



Christmas drink/drug driving campaign 2023/24

Northern Ireland

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This bulletin summarises available information in relation to the PSNI Christmas drink/drug driving campaign 2023/24, which ran from 1st December 2023 to 1st January 2024 inclusive, specifically the outcomes in terms of Preliminary Breath Tests (PBTs) and drink/drug driving arrests.

These figures are provisional and subject to change, particularly for PBTs which are likely to increase as more information is uploaded to the system.

Key points:

- Initial figures show that PSNI officers conducted 7,250 preliminary breath tests (PBTs) during the Christmas drink/drug drive campaign between 1st December 2023 and 1st January 2024. While this is a decrease of 27.7% on the same period last year, it is likely that the 2023/24 total will increase as more information is uploaded to the system from the PBT devices.
- Of the 7,250 PBTs conducted, 4.9% (355) resulted in a fail or failed to provide, a similar proportion when compared with the 2022/23 campaign (5.2%).
- A total of 298 people were arrested for drink/drug driving related offences during this year's campaign, representing a decrease of 3.9% compared with the same period last year (310).
- The highest number of arrests were made in Belfast (65), while Fermanagh and Omagh experienced the largest decrease in arrests when compared with the same period last year (from 31 to 9).
- Males accounted for the majority (82.6%) of those arrested for drink/drug driving offences throughout the 23/24 campaign, while over half of those arrested were between 30 and 49 years old.
- The highest evidential breath test reading recorded over the campaign was 159µg/100ml.
- The youngest person arrested for drink/drug driving offences during the 2023/24 campaign was 14 years old while the oldest was 82 years old.

Background

There is no one measure of counting alcohol or drug driving offences as this is a complex process and there is no unique source of data. This bulletin has presented the information on the basis that those who have a Preliminary Breath Test with a result of 'Fail' or 'Failure to Provide' are a proxy measure for driving when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Police will arrest people, collect further evidence via breath, blood or urine and present this to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) who will ultimately decide on the prospect of a successful case.

In terms of the 2023/24 statistics, the PBT figures are based on an extract of the data on 22nd January 2024 and are likely to increase as more information is uploaded to the system. The arrest figures were extracted on 12th January 2023 and will be subject to minor amendment. These figures are therefore provisional and subject to change.

Preliminary Breath Tests

Table 1 **Number of Preliminary Breath Tests carried out by PSNI by result**

Result	1 st Dec 2022 – 1 st Jan 2023	1 st Dec 2022 – 1 st Jan 2023	1 st Dec 2023 – 1 st Jan 2024	1 st Dec 2023 – 1 st Jan 2024	% change between 2022/23 and 2023/24
	Number	%	Number	%	
Zero	9,203	91.7	6,649	91.7	-27.8
Pass	275	2.7	226	3.1	-17.8
Warning	30	0.3	20	0.3	-33.3
Fail	356	3.5	216	3.0	-39.3
Failed to Provide	168	1.7	139	1.9	-17.3
Total	10,032	100.0	7,250	100.0	-27.7

Arrests

Table 2 Number of arrests for drink/drug driving offences by District

District	1 st Dec 2022 – 1 st Jan 2023	1 st Dec 2023 – 1 st Jan 2024
Antrim and Newtownabbey	23	22
Ards and North Down	15	21
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	30	34
Belfast City	54	65
Causeway Coast and Glens	22	11
Derry City and Strabane	29	37
Fermanagh and Omagh	31	9
Lisburn and Castlereagh	16	17
Mid and East Antrim	19	17
Mid Ulster	42	36
Newry, Mourne and Down	29	29
Total	310	298

Table 3 Number of arrests for drink/drug driving offences by sex

Sex	1 st Dec 2022 – 1 st Jan 2023	1 st Dec 2023 – 1 st Jan 2024
Male	268	246
Female	42	52
Other/Unknown	0	0
Total	310	298

Table 4 Number of arrests for drink/drug driving offences by age group

Age group	1 st Dec 2022 – 1 st Jan 2023	1 st Dec 2023 – 1 st Jan 2024
Under 18	4	4
18 – 29	102	89
30 – 49	153	154
50 – 69	46	47
70+	5	4
Total	310	298

Provisional evidential breath test results

Table 5 Results^{1,2} of evidential breath procedures completed for those arrested for drink/drug driving offences, 1st December 2023 – 1st January 2024

Result	1st Dec 2023 – 1st Jan 2024
Zero	19
1 - 34µg/100ml	20
35 - 49µg/100ml	28
50+µg/100ml	143
Refused to provide	43
No breath result	45
Total	298

¹ 'No breath result' includes those which resulted in a blood/urine sample as opposed to a breath sample, including those being tested for impairment through drugs, the results of which require time to process.

² Figures are provisional and subject to change.

Source: PSNI Statistics Branch, Lisnasharragh