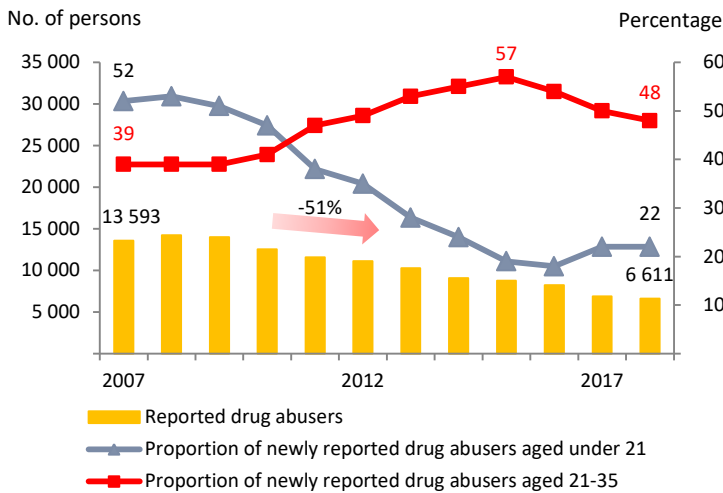


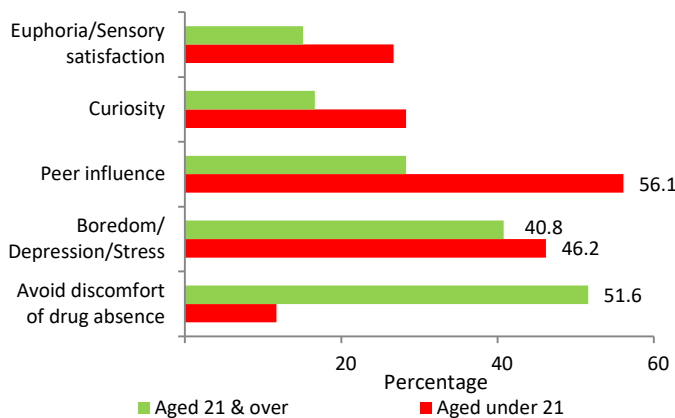


## Drug abuse in Hong Kong

**Figure 1 – Number of drug abusers, 2007-2018**

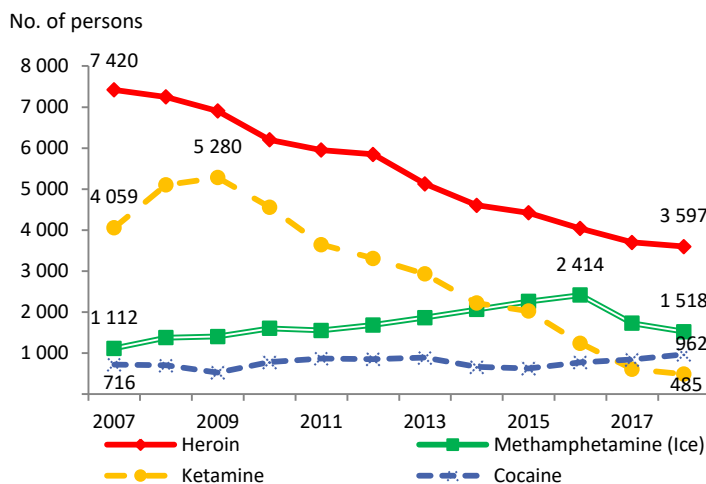


**Figure 2 – Reasons for drug abuse, 2018**



Note: Individuals could have more than one reason for drug abuse.

