



## CRIME AND JUSTICE

# DRUG SEIZURES AND OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS, 2017-18

This bulletin presents Official Statistics on drug seizures made by the police in Scotland and the characteristics of those found in possession of drugs. These statistics relate to drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which divides drugs into three classes, namely A, B and C. For the purpose of this bulletin, the drug classifications at the end of the reporting period, 31 March 2018, have been applied to the data.

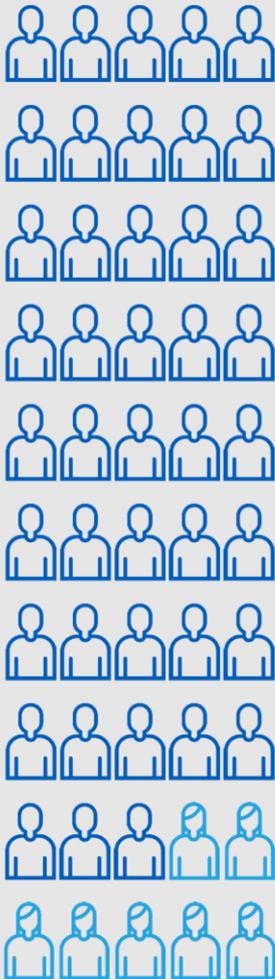
## Key Points

- The quantity of drugs seized can fluctuate considerably each year and does not necessarily move in line with the number of seizures made. Whilst most drug seizures consist of relatively small quantities (usually possession-related crimes), annual quantities of drugs seized can be greatly influenced by a small number of large seizures (usually from supply-related crimes).
- For crimes of drug supply, the main Class A drugs seized by Police Scotland in 2017-18 were heroin (118.6 kilograms), cocaine (74.4 kilograms) and crack cocaine (6.7 kilograms). Police Scotland also seized approximately 25,400 ecstasy-type tablets.
- Again for crimes of drug supply, the main Class B drugs seized by Police Scotland in 2017-18 were cannabis resin (625.0 kilograms) and herbal cannabis (553.4 kilograms). They also seized over 16,000 cannabis plants. For Class C drugs, the main drugs seized were 321,000 diazepam or other benzodiazepine tablets (excluding etizolam) and 264,000 etizolam tablets.
- A sample of drug possession crime for 2017-18 estimated that 54% of drug possession crimes involved herbal cannabis or cannabis resin, with 10% for cocaine, 9% for heroin and 6% each for diazepam and etizolam.
- In 2017-18, the vast majority of drug possession offenders were male (86%). The median age of an offender was 30 years old, with almost two thirds (64%) being aged between 20 and 39 years old.

# DRUG POSSESSION CRIME IN SCOTLAND, 2017-18



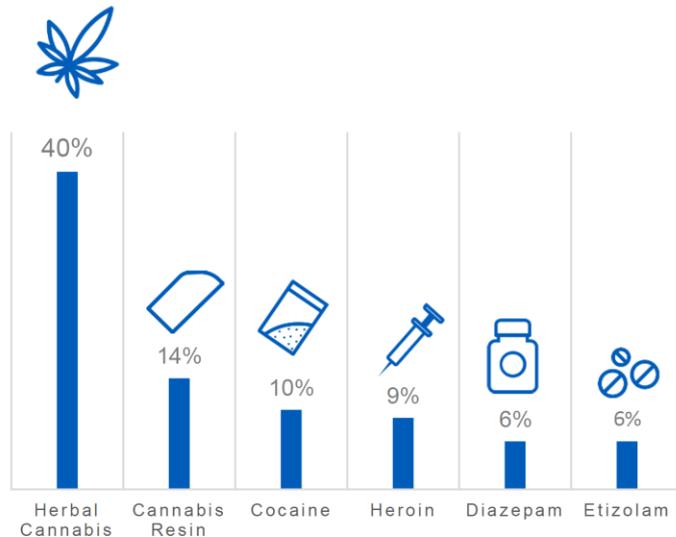
## Who were the offenders



**86%**  
Were male

**30**  
Average  
(Median) age

## What type of drugs were seized?



## Where were the drugs seized?



**49%**

In the street or other open space



**24%**

At home

## Other information from police records



**47%** of drug records have additional crimes recorded

**31%** of drug records mentioned that someone was under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol

**7%** of drug records mention NHS involvement

## Contents

<b>Key Points</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Background</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Number of seizures and quantities of drugs seized</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Drug supply crimes .....	6
Drug possession crimes .....	10
Overall quantity of drugs seized .....	13
<b>Analysis of the characteristics of drug possession crimes</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Characteristics of offenders, 2017-18.....	15
How Police Scotland became aware of the drug possession crime.....	16
Other information about the drug seizure .....	16
<b>Annexes</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Data Quality Statement .....	17
Police Scotland Management Information.....	17
Other notes .....	17

