

AET Alcohol and Drugs Education Conference

Monday 28 June 2021, London Guildhall

Young people, drugs and alcohol

what are the trends, who is taking what at what age and why

Dr David Regis, Schools Health Education Unit, Exeter

www.sheu.org.uk



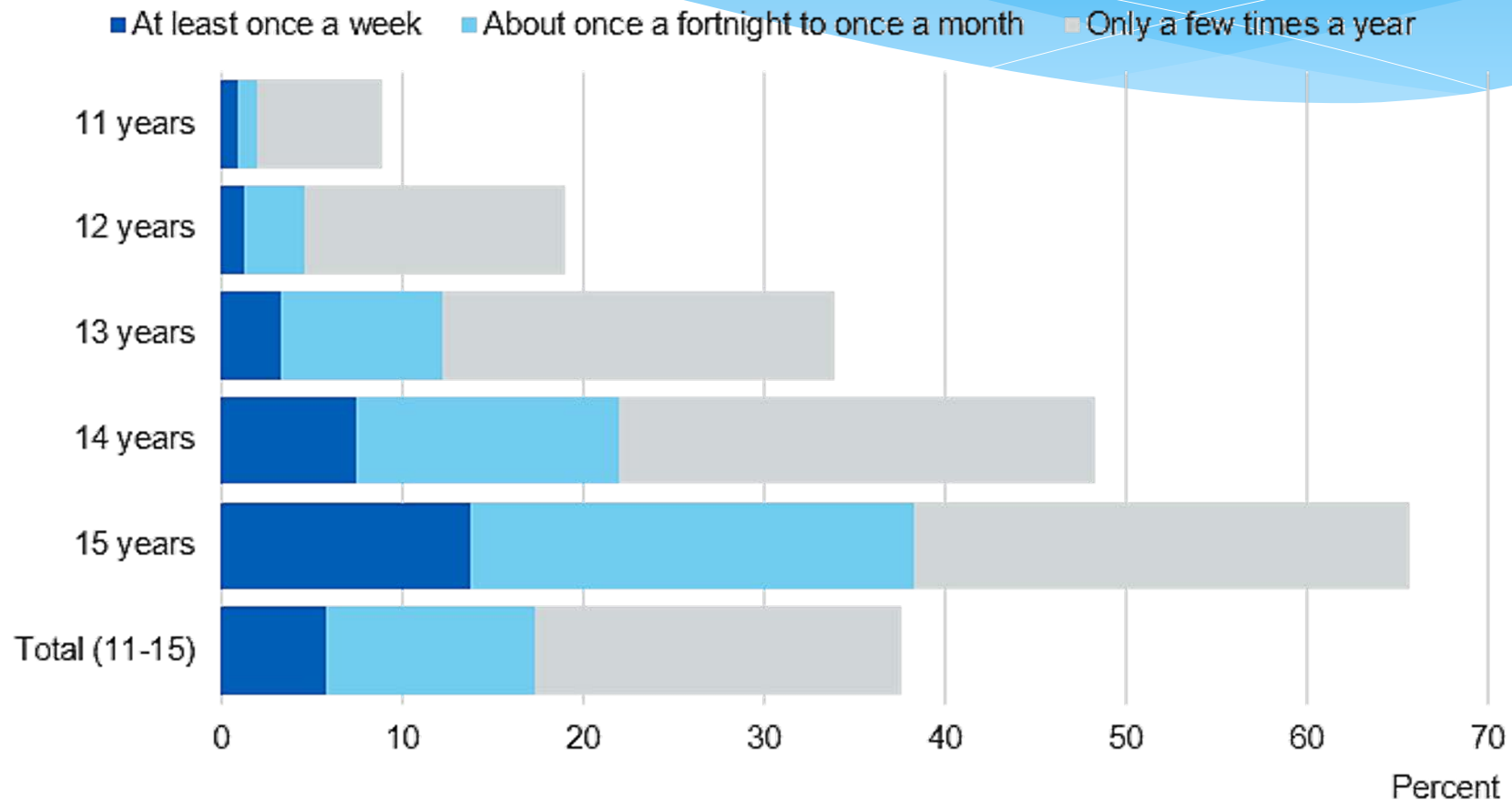
Sources

- * *Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England 2018* (2019) <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/smoking-drinking-and-drug-use-among-young-people-in-england/2018> (and previous reports)
- * Balding, AD & Regis, D (2020). *Young People into 2020*. Exeter: SHEU
- * www.sheu.org.uk

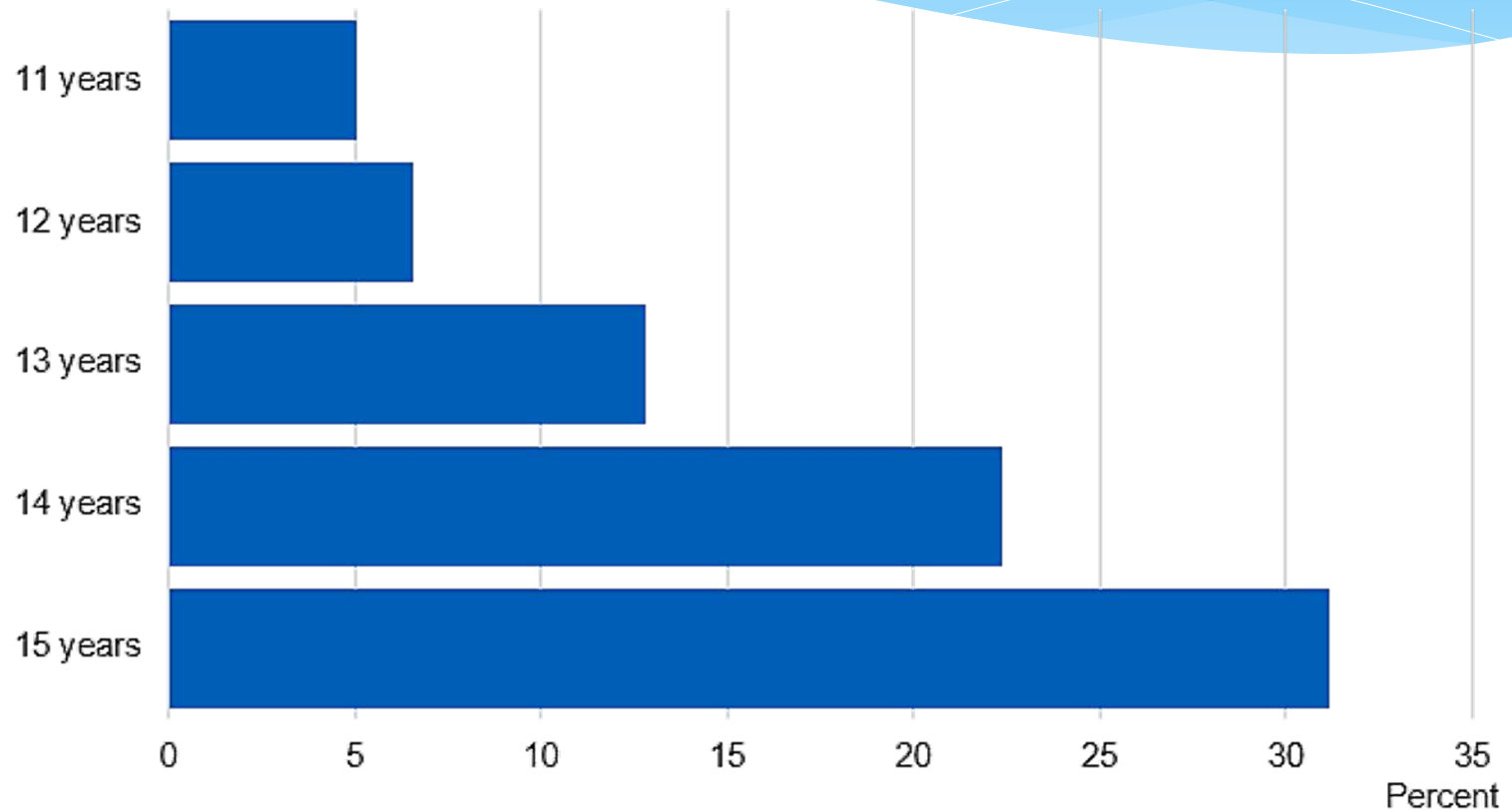
Who when & what

1. It's mostly older teenagers who use alcohol or drugs.
2. There are marked differences among groups of young people – disadvantage is a factor
3. Alcohol and cannabis are most of the story.

