

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Police Recorded Drug Seizure Statistics

Annual Report covering the period
1st April 2012 - 31st March 2013

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Background

This bulletin provides the final figures on drug seizures and arrests recorded by the police in Northern Ireland during the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013. It includes details of the number of drug seizure incidents, the weight or quantity of drugs seized by drug type, the estimated street value and the number of persons arrested for drug offences. The statistics are presented at the Northern Ireland level and are also disaggregated by police District (see map at back of the bulletin). Information at police Area level is published in an accompanying excel spreadsheet which can be found on the PSNI Drug Seizure Statistics website: http://www.psnipolice.uk/directory/updates/updates_statistics/updates_drug_statistics.htm

In response to requests from key users of the statistics we have expanded both the scope and the content of this report to provide more detail on a wider range of drug types seized by the police.

Revisions

On Monday 13th May 2013 a revision was made to the drug seizures statistics. This was because the figures published on 9th May mistakenly included a seizure of 4 kg of heroin powder which should have been attributed to the Border Force rather than PSNI as a result of a joint operation. This seizure will be reflected in the Border Force statistics that are published by the Home Office and therefore have been excluded from the PSNI figures in accordance with national guidance and also in order to avoid duplication of the statistics when collated at the UK level.

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Summary of Key Results

Overview

- The number of drug seizure incidents in Northern Ireland increased by 14.1% from 3,920 in 2011/12 to 4,474 in 2012/13.
- In 2012/13, 2,784 persons were arrested for drug offences 241 more than the 2,543 arrested in 2011/12 (an increase of 9.5%).
- The drugs that accounted for the majority of seizures incidents in 2012/13 were cannabis, benzodiazepines and cocaine.
- In terms of the quantities of Class A opiates seized in 2012/13, there was an increase in the amount of opiates seized in liquid form (mainly methadone, 1,217 ml seized in 2012/13 compared with 152 ml seized in 2011/12), and the amount of opiates powder (mainly heroin powder) seized remained similar over the last two years with 1 kg being seized in both years.
- There was also a large increase in the amount of amphetamine powder seized in 2012/13 (22.8 kg) compared with the previous year (5.5 kg seized in 2011/12).
- The number of cannabis plants seized in 2012/13 (6,813 plants) was less than half the numbers seized in the previous year (14,307 plants). Also, in 2012/13 fewer ecstasy tablets were seized than in the previous year (30,220 ecstasy tablets were seized by the PSNI in 2011/12 compared with 6,286 tablets in 2012/13).
- Whilst levels of benzodiazepines and some of other Class C drug seizures are identified in this statistical report for the first time, it is not possible to provide comparable figures for seizures of these drugs in previous years as this information is not available.
- The PSNI ran a high profile operation specifically targeted at street level drug dealing during the latter half of 2012 (Operation Torus). The increase level of drug seizures and arrest recorded in 2012/13 is likely to be part due to the success of this operation.

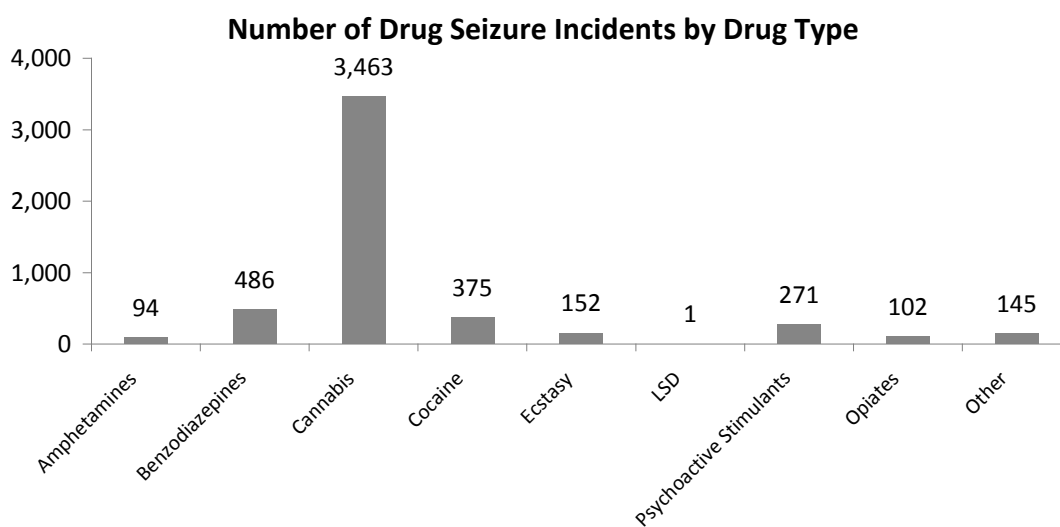
Note: Not all drug seizures are subject to forensic testing to officially confirm the drug type seized. When testing is not applied, the PSNI's drug seizure statistics are classified in accordance with the investigating officer's assessment of the drug type seized based on their experience and knowledge of the illegal drug trade in Northern Ireland.