# Background

This bulletin presents Official Statistics on the number and type of drug seizures made by Police Scotland during 2017-18. It does not include information on drugs seized by the UK Border Force or British Transport Police, or as a result of Police Scotland activity which led to drugs being seized out-with Scotland.

The data collection process for this bulletin is split into two parts, looking at seizures relating to drug supply and drug possession crimes separately. Police Scotland manually check drug supply-based crimes each year, with these records accounting for the clear majority of drugs seized in terms of quantity. This is supplemented by a sample led by Scottish Government statisticians of the remaining and far more numerous crimes of drug possession. The sample consists of a random selection of 400 crime records per year, stratified by police division to reflect the distribution of drug possession crimes across Scotland. This sample-based approach avoids the need to manually extract data for every crime record relating to a drugs possession crime, which would be a very resource intensive process. The information from the sample is then used to estimate the number of seizures and quantities seized in relation to possession crimes for the most commonly identified drug types for Scotland as a whole. This is done by multiplying the average quantity seized per crime by the estimated total number of seizures for that drug type.

For the drug types where quantities seized from possession-related crimes can be estimated, a figure for total amount seized has been produced by adding the quantity seized from supply crimes to the estimated quantity seized from possession crimes. For those drug types where the possession amount cannot be reliably estimated, only the quantity seized from supply crimes is available. However, as these drug types only appear in very small numbers within the sample, it can be assumed that the quantity seized from possession crimes is relatively low.

As well as using the sample to record information on the drugs seized from crimes of possession, information about the offender and the circumstances of the crime has also been recorded so that additional analysis on offender characteristics can be presented.

It should be noted that care must always be taken when making comparisons on this topic as there can be very large fluctuations in the quantity of drugs seized from one year to the next. Data on the quantities of drugs seized prior to 2014-15 can be found in the [2013-14 publication](#).

There are two statutory requirements for the UK to provide data on drug seizures, which are managed by the [UK Focal Point on Drugs](#), based at Public Health England. The UK Focal Point on Drugs collate drug seizure statistics from England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for the UK Focal Point's annual report. This is then submitted to the [European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction](#) (EMCDDA) and the [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#) (UNODC).

These data inform the EMCDDA's annual report and the UNODC's annual World Drugs Report.

The minimum data requirements to satisfy these two obligations are to submit data on the number of drug seizures and the quantity of drugs seized for each of the following types of drugs: cocaine, crack, ecstasy-type substances, heroin, LSD, methylamphetamine, amphetamines, herbal cannabis, cannabis resin and cannabis plants. In addition to these ten drugs, this bulletin contains seizures data on methadone, morphine, barbiturates, ketamine, mephedrone, anabolic steroids, GHB, temazepam, diazepam & other benzodiazepines (excluding etizolam). Separate figures are also presented for etizolam, a 'designer' benzodiazepine, which was classified as a Class C drug under a 2017 amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971<sup>1</sup>.

The statistics on drug seizures are used to inform [National Outcome 9](#) – 'we live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger' as well as the Scottish Government's [Justice Vision and Priorities](#). These statistics are also used by a wide range of stakeholders to monitor trends, for policy research and development, and for research purposes.

The 'Drug Seizures and Offender Characteristics' annual statistical bulletin series forms part of a series of bulletins produced by the Scottish Government on the criminal justice system which can be found at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/Publications>.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/634/pdfs/uksem\\_20170634\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/634/pdfs/uksem_20170634_en.pdf)

# Number of seizures and quantities of drugs seized

- The quantity of drugs seized can fluctuate considerably each year and does not necessarily move in line with the number of seizures made. Whilst most drug seizures consist of relatively small quantities (usually possession-related crimes), annual quantities of drugs seized can be greatly influenced by a small number of large seizures (usually supply-related crimes).

