



Police Service
of Northern Ireland



Christmas drink/drug driving campaign 2024/25

Northern Ireland

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This bulletin summarises available information in relation to the PSNI Christmas drink/drug driving campaign 2024/25, which ran from 1st December 2024 to 1st January 2025 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 5,556 preliminary breath tests (PBTs) during the Christmas drink/drug drive campaign between 1st December 2024 and 1st January 2025. While this is a decrease of 30.8% on the same period last year, it is likely that the 2024/25 total will increase as more information is uploaded to the system from the PBT devices.
- Of the 5,556 PBTs conducted, 7.3% (407) resulted in a fail or failed to provide, which is proportionately higher than for the 2023/24 campaign (5.4%).
- A total of 298 people were arrested for drink/drug driving related offences during this year's campaign, representing a decrease of 2.3% compared with the same period last year (305).
- The highest number of arrests were made in Belfast (57), while Mid Ulster experienced the largest decrease in arrests when compared with the same period last year (from 38 to 23).
- Males accounted for the majority (87.6%) of those arrested for drink/drug driving offences throughout the 24/25 campaign, while over half of those arrested (57.0%) were between 30 and 49 years old.
- The highest evidential breath test reading recorded over the campaign was 145µg/100ml.
- The youngest person arrested for drink/drug driving offences during the 2024/25 campaign was 18 years old while the oldest was 72 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 2024/25 statistics, the PBT figures are based on an extract of the data on 22nd January 2025 and are likely to increase as more information is uploaded to the system. The arrest figures were extracted on 20th January 2025 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 2023 – 1 st Jan 2024 | 1 st Dec 2023 – 1 st Jan 2024 | 1 st Dec 2024 – 1 st Jan 2025 | 1 st Dec 2024 – 1 st Jan 2025 | % change between 2023/24 and 2024/25 |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|---|
| | Number | % | Number | % | |
| Zero | 7,297 | 90.9 | 4,923 | 88.6 | -32.5 |
| Pass | 272 | 3.4 | 195 | 3.5 | -28.3 |
| Warning | 23 | 0.3 | 31 | 0.6 | 34.8 |
| Fail | 284 | 3.5 | 283 | 5.1 | -0.4 |
| Failed to Provide | 148 | 1.8 | 124 | 2.2 | -16.2 |
| Total | 8,024 | 100.0 | 5,556 | 100.0 | -30.8 |

Arrests

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

| District | 1 st Dec 2023 – 1 st Jan 2024 | 1 st Dec 2024 – 1 st Jan 2025 |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Antrim and Newtownabbey | 22 | 22 |
| Ards and North Down | 22 | 20 |
| Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon | 34 | 35 |
| Belfast City | 65 | 57 |
| Causeway Coast and Glens | 13 | 22 |
| Derry City and Strabane | 37 | 40 |
| Fermanagh and Omagh | 10 | 13 |
| Lisburn and Castlereagh | 18 | 23 |
| Mid and East Antrim | 17 | 16 |
| Mid Ulster | 38 | 23 |
| Newry, Mourne and Down | 29 | 27 |
| Total | 305 | 298 |

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

| Sex | 1 st Dec 2023 – 1 st Jan 2024 | 1 st Dec 2024 – 1 st Jan 2025 |
|---------------|---|---|
| Male | 252 | 261 |
| Female | 52 | 37 |
| Other/Unknown | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 305 | 298 |

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

| Age group | 1 st Dec 2023 – 1 st Jan 2024 | 1 st Dec 2024 – 1 st Jan 2025 |
|--------------|---|---|
| Under 18 | 4 | 0 |
| 18 – 29 | 92 | 80 |
| 30 – 49 | 157 | 170 |
| 50 – 69 | 48 | 46 |
| 70+ | 4 | 2 |
| Total | 305 | 298 |

Provisional evidential breath test results

Table 5 Results of evidential breath procedures completed for those arrested for drink/drug driving offences, 1st December 2024 – 1st January 2025

| Result | 1 st Dec 2024 – 1 st Jan 2025 |
|--------------------|---|
| Zero | 14 |
| 1 - 34µg/100ml | 21 |
| 35 - 49µg/100ml | 27 |
| 50+µg/100ml | 137 |
| Refused to provide | 44 |
| No breath result | 55 |
| 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 The legal limit for breath tests is 35µg/100ml.

³ Figures are provisional and subject to change.

Source: PSNI Statistics Branch, Lisnasharragh