Usual frequency of drinking, by age, ONS 2018



Pupils who have taken drugs in the last year, by age, ONS 2018



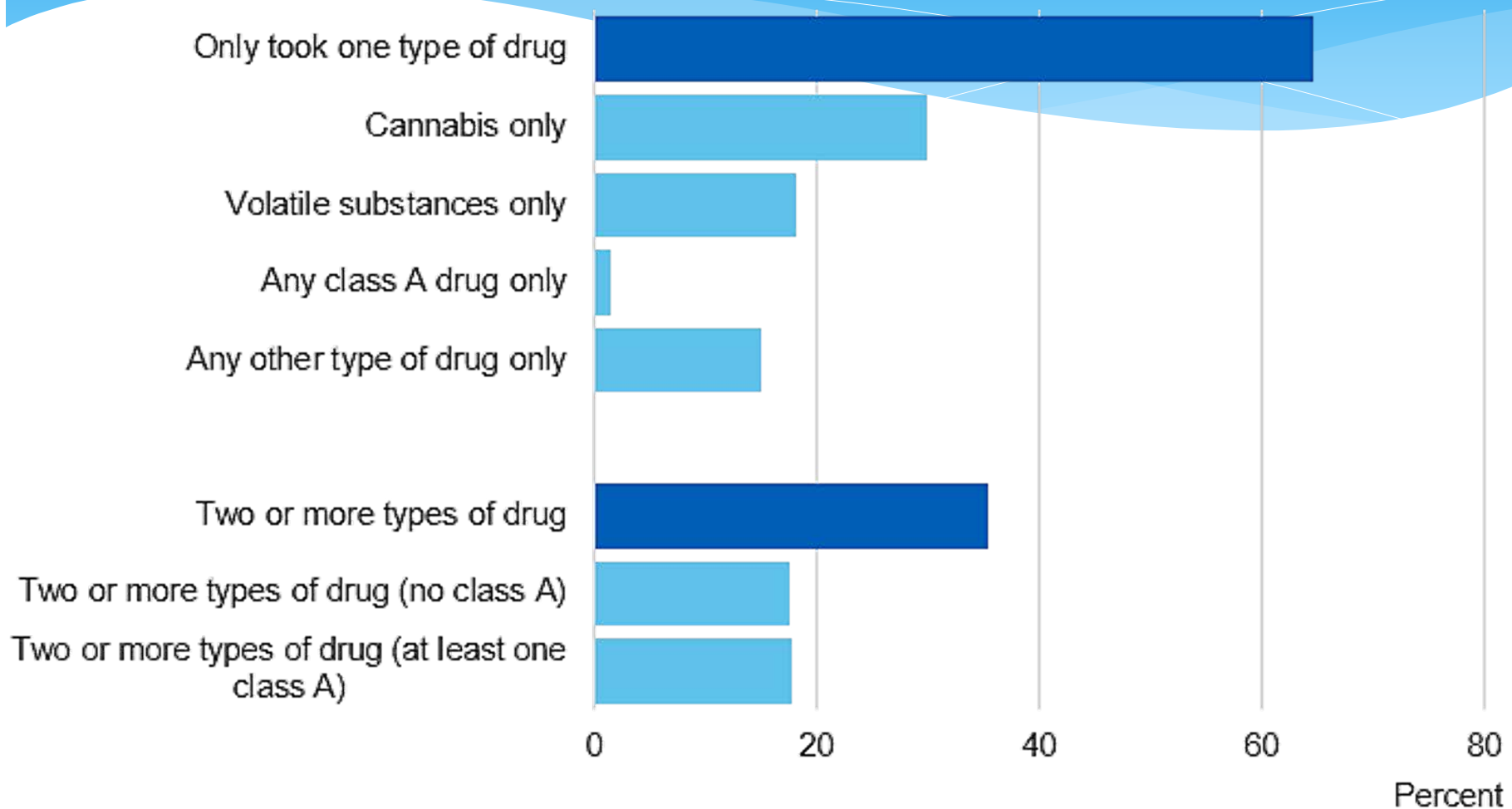
Vulnerable groups

LA survey, SHEU, Autumn 2020

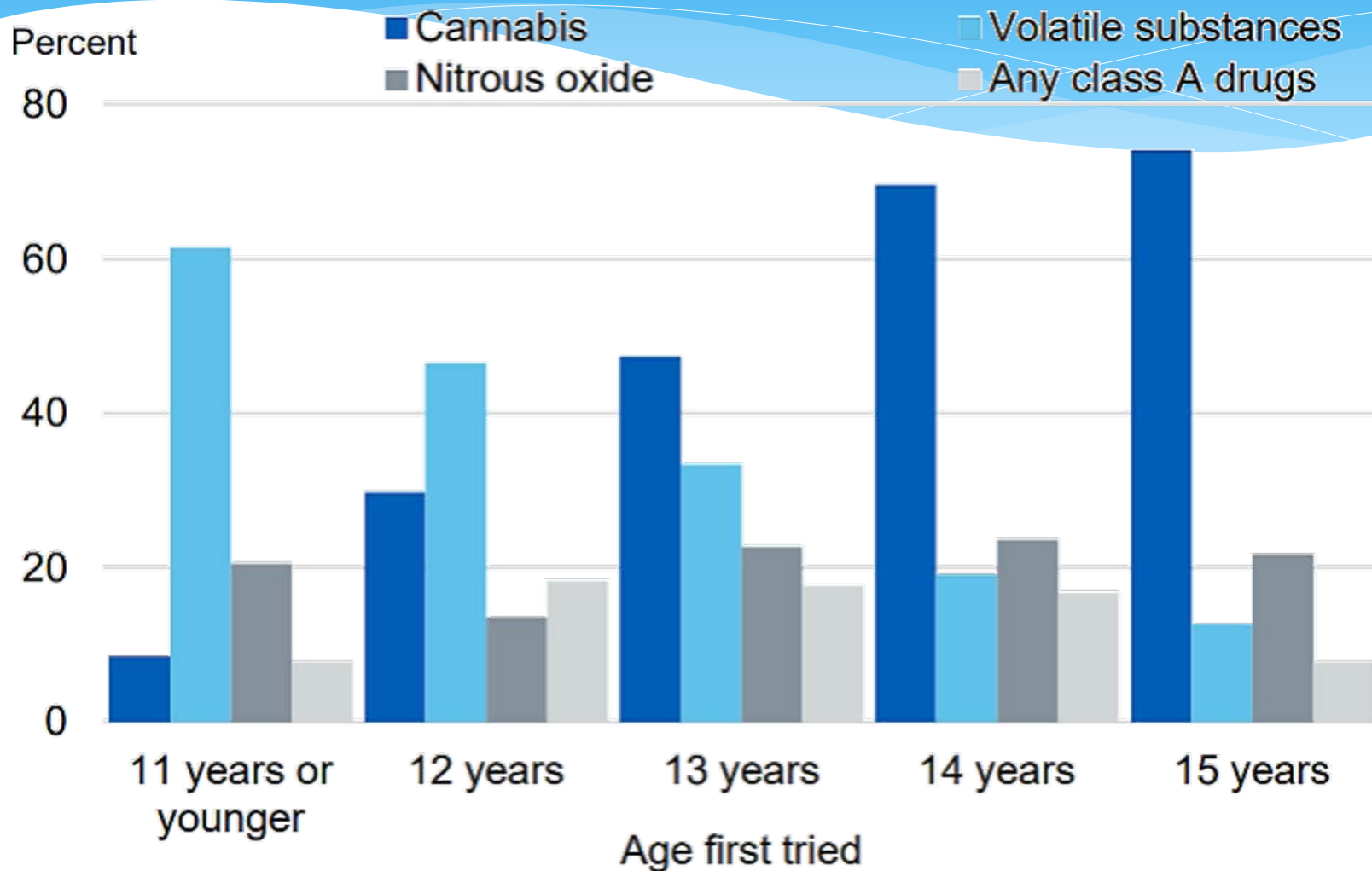
Year 10		<div>99 99 $p < 0.05$</div> <div>99 99 $p < 0.01$</div>											
		All	Single-parent family	LGB	Ethnic minority	Disability or long-term illness	Free school meals	Special ed needs	Armed forces family	Young Carer	FSM	Minority religion	Transgender
Sample N		3329	513	394	391	362	259	255	139	137	130	117	16
Ever tried smoking		22	30	32	22	24	36	31	36	34	19	31	38
Drank last week		26	26	33	18	29	31	32	36	31	13	31	13
Ever taken drugs		12	19	16	13	12	14	14	19	19	9	23	25

