-
Been the victim of an offence not mentioned above	(188)	25	9	28	24	-
Been threatened with a knife or gun**	(295)	9	6	42	34	-

Been attacked with a knife or gun**	(102)	14	4	27	25	-
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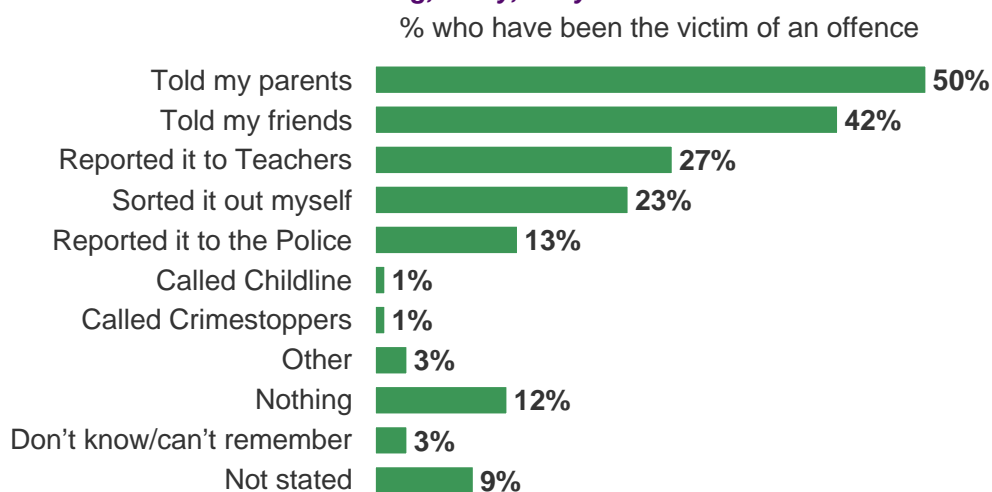
\*\* These options are new for 2008

### Reporting crime

Young people who are victims of crime are most likely to turn to their parents and their friends, which is consistent with findings from 2005 and 2004. Half of victims (50%) told their parents what had happened to them and two in five (42%) told their friends, which is relatively consistent with the findings from the 2004 survey (54% and 43%) and 2005 survey (53% and 41% respectively). Compared to previous years, there seems to be a very slight shift in those confiding in their friends rather than their parents.

Young people surveyed in 2008 are less likely to sort matters out for themselves than they were in 2005 (27% compared with 23% in 2008), although they are now more likely to do nothing (12%), which reflects the 2004 findings. Furthermore, in line with previous years, a small minority of young people report the crime to Childline or Crimestoppers.

**Figure 4.4: Reporting crime**  
*Which of the following, if any, did you do?*



Base: All young people who have been the victim of one of the offences (2,434), 21 January - 11 April 2008

In line with previous years, younger people are more likely to report crime to teachers and parents, while older pupils favour external sources such as the police and friends. For instance, almost a third of 11–14-year-olds (29%) say they reported the crime to their teachers, while only a fifth of 15–16-year-olds did so (20%). Most notably, over half of younger pupils are much more likely to tell their parents about crime (52% of 11–14-year-olds versus 43% of 15–16-year-olds), while almost half (46%) of 15–16-year-olds report crime to their friends (compared to 40% of 11–14-year-olds).

Gender also continues to influence who young people report crime to. Girls are more likely to confide in their parents (56% compared with 45% of boys), friends (50% compared with 34% of boys) or their teachers (30% compared with 24% of boys). It is worth noting that the degree to which girls confide in teachers has significantly declined from 2005 (34% in 2005 compared to 30% in 2008). Conversely, boys are much more likely to say they can sort it out themselves (27% compared with 19% of girls) and are more likely to report it to the police (15% versus 11% of girls). It is worth noting though

that overall the number talking to parents has shown a slight decline from 2005 (for instance, 53% compared to 50% in 2008).

Comparable with the 2005 survey, young people who have offended are more likely to sort it out themselves (36%), than those who have not committed a crime (17%) or do nothing (14% compared to 11% who have not committed a crime). Similarly, and again reflecting 2005 findings, it was found that young people were less likely to turn to their parents if they had committed a crime (40% compared with 55% of who have not offended). Furthermore, young people that carried a knife were much more likely to sort things out for themselves (31% compared to 18%), whereby more than half of those that did not were more likely to tell their parents (54% compared to 43% of those who carry a knife).

## 5 Weapons and groups

In this section of the report we investigate further the possession and use of weapons (specifically knives and guns) by young people in mainstream education. We then examine whether young people see themselves as part of a group and if so, the group's attitude to and involvement in crime.

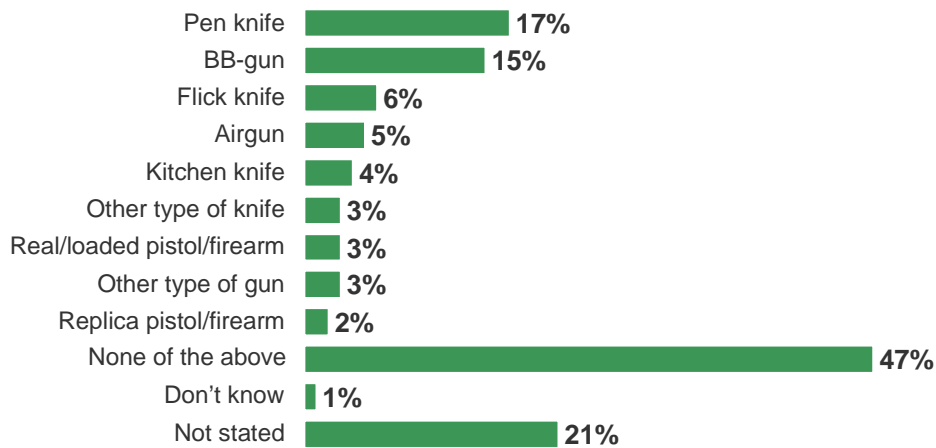
### *Carrying and using a weapon*

#### **Carriage of a potential weapon**

Nearly half of young people (47%) say they have not carried a knife or gun in the last year, compared to three in ten (31%) who report to have carried one of these weapons.

**Figure 5.1: Carriage of potential weapons**

*Have you ever carried one of the following around with you in the last year?*



Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

As Figure 5.1 above shows, the most common weapon young people report having carried in the last year is a penknife (17%), although this figure has significantly decreased since 2005, when it stood at 24%. It is also worth noting that a significantly lower proportion of young people reported having carried a flick knife (6%), down from 8% in 2005.

The second most common weapon young people say they have carried over the last year is a BB gun containing ball bearings or plastic pellets – 15% of young people report this. Again, however, this has significantly decreased when compared to 2004 and 2005; 23% reported this in 2004 and 21% in 2005, as shown in Table 5.1. Additionally, a significantly lower proportion of young people have carried either a real or loaded firearm, or indeed a replica firearm (3% and 2% respectively) compared to a BB gun over the same period.

As there is a substantial proportion of respondents who did not give an answer at this question (21%), the results based on all valid answers are included in the table below. There is no difference in the pattern described above.

**Table 5.1: Potential weapons by young people**  
*Have you ever carried one of the following around with you in the last 12 months?*

**Base: All young people**

	2008 (4,750)	2008 (3,747)	2005 (5,463)	2004 (4,715)
	<b>All valid responses</b>			
Carried a knife or gun	31	39	N/A	N/A
Not carried a knife or gun	47	60	N/A	N/A
Penknife	17	21	24	25
BB gun	15	19	21	23
Flick knife	6	7	8	9
Airgun	5	6	6	7
Kitchen knife	4	5	4	5
Other type of knife	3	4	N/A	N/A
Replica pistol/firearm	2	3	3	4
Real/loaded pistol/firearm	3	3	2	2
Other type of gun	3	4	N/A	N/A
Don't know	1	1	3	2
None of the above	47	60	51	51

### **Demographic variations**

Those aged 15–16 years old are more likely to report having carried a weapon of some kind over the last twelve months than their younger counterparts (34% versus 30%). When individual age years are looked at, it becomes clear that it is at the age of 13 when the difference between whether or not young people carry a gun or knife becomes significant; between 24–26% of 11–12-year-olds have carried a knife or gun, increasing to 33% of 13-year-olds and 34–36% of 14–16-year-olds.