Section 1 – Drug Incidents, Arrests and Seizures

Drug Seizure Incidents and Arrests

- In 2012/13 there were 4,474 drug seizure incidents in Northern Ireland. The number of drug seizures has increased over the last three years, with there being nearly one thousand more seizures in 2012/13 than two years ago in 2010/11.
- Although the number of drug seizure incidents has increased from 2011/12 to 2012/13 the street value of the drugs seized decreased by approximately £3 million. In 2012/13 the estimated street value of the drugs seized was £10.2 million.
- As with the number of seizure incidents, the number of persons arrested for drug offences has steadily increased over the last three years. In 2012/13, 2,784 persons were arrested for drug offences, 241 (9.5%) more than in 2011/12 and 349 (14.3%) more than in 2010/11.

2012/13 Drug Seizures by Drug Type



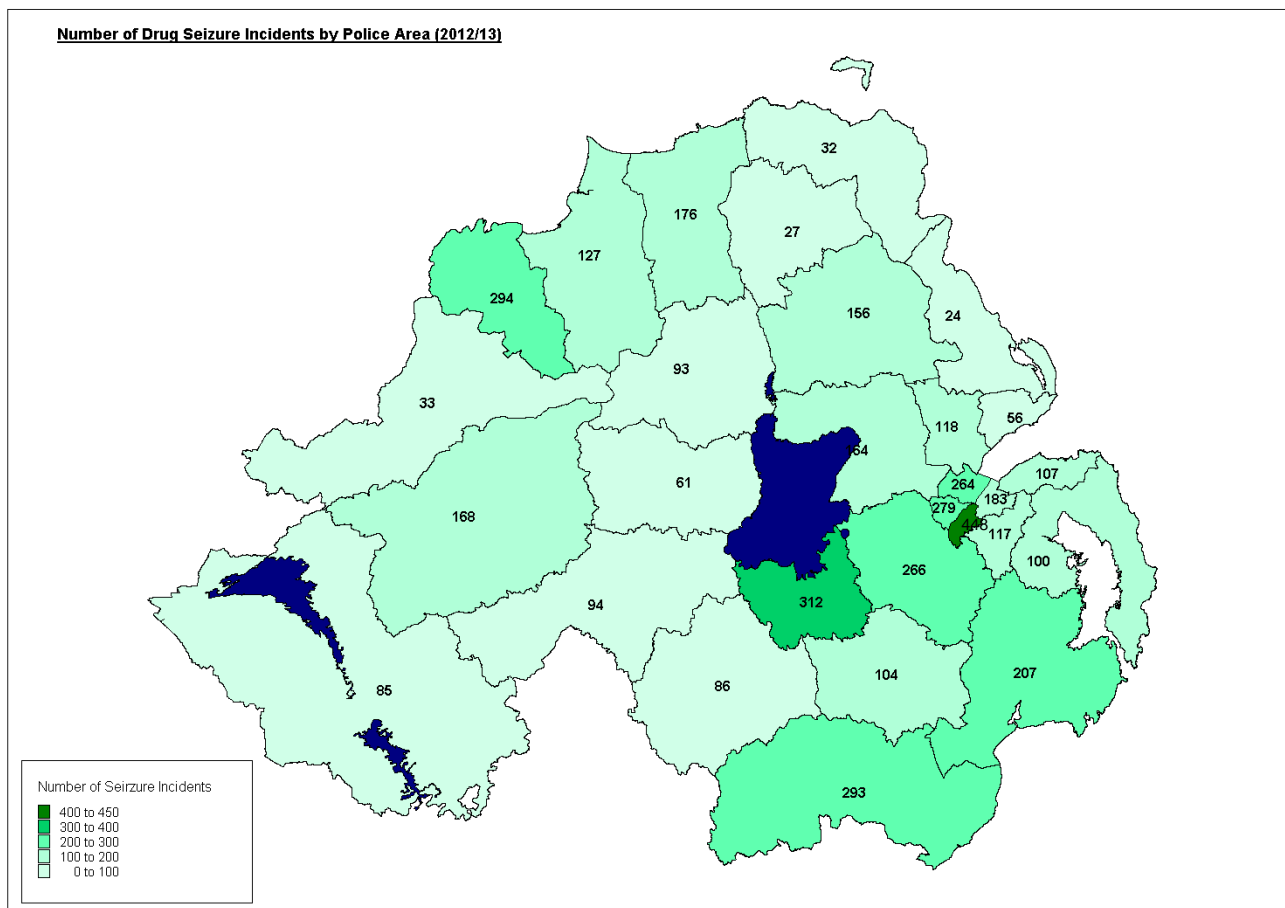
Note: A seizure incident can involve more than one drug type, seizure figures for individual drugs cannot be added together to produce totals.