Local authority funded school survey
Majority of schools take part

Drug types taken in last year, 11-15yo ONS 2018

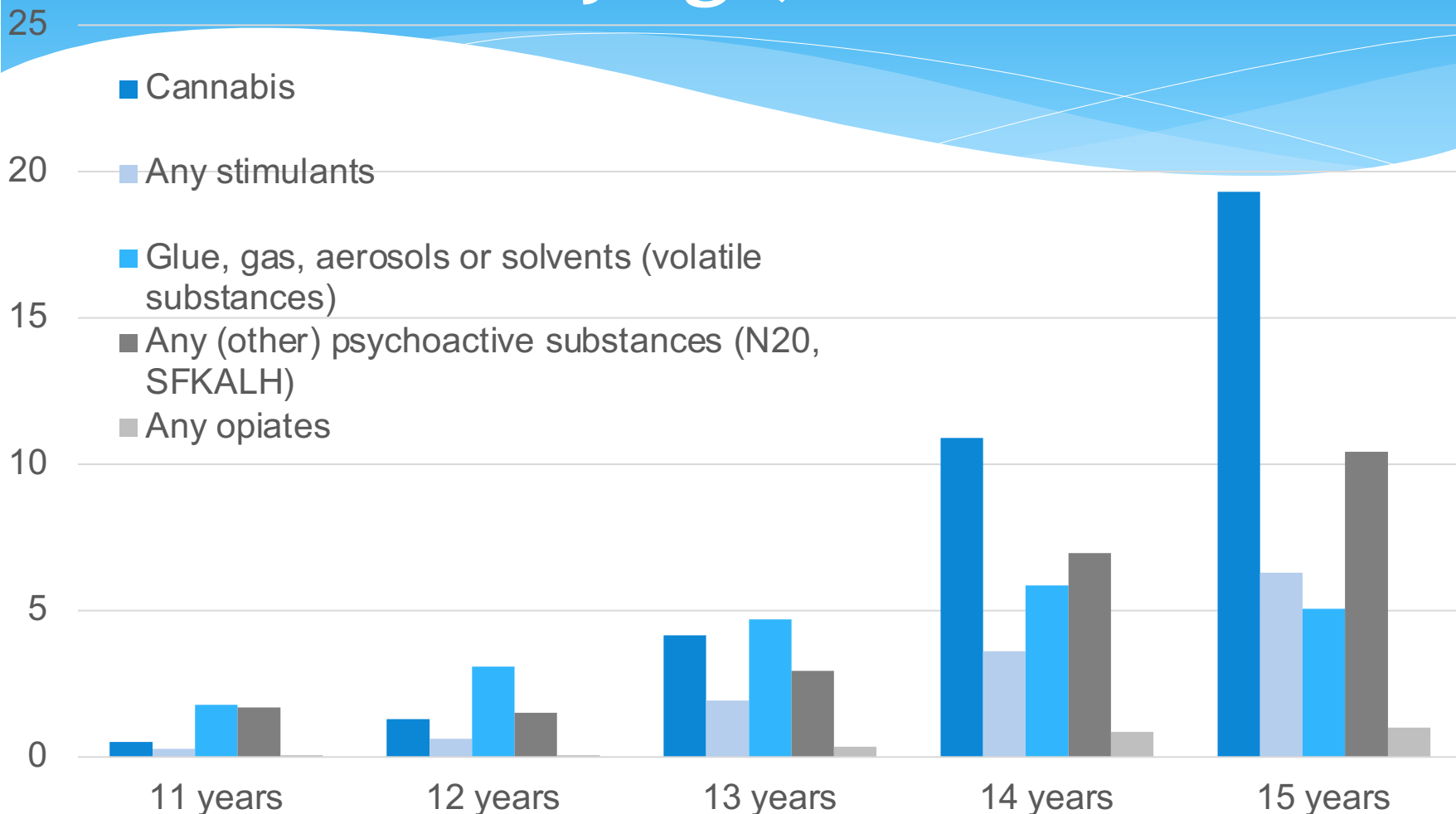


Drug type first used by age (ONS 2016)



Drug type taken in last year, by age, 2018

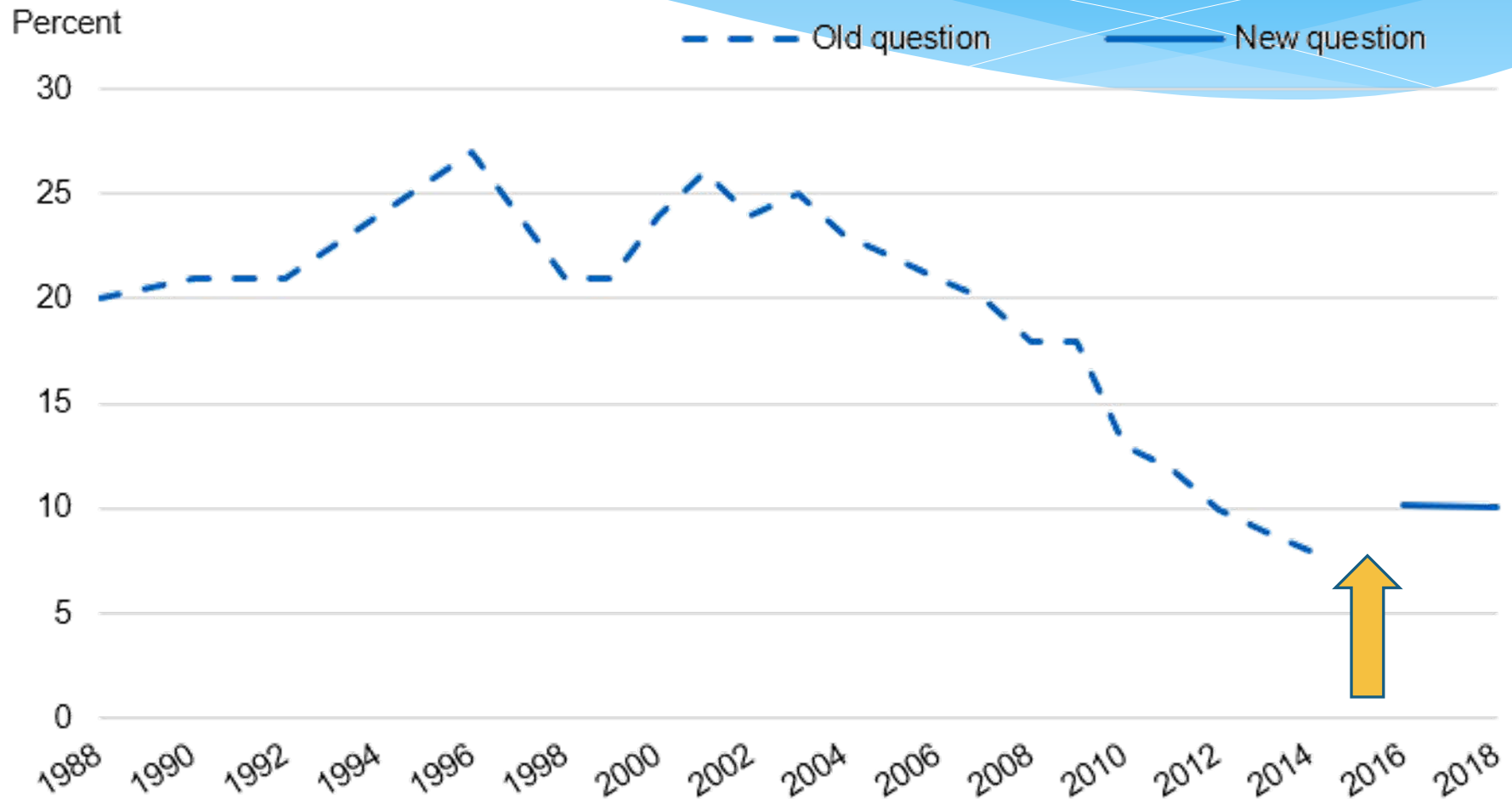
(my chart, ONS figures)