Older (15–16) and younger (11–14) pupils are particularly more likely to carry the following weapons:

- penknife (21% of 11–14-year-olds compared to 15% of 15–16-year-olds)
- flick knife (7% of 15–16-year-olds compared to 5% of 11–14-year-olds)
- airgun (6% of 15–16-year-olds compared to 4% of 11–14-year-olds).

As seen in previous years, boys are predominantly more likely to admit to carrying a knife or gun than girls; almost half of boys (45%) say they have carried a knife or gun, compared with 16% of girls. This pattern is evident for every weapon listed in the survey.

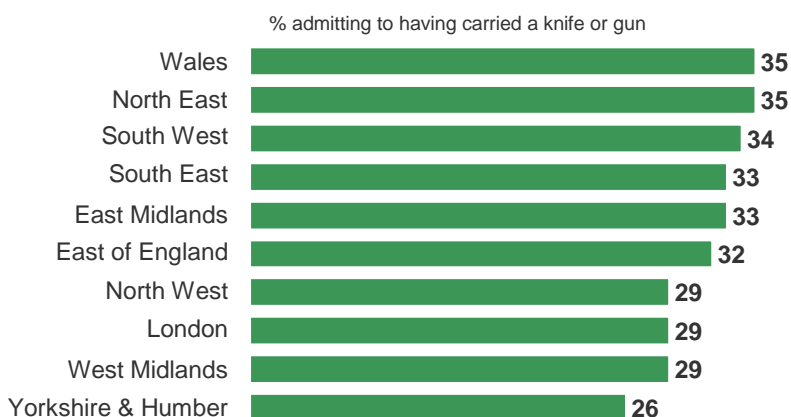
While there is no significant difference in terms of carrying a ‘knife’ or ‘gun’ across ethnicity overall, the data show that White young people are more likely to report having carried a penknife (18% against 13%) and a BB gun (15% against 12%) compared to BME young people.

Young people who claim to carry a knife or gun claim to have reoffended more often than those who do not (80% compared to 54%).

Exposure to drugs seems to have an effect on whether or not a weapon is carried; young people who claim to have the ability to obtain drugs are much more likely to report that they also carry a weapon (69%), compared to only 23% of those who do not have the ability to obtain drugs.

Regional differences between the proportions of young people who carry a weapon also exist, as shown in Figure 5.2 below. More than one in three young people in Wales (35%) and the North East (35%) report they have carried a weapon, while Yorkshire and Humber has the lowest proportion of youth carrying knives or guns (26%). The regions with the highest incidence of penknife carrying are the South West (21%) and Wales (20%), whereas BB gun use is most prevalent in the North East (18%), South East (17%) and South West (17%).

**Figure 5.2: Weapon carriage by region**



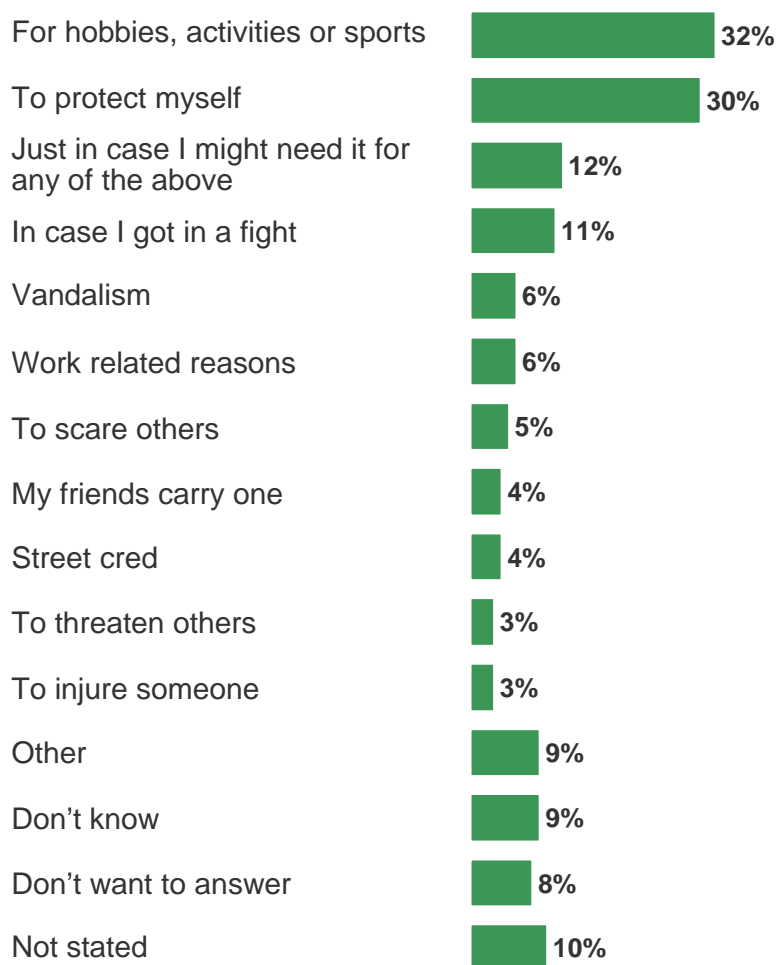
Base: All young people (4,750). 21 January - 11 April 2008

The data suggest that young people who have been the victim of an offence are significantly more likely to have carried a knife or gun. Two in three young people who have been a victim of an offence (66%) claim to carry a weapon, compared to just under one in four (23%) of those who have not.

### **Use of knives**

As Figure 5.3 shows, the most frequently cited reason for young people to carry a knife is for hobbies, activities or sport (32%), closely followed by carrying a knife for their own protection (30%). Very few young people say they carry a knife with the proactive intent to use it against others; 5% attribute knife carrying to scare others, 3% to threaten others and 3% to injure someone.

**Figure 5.3: Use of knives**  
*And what do you use the knife for?*



Base: All young people who have carried a knife with them in the last 12 months (1,188), 21 January - 11 April 2008

There was very little variation in terms of age, gender and ethnicity for the reasons given for carrying a knife in the last twelve months. However, it is interesting to note that in line with the findings for carrying a knife overall, boys aged 15–16 and those from a White background are more likely to report carrying a knife to use it for hobbies, activities or sports:

- 39% of 15–16-year-olds against 29% of 11–14-year-olds
- 37% of boys compared to 19% of girls
- 35% of White young people compared to 13% of BME young people.

Boys and the older age group also more frequently cite work-related reasons for carrying a knife (7% of boys against 4% of girls, and 10% of 15–16-year-olds, compared to 5% of 11–14-year-olds).

More young people who have not been a victim of an offence claim to use a knife for hobbies or activities (40% versus 30% of victims), while those who have been victimised most commonly cite protection to explain their knife carriage (35% versus 20% of non-victims).

The frequency with which young people who have been a victim of an offence carry a knife to use for their own protection or for use in a crime also appear to be connected.

Over a quarter of young people (27% compared to 20% of non-victims) who claim to have been victimised report carrying a knife at least once or twice within the last year to use for protection or a crime, while 7% claim to have carried one three or four times (compared to only 4% of non-victims).

