



Home Office



Seizures of drugs in England and Wales, 2014/15

Statistical Bulletin 06/15

Edited by: Jodie Hargreaves and Kevin Smith

November 2015

Further information

This statistical release presents figures for drug seizures made in 2014/15 in England and Wales by the police (including the British Transport Police) and Border Force. The data relate to all drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (MDA), which divides drugs into three categories – Classes A, B and C – according to the harmfulness they cause to the user or to the society when they are misused. Class A drugs are considered to be the most harmful.

The annual *Seizures of drugs in England and Wales* publication, and other Home Office statistical releases, are available from the [Home Office pages](#) of the GOV.UK website.

The dates of forthcoming publications are pre-announced and can be found via the [GOV.UK publication hub](#).

For further information about the statistics in this publication, please email crimeandpolicestats@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or write to:
Home Office Statistics, 1st Floor, Peel Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

Home Office Responsible Statistician

Damon Wingfield, Programme Director, Crime and Policing Statistics
Contact via crimeandpolicestats@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

This statistical bulletin is produced to the highest professional standards and is free from political interference. It has been produced by statisticians working in the Crime and Policing Analysis Unit in accordance with the Home Office's [statement of compliance](#) with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which covers Home Office policy on revisions and other matters. The Chief Statistician, as Head of Profession, reports to the National Statistician with respect to all professional statistical matters and oversees all Home Office National Statistics products with respect to the Code, being responsible for their timing, content and methodology.

Contents

	Page
Lists of figures and tables	iv
Summary	vi
1 Introduction	8
2 Number of seizures.....	10
3 Quantity of drugs seized.....	14
4 Seizures by authority	20
5 Data quality and interpreting the figures	23
6 Revisions analysis.....	24
7 Other data sources	25

List of figures

1 Introduction

2 Number of seizures.....

Figure 2.1 Number of seizures of Class A, Class B and Class C drugs, 2006/07 to 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

Figure 2.2 Index of police recorded drug offences and the total number of drug seizures, 2006/07 to 2014/15

Figure 2.3 Number of seizures of the main Class A drug types, 2006/07 to 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

Figure 2.4 Number of cannabis seizures, 2006/07 to 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

3 Quantity of drugs seized.....

Figure 3.1 Quantity of cocaine and heroin seized, 2006/07 to 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

Figure 3.2 Distribution of quantities of Class A drugs seized, summarised in kilograms, 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

Figure 3.3 Distribution of quantities of Class A drugs seized, summarised in doses, 2014/15, police forces only

Figure 3.4 Quantity of cannabis seized, 2006/07 to 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

Figure 3.5 Distribution of quantities of herbal cannabis and cannabis resin seized, 2014/15, police forces only

Figure 3.6 Distribution of quantities of cannabis plants seized, 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

Figure 3.7 Distribution of quantities of Class B drugs seized, summarised in kilograms, 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

Figure 3.8 Distribution of quantities of anabolic steroids seized, 2014/15, police forces only

4 Seizures by authority

Figure 4.1 Proportion of drug seizure numbers by drug type and authority, 2014/15

Figure 4.2 Proportion of drug seizure quantities by drug type and authority, 2014/15

Figure 4.3 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of cocaine, by authority, 2014/15

Figure 4.4 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of heroin, by authority, 2014/15

Figure 4.5 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of herbal cannabis, by authority, 2014/15

Figure 4.6 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of ecstasy, by authority, 2014/15

List of tables

- 1** **Introduction**
- Table 1.1 Drugs and their classifications under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- 2** **Number of seizures**
- 3** **Quantity of seizures**
- Table 3.1 Drugs summarised in kilograms, doses and plants
- 4** **Seizures by authority**
- Table 4.1 Number of seizures made by police forces and Border Force, 2013/14 to 2014/15

Summary

This statistical release presents figures for drug seizures made in 2014/15 in England and Wales by the police (including the British Transport Police) and Border Force. The data relate to all drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (MDA), which divides drugs into three categories (Classes A, B and C) according to the harmfulness they cause to the user or to society when they are misused. Class A drugs are considered to be the most harmful.

Bedfordshire Police and Hampshire Police were unable to provide accurate data for 2014/15 and Gwent Police were only able to supply data for 10 months in 2013/14. As a result, imputation methods have been used to estimate data for these forces. Figures in this publication include the imputed estimates for Gwent Police (in 2013/14) and for Bedfordshire Police and Hampshire Police (in 2014/15). These forces account for around four per cent of all drug seizures. All comparisons in this publication include the estimated values.

The numbers of seizures made can be affected by police activity and changes in recording practices. Therefore, the number of drug seizures each year should not be taken as a measure of drug prevalence in England and Wales. Prevalence is addressed in the Drug Misuse publications, based on results from the Crime Survey for England and Wales¹.

Further information can be found in the [User Guide](#).

Key findings

- There were 167,059 drug seizures in England and Wales in 2014/15 (including estimated figures), a 14 per cent decrease on the number of drug seizures in 2013/14 (194,346). Over the same time period, there was also a 14 per cent decrease in the number of police recorded drug offences, which is highly correlated with the number of drug seizures².
- Seizures by police forces decreased by 15 per cent between 2013/14 and 2014/15 (from 188,499 to 160,933) whereas seizures made by Border Force increased by five per cent (from 5,847 seizures to 6,126).
- The majority of seizures (96%) were made by police forces in England and Wales; however, Border Force seizures tended to be for larger quantities. In terms of quantity, Border Force seized 91 per cent of all cannabis resin, 82 per cent of the total amount of ecstasy and 79 per cent of the total amount of cocaine.

Class A

- Between 2013/14 and 2014/15, seizures of Class A drugs decreased by ten per cent from 32,847 in 2013/14 to 29,705 in 2014/15.
- Cocaine was the most commonly seized Class A drug, with just over half of all Class A seizures involving this substance. In 2014/15, there were 15,815 seizures of cocaine, down six per cent on the previous year (16,913 seizures).
- There was also a small decrease in the quantity of cocaine seized between 2013/14 and 2014/15, from 3,416 kilograms in 2013/14 to 3,387 kilograms in 2014/15, a decrease of one per cent.
- In 2014/15 there was a large increase in the quantity of heroin seized (by both police forces and Border Force) from 647 kilograms in 2013/14 to 1,113 kilograms in 2014/15, an increase of 72 per cent.

¹ See the latest edition of 'Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2014/15 Crime Survey for England and Wales', available at: [Drug misuse statistics](#).

² Statistics on the number of police recorded drug offences are published on a quarterly basis by the [ONS](#).

Class B

- There were 132,253 seizures of Class B drugs in 2014/15, a decrease of 17 per cent since 2013/14 (158,732).
- The majority of Class B seizures were for cannabis, with 124,408 seizures in total (down 17% on the 2013/14 figure).
- In terms of quantity, between 2013/14 and 2014/15, there was a decrease of 16 per cent in the amount of herbal cannabis seized and a decrease of 20 per cent in the number of cannabis plants seized.
- Over the same time period there was a large increase in the amount of cannabis resin seized; however, this was down to an unusually low amount seized in 2013/14 (736 kg seized in 2013/14 compared with 19,478 kg in 2011/12, 11,508 kg in 2012/13 and 7,405 kg in 2014/15).

Class C

- Seizures of Class C drugs increased between 2013/14 and 2014/15, from 5,618 to 6,244 in 2014/15, an increase of 11 per cent.
- The most commonly seized Class C drug in 2014/15 was benzodiazepine with 2,122 seizures, a small increase of one per cent on the 2013/14 figure of 2,107.
- Seizures of “Other Class C” drugs increased by 36 per cent between 2013/14 and 2014/15, from 2,275 to 3,098 seizures.