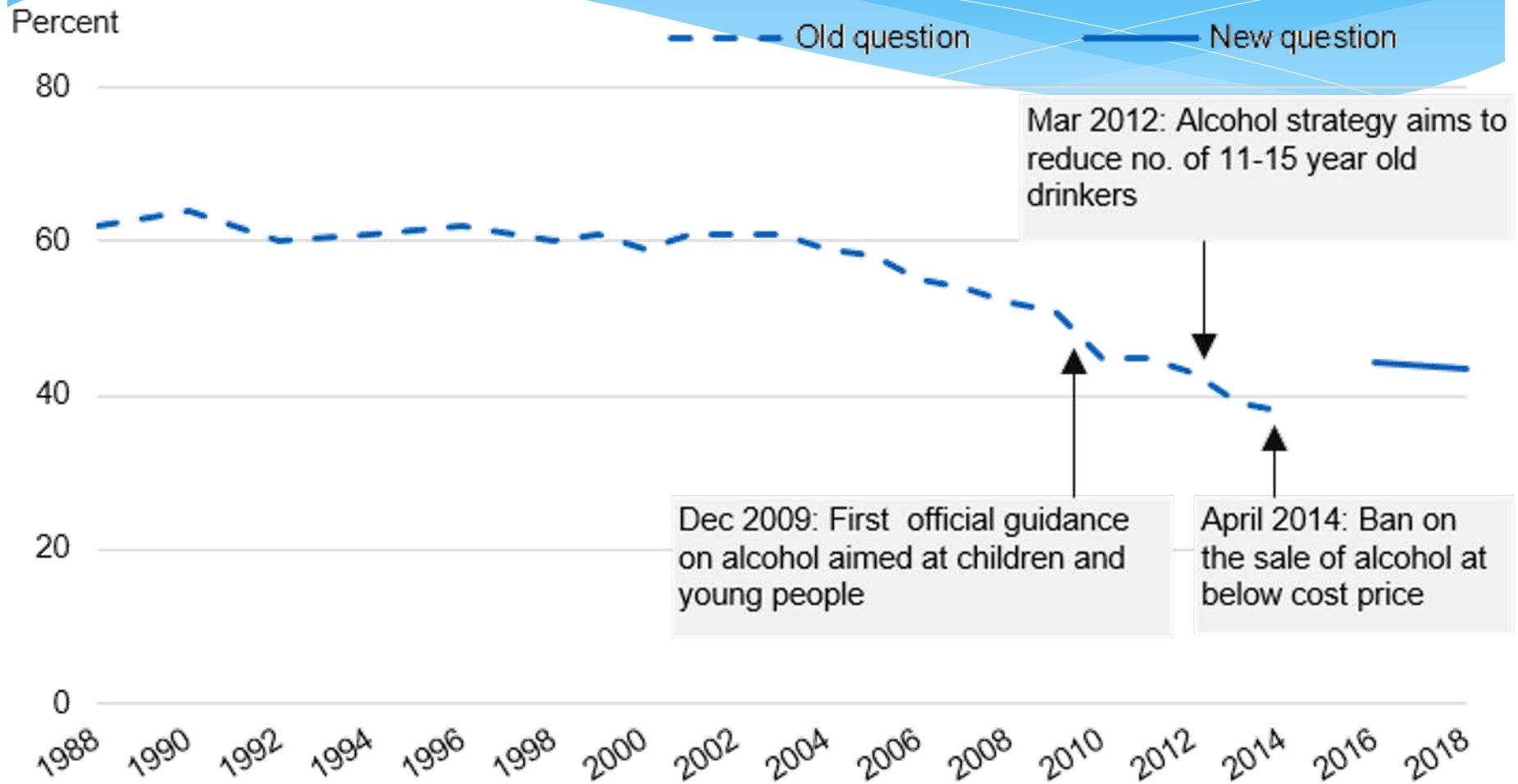
Trends

1. Most measures of alcohol and drug use among young people show decline in ever-used and recently-used over the last 10 years or so.
2. Alcohol use is in general decline among young people
3. Longer data series show a rise in drug use to a mid-1990s peak, perhaps a wobble, then a decline since 2000)
4. Some changes in questions by ONS make recent trends hard to be sure of

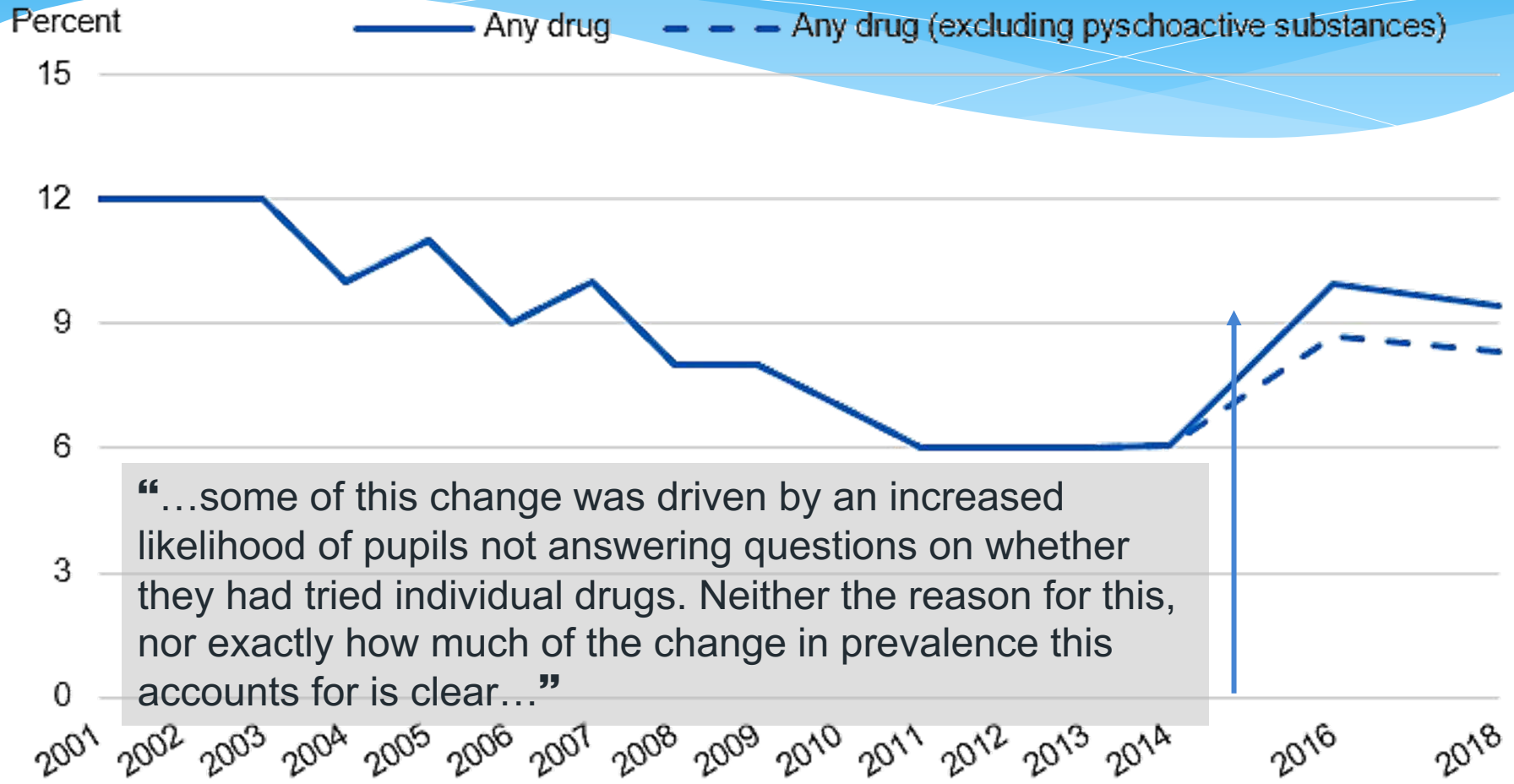
Had an alcoholic drink in the last week, 11-15yo by year ONS 1988-2018