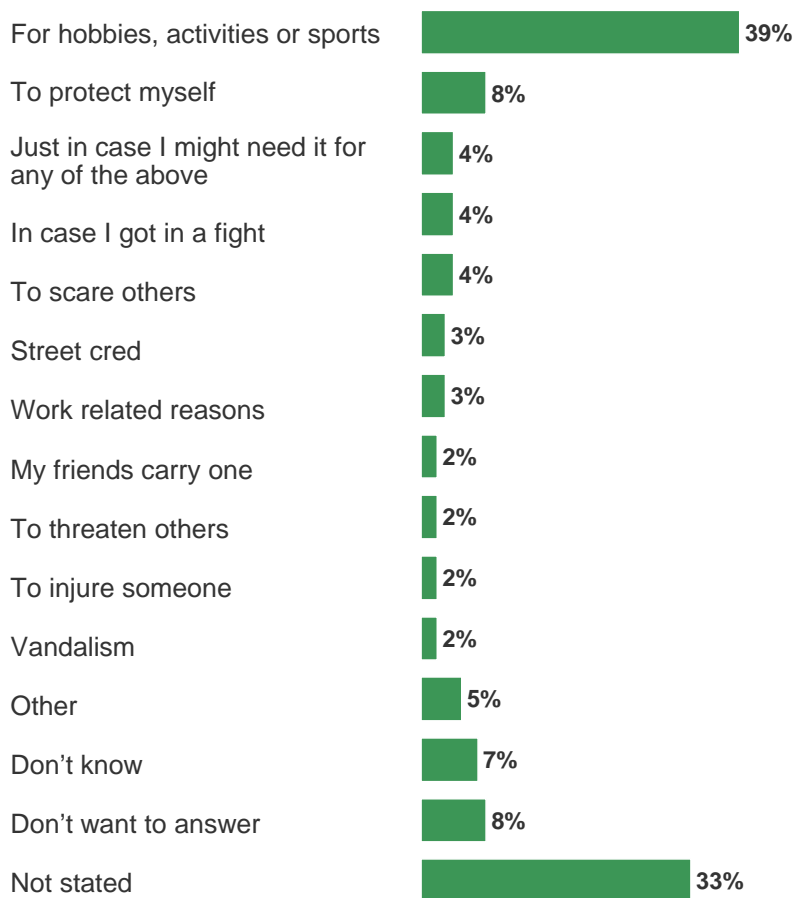
### Use of guns

As was shown to be the case for knives, the most common reason young people give for carrying a gun is for hobbies, activities or sports (39%). A much lower proportion of young people report carrying a gun for their own protection than for hobbies, activities and sport (39% compared to 8%).

As with knife carriage, there is only a very small minority of young people who say they carry a gun with the intent of using against others (2% say they do so to threaten others, 4% to scare others and 2% to injure someone).

It should be noted that there is a relatively high proportion of young people who either overtly state they do not want to give a reason why they have carried a gun (8%) or who just fail to answer this question (33%). Although different interpretations of why this could be the case could be offered, it is felt that the picture is not clear enough to make such a judgement.

**Figure 5.4: Use of guns**  
*And what do you use the gun for?*



Base: All young people who have carried a gun with them in the last 12 months (985), 21 January - 11 April 2008

There is very little difference across sub-groups for the reasons given for carrying a gun, other than for hobbies, where there were differences in age, gender and ethnicity:

- 46% of 15–16-year-olds compared to 37% of 11–14-year-olds
- 43% of boys compared to 22% of girls
- 41% of White young people compared to 24% of BME young people.

However, BME young people more frequently cite more reasons for carrying a gun than their White counterparts; just in case they need it (8% compared to 4%), to protect themselves (14% compared to 7%), to threaten others (4% against 1%), in case they get in a fight (11% versus 3%) and to injure someone (6% against 1%).

In line with the findings for knife carriage, more young people who have carried a gun and have also been victims of an offence refer to protection as being the most common reason for carrying a weapon (11%), compared to only 4% of those who have not been victimised.

### **Membership of a group and group behaviour**

#### **Group differences and composition**

The 2008 survey is the first time that young people were asked whether or not they think of themselves as being part of a group (defined in the survey as three or more people – including themselves), and about the behaviour and activities undertaken within that group. The large majority of young people (82%) considered themselves to be part of a group, while only 12% said they were not.

**Table 5.2: Group membership**

*Thinking about the people you hang around with, do you think of yourself as part of a group (for these questions a group is made up of 3 or more people including you)?*

<b>Base: All young people</b>	<b>2008 (4,750)</b>
Yes	82
No	12
Don't know	3

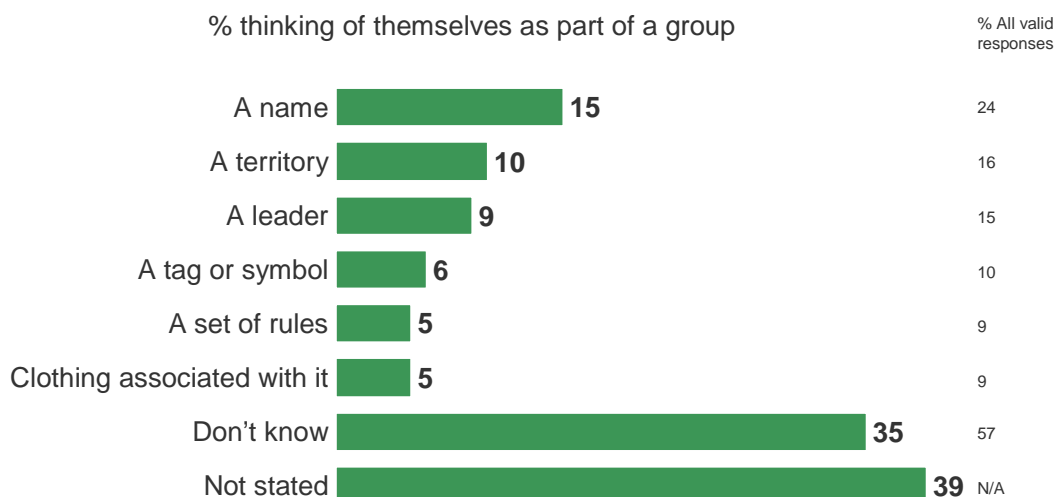
There are significant differences in terms of age, gender and ethnicity for whether young people consider themselves to be part of a group. The likelihood of young people considering themselves to be part of a group increases as they get older, with the biggest increase between the ages of 12 (76%) and 13 (83%). 13–16-year-olds are therefore significantly more likely than 11–12-year-olds to consider themselves to be part of a group (74–76% compared with 83–88%). Furthermore, girls are significantly more likely to report being part of a group (85%) than boys (79%) and White young people are more likely to report being part of a group than Asian young people (82% compared to 76%).

Young people who say they have offended, carried a weapon or been the victim of an offence are more likely to see themselves as part of a group. Those who had committed a criminal offence in the last twelve months more frequently referenced themselves as part of a group than those who did not (93% compared to 78%), and the same was true of those who reported having carried a weapon during this period, compared to those

who had not (91% against 79%). However, young people who had themselves been victims of an offence are more likely than non-victims to say they are part of a group (86% versus 80%).

As Figure 5.5 shows, the most commonly cited characteristics of a group were having a name (15%) or territory (10%), while the least commonly cited characteristics were having a set of rules (5%) or clothing associated with the group (5%). There is a sizeable proportion (35%) that is unaware if their ‘group’ has any of the above characteristics.

