



Home Office



Seizures of drugs in England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2016

Statistical Bulletin 13/16

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Further information

This statistical release presents figures for drug seizures made in 2015/16 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.

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, email crimeandpolicestats@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk, or write to: Crime and Policing Analysis Unit, 1st floor Peel Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF

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These statistics have been designated as National Statistics, following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate and the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.



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Summary

This statistical release presents figures for drug seizures made in 2015/16 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.

Four police forces (Bedfordshire, Dorset, Essex and Leicestershire) were unable to provide fully accurate data for the 2015/16 period. As a result, imputation methods have been used to estimate data for these forces. Most recently available data for the imputed forces suggests they account for around five per cent of all drug seizures made by police forces in England and Wales. All comparisons in this publication include the estimated values.

The number 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 148,553 drug seizures in England and Wales in 2015/16 (including estimated figures), an 11 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (167,059), and the fourth consecutive annual fall. Over the same time period, there was a 13 per cent decrease in the number of police recorded drug offences², which is highly correlated with the number of drug seizures³.
- Seizures by police forces decreased by 11 per cent between 2014/15 and 2015/16 (from 160,933 to 143,248) and seizures made by Border Force decreased by 13 per cent (from 6,126 seizures to 5,305).
- 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 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.

Class A

- 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 just over half of all Class A seizures involving this substance. In 2015/16, there were 15,588 seizures of cocaine, down one per cent on the previous year (15,815 seizures). However, the quantity of cocaine seized between 2014/15 and 2015/16 rose from 3,387 kilograms in 2014/15 to 4,228 kilograms in 2015/16 (the highest amount since 2004).

Class B

- There were 115,126 seizures of Class B drugs in 2015/16, a decrease of 13 per cent since 2014/15 (132,254). The majority of Class B seizures were for cannabis, with 109,527 seizures in total (down 12% on the 2014/15 figure).
- Between 2014/15 and 2015/16 the number of seizures of herbal cannabis fell by 12 per cent, however, the quantity of herbal cannabis seized doubled, from 15,105 kilograms to 30,493

1. See the latest edition of 'Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2015/16 Crime Survey for England and Wales', available at: [Drug misuse statistics](#).

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

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

kilograms. This was down to an increase of 159 per cent in the quantity of herbal cannabis seized by Border Force. The quantity of herbal cannabis seized by the police forces fell by 28 per cent over the same time period.

- There was also a decrease, of five per cent, in the amount of cannabis resin seized (from 7,405 kg to 7,035 kg) while the number of cannabis plants seized increased by seven per cent from 366,841 plants to 393,702 plants.

Class C

- Seizures of Class C drugs decreased between 2014/15 and 2015/16, from 6,244 to 5,128, a fall of 18 per cent.
- The most commonly seized Class C drug in 2015/16 was benzodiazepine with 1,964 seizures, a fall of seven per cent on the 2014/15 figure of 2,122.

1 Introduction

This publication presents figures for drug seizures made in 2015/16 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 figures presented are correct at the time of extraction from the data system, 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, 2014/15](#)'.

Four police forces (Bedfordshire, Dorset, Essex and Leicestershire) were unable to provide fully accurate data for the 2015/16 period. As a result, imputation methods have been used to estimate data for these forces. Most recently available data for the imputed forces suggests they account for around five per cent of all drug seizures made by police forces in England and Wales. All comparisons in this publication include the estimated values.

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

Substances covered by this release

The statistics covered by this release 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 bulletin⁴. Seizures of substances controlled under the [Psychoactive Substances Act 2016](#) are not covered in this publication.

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. Cannabis is counted as a Class B drug for the entire time series in this publication.

c. Ketamine was reclassified from a Class C to a Class B drug on 10 June 2014. Ketamine is counted as a Class C drug for the entire time series in this publication.

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'.

4. 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>

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.

Between April 2015 and March 2016 the following were subject to a TCDO:

- Seven substances related to Methylphenidate (Class B drug under the 1971 Act) were subject to a TCDO, namely:
 - Ethylphenidate
 - 3,4-Dichloromethylphenidate
 - Methylphenidate
 - Isopropylphenidate
 - Propylphenidate
 - 4-Methylmethylphenidate
 - Ethylphenidate

 - Any stereoisomeric form of a substance specified above
 - Any preparation or other product containing a substance specified above

This TCDO came into force on 27 June 2015, and was extended for an additional 12 months from June 2016

- N-methyl-1-(thiophen-2-yl)propan-2-amine (methiopropamine or MPA) and its simple derivatives.