## Drug supply crimes

- Intelligence-led operations against known drug dealers tend to result in a low number of seizures, but conversely the quantity of drugs seized and their value will be high. These high profile operations may result in greater disruption to the illicit drugs trade which, whilst having a positive effect, may reduce the number of seizures made. As such, care should be taken when comparing quantities of drugs seized over time.
- A significant proportion of drugs seized in terms of quantity come from seizures related to supply crimes, despite making up a relatively small proportion of the overall number of seizures.
- This section covers drugs seized where the crime was one of drug supply, drug production or illegal importation of drugs.

## Class A drugs seized from drug supply crimes

- [Table 1b](#) shows that in 2017-18, Police Scotland reported that they seized 118.6 kilograms (kg) of heroin, 74.4 kg of cocaine and 6.7 kg of crack cocaine from drug supply crimes. This is compared to 54.1 kilograms (kg) of heroin, 120.3 kg of cocaine and 5.2 kg of crack cocaine in 2016-17.
- Approximately 25,400 ecstasy-type tablets were seized in 2017-18, compared to 8,600 in 2016-17.
- 1.1 litres of methadone was seized by Police Scotland in 2017-18, the same quantity as in 2016-17.
- Compared to other types of Class A Drugs, relatively small amounts of LSD and morphine were seized in 2017-18.
- In addition to the information in Table 1a, there were 31 supply-based seizures of 'Other' Class A drugs in 2017-18, including 3 seizures of methylamphetamine.

**Table 1a: Number of Class A drug seizures by Police Scotland from supply crimes, by drug type, 2014-15 to 2017-18<sup>1</sup>**

Drug	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cocaine Powder	366	506	488	543
Crack Cocaine	3	25	85	70
Ecstasy-type Substances	89	148	150	143
Heroin	553	737	815	826
LSD	3	6	9	3
Methadone	34	11	12	9
Morphine	3	18	3	6

**Table 1b: Quantity of Class A drugs seized by Police Scotland from supply crimes, by drug type, 2014-15 to 2017-18<sup>1</sup>**

Drug	Units	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cocaine Powder	kg	75.7	82.7	120.3	74.4
Crack Cocaine	kg	0.0	4.2	5.2	6.7
Ecstasy-type Substances	tablets (000s)	15.1	13.4	8.6	25.4
Heroin	kg	106.1	74.0	54.1	118.6
LSD	tablets/other units (000s)	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Methadone	litres	8.1	4.3	1.1	1.1
Morphine	litres	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.0

1. Data for 2014-15 is based on an estimated 85% of all drug supply-related crimes, data for 2015-16 is based on an estimated 92% of all drug supply-related crimes. Data for 2016-17 onwards is based on 100% of drug supply-related crimes.

### **Class B drugs seized from drug supply crimes**

- [Table 2b](#) shows the quantities of Class B drugs seized in 2017-18.
- The quantity of cannabis-related drug seizures from drug supply crimes in 2017-18 included 553.4 kg of herbal cannabis, 625.0 kg of cannabis resin and 16,346 cannabis plants. This is compared to 347.9 kg of herbal cannabis, 322.1 kg of cannabis resin and 18,310 cannabis plants in 2016-17.
- There were 68.3 kg of amphetamines seized in 2017-18, compared to 109.9 kg seized in 2016-17. There was 0.1 kg of ketamine seized in 2017-18, compared to 10.0 kg in 2016-17. There were no mephedrone seizures from drug supply crimes in 2017-18, compared to 14.6 kg in 2016-17.
- In addition to the information in Table 2a, there were 23 supply-based seizures of 'Other' Class B drugs in 2017-18.