**Figure 5.5: Group characteristics**  
*Does your group have any of the following?*



Base: All young people who think of themselves as part of a group (3,926), 21 January - 11 April 2008

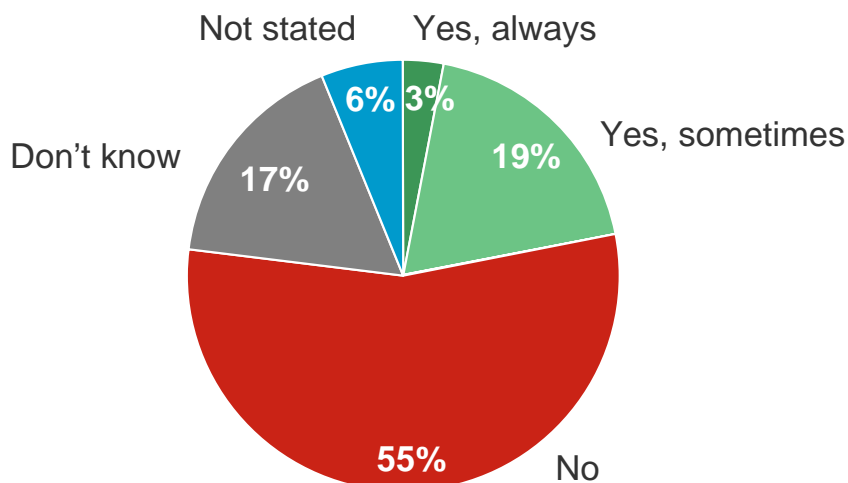
Young people who are part of a group in which crime is seen as acceptable (see below for findings on group activity) are more likely to report that their group has any of the characteristics above than those who are part of a group in which crime is unacceptable:

- 30% compared with 10% report that their group has a name
- 25% compared with 5% say that they have a territory
- 18% compared with 7% say that they have a leader
- 12% compared with 4% report that their group has a set of rules
- 16% compared with 4% say that their group has a tag or symbol
- 14% compared with 2% have clothing associated with their group.

### **Group activity**

As can be seen in Figure 5.6 below, more than half of young people who considered themselves to be part of a group thought their group did not think criminal offending was acceptable (55%) compared with one in five (19%) who claimed their group felt crime was sometimes acceptable, and only 3% saying it was always acceptable. Among young people who consider themselves group members, the likelihood of being part of a group where crime is sometimes or always seen as acceptable increases steadily with age, from 6% of 11-year-olds to 34% of 15–16-year-olds.

**Figure 5.6: Group attitudes to crime**  
*Is committing a crime seen as OK by your group?*



Base: All young people who think of themselves as part of a group (3,926), 21 January - 11 April 2008

When asked to state from a list of things people in their group had done in the last 12 months, the majority of young people cited hanging out in public spaces (57%). Nearly one in six, respectively, referred to their group threatening others, creating graffiti, or breaking and damaging things (all 17%). In relation to more serious offending, 13% of young people say their group have used force or violence against other people and 9% have carried knives.

It is worth noting that one in five young people (21%) cited none of the above, which could indicate an alternative activity not covered by the options in the questionnaire (please refer to Figure 5.5 for list of all activities undertaken by group members). When asked for reasons why the young people joined their group, the most common reason was to make friends (63%), followed by wanting to take part in activities such as football (24%) or to feel like you belonged to something (14%).

However, young people who consider themselves to be part of a group in which crime is acceptable are less likely to cite making friends or taking part in group activities as the reasons for joining their group (58% compared to 68%, and 23% compared to 27%). Instead they are more likely to cite all other reasons presented in the survey, such as 'because there was nothing else to do', 19% versus 6% for those who are part of a group that does not see criminal behaviour as acceptable, and 'for protection' (14% versus 6%).

Girls are much more likely than boys to join a group in order to make friends (67% versus 59%), while boys were more likely to join a group because there was nothing else to do (12% compared with 7%).

## 6 Truancy and exclusion

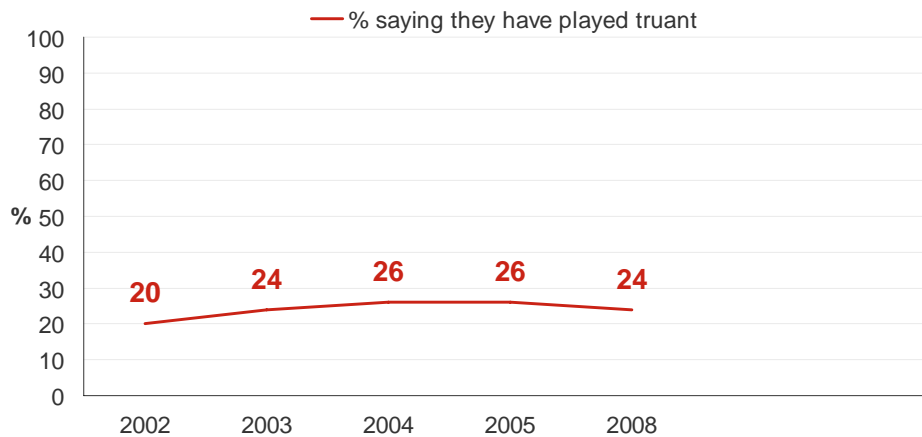
This section explores the prevalence of truancy and exclusion among young people in mainstream education, and also the reasons why young people play truant.

### *Prevalence of truancy*

Truancy levels among young people have remained relatively constant, as Figure 6.1 shows.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 6.1: Truancy levels**

*How often, if at all, have you played truant from school for at least a whole day?*



Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

A quarter of young people in mainstream education (24%) say that since starting school they have played truant compared with three in five (63%) who say they have never done so. However, as found in 2004 and 2005, most young people who have played truant for a whole day have done so less than five times (18%), compared with 6% who have truanted more than five times.

Table 6.1 shows the number of times young people have played truant, if at all.

**Table 6.1: Frequency of truancy**

*How often, if at all, have you played truant from school for at least a whole day?*

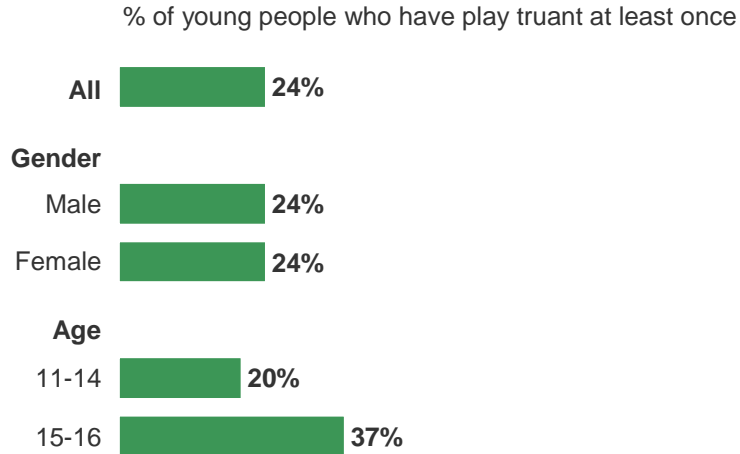
Base: All young people	2008 (4,750)	2005 (5,463)	2004 (4,715)
	%	%	%
Never played truant	63	61	62
1–2 times	13	13	14
3–4 times	5	6	5
5–9 times	2	3	3
10–14 times	1	1	1

<sup>24</sup> This question was asked of young people for the first time in 2002.