- Cannabis was the most common drug seized accounting for over three quarters (3,463 cannabis seizures) of all drug seizures. In total, 405 kg of cannabis resin was seized along with 361 kg of herbal cannabis, 6,813 cannabis plants and 410 cannabis joints.
- Benzodiazepines seizures accounted for the second largest number of seizure incidents in 2012/13. Just over one in every ten seizure incidents in 2012/13 involved the recovery benzodiazepine tablets. A total of 95,542 benzodiazepine tablets were recovered by the PSNI in 2012/13 (the number of these seizures is unavailable for previous years).
- The third most commonly seized drug was cocaine. There were 375 cocaine seizure incidents that involved the recovery of 11.6 kg of cocaine powder.
- Other drugs seized in 2012/13 included 22.8 kg of amphetamines powder, 6.6 kg of NRG2 (methlethylcathinone), 4.8 kg of heroin powder, 3.9 kg of mephedrone, 1.2 litres of methadone and over 6,000 ecstasy tablets.

Section 2 – Drug Incidents, Arrests and Seizures by Police District & Area

2012/13 Seizure Incidents and Drug Arrests by Police Districts & Areas

- There were over 400 drug seizure incidents in each of the eight police Districts, with the most seizures occurring in E District (795), B District (631) and D District (604).
- In terms of the 29 police Areas, South Belfast (448) had the highest number of drug seizure incidents followed by Craigavon (312).



- The number of persons arrested for drug offences varied across the police Districts ranging from 199 drug arrests in C District to 434 in G District. There were also more than 400 persons arrested for drugs in both D District (414) and B District (417). South Belfast and Foyle police Areas accounted for the largest number of persons arrested for drug offences (327 and 227 respectively).

2012/13 Drug Seizure Type by Police Districts & Areas

- Over half of the cannabis resin seized in 2012/13 was recovered in D District (246 kg) with most of this being in Lisburn (242 kg). The greatest amount of herbal cannabis was recovered in E District (107 kg) with just under a third of the total quantity seized in 2012/13 – with most of this was being in Banbridge. Over 1,000 cannabis plants were seized in C District (1,328 plants), E District (1,337 plants), F District (1,057 plants) and H District (1,096 plants). The largest number of cannabis plants seized during 2012/13 was in the Newry and Mourne area (749 plants).

- Benzodiazepines were the second most commonly seized drug type in 2012/13 with the majority of these relating to seizures of diazepam tablets. Nearly a quarter of all the 87,045 diazepam tablets seized in 2012/13 were recovered in H District (20,711 tablets). A further 14,202 tablets were seized in B District, 12,822 tablets in A District and 10,682 tablets in C District.
- Cocaine was the third most commonly seized drug in 2012/13 with just over 11.6 kg of cocaine powder seized. The largest seizure was in A District (5kg) followed by E District (2 kg) and B District (2 kg). In terms of police Areas the largest quantity of cocaine powder was seized in West Belfast (5 kg), followed by Newry and Mourne (1.9 kg) and South Belfast (1.7 kg).
- Psychoactive stimulants seizures were mainly made up of NRG2 (methlethylcathinone) and mephedrone powder. In total, over 6.5 kg of NRG2 powder and nearly 4 kg of mephedrone powder were seized in 2012/13 with the largest quantities of both drugs being seized in E District. The largest quantity of NRG2 powder (2.2 kg) was seized in Armagh whereas the largest quantity of mephedrone powder (2.2 kg) was seized in Craigavon.
- In 2012/13 there were 102 seizures of opiates. The most common opiates seized were methadone and heroin. In total 1,204 ml of methadone was seized with 950 ml of this was in A District (West Belfast). In addition, 96% of the heroin powder seized (810 g of 841 g) was in H District (Ballymena).