**Table 2a: Number of Class B drug seizures by Police Scotland from supply crimes, by drug type, 2014-15 to 2017-18<sup>1</sup>**

Drug	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Herbal Cannabis	731	905	849	918
Cannabis Resin	268	400	329	334
Cannabis plants	594	655	683	648
Amphetamines	124	135	151	102
Barbiturates	-	-	-	-
Ketamine	2	2	7	7
Mephedrone	2	11	22	-

**Table 2b: Quantity of Class B drugs seized by Police Scotland from supply crimes, by drug type, 2014-15 to 2017-18<sup>1</sup>**

Drug	Units	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Herbal Cannabis	kg	165.4	413.9	347.9	553.4
Cannabis Resin	kg	153.4	570.4	322.1	625.0
Cannabis plants	plants	13,022	31,398	18,310	16,346
Amphetamines	kg	118.4	71.8	109.9	68.3
Barbiturates	tablets (000s)	-	-	-	-
Ketamine	kg	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.1
Mephedrone	kg	0.0	0.9	14.6	-

1. Data for 2014-15 is based on an estimated 85% of all drug supply-related crimes, data for 2015-16 is based on an estimated 92% of all drug supply-related crimes. Data for 2016-17 onwards is based on 100% of drug supply-related crimes.

- [Table 3b](#) shows the quantities of Class C drugs seized from drug supply crimes.
- Most Class C seizures were of diazepam and other benzodiazepines (excluding etizolam), with almost 321,000 tablets seized in 2017-18. This is compared to almost 2.2 million tablets seized in 2016-17. Whilst it is not possible to present figures for diazepam and other benzodiazepines (excluding etizolam) separately, the vast majority of tablets seized are likely to have been diazepam.
- Almost 264,000 tablets of etizolam were seized in 2017-18. Etizolam is a 'designer' benzodiazepine, which was classified as a Class C drug under a 2017 amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971<sup>2</sup>.
- Approximately 400 tablets of anabolic steroids were seized in 2017-18, compared to 12,100 in 2016-17. Approximately 100 tablets of temazepam were seized in 2017-18, compared to approximately 34,200 in 2016-17.
- In addition to the information in Table 3a, there were 42 supply-based seizures of 'Other' Class C drugs in 2017-18.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/634/pdfs/ukxiem\\_20170634\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/634/pdfs/ukxiem_20170634_en.pdf)

**Table 3a: Number of Class B drug seizures by Police Scotland from supply crimes, by drug type, 2014-15 to 2017-18<sup>1</sup>**

Drug	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Anabolic Steroids	3	5	52	3
GHB	0	2	-	-
Temazepam	2	4	2	1
Diazepam and other Benzodiazepines (excluding etizolam) <sup>2</sup>	419	382	316	278
Etizolam <sup>3</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	44

**Table 3b: Quantity of Class B drugs seized by Police Scotland from supply crimes, by drug type, 2014-15 to 2017-18<sup>1</sup>**

Drug	Units	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Anabolic Steroids	tablets (000s)	0.3	0.3	12.1	0.4
GHB	litres	0.0	0.0	-	-
Temazepam	tablets (000s)	0.0	1.3	34.2	0.1
Diazepam and other Benzodiazepines (excluding etizolam) <sup>2</sup>	tablets (000s)	1,182.7	1,276.1	2,165.4	320.8
Etizolam <sup>3</sup>	tablets (000s)	n/a	n/a	n/a	263.9

1. Data for 2014-15 is based on an estimated 85% of all drug supply-related crimes, data for 2015-16 is based on an estimated 92% of all drug supply-related crimes. Data for 2016-17 onwards is based on 100% of drug supply-related crimes.

2. The vast majority of the tablets seized in this category are likely to have been diazepam.

3. From 2017-18 onwards, separate figures are presented for etizolam, a 'designer' benzodiazepine, which was classified as a Class C drug under a 2017 amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

## Drug possession crimes

- The majority of seizures of controlled drugs are from drug possession crimes (in terms of numbers of seizures), however by their nature these incidents involve a relatively small quantity of drugs being seized. As a result, drug possession crimes account for only a small proportion of all drugs seized in terms of quantity, despite accounting for the vast majority of seizures.
- The data presented below for drug possession crimes is based on a sample of 400 records per year. As this analysis is drawn from a sample of records, users should treat the following information as a broad indication of the characteristics of drug possession rather than as an exact measure. All figures are presented at a national level as the sample size is too small to provide robust estimates for geographies below this.