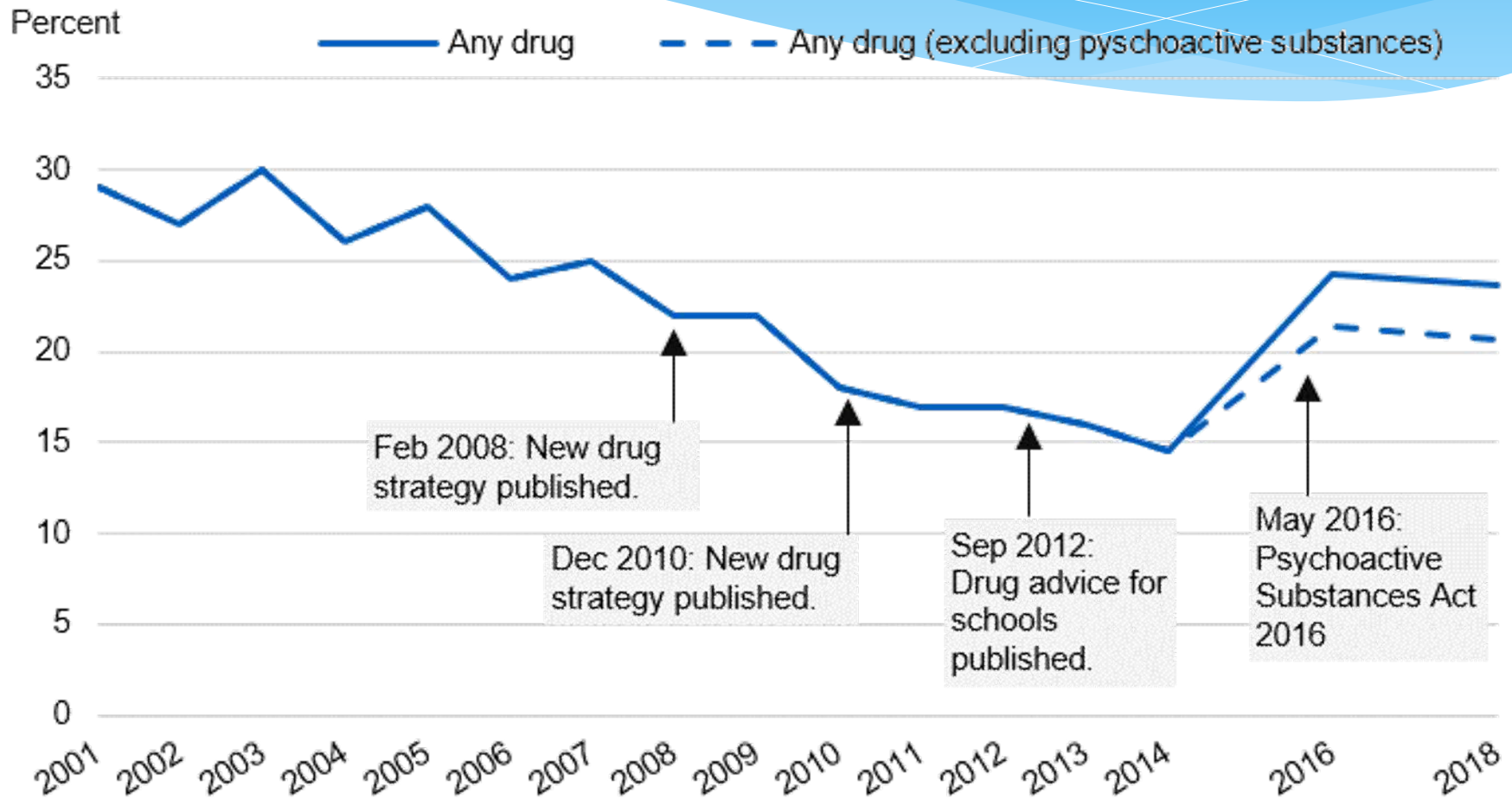
Ever had an alcoholic drink, 11-15yo by year ONS 1988-2018



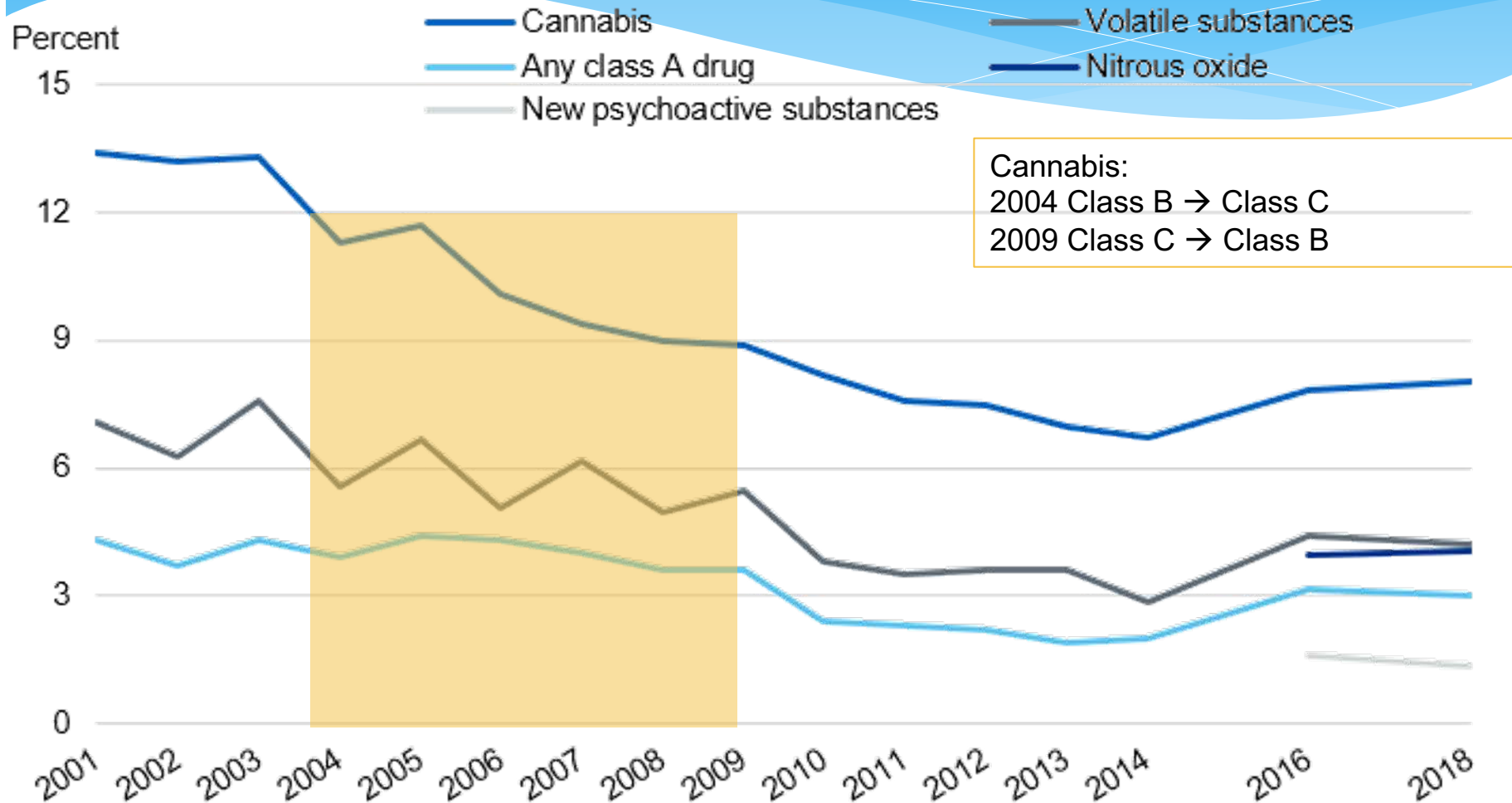
Pupils who have taken drugs in the last month, by year ONS 2001-2018