Section 3 – Drug Seizure Statistics Comparisons 2010/11 to 2012/13

Drug Seizures Comparisons with the Previous Two Years

- PSNI seized four times as many kilogrammes of amphetamine powder in 2012/13 (22.8 kg) than in the previous year (2011/12, 5.5kg) and twice as much as in 2010/11 (11.2 kg).
- The quantity of cannabis resin seized has increased over each of the last three years. The quantity seized in 2012/13 (404.6 kg) was more than twice the quantity seized in 2011/12 (191.5 kg) and five times the quantity seized in 2010/11(87.1 kg).
- In 2012/13 there were 361 kg of herbal cannabis seized which is 41 kg less than was seized in 2011/12 but still twice as much than was seized in 2010/11 (87.1 kg).
- The number of cannabis plants seized has decreased over the last 12 months with approximately half as many plants recovered in 2012/13 (6,813 plants) than in 2011/12 (14,307 plants) and a third less than were recovered in 2010/11 (10,330 plants).
- The amount of cocaine seized in 2012/13 (11.6 kg) is nearly 4.0 kg more than was seized two years ago (2011/12, 7.8 kg) and 0.6 kg less than was seized last year (2010/11, 12.2 kg).
- The number of ecstasy tablets recovered by the PSNI have substantially decreased in 2012/13 (6,286 tablets) to about a fifth of the number seized in 2011/12 (30,220 tablets) and about half the number seized in 2010/11 (14,774 tablets).
- The PSNI recovered approximately twice as much mephedrone powder in 2011/12 than in the previous year (2011/12) but this is about a fifth of the 20.9 kg seized in 2010/11. The reduction over three years may be attributed to the rise in other psychoactive substances becoming available such as NRG2 of which PSNI sized 6.5 kg of in 2012/13.
- Similar amounts of Class A opiate powder (mainly heroin) were seized in 2012/13 and in 2011/12 (1 kg in both years). This is a decrease in the amount of opiate powder seized three years ago (5 kg in 2010/11). The volume of Class A opiate (mainly methadone) seized (in millilitres) is eight times more than the previous year and four times more than in 2010/11. The majority of this increase is due to one large seizure of methadone (950ml) in 2012/13.

Table 1: Drug Statistics – Police District
Financial Year: 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013

	A District	B District	C District	D District	E District	F District	G District	H District	Northern Ireland
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Amphetamines (Class B)

Amphetamine Powder (gms)	784	276	1,320	102	133	14	21	20,133	22,784
Amphetamine Wraps	3	3	6	0	0	0	2	0	14
Amphetamine Tablets	1,728	11	442	22	0	0	0	80	2,283
Number of Seizures	12	19	23	6	6	7	6	15	94

Benzodiazepines (Class C)

Diazepam Tablets	12,822	14,202	10,682	7,880	5,261	8,284	7,203	20,711	87,045
Diazepam Powder (gms)	0	0	0.01	0.01	0.2	0.21	0.01	0.51	0.95
Temazepam Tablets	37	28	148	3	66	95	39	361	777
Other Powder (gms)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.11	0	2.11
Other Tablets	0	499	0	6,414 ¹	316	0	0	491	7,720
Number of Seizures	69	118	57	67	55	37	49	34	486

Cannabis (Class B)

Cannabis Resin (gms)	11,093	358	1,290	245,566	33,717	1,320	95,543	15,756	404,644
Cannabis Herbal (gms)	20,509	52,694	22,238	25,893	106,980	27,001	87,506	18,145	360,964
Cannabis Plants	553	878	1,328	414	1,337	1,057	150	1,096	6,813
Cannabis Joints	44	40	51	43	90	45	70	27	410
Number of Seizures	435	409	436	485	618	324	431	325	3,463

Cocaine (Class A)

Cocaine Powder (gms)	5,274	2,102	781	266	2,474	45	97	521	11,560
Cocaine Wraps	2	5	9	4	9	1	3	3	36
Number of Seizures	39	81	42	69	80	11	22	31	375

¹ Includes one large seizure of 5,000 Benzodiazepine tablets from the Royal Mail Sorting Office and a seizure of 914 tablets of Phenazepam in Antrim Police Area.