15–19 times	*	1	1
More than 20 times	2	2	2
Don't know/can't remember	5	6	6

### Profile of truants

**Figure 6.2: Profile of truants – gender and age**

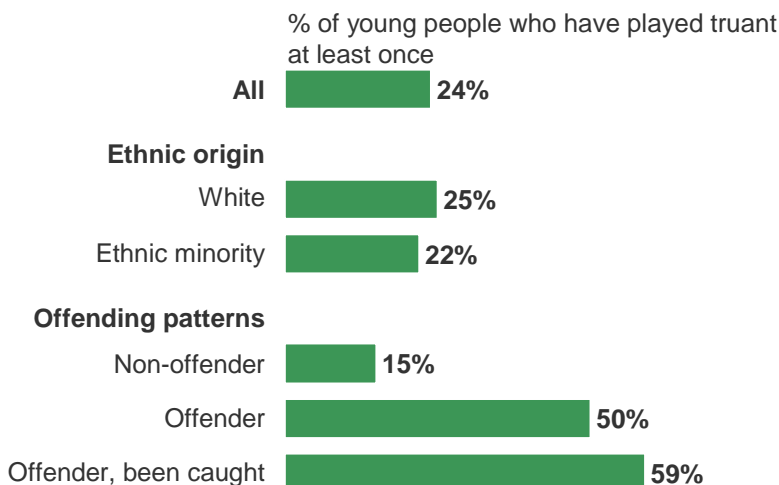


Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

Truants tend to be older, are more likely to have committed an offence in the last year and to have been a victim of a crime themselves. Just under one in five 15–16-year-olds (17%) say they have played truant between one and two times, whereas this is true of only one in ten 11–14-year-olds (11%). Young people who say they have offended in the last year are more likely to have played truant (50%) than young people who have not (15%). And while only 17% of young people who have not been a victim of crime admit to having truanted at least once, this figure increases to almost a third (31%) of young people who have been a victim.

Truancy is most common among young people living in the South East (31%) while the East of England (20%) and Yorkshire and Humber (20%) have the lowest rates of truancy.

**Figure 6.3: Profile of truants – ethnicity and offending**



Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

Those who have ever been excluded from school are significantly more likely to have truanted than their peers who have not been excluded (63% compared with 24%).

### ***When young people start playing truant***

One-fifth (20%) of young people say they first played truant when they were in primary school, which represents a significant decrease from 2005 (from 26%). In accordance with this is the slight decrease in the proportion that first played truant in year 7 (from 28% in 2004 to 25% in 2005, and to 24% in 2008), thereby suggesting that young people truant for the first time at an increasingly older age than in previous years.

**Table 6.2: Truancy by school year**  
*When you first played truant from school, what school year group were you in?*

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>Base: All who have ever played truant from school</b>	<b>(1,222)</b>	<b>(1,310)</b>	<b>(1,176)</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Year 6 or below	20	26	18
Year 7	24	25	28
Year 8	20	18	19
Year 9	17	14	16
Year 10	9	7	8
Year 11	2	2	2
Don't know/can't remember	5	5	6

### ***Reasons for playing truant***

When asked why they play truant from school, the most common response was boring lessons or not getting on with their teacher (55% and 31% respectively). The full list of reasons is given in Table 6.3.

There are some sub-group differences worth noting. Older pupils (aged 15–16) are more likely to say that they truanted because they had not done their homework (29% of 15-year-olds or older compared with 22% of 11-year-olds). Furthermore, females are more likely than males to have played truant because of bullying (14% compared to 9%) or because of wanting to do something better (27% compared to 21%).

**Table 6.3: Main reasons for playing truant**  
*What would you say were the main reasons why you played truant?*

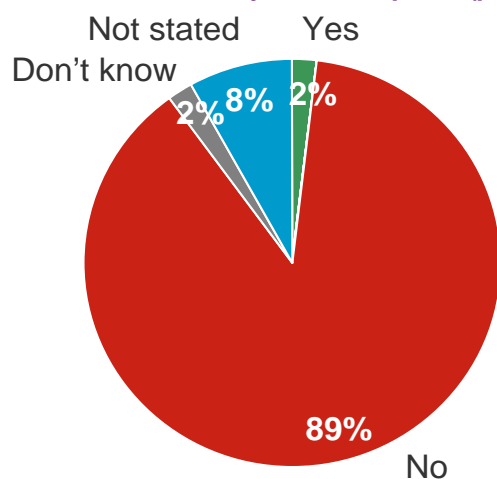
<b>Base: All who have ever played truant</b>	<b>(1,222)</b>
	<b>%</b>
Found lessons boring	55
Didn't get on with teacher	31
Had not done homework	25
Wanted to do something better	24
Found lessons badly taught	22
Found lessons difficult	17

Trying to avoid a test or an exam	15
Bullied by other people at school	12
Family needed me to help out at home	10
Friends made me do it	9
I had a job/needed to work	2
Experienced racism	1
Other	11
Don't know	6

## Exclusions

The majority (89%) of young people have not been permanently excluded from school in the last year, with only 2% saying that they have been.

**Figure 6.4: Exclusions from school**  
*In the last 12 months, have you been expelled (permanently excluded) from school?*



Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

While there are no gender differences in the proportion of young people saying that they *have* been excluded, girls are significantly more likely than boys to say that they *have not* been excluded (92% compared with 85%). A significantly higher proportion of White young people say that they have not been expelled compared to BME young people (89% versus 85%).

Although overall exclusion rates are low (2%), there is a link between exclusion and other behaviours such as committing offences and attendance at school. Young people claiming higher truancy rates (having truanted at least 10 times) are significantly more likely to say that they have been expelled (11%) than those who have truanted 1–9 times (5%) or have never played truant (1%).

There is some variation in the proportion of young people saying that they have been expelled by region. Wales (92%) and Yorkshire and Humber (92%) have the highest percentage saying they have not been expelled, although this is only significantly higher than the East of England (87%), the North West (86%) and West Midlands (85%).

Young people saying that the following apply to them are significantly more likely to have been permanently excluded:

- those who are part of a group where crime is accepted (5% versus 1% where crime is not accepted)
- young people who have committed a criminal offence (6% compared to 1% of those who have not)
- young people who have carried a knife or gun (5% compared with 1%)
- those who say that they are able to get drugs (3% compared with 1% who aren't)
- young people who have been a victim of an offence (3% versus 1%).

### **Suspensions**

One in 12 young people say that they have ever been suspended (8%); 5% have only been suspended once and 3% say more than once. Three-quarters (75%) say that they have never been suspended.<sup>25</sup>

Young people aged 15–16 (8% once and 4% more than once) are significantly more likely than those aged 11–14 to have been suspended (4% once and 3% more than once). Boys are more likely than girls to have been suspended; 7% of boys say that they have been suspended once compared to 3% of girls.

<sup>25</sup> When the data are based on all valid responses to this question (i.e. excluding the 602 respondents who did not give an answer), the results are as follows: suspended once (6%), suspended more than once (4%), never been suspended (86%).

## 7 Alcohol and drug use

This final chapter explores young people's experience of drinking alcohol and taking drugs, both at any point in their lives and in the month prior to the survey taking place.

### *Experience of alcohol and drug use*

Three in five (59%) young people in mainstream education admit to having tried alcohol at least once in their lives. However, it should be remembered that this question asks young people whether they have ever had any alcoholic drink, with the proportion reducing to 37% when asked if they had drunk alcohol in the past month.

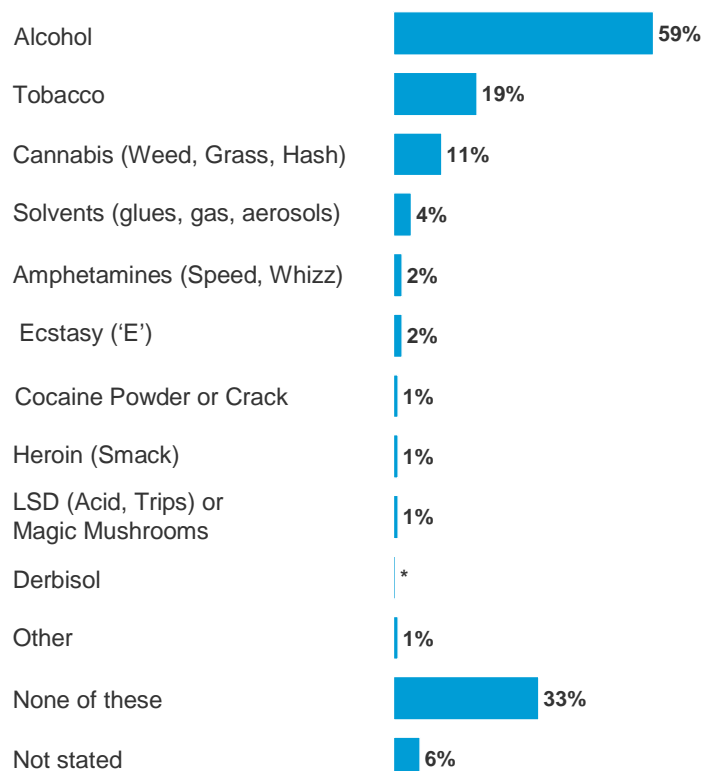
Furthermore, just under a fifth of young people (19%) have ever smoked tobacco and one in 10 have ever smoked cannabis (11%). Far fewer young people are experimenting with Class A drugs such as ecstasy (2%), cocaine (1%) or heroin (2%).