### Number of drug possession crimes by drug classification

- Recorded crime statistics show that in total, there were 27,171 drug possession crimes recorded by the police in 2017-18, compared to 31,632 drug possession crimes in 2014-15, 29,929 in 2015-16, and 27,766 in 2016-17. Further information can be found in [Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2017-18](#).
- [Table 4a](#) shows the distribution of the classification of drugs seized in the sample for 2014-15 to 2017-18. [Table 4b](#) shows the resulting estimate of the total number of possession crimes involving each class of drug.
- In 2017-18, 57.5% of all drug possession crimes were estimated to involve Class B drugs. A further 21.8% of all drug possession crimes were estimated to involve Class A drugs, whilst 16.5% involved a Class C drug.
- Between 2014-15 and 2017-18, the proportion of drug possession crimes that were estimated to involve a Class B drug fell from 68.0% to 57.5%. None of the changes for Class A or Class C possession crimes (between 2014-15 and 2017-18) were found to be statistically significant.

**Table 4a: Percentage of drug possession records in the sample by drug classification, 2014-15 to 2017-18**

Drug Class	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Class A	15.8%	17.5%	22.5%	21.8%
Class B	68.0%	67.5%	62.5%	57.5%
Class C	15.8%	14.5%	14.0%	16.5%
Unclassified <sup>1</sup>	0.5%	0.5%	1.0%	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4b: Estimated number of drug possession crimes by drug classification, 2014-15 to 2017-18<sup>2</sup>**

Drug Class	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Class A	5,000	5,200	6,200	5,900
Class B	21,500	20,200	17,400	15,600
Class C	5,000	4,300	3,900	4,500
Unclassified <sup>1</sup>	200	100	300	1,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,632</b>	<b>29,929</b>	<b>27,766</b>	<b>27,171</b>

1. In a small number of cases the drug type could not be classified due to lack of information or no controlled drugs were seized.

2. As these figures are estimates they have been rounded to the nearest 100

### Quantity of drugs seized from drug possession crimes

- In 2017-18, cocaine, heroin, herbal cannabis, cannabis resin, diazepam, and etizolam accounted for 83.3% of all drug possession seizures.
- Herbal cannabis is the most commonly seized drug by a considerable margin, with cannabis resin the second most commonly seized drug. In 2017-18, 53.5% of all possession-related seizures involved these two drug types.
- [Table 5c](#) provides estimates of the quantity of drugs seized from 2014-15 to 2017-18 for particular drug types. Estimates of the quantity seized from drug possession crimes have only been calculated where there were at least 15 observations of that drug being seized in the sample.
- The quantity has been estimated by multiplying the average quantity seized in the sample by the estimated number of drug possession seizures involving that drug.

**Table 5a: Percentage of drug possession records in the sample, by drug type, 2014-15 to 2017-18**

Drug	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cocaine	7.8%	8.3%	10.3%	10.0%
Heroin	4.8%	6.0%	7.5%	8.8%
Herbal Cannabis	43.0%	46.8%	41.8%	39.5%
Cannabis Resin	21.0%	16.8%	18.3%	14.0%
Diazepam	14.5%	12.3%	9.8%	5.5%
Etizolam <sup>1</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.5%

**Table 5b: Estimated number of drug possession crimes, by drug type, 2014-15 to 2017-18<sup>2</sup>**

Drug	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cocaine	2,500	2,500	2,900	2,700
Heroin	1,500	1,800	2,100	2,400
Herbal Cannabis	13,600	14,000	11,600	10,700
Cannabis Resin	6,600	5,000	5,100	3,800
Diazepam	4,600	3,700	2,700	1,500
Etizolam <sup>1</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,500

**Table 5c: Estimated quantity of drugs seized by Police Scotland from drug possession crimes, by drug type, 2014-15 to 2017-18**

Drug	Units	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cocaine	kg	4.1	6.1	5.2	4.7
Heroin	kg	0.8	2.1	2.1	3.8
Herbal Cannabis	kg	36.2	36.8	39.6	61.2
Cannabis Resin	kg	14.8	17.6	32.6	28.1
Diazepam	tablets (000s)	151.3	63.2	71.8	33.2
Etizolam <sup>1</sup>	tablets (000s)	n/a	n/a	n/a	61.7

1. From 2017-18 onwards, separate figures are presented for etizolam, a 'designer' benzodiazepine, which was classified as a Class C drug under a 2017 amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