Pupils who have ever taken drugs, 11-15yo by year ONS 2001-2018



Drug types taken in last year, 11-15yo by year ONS 2001-2018

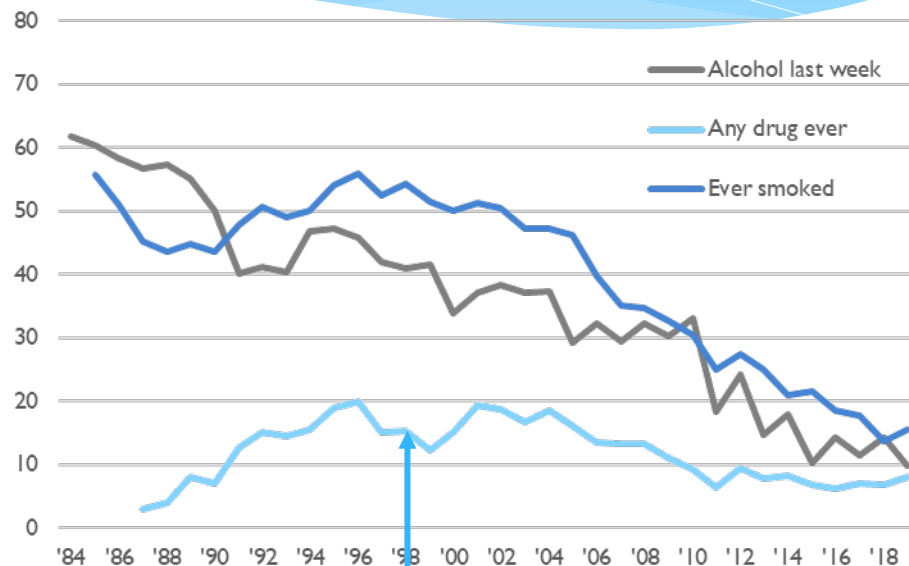
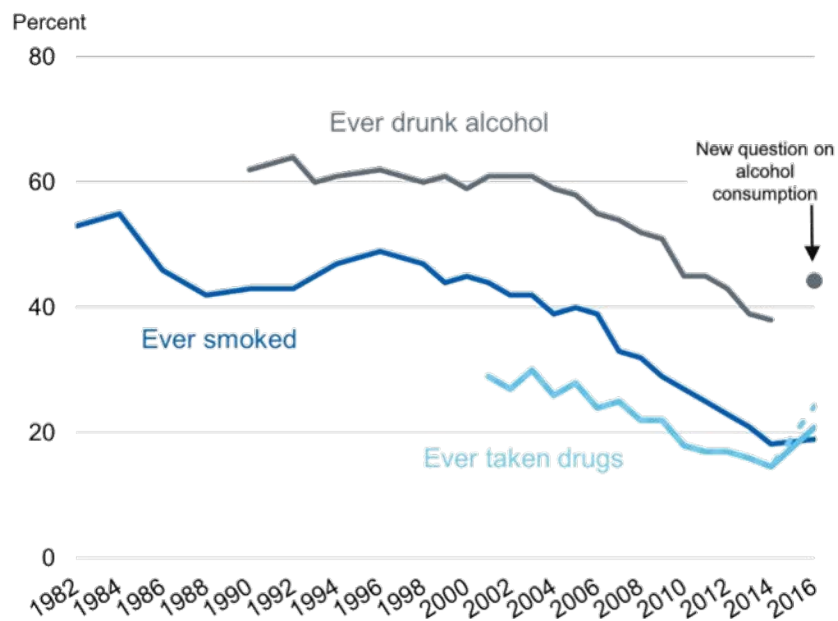


Trends ONS /SHEU

11-15yo

Y8/Y10

Aggregate of local
authority school surveys



Keith Hellowell
appointed 'drug tsar'

Context

I'd like to credit the skill and dedication of PSHE teachers over the decades with the overall fall in rates. However...

There are similar declines:

1. in other behaviours in this age group (smoking, pregnancy)
2. in other age groups (drugs, crime)
3. even in other countries (the 'crime drop')

Why? Motivations, risk & protective factors

“...results of the present study support the notion that individuals drink for a variety of reasons...”

Cooper ML (1994). Motivations for alcohol use among adolescents: Development and validation of a four-factor model. *Psychological assessment*, 6(2): 117-128

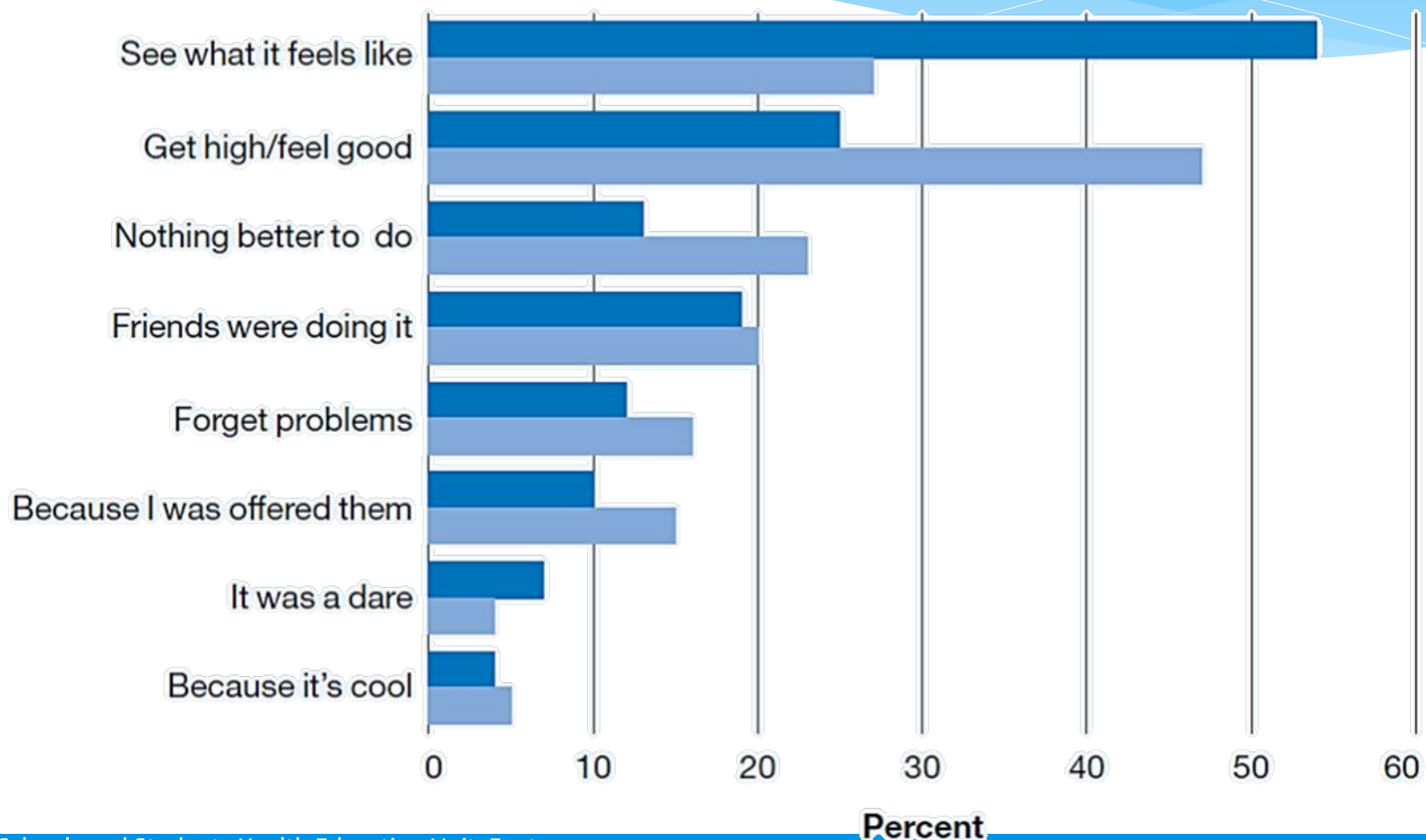
Why take drugs? (ONS 2011)