It is important to note that a fake drug 'Derbisol' was included in the question in order to calculate the proportion of young people over-reporting drug abuse. Less than 1% of young people in 2008 cited that they had ever taken Derbisol, which may or may not indicate that there is a tiny proportion of young people who over-report drug or alcohol use.

Figure 7.1 shows the types of substances ever taken by young people.

**Figure 7.1: Alcohol and drugs**

*Please look at the list of substances below and say which you have ever taken.*



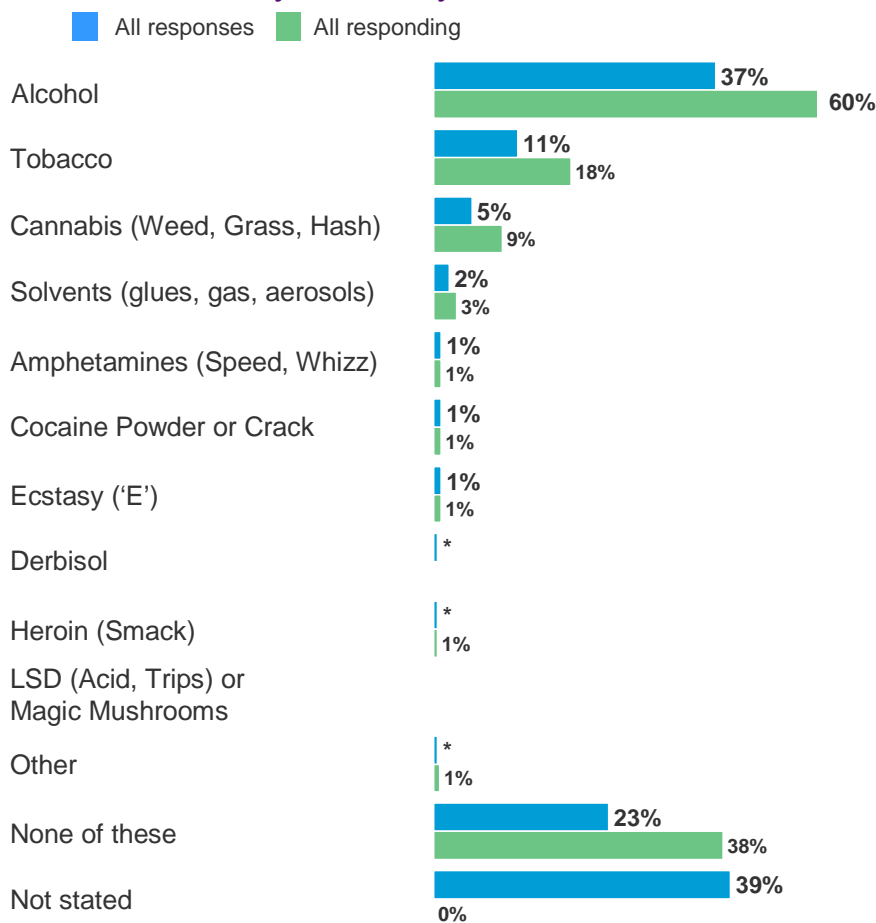
Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

## Alcohol and drug use in the last month

Young people were also asked whether they had ever drunk alcohol, smoked tobacco or taken an illegal drug in the month prior to the survey taking place. The findings (as shown in Figure 7.2) show that young people were more likely to have drunk an alcoholic drink or smoked a cigarette than take drugs in that time period. There is a high proportion of non-response at this question (39%), therefore the results based on all valid data (i.e. data excluding those not stating an answer) are also included in Figure 7.2.

Comparing the data with the 2005 and 2004 Youth Surveys shows that there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of young people who say they have drunk alcohol in the last month (37% in 2008 compared with 45% in 2005), contrary to the marginal increase between 2004 (43%) and 2005 (45%). However, there is only a marginal decrease in smoking tobacco (11% have smoked tobacco in the last month in 2008, compared with 13% in 2005 and 14% in 2004). In addition, young people surveyed in 2008 were not significantly less likely to have taken drugs in the last month than those interviewed in 2005. Furthermore, a greater number of young people in 2008 say that they have not taken any of the substances listed (23%), in comparison with 2005 (19%) and 2004 (16%). Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the incidence of 'Class A' drugs has stayed low in 2008, in line with previous years (1% respectively).

**Figure 7.2: Alcohol and drugs taken in the last month**  
*And have you taken any of the substances ticked at QB34a in the last month?*



Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008; All responding (2,897)

## ***Trends in alcohol and drug use***

Alcohol and drug use among young people in mainstream education seem to be on the decline. The proportion of young people who say they have ever drunk alcohol has fallen significantly from 67% in 2004, and 65% in 2005 to 59% in 2008. Furthermore fewer young people in 2008 say they have tried cannabis (13%) than in 2005 (11%). Tobacco use has also fallen significantly to 19%, when compared with 2005 (24%), and 2004 (25%).

As might be expected with the decline in reported drug and alcohol usage, there is an increase in young people who have never taken any of the substances to 33% in 2008, compared to 2005 (28%) and 2004 (26%).

**Table 7.1: Trends in alcohol and drug use**  
*Please look at the substances below and say which you have ever taken*

<b>Top five substances that young people have ever taken (ranked by 2008 findings)</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>Base: All young people</b>	<b>(4,750)</b>	<b>(5,463)</b>	<b>(4,715)</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Alcohol	59	65	67
Tobacco	19	24	25
Cannabis	11	13	15
Solvents	4	5	5
LSD	1	3	2
None of these	33	28	26

## ***Profile of young people reporting alcohol and drug use***

Young people in the older age groups are more likely to have ever drunk alcohol or taken drugs. The vast majority of 15–16-year-olds (82%) have tried an alcoholic drink at least once in their life, nearly a third more than the proportion of 11-year-olds (51%). This pattern was also evident in 2005 where 84% of 15–16-year-olds admitted ever trying alcohol, compared to 46% of 11-year-olds. Smoking tobacco is also more prevalent among older pupils; 36% of 15–16-year-olds say they have tried smoking tobacco, compared with just 13% of 11–14-year-olds. Of the young people who have used cannabis, those nearing the end of secondary school are more likely to have done so (25% of 15–16-year-olds) than their younger counterparts (6% of 11–14-year-olds). Females are also more likely than males to smoke tobacco (20% compared to 17%).

White young people are more likely to have drunk alcohol and smoked tobacco than BME young people. Just over three-fifths of White pupils (64%) have consumed alcohol at least once, compared with 32% of Black and minority pupils. Furthermore, a quarter of White pupils (20%) say they have smoked tobacco, as opposed to just 13% of Black and minority pupils. Overall, Asian and Black young people are much less likely to have taken a substance (24% and 46%, respectively) when compared to White pupils (65%).

There are some regional variations in substance use, with significantly higher proportions of young people in the South East and South West saying that they have drunk alcohol than those in other regions (71% compared to 47–64% in other regions).

