

# Teen Britain: the shocking truth(tm) article



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Bullying, drugs, alcohol and sex were a few of the issues raised in this article, published on the 27th November 2005 as facing teenagers in today's society. As one of these young adults in our civilisation, I feel that it is my duty to defend myself and others like me in the face of such criticism.

Firstly some of the points mentioned in your article I fully understand and agree with. For example, I agree that there are too many teenagers in society who are taking drugs or drinking alcohol whilst roaming our streets. You state that, " 72% of 14 year olds have consumed alcohol". This growing incidence of alcohol and drug use could also be a factor in the rise of the crime rate. However, I don't think that the press or general public can put all of the blame for this on today's teenagers, their families or the area in which they live. I think that the media has had a part to play in this and so should accept some of the blame.

One of the reasons I think this, is that it wasn't so long ago that many newspapers and television documentaries claimed that cannabis didn't have any side effects or create long term damage; however, we are now being told by the media that there are serious side effects to cannabis, such as, that it affects the quickness of the brain and how well you learn in class. Cannabis is proven to affect concentration so therefore pupils will not be able to take as much in during lessons. This may be one of the reasons for teenagers becoming addicted to drugs as they have been given mixed messages about the use and effects of them.

In my opinion, the media is to blame for some of the negative behaviour that we are seeing from the teenagers of today. The main reason for my belief is

that the media publicise a lot of the bad behaviour of teenagers; for example, young teenagers getting pregnant or drunk. However, I feel that the media very rarely praise teenagers for good behaviour and the achievement of some amazing goals. For example, good exam results, helping charities or helping out at home in difficult situations.

Furthermore, some negative teenage behaviour, like smoking and drinking are activities shown on many popular television programmes, such as 'Footballers Wives' and 'Bad Girls'. After watching such programmes, some teenagers see these activities as cool and copy what they have watched. The media may also be influencing some teenagers to behave badly, as some of them crave to be famous and they feel that the only way to achieve this ambition is to do something delinquent, as they see these sorts of things getting attention every day.

However, the media plays its part in the negative behaviour of teenagers in Britain today, so do a lot of people living in our country and indeed the laws we follow. It isn't the teenagers' fault that they believe that drinking alcohol will not harm them, as this is what they have been led to believe by our new licensing laws; These allow pubs and clubs to open for much longer and therefore make alcohol more readily available. Also the companies that are selling alcohol are partly to blame as they create new drinks which appeal to a younger market by making them taste more like soft drinks. Instead of marketing alcohol to teenagers people should be making young people aware of the dangers of alcohol and binge drinking. Adolescents should be advised to drink in small amounts and not go out binge drinking like these laws may encourage.

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Your article is extremely negative with its facts. You suggest that a percentage of teenagers have done something disapproving rather than celebrating the percentage of teenagers who have not. For example, instead of saying that " 32% of 14 year olds have had sexual intercourse", you could have said that 68% of 14 year olds have not had sexual intercourse. By being so negative you make teenagers sound as bad as you can, rather than praising the ones who aren't like this. This makes it far easier for the people reading your article to stereotype teenagers and jump to conclusions; however we are not all like you suggest.

Finally, I would like to question the facts and statistics presented in this article as I don't always fully agree. I don't think that you have taken a big enough sample of teenagers in Britain, also I don't think that you have asked teenagers to complete your surveys in enough areas of Britain. Therefore, I question how you can support some of your statements as you seem to be stereotyping all teenagers in Britain to be like the few you have spoken to. Would you like someone to go and speak to one or two people in your street and say you were the same as them? No, I didn't think you would. Well, is it fair that you have done this to the teenagers of Britain?