1 Introduction

This publication presents figures for drug seizures made in 2014/15 in England and Wales by the police (including the British Transport Police) and Border Force. Although Border Force will have made seizures outside the land territory of England and Wales (e.g. Scotland, Northern Ireland), such seizures are excluded from figures presented in this publication.

The presented figures are correct at the time of publication and include revisions submitted by police forces for the years covered by, and received since, the publication of, '[Seizures of drugs in England and Wales, 2013/14](#)'.

Bedfordshire Police and Hampshire Police were unable to provide accurate data for 2014/15 and Gwent Police were only able to supply data for 10 months in 2013/14. As a result, imputation methods were used to estimate data for the missing periods for these forces. Figures in this publication include the imputed estimates for Gwent Police in 2013/14 and for Bedfordshire Police and Hampshire Police in 2014/15.

Data on the number of seizures and quantity of drugs seized can be found in the accompanying ODS and Excel [workbooks](#).

Substances covered by this release

The statistics relate to all drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (MDA), which divides drugs into three categories – Classes A, B and C – according to the harmfulness they cause to the user or to society when they are misused. Class A drugs are considered to be the most harmful. However, given the large number of drugs covered by the MDA, it is not feasible to publish seizure statistics in detail for every drug type. While all drugs are included in the totals, only those shown below are covered in detail within this bulletin³.

Table 1.1 Drugs and their classifications under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

Class A	Class B	Class C
Cocaine	Amphetamines ^a	Anabolic steroids
Crack	Barbiturates ^a	Benzodiazepines
Ecstasy	Cannabis ^b	GHB
Heroin	Ketamine ^c	Temazepam
LSD	Mephedrone	
Methadone		
Morphine		

a. Amphetamines and barbiturates are Class A drugs if prepared for injection.

b. Cannabis was reclassified from a Class B to a Class C drug in January 2004, and then classified back as a Class B drug on 26 January 2009.

c. Ketamine was reclassified from a Class C to a Class B drug on 10 June 2014.

On 10 June 2014, ketamine was reclassified from a Class C drug to a Class B drug. In this publication ketamine has been grouped with Class B drugs for the entire time series shown, with the exception of class totals, where it remains grouped with Class C drugs until 2013/14⁴.

As with previous years, Border Force has been unable to separately identify some of the drugs included in the above table from their recording system. This has resulted in Border Force seizures of methadone being included within the 'other Class A' grouping, barbiturates within 'other Class B', and benzodiazepines and temazepam within 'other Class C'.

³ Where a seizure is made of a drug that is not listed in the above, it is aggregated into an 'other' class category. Further information on drugs covered under the MDA is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlled-drugs-list>

⁴ Ketamine has been grouped with Class C drug totals until 2013/14 so that the total number of seizures for each drug classification reflects government policy in that time period.

Temporary Class Drug Orders (TCDOs)

In response to the increasing number of new psychoactive substances not controlled under the MDA and concerns about potential harms, the government implemented TCDOs in November 2011⁵. Under an amendment to the MDA, a substance becomes controlled for up to 12 months to give the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) time to provide full, independent and expert advice on the drug; possession is not an offence, but the drug can still be seized.

Seven methylphenidate based new psychoactive substances (ethylphenidate, 3,4-dichloromethylphenidate ('3,4-DCMP'), methylnaphthidate ('HDMP-28'), isopropylphenidate ('IPP' or 'IPPD'), 4-methylmethylphenidate, ethylnaphthidate and propylphenidate), and their simple derivatives, are currently controlled under a TCDO.

A number of compounds, including those from the methoxetamine, NBOMe, benzofuran and methylphenidate-based families and their simple derivatives, have previously been subjected to a **TCDO**. Of these, the methoxetamine, NBOMe and benzofuran compounds and their simple derivatives are currently subjected to permanent control under the 1971 Act (Methoxetamine since 26 February 2013 and NBOMe and benzofuran since 10 June 2014).

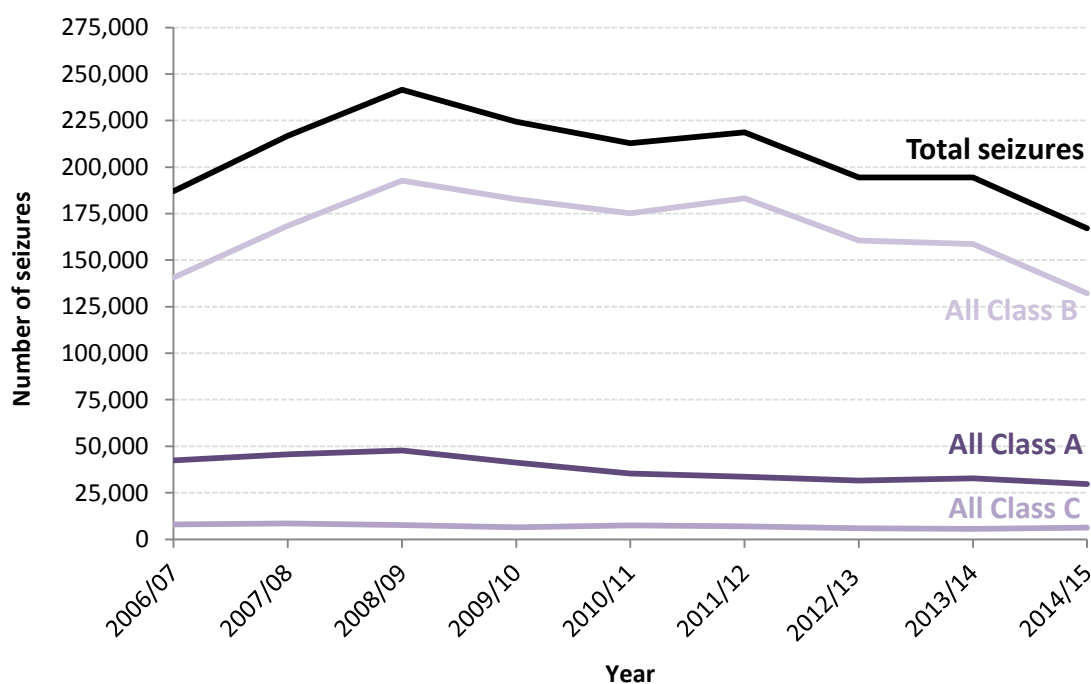
⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/temporary-class-drugs-orders-factsheet>

2 Number of seizures

The numbers of seizures made can be affected by police activity and changes in recording practices. Therefore, the number of drug seizures each year should not be taken as a measure of drug prevalence in England and Wales. Prevalence is addressed in the Drug Misuse publications, based on results from the Crime Survey for England and Wales⁶.

- In 2014/15, there were 167,059 seizures of drugs in England and Wales, a 14 per cent decrease since 2013/14, when there were 194,346 seizures⁷.
- The number of drug seizures peaked in 2008/09, at 241,473 seizures, and has since declined by 31 per cent (Figure 2.1).
- As in previous years, the majority of seizures were for Class B drugs, and, in particular, cannabis. Around three quarters of all seizures involved cannabis in one form or another.

Figure 2.1 Number of seizures of Class A, Class B and Class C drugs, 2006/07 to 2014/15, police forces and Border Force



Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 1](#).