Those who admit to offending and carrying weapons are more likely to drink alcohol or take drugs. A significantly higher proportion of young people who have committed an offence say that they have taken a substance (86%) than those who have not committed an offence (51%). This applies to all substances, including alcohol (84% versus 50%), tobacco (48% compared to 9%), cannabis (31% versus 3%) and higher classification drugs.

Substance use is also more prevalent among those who have carried a gun or knife (74% versus 56% who have not), among young people who are part of a group where crime is accepted (88% compared with 56% who are part of a group where crime is seen as unacceptable), among young people who have been a victim of crime themselves (68% versus 55% of non-victims) and perhaps not surprisingly, among young people who say that they are able to access drugs themselves (77% versus 44%).

There is also a link between truancy and alcohol and drug abuse. Persistent truants<sup>26</sup> (93%) are significantly more likely to say that they have taken drugs or drunk alcohol than those who have never truanted (54%). The same applies to young people who have been expelled; 81% of those who have been expelled have taken a substance compared with 61% who have not.

### **Access to drugs**

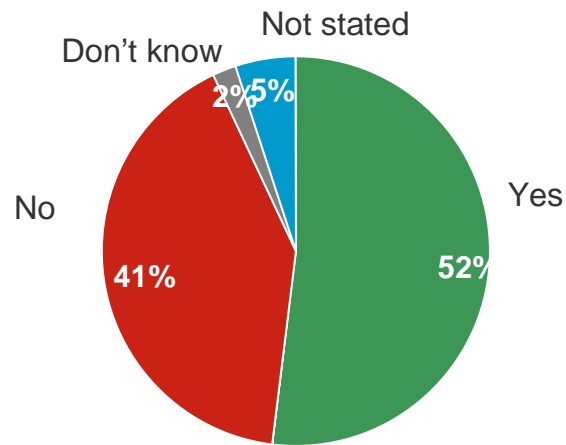
Over half (52%) of young people say that they know someone who could provide them with drugs. Young people were then asked the age of the person/people who could give them drugs, and while 23% say that they were mostly over 18, it is more likely those supplying drugs are young people themselves (28% say the people who could sell/give them drugs are mostly under 18).

As mentioned in the profile of substance abusers section, there is a link between young people using substances and knowing someone they can go to for drugs. Therefore, unsurprisingly, the variations in sub-groups as to whether young people can access drugs mirror patterns of substance use more generally. Not only are those aged 15–16 more likely to have taken a substance, they are also more likely than young people aged 11–14 to know people they could go to to get drugs (73% versus 45%). White young people are more likely to be able to access drugs than BME young people (53% versus 45%).

The proportion of young people who know someone who could give them drugs is higher in South East England (63%) and the South West (60%) than elsewhere (41–53%).

<sup>26</sup> Those who have played truant at least 10 times.

**Figure 7.3: Ability to get drugs**  
*Are there people who you could go to today who could sell or give you drugs?*



Base: All young people (4,750), 21 January - 11 April 2008

# Appendix A: Typologies

## *List of offences by level of seriousness, as defined by the YJB*

### **Very serious**

- Sneaked or broken into a house or a building intending to steal something
- Driven a car or bike when you were drunk or over the limit
- Carried a knife
- Carried a gun
- Beat up or hurt someone in your family, causing them to need medical treatment
- Beat up or hurt someone not in your family, causing them to need medical treatment
- Taken a car, motorbike etc. without the owner's permission
- Used or sold a stolen credit card, chequebook or cash card
- Carried a weapon other than a knife or gun
- Stolen a mobile phone from another person
- Stolen an iPod or other MP3 player
- Sold drugs to someone else
- Set fire to anything on purpose (e.g. building, car, furniture)
- Physically assaulted someone because of their skin colour, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because of a disability they have

### **Fairly serious**

- Stolen anything from a shop, supermarket or department store
- Stolen anything in school
- Stolen anything from your home or the place where you live
- Stolen anything from a car
- Snatched anything from a person, like a purse or bag
- Stolen money from a gas or electricity meter, public phone, vending machine or any other type of machine
- Taken away a bicycle without the owner's permission
- Been a passenger in a car that was taken without the owner's permission
- Bought, sold or held on to something you believed to be stolen
- Threatened/assaulted others in public
- Hurt someone, but they did not need medical treatment

- Used a mobile phone to video or photograph someone while you or someone else assaulted them ('happy slapping')

#### **Less serious**

- Damaged or destroyed, on purpose or recklessly, something belonging to somebody else
- Written or sprayed graffiti on walls, buses, trains, seats, shelters
- Bought drugs for your own use
- Travelled on a bus, train or underground without paying your fare
- Sent a voicemail or text message to someone on your mobile phone in order to scare, harass or threaten them in some way
- Threatened or been rude to someone because of their skin colour, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because of a disability they have

#### ***List of offences by type***

- Anti-social behaviour
- Travelled on a bus, train or underground without paying your fare
- Damaged or destroyed, on purpose or recklessly, something belonging to somebody else
- Written or sprayed graffiti on walls, buses, trains, seats, shelters
- Set fire to anything on purpose (e.g. building, car, furniture)
- Theft/stealing
- Stolen anything from a shop, supermarket or department store
- Stolen anything in school
- Stolen anything from your home or the place where you live
- Bought, sold or held on to something you believed to be stolen
- Taken away a bicycle without the owner's permission
- Stolen money from a gas or electricity meter, public phone, vending machine or any other type of machine
- Stolen anything from a car
- Been a passenger in a car that was taken without the owner's permission
- Sneaked or broken into a house or a building intending to steal something
- Stolen a mobile phone from another person
- Stolen an iPod or other MP3 player
- Snatched anything from a person, like a purse or bag
- Taken a car, motorbike etc. without the owner's permission

- Used or sold a stolen credit card, chequebook, cash card

### ***Threatening or assaulting***

- Hurt someone, but they did not need medical treatment
- Threatened/assaulted others in public
- Sent a voicemail or text message to someone on your mobile phone in order to scare, harass or threaten them in some way
- Threatened or been rude to someone because of their skin colour, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because of a disability they have
- Used a mobile phone to video or photograph someone while you or someone else assaulted them ('happy slapping')
- Beat up or hurt someone not in your family, causing them to need medical treatment
- Beat up or hurt someone in your family, causing them to need medical treatment
- Physically assaulted someone because of their skin colour, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because of a disability they have
- Drugs
- Bought drugs for your own use
- Sold drugs to someone else
- Other offences
- Driven a car or bike when you were drunk or over the limit

## Appendix B: Technical note

Below we outline the approach adopted for surveying young people in mainstream education.

### *Sampling*

The sample of schools approached to participate in the survey comprised 650 middle and secondary state schools in England and Wales. These 650 schools were randomly selected from a sampling universe which included local education authorities, voluntary aided/controlled and foundation schools, but excluded special schools and sixth form colleges, in order to produce a nationally representative sample of secondary and middle schools.

Fieldwork for the study was conducted between 21 January and 11 April 2008. Of the 650 schools initially approached, 286 declined to participate at the invitation stage (in response to a letter sent to the headteacher) and a further 170 schools declined to participate during the fieldwork period when Ipsos MORI recruiters made telephone contact with the school. In total 194 schools participated in this research, representing a response rate of 30%, which is in line with response rates from previous Youth Surveys (e.g. 38% in 2005 and 39% in 2004). Fully completed questionnaires were obtained from 4,750 pupils, an average of 24 pupils per school.

### *Methodology*

The age groups included in the survey were 11 to 16-year-olds in curriculum years 7 to 11. Each school was randomly allocated one of these curriculum years, from which Ipsos MORI interviewers selected one class at random (using a random number grid) to be interviewed. Interviewing was carried out through self-completion questionnaires with the whole class in one classroom period. An Ipsos MORI interviewer was present to explain the survey to pupils, to reassure them about the confidentiality of the survey, to assist them in completing the questionnaire and to collect completed questionnaires. Young people were asked not to confer or show their answers to fellow classmates. The methodology used for the Youth Surveys has not changed year-on-year.