Table 1: Drug Statistics – Police District (Cont)

Financial Year: 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013

	A District	B District	C District	D District	E District	F District	G District	H District	Northern Ireland
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Ecstasy (Class A)

Ecstasy Tablets	1,544	882	374	695	935	191	1,366	299	6,286
Ecstasy Powder (gms)	0	31	119	50	9	62	47	34	352
Number of Seizures	17	32	19	18	26	12	11	17	152

LSD (Class A)

LSD Tablets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LSD Microdots	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Number of Seizures	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Psychoactive Stimulants (Class B)

Mephedrone Powder (gms)	7	6	9	1,378	2,226	145	84	92	3,947
Mephedrone Wraps	0	0	0	0	20	1	3	0	24
Mephedrone Tablets	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	14
Methylethylcathinone (NRG2) Powder (gms)	157	199	22	184	3,568	173	2,228	51	6,582
Methylethylcathinone (NRG2) Wraps	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Other Powder (gms)	6	1	206	3	267	1	234	4	723
Other Tablets	0	4	8	0	34	3	0	0	49
Number of Seizures	12	18	18	24	78	40	59	22	271

Table 1: Drug Statistics – Police District (Cont)
Financial Year: 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013

	A District	B District	C District	D District	E District	F District	G District	H District	Northern Ireland
Opiates									
Heroin Mls	0	12.15	0	0	0.06	0.01	0	0.11	12.33
Heroin Powder (gms)	0.23	6.10	0	10.50	4.42	9.46	0.58	809.60	840.89
Heroin Wraps / Twists	3	29	0	0	27	4	1	21	85
Methadone Mls	950	192	0	0	62	0	0	0	1,204
Methadone Powder (gms)	0	0	120	3	33	12	21	7	195
Methadone Tablets	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	7
Other opiates – Powder (gms)	0	0	0	0	1.10	0.02	44.99	0	46.11
Other opiates - Tablets	50	103	0	7	8	24	166	0	358
Other opiates – Mls	0	200	0	0	1	0	0	0	201
Number of Seizures	8	24	1	6	20	10	15	18	102

Other drugs²

Other Powder (gms)	0	183	119	261	1,012	260	267	3	2,105
Other Tablets	317	797	387	1,951	2,454	424	633	325	7,288
Other Mls	521	49	329	67	0	1,379	275	25	2,645
Other Wraps / Twists	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Other Ampoules	0	2	972	57	18	25	101	43	1,218
Psilocin (Magic Mushrooms)	0	0	30	2	0	0	14	0	46
Number of seizures	12	17	18	20	19	22	24	13	145

² Other drugs include Steriods, Ketamine, GHB and magic mushrooms.

Table 1: Drug Statistics – Police District (Cont)**Financial Year: 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013**

	A District	B District	C District	D District	E District	F District	G District	H District	Northern Ireland
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Number of Seizure Incidents

Total Seizure Incidents³	543	631	531	604	795	408	547	415	4,474
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Estimated Street Value of Drugs Seized

Estimated Street Value (£)	868,818	1,102,827	966,293	1,756,525	2,112,579	817,853	1,453,065	1,124,096	10,202,057
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Persons Arrested with Drug Related Offences

Number of Persons Arrested	268	417	199	414	389	319	434	344	2,784
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³ This figure is a revision of that originally published on 9th May 2013. The number of seizure incidents decreased by 1 when it was subsequently realised that a 4kg seizure of heroin should have been excluded as it was the result of a joint operation with the Border Force and will be included in their drug seizure statistics as they were the lead agency in the operation. The quantities of heroin seized and the estimate street value of drugs seized have also been amended accordingly.

