Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Request Number: F-2009-02438

Keyword: Crime

Subject: CANNABIS

Request and Answer:

Please give figures for each of the last ten years for:

Question 1
a) How many Cannabis growing operations have been detected?
b) What was the estimated eventual street value of Cannabis seized?

Question 2
a) How many individuals have been arrested in connection with the cultivation of cannabis?
b) What was their nationality?
c) How many were in the UK illegally?
d) How many were under 16?

Question 3
a) How many individuals have been charged in connection with the cultivation of cannabis?
b) What was their nationality?
c) How many were in the UK illegally?
d) How many were under 16?

Question 4
a) How many detections involving Cannabis Resin were there?
b) What was the estimated eventual street value of the drugs seized?

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information.

Please find attached records in relation to 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2d, 3a, 3b, 3d, 4a and 4b.

Answer 2c and 3c.
PSNI Central Statistics Unit are unable to provide information on question 2c and 3c concerning individuals being held in the United Kingdom illegally.

PSNI do not record the requested information in relation to questions 2c and 3c in an easily retrievable format. It is therefore considered the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the “appropriate limit” as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450.

The information you require in relation to questions 2c and 3c would involve a case by case extraction from several information systems. The information may or may not be retained in each case. To conduct this extraction, staff would have to be redirected from current work to complete the task. To do this would impact on the PSNI’s ability to deliver front line policing, which would also impact on the wider community.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the ‘appropriate limit’. Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions. The PSNI have also considered whether we can be of any assistance in terms of helping you refine your request to bring it under the cost limit however due to the nature and structure of the information requested, this is not possible within the appropriate limit.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this email.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing FOI@psni.pnn.police.uk

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner’s Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psni.police.uk

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

FOI-2009-02438 Please give figures for each of the last ten years for..
1a How many Cannabis growing operations have been detected?
1b What was the estimated eventual street value of Cannabis seized?
2a How many individuals have been arrested in connection with the cultivation of cannabis?
2b What was their nationality?
2c How many were in the UK illegally?
2d How many were under 16?
3a How many individuals have been charged in connection with the cultivation of cannabis?
3b What was their nationality?
3c How many were in the UK illegally?
3d How many were under 16?
4a How many detections involving Cannabis Resin were there?
4b What was the estimated eventual street value of the drugs seized?

Drug Seizure Statistics

1(a)(b) Cannabis Plant Seizure Incidents, Plant Seized and associated Street Value

Financial Year	No of Seizure Incidents	Number of Cannabis Plants Seized	Street Value
1999/2000	14	743	£445,800
2000/2001	11	210	£126,000
2001/2002	14	141	£84,600
2002/2003	29	202	£121,200
2003/2004	59	1,173	£703,800
2004/2005	43	574	£344,400
2005/2006	45	1504	£902,400
2006/2007	105	1,448	£724,000
2007/2008	115	4,006	£2,003,000
2008/2009	173	30,904	£15,452,000

Street Value based on £600 per plant for years 1999/2000 – 2005/06 and £500 per plant for 2006/07 – 2008/09

2(a) 3(a) Number of persons arrested and charged for cultivating cannabis.

Financial Year	No of Persons Arrested [2]	No of Persons Charged
1999/2000[*1 2]	3	3
2000/2001[*1 2]	2	2
2001/2002[*1 2]	1	1
2002/2003[1 2]	4	7
2003/2004[1 2]	15	18
2004/2005[1 2]	20	22
2005/2006 [2]	13	16
2006/2007 [2]	61	40
2007/2008	94	43
2008/2009	177	100

[*] For the years 1999/00 – 2001/02 we only have details of arrests for cultivating cannabis if the arrest resulted in a charge for this offence (i.e. we can't say how may were arrested for cultivating cannabis and not charged).
[1] Due to limitations of legacy IT systems, figures prior to 2006/07 also include the number of persons summonsed. In addition, there is a possibility that some persons may have been summonsed without having been arrested.
[2] Please note that details of arrests prior to 2007/08 were recorded on a different IT system and as a result are less complete than those recorded from 07/08.

2(b) Persons Arrested for Cultivating Cannabis by Nationality

	2002/03[1]	2003/04[1]	2004/05[1]	2005/06[1]	2006/07[1]	2007/08	2008/09
Northern Ireland	2	11	18	13	56	74	75
Rest of UK	1	3	1	0	0	14	20
Ireland	1	0	1	0	1	1	6
China	0	0	0	0	0	3	64
Hong Kong	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Korea	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Latvia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Namibia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Poland	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Portugal	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Vietnam	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**4**	**15**	**20**	**13**	**61**	**94**	**177**

* Nationality of persons arrested is not available prior to financial year 2002/03.
[1] Please note that details of arrests prior to 2007/08 were recorded on a different IT system and as a result are less complete than those recorded from 07/08.

2(d) There were no persons arrested under 16 years of age for cultivating cannabis.

3(b) Persons Charged with Cultivating Cannabis by Nationality

	2002/03[1]	2003/04[1]	2004/05[1]	2005/06[1]	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Northern Ireland	6	18	19	15	36	32	38
Rest of UK	1	0	1	1	2	7	12
Ireland	0	0	2	0	1	0	5
China	0	0	0	0	0	3	40
Australia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Hong Kong	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Korea	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Latvia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Namibia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poland	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Portugal	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Vietnam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**7**	**18**	**22**	**16**	**40**	**43**	**100**

* Nationality of persons charged is not available prior to financial year 2002/03.

[1] Due to limitations of legacy IT systems, figures prior to 2006/07 also include the number of persons summonsed. Cultivating cannabis is an indictable, arrestable or summary offence and some persons may have been summonsed without having been arrested.

3(d) There was 1 person charged with cultivating cannabis aged under 16.

4 (a)(b) Cannabis Resin Seizure Incidents, Amount Seized and associated Street Value

Financial Year	No of Seizure Incidents	Amount of Cannabis Resin Seized (kgs)	Street Value
1999/2000	1,584	516.5	£5,164,983
2000/2001	1,320	384.4	£3,844,289
2001/2002	1,126	417.2	£4,171,883
2002/2003	1,366	709.5	£4,051,486
2003/2004	1,819	2,204.2	£11,021,179
2004/2005	1,841	933.0	£4,665,140
2005/2006	2,086	426.2	£2,131,129
2006/2007	1,438	3,683.5	£18,417,685
2007/2008	1,480	78.2	£390,838
2008/2009	1,630	743.1	£3,715,612

Street Value based on £10 per gram for years 1999/2000 – May 2002 and £5 per gram for May 2002 – 2008/09

Source: Central Statistics Unit, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Lisnasharragh