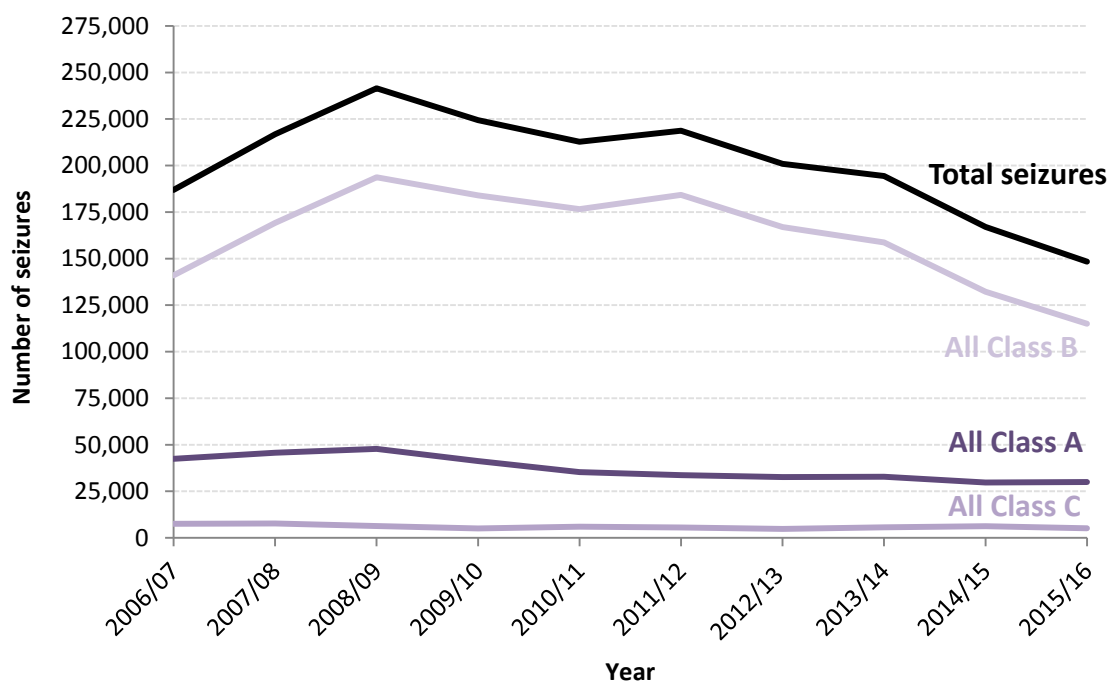
This came into force 27 November 2015.

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

2 Number of seizures

- In 2015/16, there were 148,553 seizures of drugs in England and Wales, an 11 per cent decrease since 2014/15, when there were 167,059 seizures⁶.
- The number of drug seizures peaked in 2008/09, at 241,473 seizures, and has since declined by 38 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 (either herbal, resin or plant).

Figure 2.1 Number of seizures of Class A, Class B and Class C drugs, 2006/07 to 2015/16, police forces and Border Force¹



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

Chart notes

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

The number 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 presented in the Drug Misuse publications, based on results from the Crime Survey for England and Wales⁷.

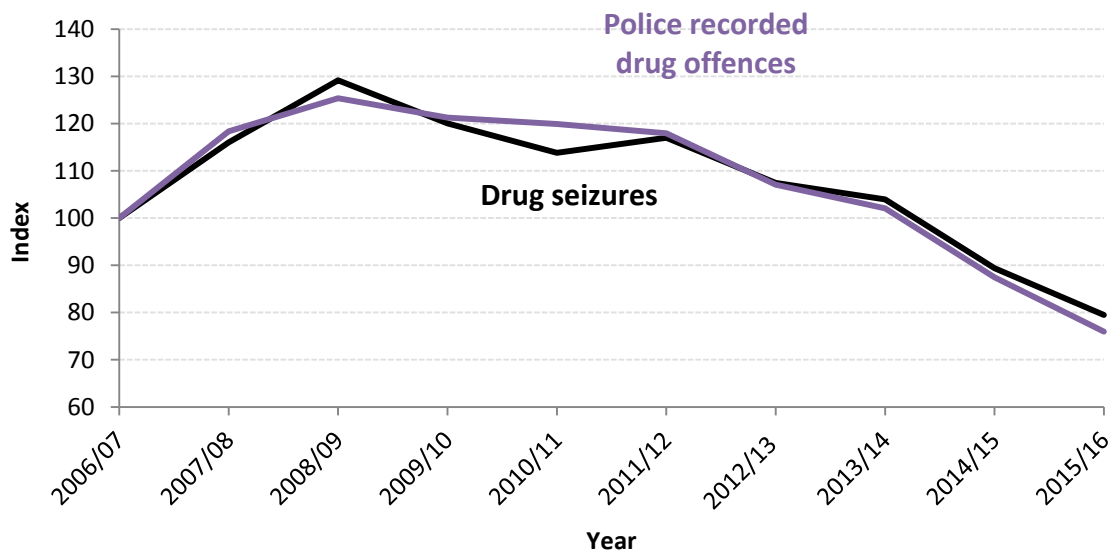
6. Figures include estimates for Bedfordshire, Dorset, Essex and Leicestershire in 2015/16, and for Bedfordshire and Hampshire in 2014/15.

