



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2016-00407

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Under 16s Arrested for Drugs Offences

Request and Answer:

Question

I would like to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:

Please provide the number of children under 16, broken down by age, who were arrested in the past five years on suspicion of;

- a) drugs possession offences and
- b) drugs supply offences.

Please provide a table showing the number of children by age arrested for the two different offence types for each of the last five years.

Answer

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act I can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

Please find a table included below which contains the requested information on the number of persons aged under 16 who were arrested and processed through custody for drug related offences by financial year from 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2016.

Financial Year	Age at Time of Arrest	Persons Arrested and Processed through custody for Possession Offences	Persons Arrested and Processed through custody for Supply Offences
2011/12	12	0	0
	13	1	1
	14	5	1
	15	20	5
2012/13	12	0	0
	13	1	0
	14	10	2
	15	16	5
2013/14	12	0	0
	13	3	1
	14	7	1
	15	24	7

2014/15	12	1	1
	13	3	3
	14	9	4
	15	22	2
2015/16	12	0	0
	13	3	3
	14	8	3
	15	26	6

Source: PSNI Statistics Branch

Please Note: 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.

Note that when a person was arrested and processed through custody for drug offences on more than one occasion within the same year, they will only appear once within each offence category and financial year. In the eventuality where one person was arrested more than once within the same year for the same offence type but at a different age (e.g. 13 and 14), they will only appear in the youngest age group. Similarly, if one person has been arrested for both Possession and Supply offences on the same occasion, they will be counted once in the possession offence column and once in the supply offence column.

This data represents the number of persons arrested and processed through custody as described by the system's person ID. This does not give a measure of the number of times an arrest was made; this would be represented by a count of custody records containing an arrest for a drug possession or drug supply offence which is as follows for each financial year: 33 in 2011/12, 30 in 2012/13, 42 in 2013/14, 49 in 2014/15 and 49 in 2015/16. In the course of the five years, there were 157 unique individuals arrested for a drug possession and/or a drug supply offence while aged 15 or under at the time of arrest.

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.

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.