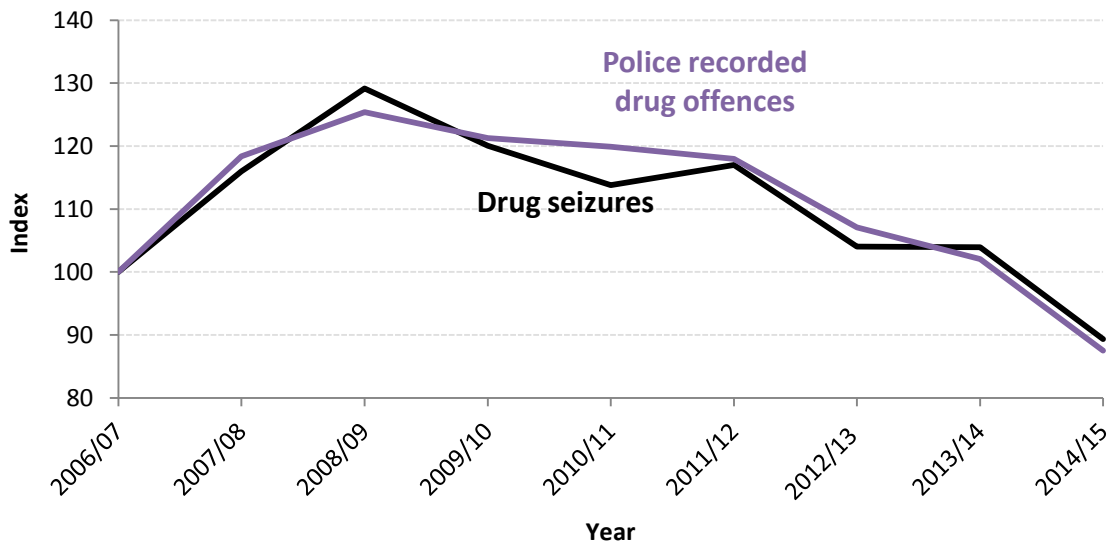
⁶ See the latest edition of 'Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2014/15 Crime Survey for England and Wales', available at: [Drug misuse statistics](#).

⁷ Figures include estimates for Bedfordshire and Hampshire in 2014/15, and for Gwent in 2013/14.

The total number of drug seizures per year is highly correlated with the number of police recorded drug offences⁸. In 2014/15 the police recorded 169,964 drug offences, a 14 per cent decrease since the previous year (198,215).

Since the peak in 2008/09, the number of drug offences recorded by the police has decreased by 30 per cent. Over the same time period the number of drug seizures by police forces and Border Force has decreased by 31 per cent (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Index of police recorded drug offences and the total number of drug seizures, 2006/07 to 2014/15



Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 1](#).
ONS, Crime in England and Wales, year ending March 2015, [Reference table 4](#).

Class A drugs

Substances considered to be the most harmful to the user or to society are categorised as Class A drugs under the MDA. In 2014/15, there were 29,705 seizures of Class A drugs, a ten per cent decrease since 2013/14 (32,847 seizures). In 2014/15, just under one fifth (18%) of all drug seizures involved at least one Class A drug. Since 2006/07, cocaine has been the most commonly seized drug in this classification group; prior to 2006/07, heroin had been the most commonly seized Class A drug⁹.

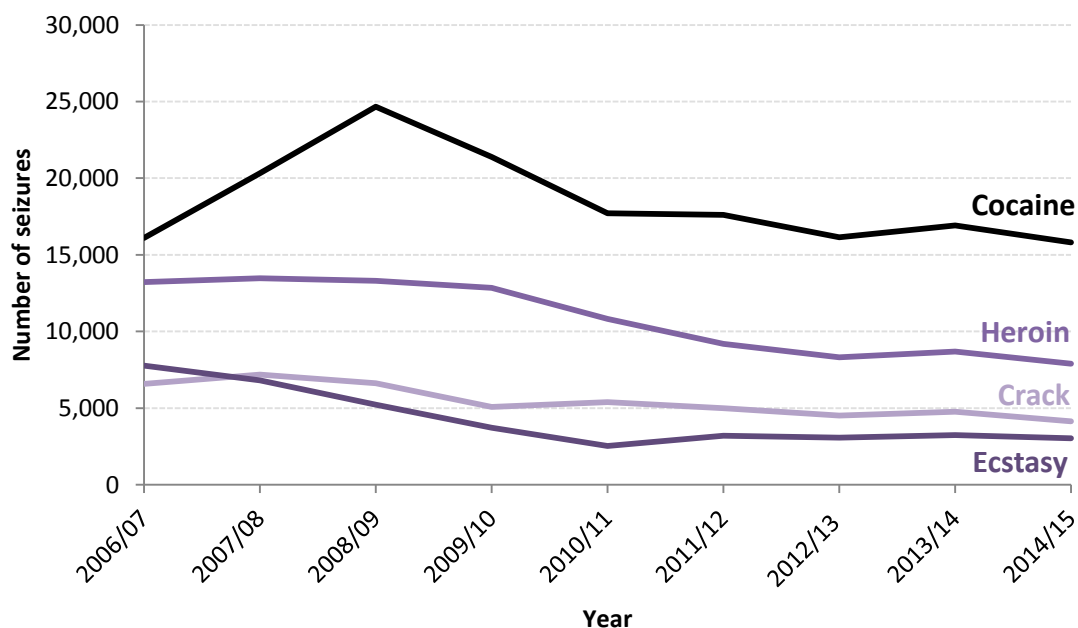
- Over half (53%) of all seizures of Class A drugs involved cocaine, with 15,815 seizures of the substance in 2014/15, a six per cent decrease on the 2013/14 figure (16,913).
- After cocaine, heroin was the second most commonly seized Class A drug, with 7,892 seizures in 2014/15 (27% of all Class A seizures). This was a nine per cent decrease on the 2013/14 figure of 8,682 seizures.
- There were also decreases in the number of crack cocaine seizures (down 13%, from 4,762 to 4,132), ecstasy (down 7% from 3,245 to 3,018) and methadone (down 10% from 761 seizures to 686 seizures).

⁸ Statistics on the number of police recorded drug offences are published on a quarterly basis by the [ONS](#).

⁹ Statistics on historic seizures of drugs in England and Wales can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seizures-of-drugs-in-england-and-wales-2009-to-10>.

Figure 2.3 Number of seizures of the main Class A drug types, 2006/07 to 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

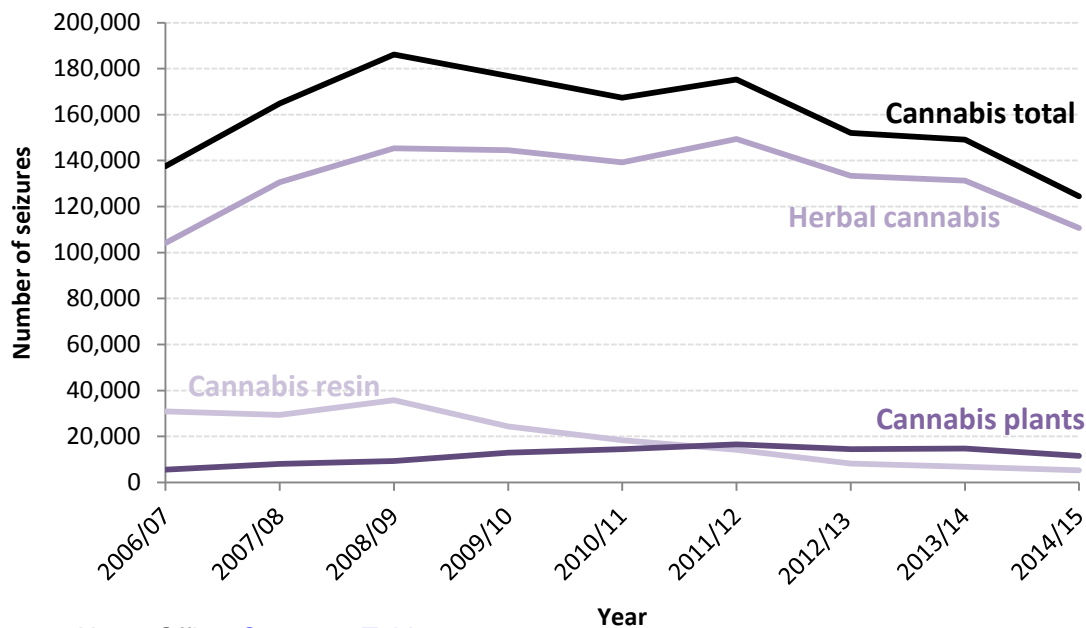


Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 1](#).

