



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2014-04735

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Children Caught with Drugs in Schools for Last Five Years

**Request and Answer:**

### Question

Figures showing how many children have been caught with drugs at schools in Northern Ireland? A breakdown of their ages and what drug(s) they were found to possess? What action was taken by police in response?

I would like the figures to cover the last five years please.

Clarification sought: I have been advised by the Department concerned that they are unable to provide the actual number of children caught with drugs in schools, however, they can provide the number of crimes recorded for drug offences (possession and/or supply) for which a person aged 18 or under was arrested and processed through custody and also where the incident related to the recorded crime occurred at or within the vicinity of an Education Establishment for financial years 2009/10 to 2013/14.

In relation to drugs found the Department is unable to list the drugs that were seized specifically from each individual but can describe and list the drugs that were seized during each incident. The drugs seized on those occasions may not all have been recovered from the individual aged 18 or under as more than one person may be involved in an incident.

I have also been informed by the Department that it is also possible that a subsequent arrest to one of the incidents taken into account be recorded against a linked serial for which the location will not be an Educational establishment and will therefore not be included in the overall figures.

Clarification received: Yes, I am happy to proceed with the request as you laid it out.

### Answer

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 to you in full.

Please find table at end of this correspondence outlining the number of people aged 18 or under arrested and processed through custody for drug offences at or within the vicinity of a school in Northern Ireland from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2014.

This information is based on data extracted from a live system and may be subject to change. It is dependent on the information having been input into the system in such a way as to identify those records that are relevant.

The data was extracted from the total number of arrests for drug-related offences and filtered by age at time of arrest.

The location information (school or within the vicinity of a school) was extracted from the incident linked to the arrest. There is a possibility that the arrest for drugs offences was carried out in an alternative location.

The drugs seized information was extracted from the drug seizure information of the incident linked to the arrest. This is a list of the drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) that were seized by PSNI and recorded as such against that incident. More than one defendant of all age may have been involved in the incident and there is a possibility that these particular drugs may not have been seized from the individual aged 18 or under. There is also a possibility that the drugs seized were recorded against an incident different than that of the arrest and could therefore not appear in the listed substances. '-' means that no drugs were seized in the particular incident linked to the arrest.

I have also attached an excel document which outlines how each case was dealt with. Please note the figures do not correlate with those provided by Central Statistics Branch, this is due to two or more separate offences being generated out of the same occurrence.

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

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](mailto: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](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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

**Number of people aged 18 or under arrested and processed through custody for drug offences at or within the vicinity of a school in Northern Ireland from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014**

There were 21 people aged 18 or under arrested and processed through custody for drug offences between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 where the incident occurred at or in the vicinity of a school.

Age of the arrested party at the time of arrest	Drugs seized during the incident linked to the arrest
12	-
12	-
13	Cannabis Herbal
13	Cannabis Herbal
13	Cannabis Herbal
14	Amphetamine Powder
14	Cannabis Herbal
14	Cannabis Herbal
14	Cannabis Joints, Diazepam Tablets
14	Cannabis Joints, Cannabis Herbal
14	Cannabis Herbal
15	-
15	-
15	Cannabis Herbal
16	Cannabis Resin
16	Cannabis Herbal
17	Cannabis Herbal
17	Diazepam Tablets
18	Mephedrone Powder
18	Cannabis Herbal, Diazepam Tablets
18	Cannabis Herbal

Source: PSNI Statistics Branch

**Notes:**

*This information is based on data extracted from a live system and may be subject to change. It is dependent on the information having been input into the system in such a way as to identify those records that are relevant.*

*The data was extracted from the total number of arrests for drug-related offences and filtered by age at time of arrest.*

*The location information (school or within the vicinity of a school) was extracted from the incident linked to the arrest. There is a possibility that the arrest for drugs offences was carried out in an alternative location.*

*The drugs seized information was extracted from the drug seizure information of the incident linked to the arrest. This is a list of the drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) that were seized by PSNI and recorded as such against that incident. More than one defendant of all age may have been involved in the incident and there is a possibility that these particular drugs may not have been seized from the individual aged 18 or under. There is also a possibility that the drugs seized were recorded against an incident different than that of the arrest and could therefore not appear in the listed substances. '-' means that no drugs were seized in the particular incident linked to the arrest.*