

Doping In Sport 'Fast Becoming A Crisis', Says UKAD Chief

UK Anti-Doping chief Nicole Sapstead has described recently-revealed figures of a BBC poll into [doping in amateur sport](#) as "incredibly alarming".

The BBC poll revealed more than a third (35 percent) of amateur sports people say they personally know someone who has doped, and 8 percent said they had taken anabolic steroids. Half of the poll population said they believe the use of [performance enhancing drugs](#) is "widespread" among those who play sport competitively. Of the 79 people interviewed who had specifically taken [anabolic steroids](#), 41 percent remarked improving performance was the main reason for taking them, followed by pain relief (40 percent) and improving how they look (34 percent).

Only 25 percent of users overall claim they have taken performance-enhancing substances with the intention of improving performance. The poll also found that over half say they were primarily used for pain relief, while 17 percent say they were used to improve looks. Sapstead added she thinks there are clearly a group of individuals seeking to enhance their performance by taking prohibited substances and added then there are others who were taking these substances because they have a body image problem, or actually because they think it is the done thing.

A BBC State of Sport investigation into doping in UK amateur sport also found that 49 percent thought performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) were "easily available" among people who play sports on a regular basis.

UK Anti-Doping figures said the national body responsible for protecting clean sport and there are currently 52 athletes and coaches serving bans. Of them, only 12 percent are professional sports men or women; 62 percent are amateurs, 21 percent are semi-professional, and 5 percent are coaches.

UK Anti-Doping chief, reacting to the ComRes poll for BBC Sport of more than 1,000 men and women who are members of sports clubs and teams, said the figures as regards the prevalence of performance-enhancing substances at an amateur level are incredibly alarming. Sapstead remarked certainly the figures as regards the prevalence of performance-enhancing substances at an amateur level are incredibly alarming and added it does confirm what UK Anti-Doping has long suspected and also seen through some of our intelligence-led testing.

Sapstead said she does not think any sport can say that they don't have a problem at an amateur level. The UKAD chief also commented that she thinks now is the time for everybody to sit up and acknowledge that this is a reality in every single sport and that you cannot just be washing your hands of it or hoping that someone else will address it. Sapstead also remarked that UK Anti-Doping requires an extension of powers and extra cash from individual sports governing bodies to address what is fast becoming a crisis for sport.

Sapstead also remarked there is a "woeful lack of education" at amateur level about the health risks of doping and commented that there is a "robust" anti-doping program in the United Kingdom but it faces "challenges". UK Anti-Doping works with police forces to target suppliers of drugs to amateur dopers.