2. As these figures are estimates they have been rounded to the nearest 100

## Overall quantity of drugs seized

- [Table 6](#) shows the total quantity of drugs seized for the drug types where an estimate of the quantity seized from possession crimes has been made. The figures shown in the table are the sum of the quantities seized from supply-related crimes and the estimated quantity seized from possession crimes.
- For those drug types not shown in Table 6, there were fewer than 15 observations in the sample of possession crimes for each year, and therefore the total quantity seized from possession crimes is likely to be very small. Due to this the quantity seized from supply-related crimes shown in [Tables 1b](#), [2b](#) and [3b](#) should provide a reasonable estimate of the total quantity seized.
- For all of these drug types the quantity of drugs seized from possession crimes is relatively small when compared to the quantity seized from supply crimes.
- In 2017-18, 79.1 kg of cocaine was seized in total compared to 125.5 kg in 2016-17. There were also 122.4 kg of heroin seized in 2017-18, compared to 56.2 kg in the previous year.
- In total, 614.6 kg of herbal cannabis was seized in 2017-18 compared to 387.4 kg in 2016-17. The quantity of cannabis resin seized in 2017-18 was 653.1 kg compared to 354.7 kg in 2016-17.
- Approximately 354,000 diazepam tablets were seized in 2017-18, compared to 2.2 million in 2016-17. Approximately 326,000 etizolam tablets were seized in 2017-18. As noted above, etizolam is a 'designer' benzodiazepine, which was classified as a Class C drug under a 2017 amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/634/pdfs/uksiem\\_20170634\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/634/pdfs/uksiem_20170634_en.pdf)

**Table 6: Estimated total quantity of drugs seized by Police Scotland, by drug type, 2014-15 to 2017-18<sup>1</sup>**

Drug	Units	Drug Class	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cocaine	kg	A	79.8	88.8	125.5	79.1
Heroin	kg	A	106.9	76.1	56.2	122.4
Herbal Cannabis	kg	B	201.6	450.7	387.4	614.6
Cannabis Resin	kg	B	168.2	588.0	354.7	653.1
Diazepam <sup>2</sup>	tablets (000s)	C	1,334.0	1,339.3	2,237.3	354.0
Etizolam <sup>3</sup>	tablets (000s)	C	n/a	n/a	n/a	325.5

1. Data for 2014-15 is based on an estimated 85% of all drug supply-related crimes, data for 2015-16 is based on an estimated 92% of all drug supply-related crimes. Data for 2016-17 onwards is based on 100% of drug supply-related crimes.

2. For the element of this which applies to supply based crimes a small proportion of these will be other benzodiazepines (excluding etizolam).

3. From 2017-18 onwards, separate figures are presented for etizolam, a 'designer' benzodiazepine, which was classified as a Class C drug under a 2017 amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

# Analysis of the characteristics of drug possession crimes

- Information about the offenders of drug possession crimes and how they came to the attention of the police was also recorded in the sampling process.

## Characteristics of offenders, 2017-18

- The vast majority of drug possession crimes were committed by one offender, with only 2% of crimes having multiple offenders (these situations can occur where offenders collectively admit to ownership of the seized drugs, or if no one admits to ownership).
- The vast majority of drug possession crimes were committed by males or all male groups (86%).
- The median age of a drug possession offender was 30 years old. [Table 7](#) shows the age distribution of the offenders in the sample.
- Almost two thirds (64%) of offenders are in the 20-29 and 30-39 years age groups. Offenders are far more likely to come from these two age groups than would be expected based solely on their size within the general population (26%).
- In 31% of drug possession crimes there was a reference to someone being either under the influence of alcohol or drugs or having consumed alcohol or drugs. In the majority of these cases it refers to the offender, however in a small number of cases it is in reference to another party.

**Table 7: Age distribution of the offenders of drug possession crimes in 2017-18**

Age group of offender	Percentage of offenders	Percentage of total population <sup>1</sup>
0-19	12.9%	21.3%
20-29	36.6%	13.6%
30-39	27.7%	12.8%
40-49	16.6%	13.1%
50+	6.2%	39.2%

1. Population figures are based on the National Records of Scotland 2017 mid-year estimates. <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates>