Class B drugs

In 2014/15, there were 132,253 seizures of Class B drugs, a 17 per cent decrease on 2013/14, when there were 158,732 seizures of Class B drugs. As in previous years, the great majority of Class B seizures were for cannabis, with over 90 per cent of all Class B seizures involving at least one form of cannabis (124,408).

- There were 124,408 seizures of cannabis in 2014/15, a 17 per cent decrease on 2013/14 (149,087).
- The decrease in seizures of cannabis was seen across each of the three types of cannabis recorded;
 - Seizures of herbal cannabis (which dominate seizures of cannabis) fell by 16 per cent between 2013/14 and 2014/15 (from 131,257 to 110,626);
 - seizures of cannabis plants decreased by 21 per cent (from 14,728 to 11,612);
 - the number of seizures of cannabis in the resin form fell by 22 per cent over the same time period (from 6,864 to 5,339).
- Since the peak in 2008/09, there has been a downward trend in the number of seizures of cannabis resin, whereas the number of seizures of cannabis plants saw an upward trend between 2006/07 and 2011/2012 (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.4 Number of cannabis seizures, 2006/07 to 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 1](#).

Other Class B drugs

- Amphetamines were the second most frequently seized Class B drug with 5,531 seizures in 2014/15, an 11 per cent decrease since 2013/14, when there were 6,239 seizures.
- On 10 June 2014, ketamine was reclassified from a Class C drug to a Class B drug. In 2014/15, there were 484 seizures of Ketamine, a 70 per cent decrease on the previous year, when there were 1,639 seizures.
- In addition, the number of seizures of 'other Class B' drugs in 2014/15 (3,788 seizures) was 13 per cent lower than in 2013/14 (4,348 seizures). The majority of "other Class B seizures" were for mephedrone. There were 2,245 seizures of mephedrone in 2014/15, compared with 3,062 in 2013/14 (down 27%).

Class C drugs

There was an 11 per cent increase in the number of seizures of Class C drugs in 2014/15 compared with 2013/14, a rise of 626 seizures from 5,618 in 2013/14 to 6,244 in 2014/15.

- Around a third (34%) of all seizures of Class C drugs involved benzodiazepines with seizures of the substance in 2014/15 remaining at a similar level to 2013/14 (2,122 seizures in 2014/15 and 2,107 seizures in 2013/14).
- In 2014/15 there were 3,098 seizures of 'Other Class C' drugs, a 36 per cent increase compared with 2013/14.

Unknown substances

Since 2007/08, recorded seizures of 'unknown' substances have increased year on year, from 2,120 seizures in 2007/08 to 7,375 in 2014/15. Many of these seizures are likely to involve drugs sent for forensic testing by forces, where the police forces have not updated statistical returns on the receipt of those forensic test results. Changes to police forces' forensic analysis arrangements after the closure of the Forensic Science Service may also have had an impact.

3 Quantity of drugs seized

The quantity of drugs seized tends to fluctuate from year to year and trends do not necessarily move in line with the number of seizures made. Annual totals of the quantity of drugs seized can be greatly influenced by a small number of large seizures. As with the number of drug seizures, any large quantity of drugs seized should not be taken as an indication of drug prevalence or availability.

The quantities of drugs seized are summarised in terms of kilograms, doses (in thousands) or plants, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Drugs summarised in kilograms, doses and plants

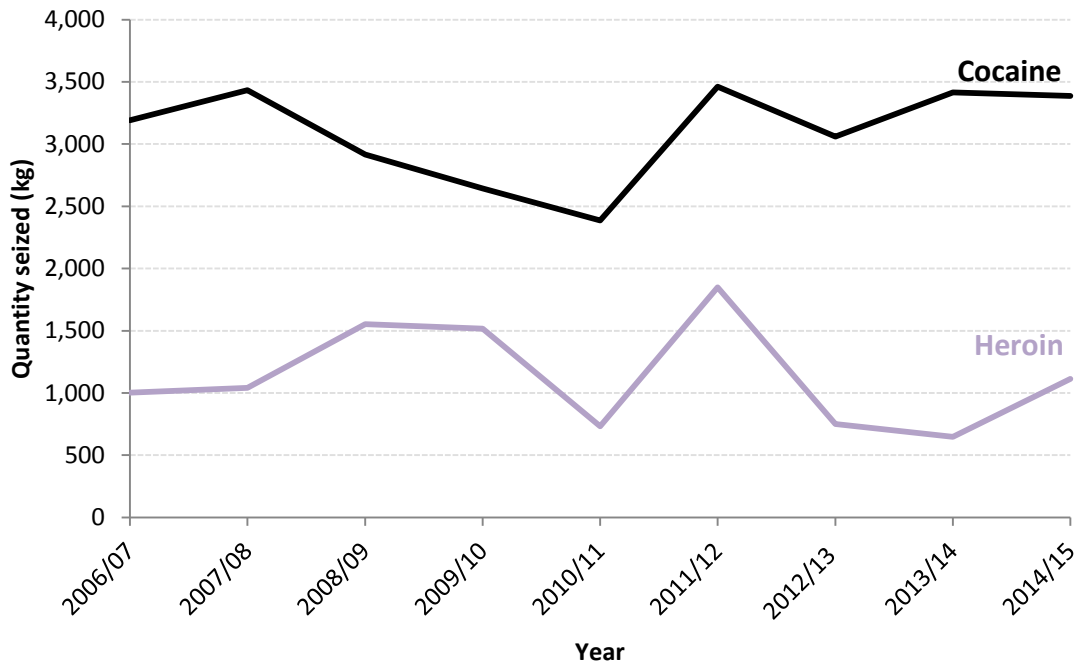
Summarised in kilograms	Summarised in thousands of doses	Summarised as plants
Amphetamines	Anabolic steroids	Cannabis plants
Herbal cannabis	Barbiturates	
Cannabis resin	Benzodiazepines	
Cocaine	Ecstasy	
Crack	LSD	
GHB	Methadone	
Heroin	Morphine	
Ketamine	Temazepam	

Most drugs can plausibly be seized in a preparation form other than kilograms or doses; therefore, in order to present all seized quantities within a given drug type in terms of one comparable unit (either kilograms or doses), conversion factors are applied to estimate the overall quantity of drugs seized.

See the [user guide](#) for more information.

Class A drugs

Figure 3.1 Quantity of cocaine and heroin seized, 2006/07 to 2014/15, police forces and Border Force



Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 2](#).

- In 2014/15, 3,387 kilograms of cocaine were seized by the police and Border Force, a one per cent decrease on the previous year (3,416 kg). Taking police seizures alone, there was a 20 per cent increase in the quantity of cocaine seized on the previous year, mainly down to one large seizure by the Metropolitan Police of 150 kilograms¹⁰.
- Just under two thirds (65%) of the 15,815 seizures of cocaine were each under one gram in weight, and three per cent of cocaine seizures weighed 500 grams or more (Figure 3.2).
- The quantity of crack seized in 2014/15 was 33 kilograms, a reduction of 15 kilograms since 2013/14, when 48 kilograms were seized. Similarly to cocaine, the majority of seizures of crack (61%) weighed less than one gram each.
- In 2014/15, 1,113 kilograms of heroin were seized, a 72 per cent increase on 2013/14 (647 kg) and the largest quantity since 2011/12, when 1,849 kilograms were seized. This change on the previous year is largely due to an increase in the number of seizures weighing 10 kilograms or more, with 24 seizures falling within this category in 2014/15, compared with 13 seizures in 2013/14.
- There has been an increase of four per cent in the quantity of ecstasy seized in 2014/15, compared with 2013/14, from 1,084,466 to 1,125,004. Forty per cent of all police force seizures of ecstasy were of a single dose or less; a further 39 per cent were of quantities of up to 10 doses (Figure 3.3).