### *Weighting*

Weighting factors are sometimes applied to survey data in order to minimise any bias that may occur as a result of under- or over-representation of certain groups among those who respond. Any weighting that is applied has a 'design effect' which reduces the effective sample size and therefore increases sampling error.

After examining the profile of the data collected from the survey we took the decision to weight the data by gender, age and region, using interlocking cell weights. The reason we chose these variables is that this is where the profile of our survey data is slightly different from the known profiles, as recorded by the DfES.

The weights were derived from data supplied by the DfES and the Welsh Office. The same weighting sources are used year-on-year to allow for comparability.

When a weighting scheme is imposed after data collection, or the sample is clustered, then the precision would not be as great as would be suggested from using a straightforward simple random sample formula. Consequently, the confidence interval would be somewhat wider. The extent to which these modifications affect the confidence interval is known as the Design Effect (DE). The DE is 1.1344, thus reducing the effective sample size to 4187.

## Appendix C: List of local education authorities by Government office region

**Eastern:** Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend-on-sea, Suffolk, Thurrock.

**East Midlands:** Derby, Derbyshire, Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Rutland.

**London:** Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, City of London, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston on Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond-upon-Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Westminster.

**North East:** Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland.

**North West (including Merseyside):** Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bolton, Bury, Cheshire, Cumbria, Halton, Knowsley, Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens, Salford, Sefton, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington, Wigan, Wirral.

**South East:** Bracknell Forest, Brighton and Hove, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Medway, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Portsmouth, Reading, Slough, Southampton, Surrey, West Berkshire, West Sussex, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham.

**South West:** Bath and North-East Somerset, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Isles of Scilly, North Somerset, Plymouth, Poole, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Torbay, Wiltshire.

**Wales:** Anglesey, Blaenau, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Conway, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouth, Neath, Port Talbot, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Swansea, Torfaen, Wrexham, Vale of Glamorgan.

**West Midlands:** Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton, Worcestershire.

**Yorkshire and Humberside:** Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Doncaster, East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston-upon-Hull, Kirklees, Leeds, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Rotherham, Sheffield, Wakefield, York.

## Appendix D: Statistical reliability

The respondents to the questionnaire are only samples of the total ‘population’, so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the ‘true’ values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the ‘true’ values from knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% – that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the ‘true’ value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the ‘95% confidence interval’.

Size of sample on which survey results is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	+	+	+
100 interviews	6	9	10
500 interviews	3	4	4
1,000 interviews	2	3	3
4,750 interviews (schools survey)	1	1	1

For example, with a sample of 4,750 where 30% give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the ‘true’ value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of plus or minus one percentage point from the sample result. To give a specific example from this research, and using a question where the base size (or sample size) is 546, where 28% of respondents state they have not committed any further offence after being caught by the police, the chances are 19 in 20 that the ‘true’ value would fall between 24% and 32%.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be ‘real’, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one, i.e. if it is ‘statistically significant’, we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume a ‘95% confidence interval’, the differences between the two sample results must be greater than the values given in the following table.

Size of sample compared	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	+	+	+
100 and 100	8	13	14
250 and 100	7	11	12
250 and 250	5	8	9
500 and 250	5	7	8
500 and 500	4	6	6

1,000 and 500	3	5	5
1,000 and 1,000	3	4	4
1,500 and 1,500	2	3	4
2,000 and 2,000	2	3	3
2,500 and 2,500	2	3	3
5,463 and 4,750 (2005 and 2008 schools surveys)	1	2	2

## Appendix E: Sample profile

### Sample profile: Young people in mainstream education

	2008			2005			2004			2003			2002			2001			2000		
	Unweighted N	Wtd %	Wtd %	Unweighted N	Wtd %	Wtd %	Unweighted N	Wtd %	Wtd %	Unweighted N	Wtd %	Wtd %	Unweighted N	Wtd %	Wtd %	Unweighted N	Wtd %	Wtd %	Unweighted N	Wtd %	Wtd %
Total	4,750	100	100	5,463	100	100	4,715	100	100	4,963	100	100	5,167	100	100	5,263	100	100	2,767	100	100
<b>Age of Pupils</b>																					
11	490	10	19	580	11	19	475	10	19	599	12	19	586	11	19	670	13	19	448	16	19
12	943	20	19	1,169	21	19	970	21	19	1,051	21	19	1,016	20	20	1,192	23	19	642	23	19
13	965	20	18	1,172	21	19	975	21	19	977	20	19	1,005	19	19	1,072	20	18	471	17	18
14	1072	23	19	1,152	21	19	982	21	19	966	19	19	1,160	22	19	1,028	20	18	563	20	18
15/16 <sup>27</sup>	1,247	27	25	1,390	25	24	1,313	28	24	1,370	28	24	1,400	27	24	1,301	25	25	643	23	25
<b>Gender of pupils</b>																					
Male	2354	50	51	2,911	53	51	2,460	52	51	2,594	52	51	2,589	50	51	2,560	49	51	1,404	51	51
Female	2352	50	48	2,552	47	49	2,225	48	49	2,369	48	49	2,578	50	49	2,677	51	49	1,363	49	49
<b>Ethnic origin</b>																					
White	4,023	85	84	4,558	83	84	4,100	87	87	4,396	89	88	4,515	87	88	4,720	90	89	2,403	87	82

<sup>27</sup> In previous years this response has been for 15/16-year -olds.

Black and Minority Ethnic	700	15	15	875	16	15	594	13	12	552	11	12	627	10	11	521	10	11	342	14	17
<b>Government office region<sup>28</sup></b>																					
North East	313	7	5	192	4	5	249	5	5	272	5	5	223	4	3	332	6	5	321	12	6
North West (incl. Merseyside)	484	10	14	660	12	14	685	15	14	669	13	14	717	14	14	687	13	14	350	13	13
Yorkshire & Humberside	426	9	10	489	9	10	283	6	10	274	6	10	487	9	10	403	8	10	216	8	9
East Midlands	470	10	8	522	10	8	396	8	8	511	10	8	559	11	9	649	12	8	529	19	19
West Midlands	447	9	11	517	9	11	410	9	11	627	13	11	401	8	11	457	9	11	362	10	11
Eastern (incl. Anglia)	476	10	10	898	16	10	664	14	10	716	14	10	499	10	10	691	13	10	340	12	4
London	520	11	12	1,571 <sup>29</sup>	29	26	1,283	27	26	1,003	20	26	1,477	29	27	1,038	20	17	388	14	34
South East	683	14	15																		
South West	408	9	9	286	5	9	477	10	9	446	9	9	567	11	9	651	12	9	341	12	9
Wales	523	11	6	328	6	6	268	6	6	445	9	6	237	5	7	355	7	6	282	10	6

<sup>28</sup> Please note that the areas covered by some GORs changed in 1998–99, hence variation in GOR sample profile.

<sup>29</sup> Before 2008 London and the South East were combined.

<b>Family composition</b>																					
Mother	4,509	95	95																		
Stepmother	88	2	2																		
Foster mother	25	1	1																		
Father	3,227	68	68																		
Stepfather	574	11	12																		
Foster father	25	1	1																		
Brothers	2,647	56	56																		
Sisters	2,539	53	54																		
Somebody else	392	8	9																		
Both parents in h/hold				4,246	78	78	3,613	77	77	3,884	78	78	4,068	79	79	4,129	79	78	2,207	80	78
Single parent in h/hold				1,121	21	20	959	20	20	929	19	19	953	18	18	988	19	19	503	18	19
Sibling in h/hold				4,634	85	85	3,983	84	84	4,208	85	85	4,393	85	86	4,499	85	86	2,412	87	86