## **How Police Scotland became aware of the drug possession crime**

- The circumstances leading to a drug possession seizure have been recorded based on the details of the event within the crime record. As crime records have not been created specifically for this purpose, it has been necessary on occasion to make assumptions around certain aspects of what happened. As such this information should be seen as a broad illustration, rather than a precise measure.
- In 2017-18, it is estimated that 44% of drug possessions in the sample were detected by police while on routine patrol. The majority of these were cases where police officers on patrol had a suspicion or observed that the offender was in possession of drugs, with this category accounting for 37% of all records reviewed. A further 7% of records involved police on patrol dealing with another crime, offence or incident and finding drugs while doing this.
- 32% of drug possessions were assessed to be found as a result of police responding to a report of a crime, offence or another reported incident, either in relation to the drugs offence or for another matter (either criminal or non-criminal). A further 15% of drug possession seizures were made by police whilst carrying out a search warrant (likely due to the receipt of intelligence that an individual was involved in drugs crime).

## **Other information about the drug seizure**

- 7% of crime records for drug possession made reference to the involvement of NHS services. This involvement was not necessarily for the offender of the drug possession crime, and will not necessarily be linked to the use of drugs.
- More than one crime was recorded in 47% of records in the sample. The additional crimes recorded are not necessarily committed by the same person responsible for the drug possession crime, but would have related to the same incident. In 73% of the records where another crime was recorded, at least one of the other crimes was also in relation to drug possession or supply.
- Drug seizures were more common over the weekend, with Fridays and Saturdays accounting for 21% and 19% respectively.
- The most common location for drugs to be seized from an offender was the street or other open space, with 49% of records reviewed having this locus. Dwellings were the next most common locus, where 24% of seizures took place.

# Annexes

## Data Quality Statement

- To produce this annual release on drug seizures, the Scottish Government requests data on drug supply-related crimes from Police Scotland's Analysis and Performance Unit (APU). APU, in turn, requests this information from divisions across Police Scotland which still maintain aspects of their own Crime Management Systems defined by the previous legacy force areas.
- Data from drug possession crimes is collected via a random sample of 400 drug possession crime records per year. This sample is stratified by police division so that the sample's geographic distribution reflects the distribution of drug possession crimes across Scotland. These records are reviewed by Scottish Government statisticians.
- As part of the sampling process, the quality of the recording of drug possession crimes was checked and found to be very good, with nearly 100% of records classified correctly across 2017-18.
- We always welcome feedback on the content of our statistical bulletins and users are welcome to submit their comments to: [JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot](mailto:JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot).

## Police Scotland Management Information

- In addition to the Official Statistics on drug seizures, Police Scotland publish management information on drug crimes recorded by the police (including the number of recorded crimes of drug supply & production, possession of drugs and other drug crimes). This is presented within their Quarterly Management Information Reports, which are available from the 'Our Performance' section of Police Scotland's website: <http://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/our-performance/>
- These reports are produced to demonstrate Police Scotland's commitment to transparency (alongside other regular reporting activity to the Scottish Police Authority). The information within these reports is presented on a cumulative quarterly basis, with the first quarter of a reporting year containing 3 months of data (from April to June), the second containing 6 months of data (from April to September) etc. The reports are typically published within 2 months of the period to which they refer.

## Other notes

- In addition to drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the Psychoactive Substance Act 2016 made it an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, possess on custodial premises, import or export psychoactive substances. The number of crimes of production, supply or possession in custody of a psychoactive substance in 2017-18 was 11.

- Justice Analytical Services publishes a work plan each year detailing the programme of work planned over the current financial year period. The work of the division covers both an agreed forward programme of analytical priorities, and routine analytical work particularly related to the compilation of National and Official Statistics, ongoing project management and knowledge transfer activity.
- Analytical planning to develop a programme for the financial year 2018-19 followed a structured process of engagement with policy colleagues which was designed to closely align our analysis with current policy priorities and to the delivery of outcomes. The work plan is available via the following link, with an updated plan for 2019-20 due for publication later in the year: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/JAS-Programme-2018-19>.
- Clearly, only a limited selection of tables can be included in any statistical bulletin. Further analysis of Drug Seizures in Scotland can be supplied on request. In certain cases a fee is charged. For details of what can be provided, please contact Mark Bell at [JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot](mailto:JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot).

## **An Official Statistics publication for Scotland**

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### **How to access background or source data**

The data collected for this statistical bulletin

are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics

are available on the Scottish Government website

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact [JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot](mailto:JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot) for further information.

cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

### **Complaints and suggestions**

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, GR, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot).

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