Why pupils took drugs on the first and last occasions

■ First occasion
■ Last occasion

(First occasion) Pupils who had ever taken drugs

(Last occasion) Pupils who had taken drugs in the last year and taken drugs more than once

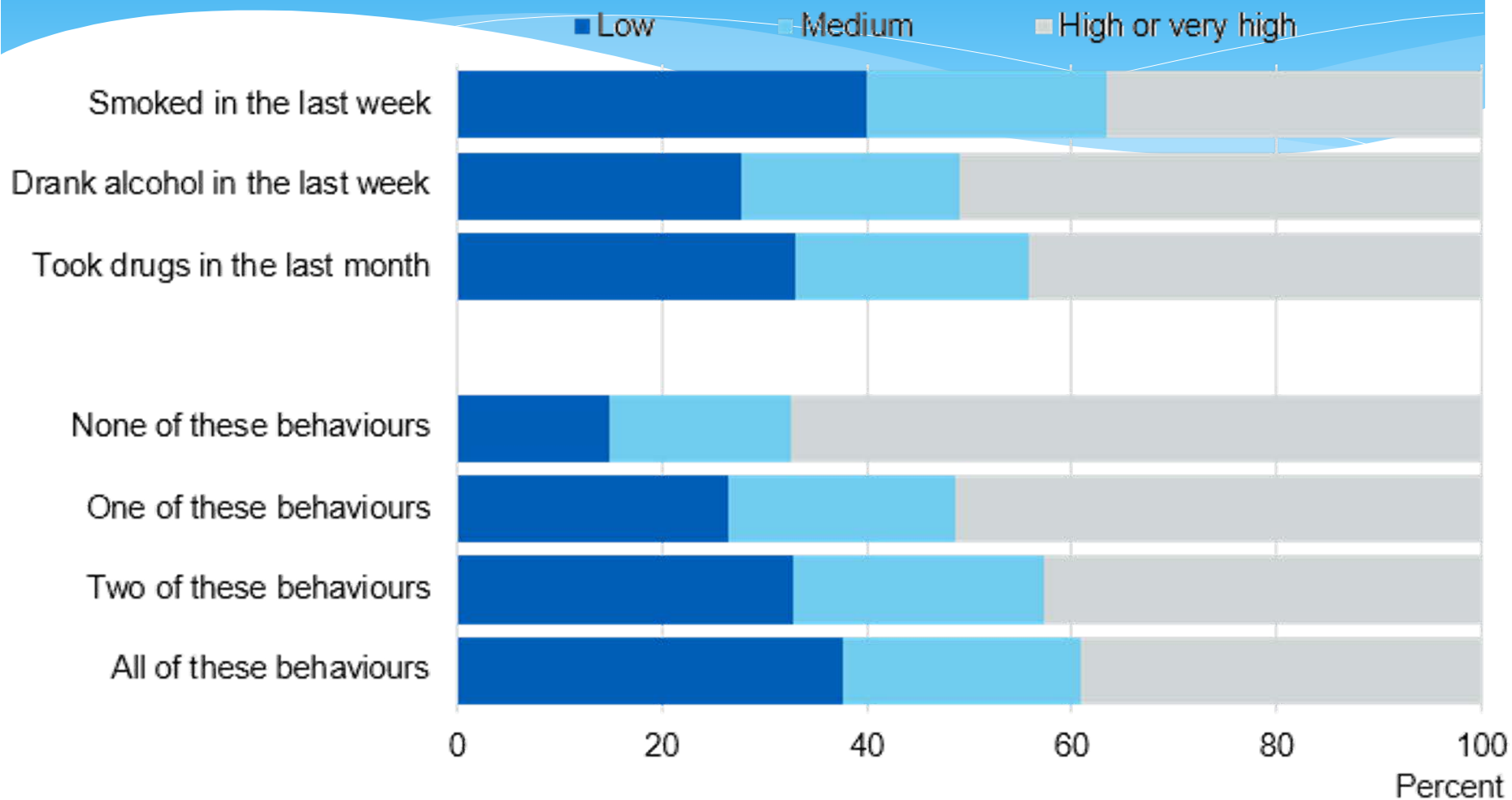


Risk & Protective Factors (lots!)

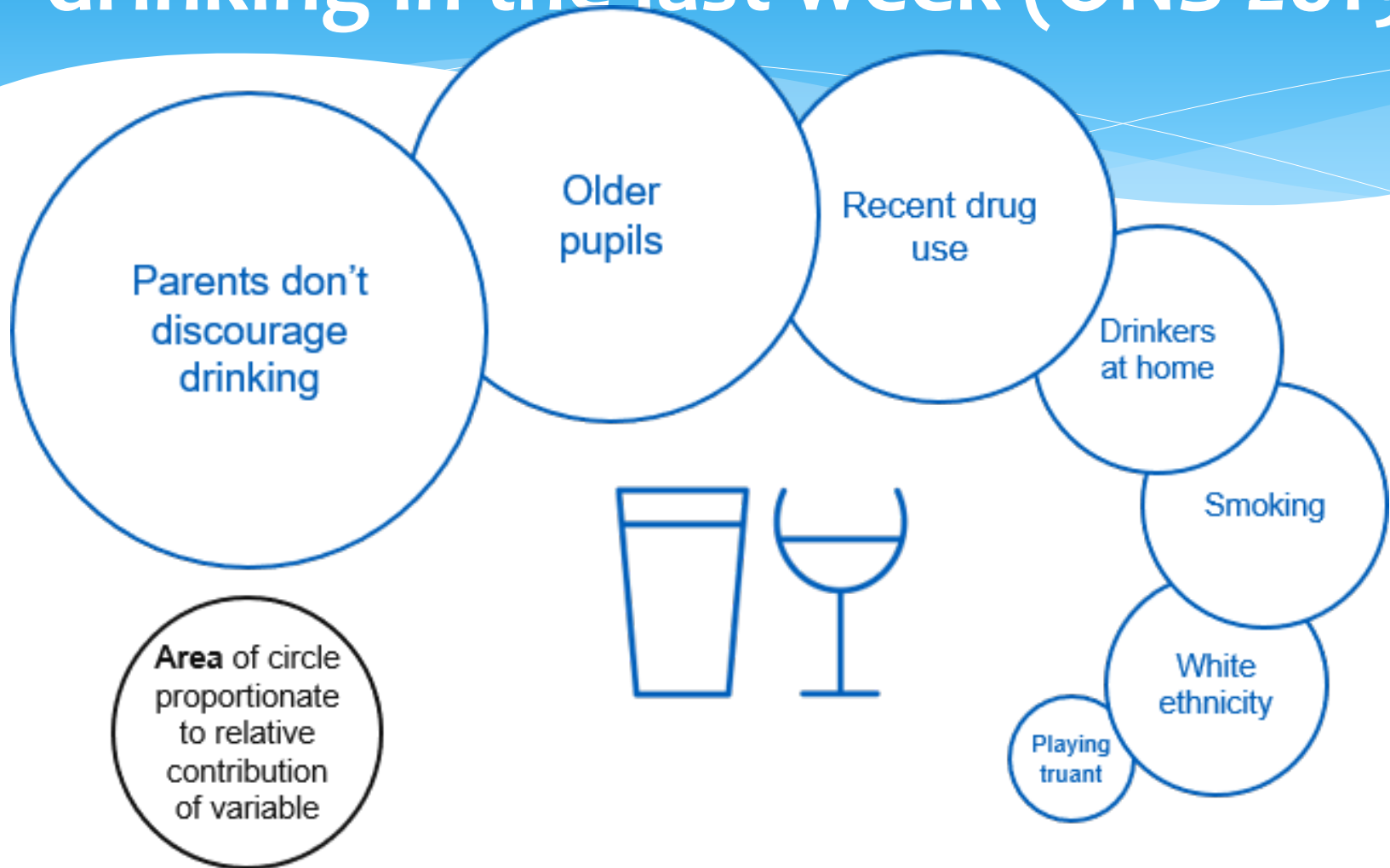
ADOLESCENCE	Risk Factors	Protective factors
Individual	Behavioural disengagement coping • Negative emotionality • Conduct disorder • Favourable attitudes toward drugs • Rebelliousness • Early substance use • Antisocial behaviour	Positive physical development • Emotional self-regulation • High self-esteem • Good coping skills and problem-solving skills • Engagement and connections in two or more of the following contexts: at school, with peers, in athletics, employment, religion, culture
Family	Substance use among parents • Lack of adult supervision • Poor attachment with parents	Family provides structure, limits, rules, monitoring, and predictability • Supportive relationships with family members • Clear expectations for behaviour and values
School, Peers, Community	School failure • Low commitment to school • Associating with drug-using peers • Not college-bound • Aggression toward peers • Norms (e.g., advertising) favourable toward alcohol use • Accessibility/availability	Presence of mentors and support for development of skills and interests • Opportunities for engagement within school and community • Positive norms • Clear expectations for behaviour • Physical and psychological safety