¹⁰ <http://content.met.police.uk/News/Four-arrested-and-150kg-of-cocaine-recovered/1400025035119/1257246745756>

Figure 3.2 Distribution of quantities of Class A drugs seized, summarised in kilograms, 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

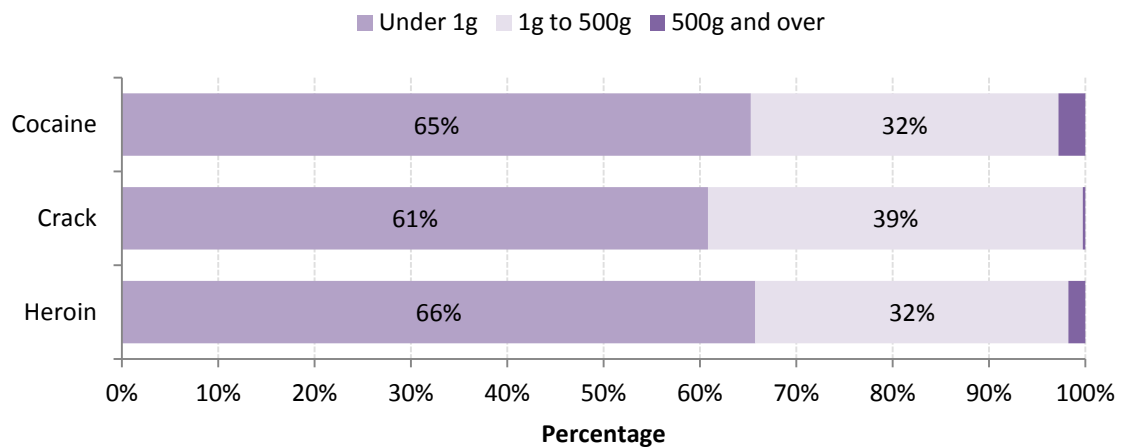
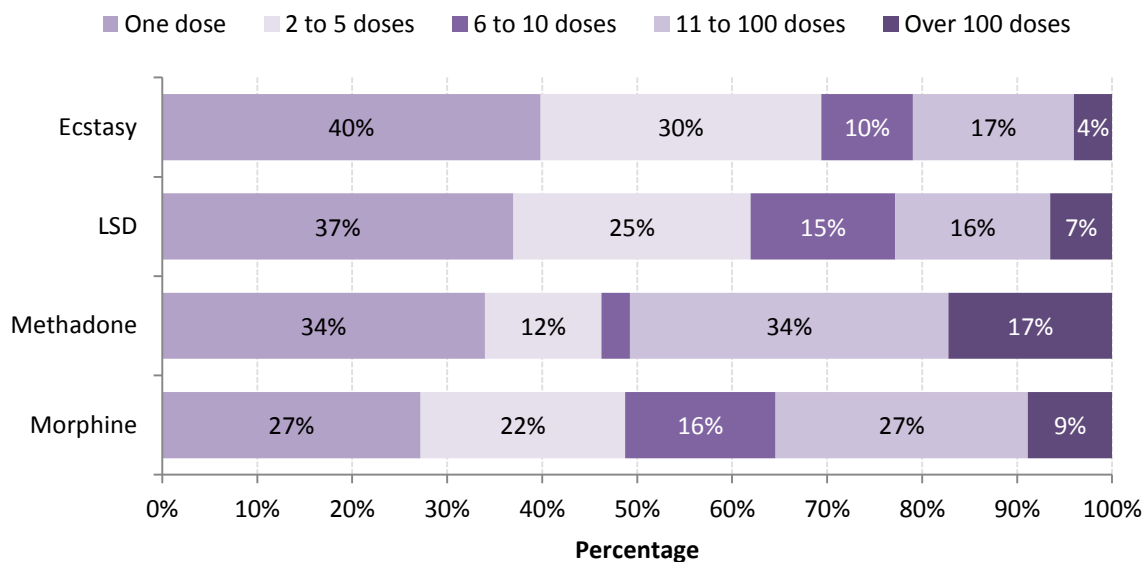


Figure 3.3 Distribution of quantities of Class A drugs seized, summarised in doses, 2014/15, police forces only*



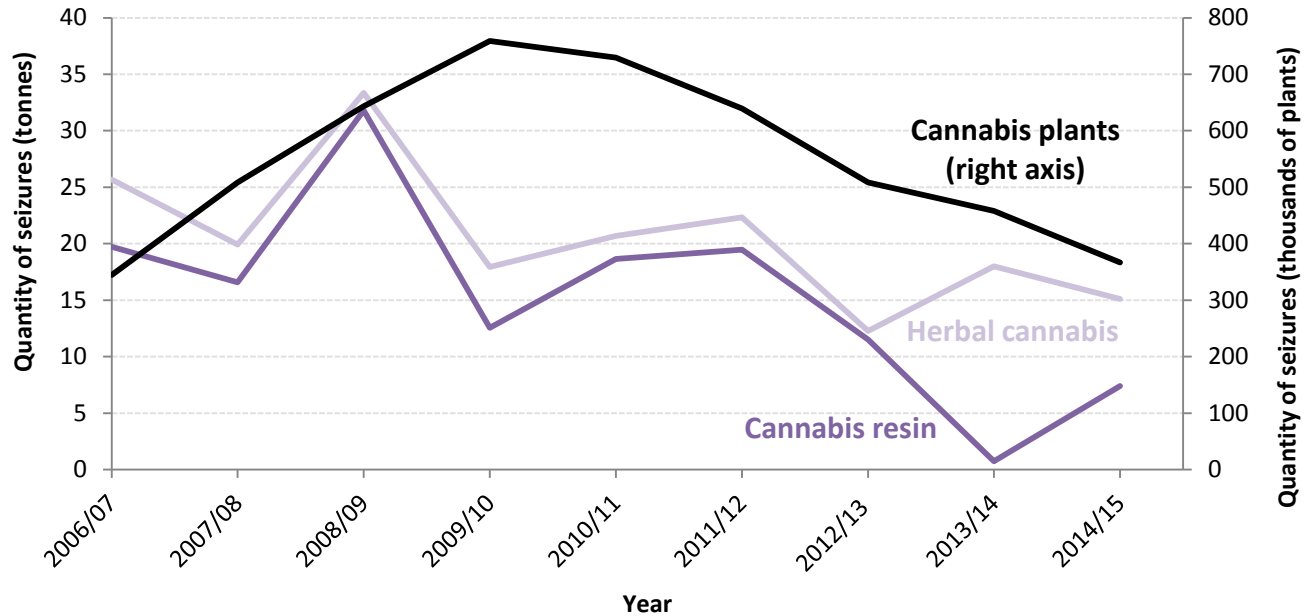
*Chart note: Does not include Border Force data since data from Border Force supplied to the Home Office were not separated into smaller categories than those published in the data tables.

Source: Home Office, [Supplementary table 2](#).

Class B drugs

Cannabis

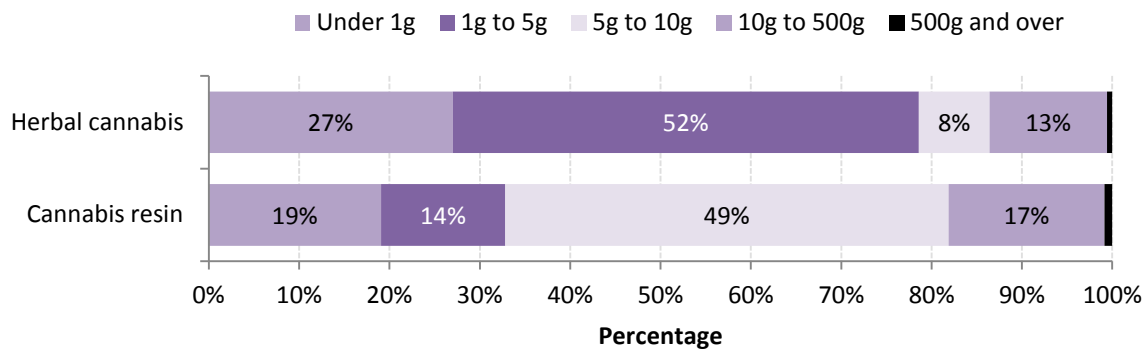
Figure 3.4 Quantity of cannabis seized, 2006/07 to 2014/15, police forces and Border Force



Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 2](#).