Table 2: Drug Seizures and Arrests 2010/11 - 2012/13

Drugs Seized		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
		No. of Seizures	Amount Seized	No. of Seizures	Amount Seized	No. of Seizures	Amount Seized
Amphetamine (Class B)	Powder (kg)	128	11.2	108	5.5	75	22.8
	Wraps	7	9	10	19	7	14
	Tablets	17	411	14	4,572	16	2,283
Benzodiazepines (Class C)	Tablets	-	-	-	-	444	95,542
	Powder (gms)	-	-	-	-	6	3.1
Cannabis (Class B)	Resin (kg)	1,072	87.1	916	191.5	737	404.6
	Herbal (kg)	1,644	176.3	2,027	402.0	2,609	361.0
	Plants	231	10,330	286	14,307	230	6,813
	Oil (gms)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0
	Joints	239	339	241	340	301	410
Cocaine (Class A)	Powder (kg)	304	7.8	302	12.2	354	11.6
	Wraps	38	174	37	317	23	36
Ecstasy (Class A)	Tablets	150	14,774	165	30,220	143	6,286
	Powder (gms)	11	44.7	18	124.1	18	352.4
LSD (Class A)	Doses	3	61	1	1	0	0
	Microdots	3	201	0	0	1	5
Psychoactive Stimulants ³ (Class B)	Powder (kg)	286	20.9	205	2.3	164	11.3
	Wraps	5	104	5	6	5	26
	Tablets	-	-	-	-	3	63
Class A Opiates	Powder (kg)	47	4.6	24	1.0	31	1.0
	Tablets	3	35	1	13	3	61
	Ampoules	1	32	0	0	0	0
	Millilitres	5	272.0	10	151.5	9	1,217.1
	Wraps	28	63	23	80	16	85
Other Drugs	Powder (kg)	-	-	-	-	47	2.1
	Tablets	-	-	-	-	64	7,288
	Millilitres	-	-	-	-	27	2,645
	Wraps/Twists	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Ampoules	-	-	-	-	20	1,218
	Psilocin	-	-	-	-	3	46
Total Seizure Incidents¹		3,564		3,920		4,474⁴	
Estimated Street Value		£9,057,953		£13,160,066		£10,202,057	
Persons Arrested		2,435		2,543		2,784	

¹ As seizure incidents can involve more than one drug type, seizure figures for individual drugs cannot be added together to produce totals.

² In 2010/11 and in 2011/12 the psychoactive stimulants reported only included mephedrone. While, in 2012/13 this category includes more drugs such as NRG2.

³ Other drugs include Steroids, Ketamine, GHB and magic mushrooms.

⁴ This figure is a revision of that originally published on 9th May 2013. The number of seizure incidents decreased by 1 when it was subsequently realised that a 4kg seizure of heroin should have been excluded as it was the result of a joint operation with the Border Force and will be included in their drug seizure statistics as they were the lead agency in the operation. The quantities of heroin seized and the estimate street value of drugs seized have also been amended accordingly.

- These drug seizures in 2010/11 and in 2011/12 were included in the total number of drug seizure incidents but the weight and quantities seized were not previously published.

Notes

Statistics on drug seizures are based on electronic and paper returns that are completed by police officers when they make a drug seizure. The statistics are checked for completeness with local districts and with the PSNI Organised Crime Branch and are also cross-referenced against other internal records of drug seizures. Not all drugs are tested to authenticate substances, When testing is not applied, the PSNI's drug seizure statistics are classified in accordance with the investigating officer's assessment of the drug type seized based on their experience and knowledge of the illegal drug trade in Northern Ireland.

The statistics contained in this bulletin are based on drug seizures that were recorded by the police. As a result, increases or decreases in the quantity and type of drugs seized along with drug related arrests can be affected by specific targeted police operations thus accounting for some of the year on year variations (i.e. increased police enforcement action can result in increased seizures & arrests). Also, not all drug use will come to the attention of the police and therefore these statistics should be considered along with other measures of drug prevalence in Northern Ireland for users to get a more comprehensive overview of the drug situation in Northern Ireland.

Copies of this bulletin are available from the PSNI Internet site:http://www.psni.police.uk/directory/updates/updates_statistics/updates_drug_statistics.htm. Annual reports are available back to 2003/04 on the PSNI internet site and during the financial year drug seizure statistics are published on a monthly basis and provisional and maybe subject to change. Statistics on drug seizures at Police Area level are published separately in an accompanying excel spreadsheet which is also available on this internet page.

We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics. If you would like to forward your views, receive notification of new publications or be kept informed of developments relating to PSNI statistics, please email your contact details using the email address provided below.

For further information about drug seizure statistics for Northern Ireland, or to contact PSNI Statistics Branch:

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PSNI Policing Districts from 1st April 2007



Based Upon Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland Data © 2007