Tables adapted from O'Connell, M. E., Boat, T., & Warner, K. E. (2009). *Preventing mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders among young people: Progress and possibilities*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (2009). *Risk and protective factors for mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders across the life cycle*.

Life satisfaction and recent behaviours (2018)

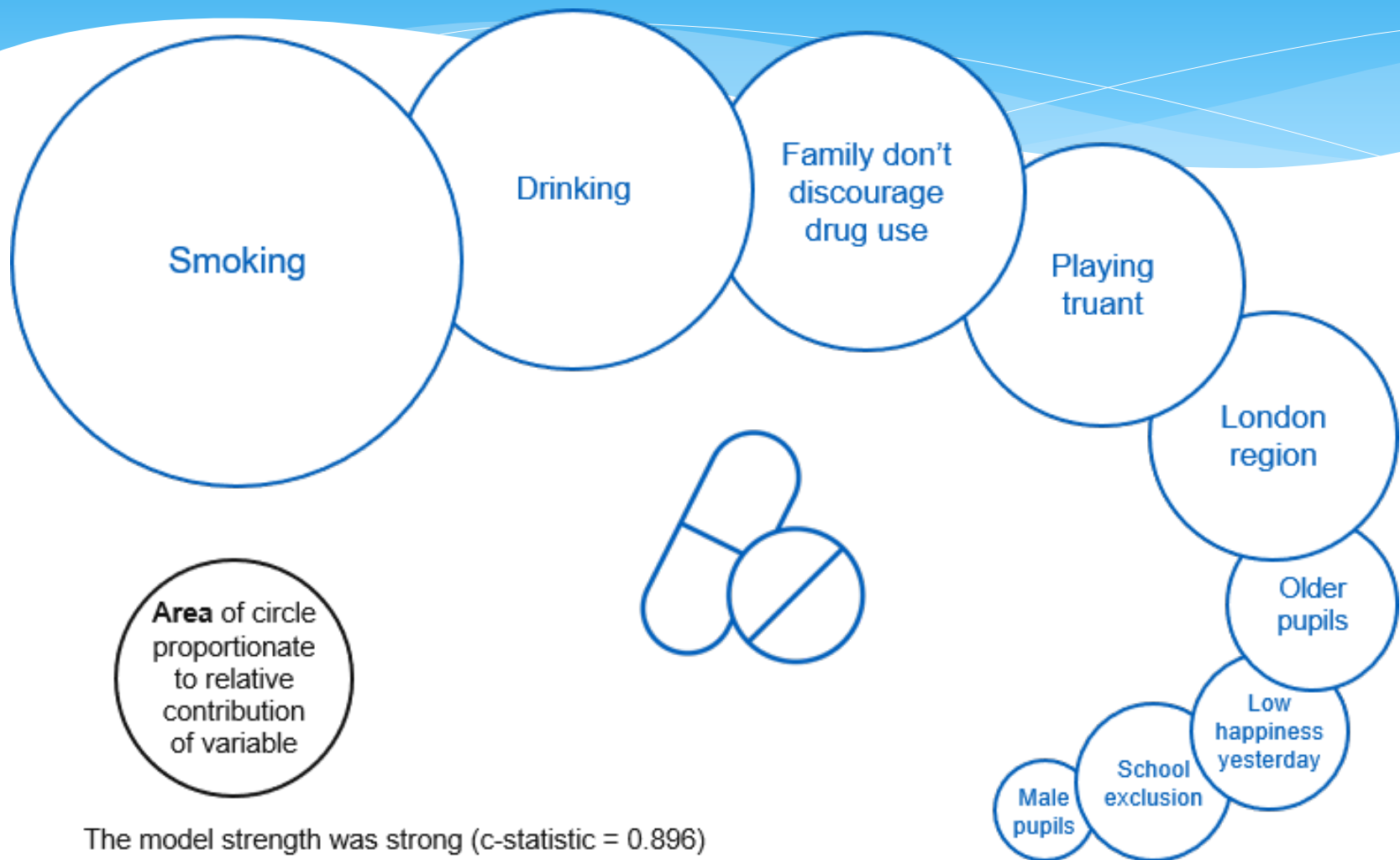


Factors associated with drinking in the last week (ONS 2019)



The model strength was strong (c-statistic = 0.879)

Factors associated with taking drugs in the last month (ONS 2019)



Impact of COVID

Large County Survey Autumn 2020

	2018	2020
Increase in handwashing 'always' after toilet		
KS1 (6-7yo)	74%	85%
KS2 (10-11yo)	69%	93%
a general increase in worries		
KS2 (10-11yo)	61%	77%
reduction in wellbeing scores		
SCWBS KS2 (10-11yo)	46	44
SWEMWBS KS3/4 (12-15yo)	23	22
reduction in volunteering outside of school in the last six months.		
KS3/4 (12-15yo)	51%	36%

COVID and drug/alcohol use

Large County Survey Autumn 2020

*** $p < 0.001$

	2018	2020
had an alcoholic drink in the 7 days before the survey	24%	18% ***
smoked in the past or smoke now	21%	15% ***
occasional/regular smoker and smoked in the 7 days before the survey	4%	2% ***
have taken at least one of the drugs listed in the questionnaire	10%	8% ***

Vulnerable groups (one LA)

SHEU, Exeter, 2021

Year 10

99 99 $p < 0.05$
99 99 $p < 0.01$

	All	Single-parent family	LGB	Ethnic minority	Disability or long-term illness	Free school meals	Special ed needs	Armed forces family	Young Carer	FSM	Minority religion	Transgender
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Ever taken drugs	12	19	16	13	12	14	14	19	19	9	23	25
Had accident last year	33	35	34	31	44	31	47	43	44	34	58	14
Low wellbeing score	8	13	21	10	11	15	13	12	19	13	54	29
Low resilience score	36	45	60	37	42	49	48	43	47	30	67	63
Bullied at school last year	16	23	33	14	27	30	33	21	35	16	60	13
Know where to get free condoms	17	20	17	16	16	23	21	27	20	11	8	14
High resilience score	11	9	2	13	10	4	6	7	4	17	0	13
Enjoy at least half of school lessons	65	57	58	67	64	55	53	59	56	67	40	63
Intend FTE after Y11	46	42	51	59	47	39	36	40	39	64	21	38
Term-time job	20	18	15	15	19	18	20	17	24	11	20	25
The school encourages everyone to treat each other with respect	78	70	66	74	74	71	65	76	64	71	71	63
I know my next steps in learning and what I need to do to improve	49	46	41	49	46	46	40	36	32	59	29	63
Pupils' views make a difference in school	58	58	57	61	60	63	54	56	59	58	67	38
Getting on better with family since lockdown NEW	50	45	37	49	47	47	53	50	48	60	38	71

The young people who are more likely to use substances may have a much wider set of issues than substance use, related to social disadvantage

(End)