

## Police Recorded Drug Seizures and Arrests in Northern Ireland

PSNI Statistics Branch is proposing to change the publication frequency of the official statistics bulletin Police Recorded Drug Seizures and Arrests in Northern Ireland and also provide a more comprehensive and informative annual output.

### Background

**Data quality:** Drug seizure figures for each financial year April to March have routinely been finalised in April and published in mid-May. This means that drugs seized towards the end of the financial year and sent to Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) for identification often had to be excluded from the finalised data due to the timescales associated with this process.

To increase the potential for such seizures to be incorporated in the published data and subsequently improve the data quality and coverage, PSNI's Statistics Branch is planning to extend the data processing period to August of each year. This will move the publication of finalised figures from May to September. The aim is for this bulletin to provide longer term trends and incorporate more informative ways of presenting the quantity of drugs seized<sup>1</sup>.

**Resource:** The drug seizures and arrests bulletin has been published on a monthly basis until April 2018. Recent resource constraints within PSNI's Statistics Branch have limited the ability to carry out the necessary data quality checks required to publish meaningful data on a monthly basis. During 2018/19 one update has so far been published (the latest twelve months to 30<sup>th</sup> September was published on 31<sup>st</sup> October) and it is anticipated that a provisional bulletin covering 2018/19 will be published in May.

**Revised publication schedule:** As a result PSNI's Statistics Branch is proposing the following publication schedule which would follow the same format for the months of May, September and October in future years:

May 2019	publication of provisional 2018/19 figures
September 2019	publication of finalised 2018/19 figures, allowing time for FSNI identification of drugs seized during the latter part of 2018/19
October 2019	publication of in-year update to 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2019

### User Views

In line with the Code of Practice for Statistics, our aim is to meet user needs as far as possible within the limitations of both the data and resource available to us. If you wish to make any comment on the above proposals please do so by emailing to [statistics@psni.police.uk](mailto:statistics@psni.police.uk) before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019. If you have any concerns, please outline these to include details of the impact the changes may have.

Regards

**PSNI Statistics Branch**

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<sup>1</sup> The Home Office publish one bulletin each year and these can be found through the link [Seizures of drugs in England & Wales statistics](#). The latest bulletin covers 2017/18 and was published on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The Home Office apply conversion factors to estimate the overall quantity of drugs seized and allow seized quantities within a given drug type to be presented in terms of one comparable unit (either kilograms or doses). They also present the distribution of quantities of drugs seized. These details can be found in Section 3 of the publication and PSNI Statistics Branch are currently investigating the feasibility of applying a similar approach to the Northern Ireland drug seizure statistics.