**Figure 3 – Drug abusers by major type, 2007-2018**

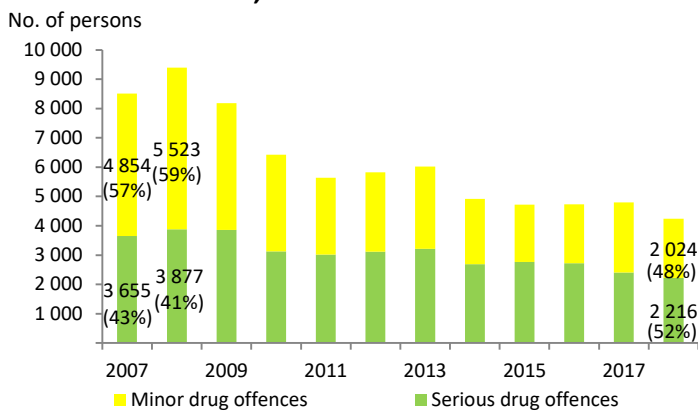


## Highlights

- During 2007-2018, total number of drug abusers in Hong Kong has largely followed a downtrend, falling by a total of 51% to 6 611 persons. Notwithstanding an improvement in overall situation, drug abuse problem amongst youths aged 21-35 has worsened, with the proportion of youths amongst newly reported drug abusers rising from 39% in 2007 to a peak 57% in 2015 (Figure 1).
- In response, the Government established the Task Force of Youth Drug Abuse ("Task Force") in 2007, tackling prevalence of drug abuse among adolescents. It also outlined a holistic approach in 2008, including stepping up enforcement and injecting HK\$3 billion to the Beat Drugs Fund in 2010. Early-intervention seems to have borne fruit more recently, with the proportion of youths in newly reported drug abusers falling back to 48% in 2018.
- Analysed by reasons for taking drugs, young abusers aged below 21 cited "peer influence" as the most dominant cause (with a share of 56%), followed by "boredom/depression/stress" (46%). However, for the older abusers aged 21 and above, "avoid discomfort of drug absence" is the most commonly cited cause (with a share of 52%), suggesting that they are drug addicts for a prolonged period (Figure 2).
- Analysed by the type of drugs, the number of abusers of Ice and Cocaine (psychotropic substance) has grown by 37% and 34% respectively during 2007-2018, due to their lower price and requirement of simpler drug equipment. By contrast, the number of abusers of Heroin and Ketamine plunged by 52% and 88% respectively upon enhanced enforcement action (Figure 3).

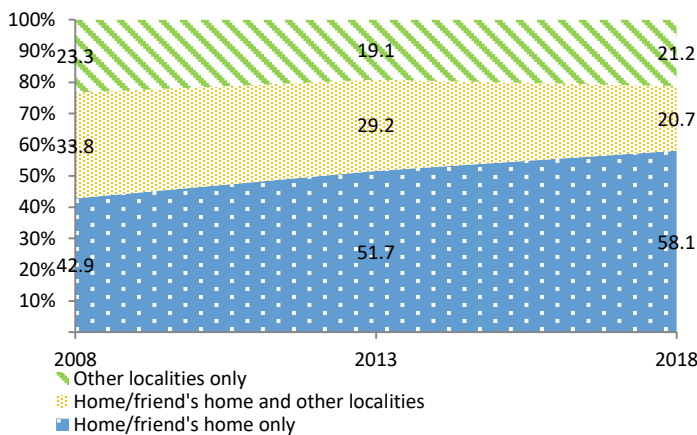
## Drug abuse in Hong Kong (cont'd)

**Figure 4 – Number of persons arrested for drug offences, 2007-2018**



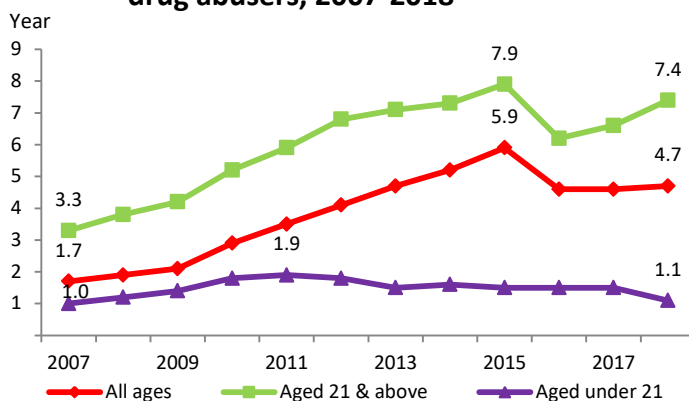
Note: While serious offences include organized crime like drug trafficking and manufacturing, minor offences are mostly individuals possessing small amounts of drugs for self-consumption.

**Figure 5 – Locality of abusing drugs, 2008-2018**



Note: Individuals could have more than one locality of abusing drugs.

**Figure 6 – Median drug history of newly reported drug abusers, 2007-2018**



## Highlights

- In line with the overall downtrend in drug abuses, persons arrested for committing drug offences has plummeted by a total of 50% to 4 240 during 2007-2018. About 52% of the offences was serious in nature (e.g. drug trafficking and manufacturing) in 2018, up from 43% in 2007 (Figure 4).
- As regards the location of drug taking, there are concerns that stepping up enforcement in public areas (e.g. disco and karaoke) inadvertently leads to more drug taking in private areas or even at home, resulting in "hidden drug abuse problem". Reflecting this, "home/friend's home only" has become the most favoured locality of drug abuse, with its proportion surging from 43% in 2008 to 58% in 2018 (Figure 5).
- In the more recent years, drug transactions are increasingly done through app-based orders and home-based delivery. As such, not only has it become more difficult for law enforcers and social workers to detect drug abusers, it also takes longer time for abusers of psychotropic substances to seek help, resulting in longer drug history of addicts. Indicative of this, overall median drug history of abusers rose steadily from 1.7 years in 2007 to a peak of 5.9 years in 2015. It then stabilized at 4.7 years in 2018 (Figure 6).
- In a bid to effectively identify drug abusers at an early stage, the Government introduced voluntary drug test in secondary schools in 2011. As to the suggestion of compulsory drug test in the community made by the Task Force, it has not been implemented yet in the wake of public concerns over its privacy and human rights implications.

Data sources: Latest figures from Narcotics Division and Security Bureau.

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