



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2023-01158

Keyword: Crime/Incident Statistics Drugs and Alcohol

Subject: Arrests For Drug Possession And Supply

Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act we 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.

For the calendar years 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018

Request 1

How many arrests were made by your force for drugs possession? (not intent to supply, possession only).

Request 1a

How many arrests were foreign nationals - and can you list the nationalities?

Request 1b

What age was the youngest person arrested for possession?

Request 2

How many were charged in relation to question 1?

Request 3

How many arrests were made by your force for being in possession of drugs with intent to supply?

Request 3a

How many arrests were foreign nationals?

Request 3b

Can you list the nationalities?

Request 4

What age was the youngest person arrested for being in possession with intent to supply?

Request 4a.

How many were charges in relation to question 4?

Clarification requested:

For those questions relating to foreign nationals please clarify whether foreign national should cover all records where UK is not a listed nationality, and particularly where Ireland is the only listed nationality should these records be included or excluded?

Clarification received:

Please can we have the information where UK is not listed, therefore Ireland would be listed separately.

Answer

Please see attached spreadsheet with Answers provided for all requests from 1 – 4a.

Note 1

A person may be arrested and processed through custody on more than one occasion in a single calendar year or during the 5 years covering the time period requested.

As a person can be arrested for more than one type of drug offence, the Possession and Supply arrest figures provided will sum to more than the total number of drug-related arrests.

Note 2

Up to three nationality fields can be completed on the person record. England, Scotland, Wales or UK. For Q1a and Q3a:

- a person has been classified as Irish if one of the three nationality fields contains 'Ireland' and none of the fields contain Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales or UK
- a person has been classified as 'foreign national' if none of the nationality fields contain a nationality of Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, UK or Ireland.

Note 3

25 % of the usually resident population in Northern Ireland declared their nationality as Irish according to the 2011 Census

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/2011-census-results-key-statistics-northern-ireland-report-11-december-2012.pdf>

This has increased to 29% in the 2021 Census

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/census-2021-main-statistics-for-northern-ireland-phase-1-statistical-bulletin-national-identity.pdf>

Nationality was missing in respect of 5 custody records.

Note 4

The drug possession offences identified for Requests 1 and 2 cover possession of a class A/B/C drug, or possession where the class of drug is not specified.

Note 5

Requests 3 and 4 have been answered on the basis of arrests for all drug supply offences and separately for those offences which are specifically possession with intent to supply. Drug supply offences include supplying, being concerned in supply of or offering to supply Class A/B/C offences, possession with intent to supply Class A/B/B, cannabis cultivation, producing or being concerned in production of class A/B/C, fraudulently import/export Class A/B/C. Possession with intent to supply include only those specific supply offences.

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 Corporate Information Branch, 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 Corporate Information Manager, Corporate Information Branch, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.police.uk.

If, following an Internal Review carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain unhappy about how your request has been handled you have the right to apply in writing to the Information Commissioner, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, at 'Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. There are a number of other platforms you can use to contact the ICO and these can be found on the ICO's website at the following link: [Make a complaint | ICO \(https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/\)](https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/).

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 their 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.