



3 November 2016

Statistical News Release – Seizures of drugs in England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2016

National Statistics on drug seizures made in England and Wales in 2015/16 by the police (including the British Transport Police) and Border Force are released today.

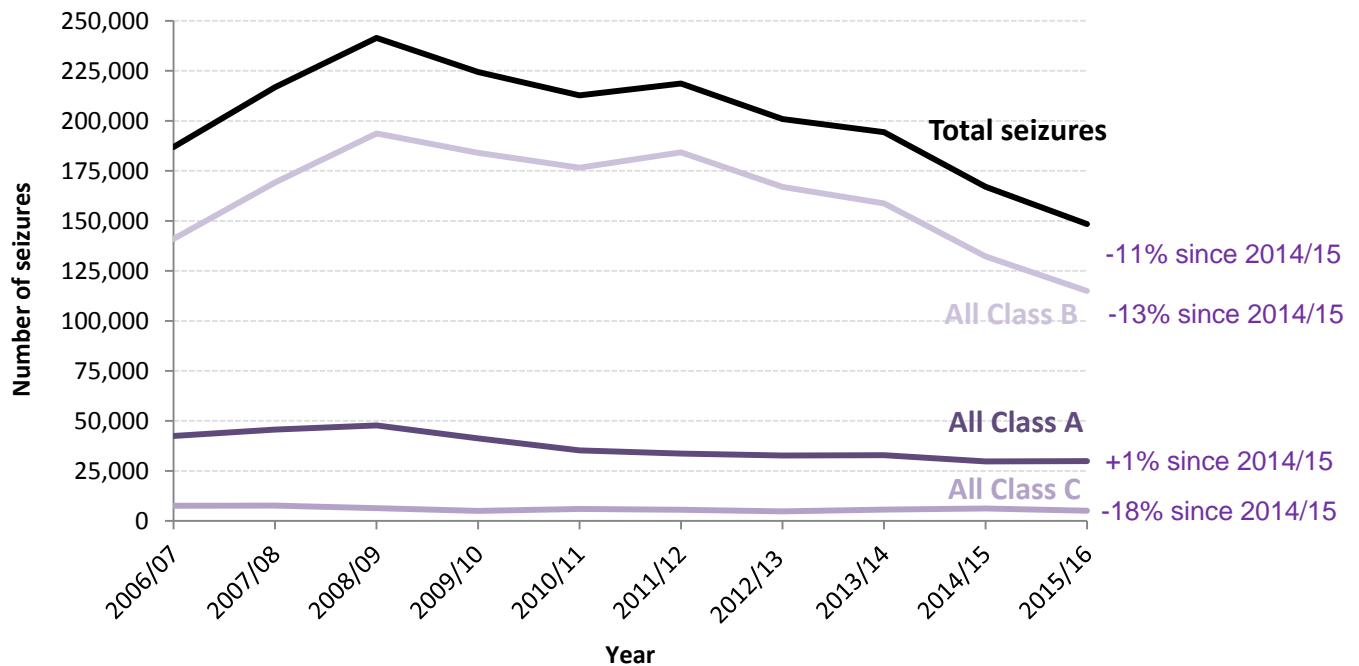
The statistics relate to all drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (MDA), which divides drugs into three categories – Classes A, B and C – according to the harmfulness they cause to the user or to society when they are misused. Class A drugs are considered to be the most harmful.

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

Key findings:

In 2015/16, there were **148,553 seizures** of drugs in England and Wales², an **11 per cent decrease** on the previous year (167,059 seizures).

Number of seizures of Class A, Class B and Class C drugs, 2006/07 to 2015/16, police forces and Border Force³



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

2. Figures for police seizures are based on data supplied for 40 forces and imputed figures for four forces.

3. For consistency, drugs are counted in their current classification for the entire time series shown.

Over the same time period, there was also a **13 per cent decrease** in the number of police recorded **drug offences**⁴, which is highly correlated with the number of drug seizures.

The number of seizures made by police forces in England and Wales **fell by 11 per cent** in 2015/16 compared with 2014/15, and seizures by Border Force over the same time period **fell by 13 per cent**.

In 2015/16, 96 per cent of all drug seizures were made by **police forces**, and **four per cent** of seizures were made by **Border Force**, however, Border Force are responsible for seizing a greater quantity of drugs (i.e. Border Force seized 90 per cent of all cannabis resin, 89 per cent of anabolic steroids, 89 per cent of herbal cannabis, 84 per cent of ketamine, and 83 per cent of cocaine).

Summary of seizures of Class A, Class B and Class C drugs

- Between 2014/15 and 2015/16, seizures of Class A drugs **increased by one per cent** from 29,705 in 2014/15 to 29,949 in 2015/16.
- **Cocaine** was the most commonly seized Class A drug, with 15,588 seizures amounting to **4,228 kilograms** – the largest quantity since 2004.
- There were **115,126 seizures of Class B** drugs in 2015/16 (down 13%).
- **Herbal cannabis** accounted for **97,218** of these seizures (down 12%), however, **the quantity of herbal cannabis seized doubled**, from 15,105 kilograms to 30,493 kilograms. This was caused by a large increase in the quantity seized by **Border Force**.
- There were **5,128** seizures of **Class C drugs** in 2015/16, a **decrease of 18 per cent** since 2014/15.

Notes to editors

1. 'Seizures of drugs in England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2016', along with data tables, is available online via Gov.uk.
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seizures-of-drugs-in-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-March-2016>
3. Seizures of substances controlled under the [Psychoactive Substances Act 2016](#) are not covered in this publication.
4. Another Home Office statistical release on drugs, 'Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2015/16 Crime Survey for England and Wales' was published on 28 July 2016. It is available on the Gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2015-to-2016-csew>
5. Statistics on the number of police recorded drug offences are published on a quarterly basis by the ONS: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/previousReleases>

For all press enquiries, please contact the Home Office Press Office who will liaise with Home Office Crime and Policing Statistics:

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Please note: the press office deals with enquiries from the media only. Members of the public should phone **020 7035 4848**.

4. Includes offences for possession of controlled drugs, trafficking in controlled drugs, and other drug offences