- In 2014/15, 15,106 kilograms of herbal cannabis were seized, a 16 per cent decrease on the quantity seized in 2013/14 (17,983 kg).
- Over the same time period, the quantity of cannabis resin seized increased from 736 kilograms in 2013/14 to 7,405 kilograms in 2014/15. This increase was due to the unusually small amount of cannabis resin seized by Border Force in 2013/14, compared with other years (263 kg in 2013/14 compared to 7,165 kg in 2012/13 and 15,566 kg in 2011/12).
- The distribution of the quantity of cannabis seized, per seizure, is quite different to all other drugs. Unlike other drugs, the majority of seizures of cannabis weighed over one gram each. In 2014/15, of the 108,517 seizures of herbal cannabis made by police forces, around one quarter (27%) were of quantities weighing less than 1 gram, a half (52%) were of quantities weighing between 1 gram and 5 grams and the remaining 21 per cent weighed 5 grams or more (Figure 3.5).
- Around a half (49%) of seizures of cannabis resin made by the police forces were of quantities weighing between 5 grams and 10 grams.

Figure 3.5 Distribution of quantities of herbal cannabis and cannabis resin seized, 2014/15, police forces only*

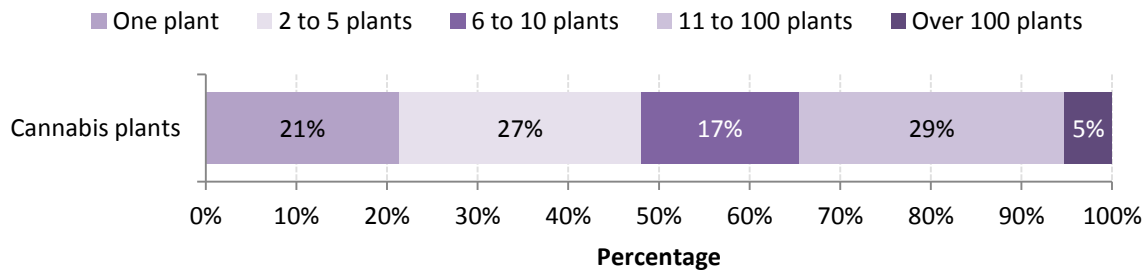


*Chart note: Does not include Border Force data since data from Border Force supplied to the Home Office were not separated into smaller categories than those published in the data tables.

Source: Home Office, [Supplementary Table 2](#).

- In 2014/15, there were 366,841 cannabis plants seized, a 20 per cent decrease on the previous year (458,062), continuing the downward trend since the number of seizures peaked in 2009/10 (758,943 plants seized).
- Almost half (48%) of seizures of cannabis plants were of quantities of five plants or fewer (Figure 3.6). In 2014/15 the average size of a seizure was 32 plants.

Figure 3.6 Distribution of quantities of cannabis plants seized, 2014/15, police forces and Border Force*



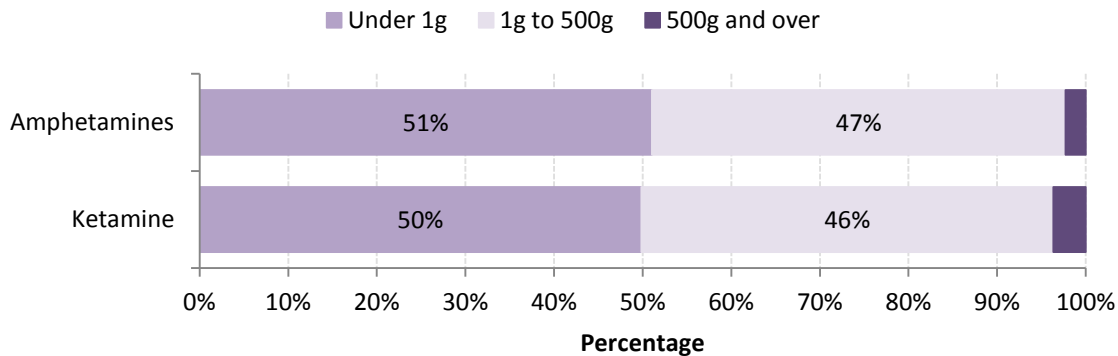
*Chart note: Border Force did not make any seizures of cannabis plants in 2014/15.

Source: Home Office, [Supplementary Table 2](#).

Other Class B drugs

- In 2014/15, there were 612 kilograms of amphetamines seized, half the amount seized in the previous year (1,218 kg).
- In 2014/15, there were 56 kilograms of ketamine seized, compared with 355 kilograms in 2013/14. In 2014/15, all police force seizures of ketamine weighed less than 500 grams, with 55 per cent weighing less than one gram. Border Force seized 16 quantities weighing 500 grams or more.

Figure 3.7 Distribution of quantities of Class B drugs seized, summarised in kilograms, 2014/15, police forces and Border Force

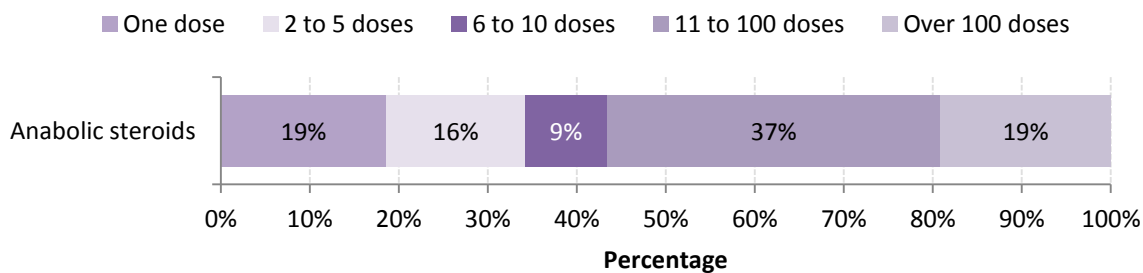


Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 3.](#)

Class C drugs

- Total seizures of anabolic steroids increased from 2,969,100 doses in 2013/14 to 16,000,268 doses in 2014/15, largely due to a number of very large seizures made by Border force.
- The total quantity of benzodiazepines seized in 2014/15 was similar to the 2013/14 figure (344,478 doses compared with 359,993 doses) and seizures of temazepam (in terms of quantity) were down by 41 per cent from 7,456 doses in 2013/14 to 4,380 doses in 2014/15.

Figure 3.8 Distribution of quantities of anabolic steroids seized, 2014/15, police forces only*



*Chart note: Does not include Border Force data since data from Border Force supplied to the Home Office were not separated into smaller categories than those published in the data tables.

Source: Home Office, [Supplementary Table 2.](#)

4 Seizures by authority

Seizures from joint operations involving Border Force and the police are recorded against the lead agency that takes possession of the seized drugs.

Number of seizures

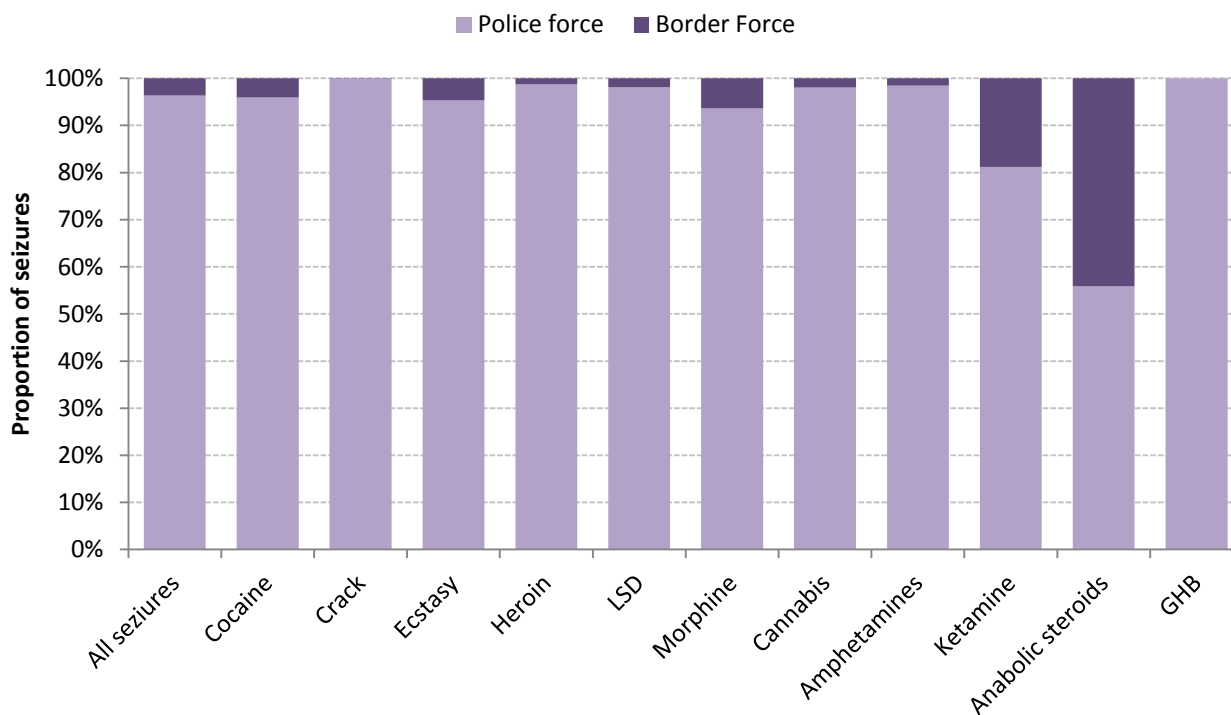
Table 4.1 shows the number of seizures made by police forces and Border Force for each class of drug. In 2014/15, 96 per cent of seizures were made by police forces (160,933); the remaining 6,126 (or 4%) were made by Border Force.

Table 4.1 Number of seizures made by police forces and Border Force, 2013/14 to 2014/15

	Police forces			Border Force		
	2013/14	2014/15	% change	2013/14	2014/15	% change
Class A	31,068	28,524	-8	1,779	1,181	-34
Class B	156,156	129,367	-17	2,576	2,886	12
Class C	3,996	4,102	3	1,622	2,142	32
All	188,499	160,933	-15	5,847	6,126	5

- The number of seizures made by police forces in England and Wales fell by 15 per cent in 2014/15 compared with 2013/14, whilst seizures by Border Force over the same time period increased by five per cent.
- For police forces, seizures of Class A drugs fell by eight per cent, Class B seizures fell by 17 per cent, and Class C seizures increased by three per cent over the last year. For Border Force, a large decrease in the number of seizures of Class A drugs (a 34% drop on 2013/14) was offset by an increase in the number of seizures of both Class B drugs (up 12%) and Class C drugs (up 32%).

Figure 4.1 Proportion of drug seizure numbers by drug type and authority, 2014/15



Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 4](#).

- Police forces accounted for 96 per cent of all seizures of Class A drugs, 98 per cent of all seizures of Class B drugs and 66 per cent of seizures of Class C drugs.
- Within Class A seizures, the police were responsible most seizures of crack (all but three), heroin (99%), LSD (98%), cocaine (96%), ecstasy (95%) and morphine (94%). For seizures of Class B drugs, approximately 98 per cent of cannabis seizures and 98 per cent of amphetamine seizures were conducted by the police.
- Of Class C drugs, Border force was responsible for 44 per cent of anabolic steroids seizures and 55 per cent of seizures of “other Class C” drugs.

Number of seizures by region

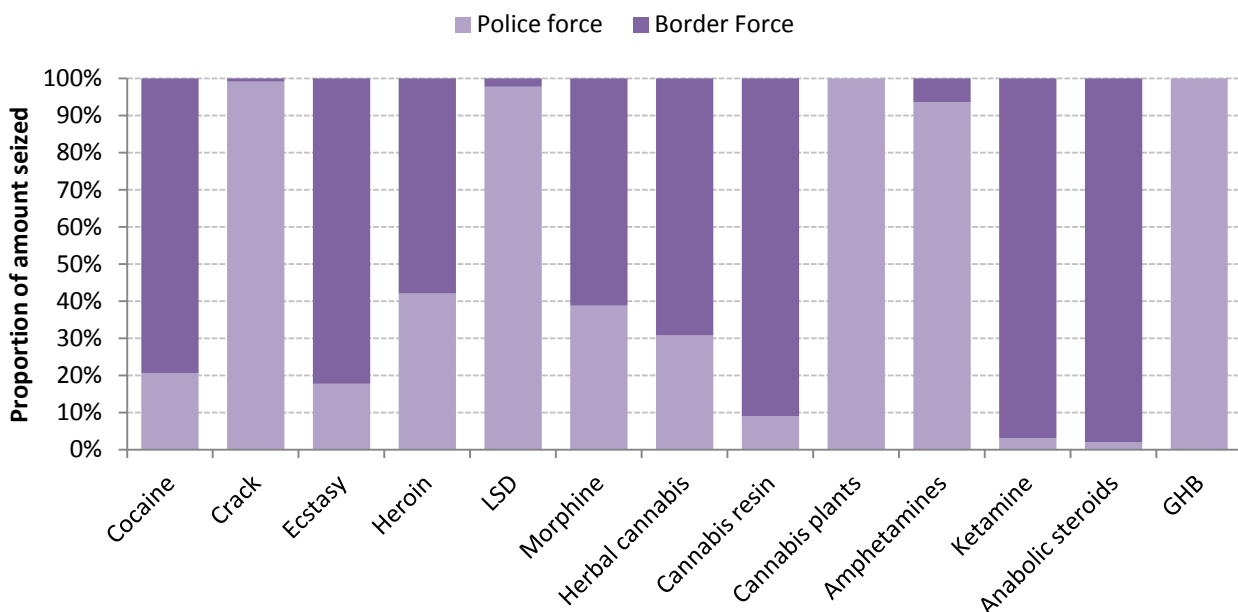
Between 2013/14 and 2014/15, there were no large differences between the proportion of seizures across each of the police force regions and Border Force. Around one quarter of all seizures took place in London. Outside of London, the largest proportion of seizures for regional police forces took place in the South East, with 11 per cent of all seizures occurring in this region in 2014/15. Of the police force regions, the North East had the smallest proportion of seizures, with five per cent of the total. Border Force and British Transport Police accounted for four per cent and one per cent of seizures in England and Wales respectively.

Quantity of seizures

Although Border Force accounted for just four per cent of seizures in 2014/15, the proportion they seized in terms of quantity was much higher. This is due to the fact that the agency is often involved in high profile operations where large quantities of drugs are seized, for example at airports or ferry ports.

- In terms of quantity, Border Force seized 82 per cent of ecstasy (926,874 doses), 79 per cent of cocaine (2,691 kg), 61 per cent of morphine (8,617 doses) and 58 per cent of heroin (645 kg).
- For Class B drugs, Border Force seized the vast majority (97%) of ketamine (54 kg), 91 per cent of cannabis resin (6,737 kg), and 69 per cent of herbal cannabis (10,458 kg).
- Ninety-eight per cent of the quantity of anabolic steroids that were seized were done so by Border Force (15,690,695 doses).

Figure 4.2 Proportion of drug seizure quantities by drug type and authority, 2014/15



Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 5](#).

Seizures of drugs in England and Wales, 2014/15

In general, Border Force seized much larger quantities of drugs, per seizure, than police forces. A third (36%) of seizures of drugs (measured in terms of weight) made by the police forces of England and Wales were for quantities of under one gram. Conversely, just two per cent of seizures of drugs made by the Border Force were of quantities less than one gram.

The difference, in terms of number of doses, between the quantity of seizures made by police forces and seizures made by Border Force follows a similar pattern, with the largest seizures being made by Border Force (Figure 4.3 to Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.3 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of cocaine by authority, 2014/15

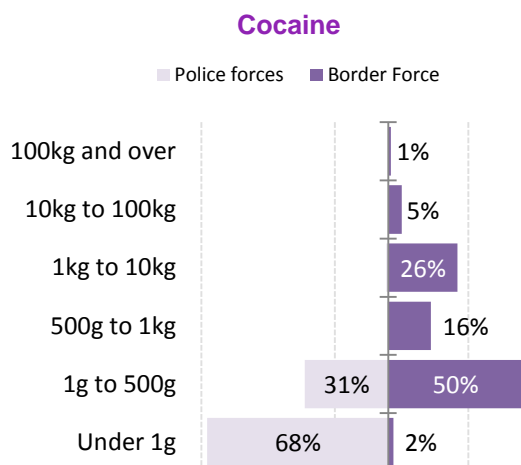


Figure 4.4 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of heroin by authority, 2014/15

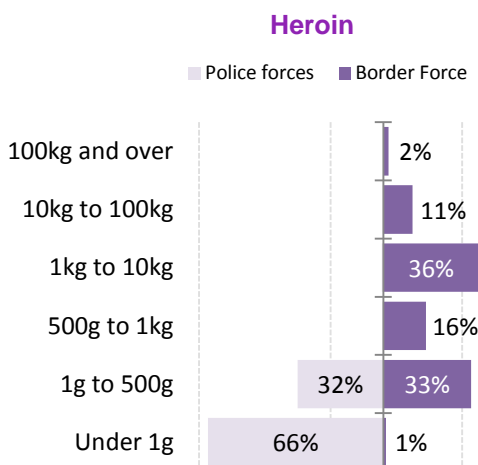


Figure 4.5 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of herbal cannabis by authority, 2014/15

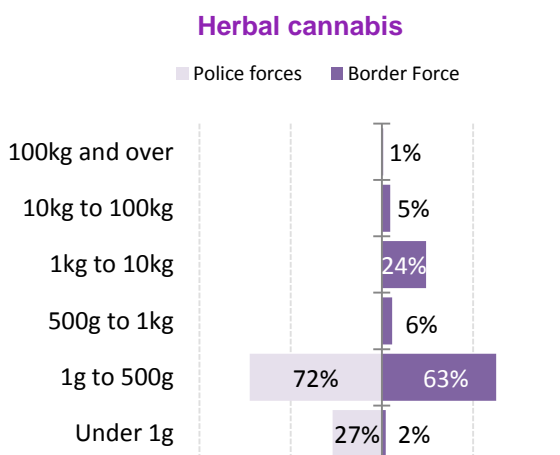
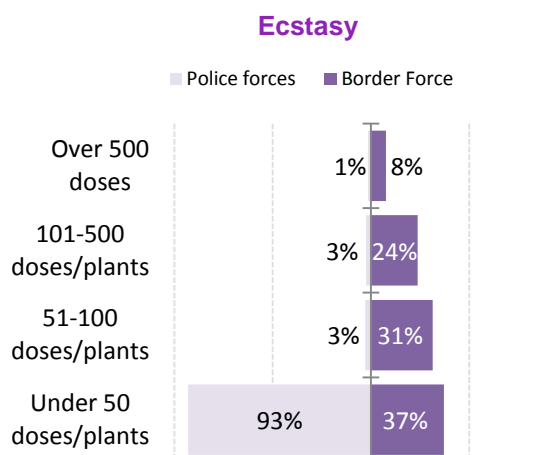


Figure 4.6 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of ecstasy by authority, 2014/15



Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 3](#).

5 Data quality and interpreting the figures

Seizures from joint operations involving Border Force and the police are recorded against the lead agency that takes possession of the seized drugs.

Where a seizure is made of a drug not separately listed in this bulletin, it is aggregated into an 'other' Class Category. Further information on drugs covered under the MDA, including a link to the full list of drugs covered, is available at: [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#). Details about the counting rules used for calculating numbers of seizures in this bulletin are included in the [user guide](#).

Amount groupings (e.g. under 1 gram, 1–50 doses) presented in the breakdowns shown in Summary Tables 3a and 3c of this publication include data on all seizures made by police forces. For the Border Force's data in Summary Tables 3b and 3c, quantities requiring conversion are not included in the breakdowns, although they are included in the total estimated quantity (kg or doses).

Bedfordshire Police and Hampshire Police were unable to provide accurate data for 2014/15 and Gwent Police were only able to supply data for 10 months in 2013/14. As a result, imputation methods were used to estimate data for missing months for these forces. Figures in this publication include the imputed estimates for Gwent Police in 2013/14 and for Bedfordshire Police and Hampshire Police in 2014/15.

6 Revisions analysis

Police forces have the opportunity to resubmit historic data whenever they wish. All figures quoted in this release are correct at the time of publication and reflect the latest revisions made by police forces; therefore, figures published in this release supersede all previous published data. Data for Border Force is only revised once; where necessary, revisions have been made for 2013/14 but Border Force data prior to 2013/14 remain unchanged from previous publications.

7 Other data sources

Seizures by police in Scotland and Northern Ireland

As well as providing a comparison to seizures in England and Wales, drug seizure figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland give a more complete UK-wide picture. Data relating to seizures of drugs by the police in Scotland are collected and published by the Scottish Government¹¹ and follow the same drug seizures counting rules as those presented for England and Wales. In 2013/14, the police in Scotland made 29,138 seizures of controlled drugs. Of these, 5,534 involved a Class A drug, 21,168 involved a Class B drug and 3,311 involved a Class C drug. Data for 2014/15 are not available at the time of publication.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland¹² collects and publishes data on drug seizures by police in Northern Ireland, and they are also presented on the same basis as those for England and Wales. Police recorded a total of 5,104 drug seizure incidents in Northern Ireland during 2014/15; Class A, B and C totals are not presented.

Border Force seizures

Seizures made by Border Force officials outside England and Wales (e.g. Scotland, Northern Ireland) are excluded from figures presented in this statistical release. A quarterly breakdown of Border Force seizures in the UK is available online as part of their regular key performance indicators.¹³

Misuse of drugs

The extent and trends in illicit drug use among adults aged 16 to 59, measured annually by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), is published separately by the Home Office.¹⁴ According to the 2014/15 CSEW, around 1 in 12 (8.6%) adults had taken an illicit drug in the last year, a similar proportion to 2013/14, but significantly lower than a decade ago (11.2% in the 2004/05 survey).

11 Latest drug seizure statistics for Scotland were published on 27 October 2015 and are available online at: [The Scottish Government website](#).

12 Latest drug seizure statistics for Northern Ireland were published on 8 May 2014, and are available online at: [Police Service of Northern Ireland website](#).

13 Border Force publishes data on its key performance indicators at [Border Force transparency data](#).

14 See the latest edition of 'Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2014/15 Crime Survey for England and Wales', available at: [Drug misuse statistics](#).

Statistical Bulletins are prepared by staff in Home Office Statistics under the National Statistics Code of Practice and can be downloaded from GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/about/statistics>

ISBN: 978-1-78246-919-3

ISSN: 1759-7005



© Crown copyright 2015

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.