7. See the latest edition of 'Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2015/16 Crime Survey for England and Wales', available at: [Drug misuse statistics](#).

The total number of drug seizures per year is highly correlated with the number of police recorded drug offences (Figure 2.2)⁸. In 2015/16 the police recorded 147,557 drug offences⁹, a 13 per cent decrease since the previous year (169,863).

Since the peak in 2008/09, the number of drug offences recorded by the police has decreased by 39 per cent. Over the same time period the number of drug seizures by police forces and Border Force combined has decreased by 38 per cent.

Figure 2.2 Index of police recorded drug offences and the total number of drug seizures, 2006/07 to 2015/16



Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 1](#).
ONS, *Crime in England and Wales*, year ending March 2016, [Appendix table A4](#).

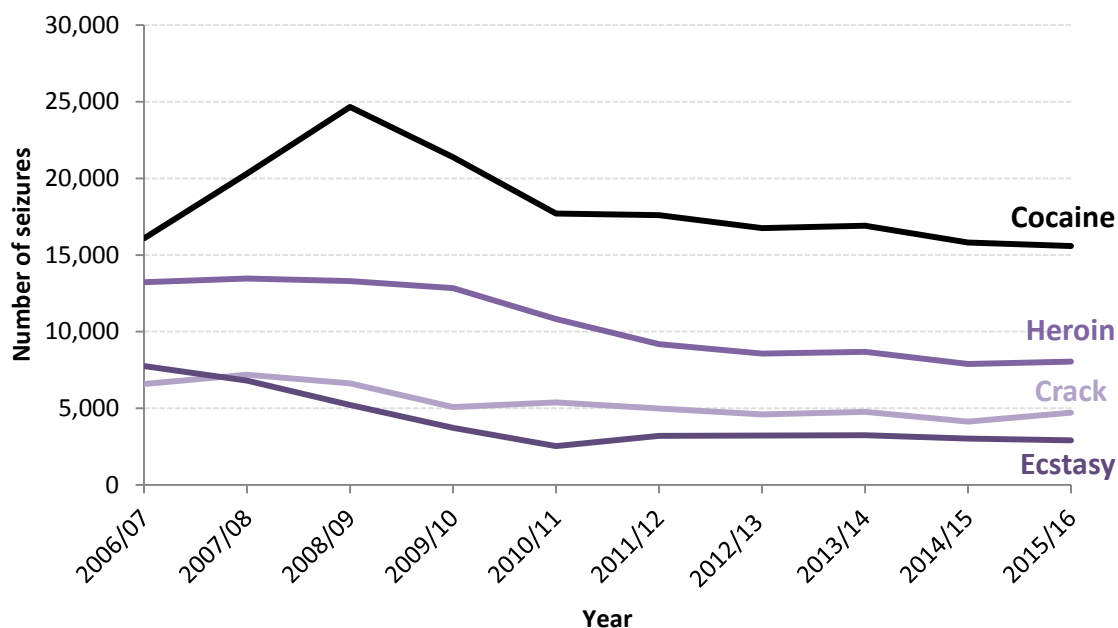
Class A drugs

In 2015/16, there were 29,949 seizures of Class A drugs, a one per cent increase since 2014/15 (29,705 seizures). In 2015/16, one fifth (20%) 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 drug¹⁰.

- Over half (52%) of all seizures of Class A drugs involved cocaine, with 15,588 seizures of the substance in 2015/16, a one per cent decrease on the 2014/15 figure (15,815).
- After cocaine, heroin was the second most commonly seized Class A drug, with 8,050 seizures in 2015/16 (27% of all Class A seizures). This was a two per cent increase on the 2014/15 figure of 7,892 seizures.
- There was also an increase in the number of crack cocaine seizures in 2015/16, up 14%, from 4,132 in 2014/15 to 4,718 in 2015/16, and in the number of seizures of 'other Class A' drugs, up 36 per cent since 2014/15.
- There was a decrease in the number of seizures of ecstasy (down 4% from 3,018 to 2,906), methadone (down 20% from 686 seizures to 547 seizures), and morphine (down 21% from 173 seizures to 136 seizures).

8. Statistics on the number of police recorded drug offences are published on a quarterly basis by the [ONS](#).
9. Includes offences for possession of controlled drugs, trafficking in controlled drugs, and other drug offences
10. Statistics on historical seizures of drugs in England and Wales can be found at:
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110220105210/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbarchive.html>.

Figure 2.3 Number of seizures of the main Class A drug types, 2006/07 to 2015/16, police forces and Border Force

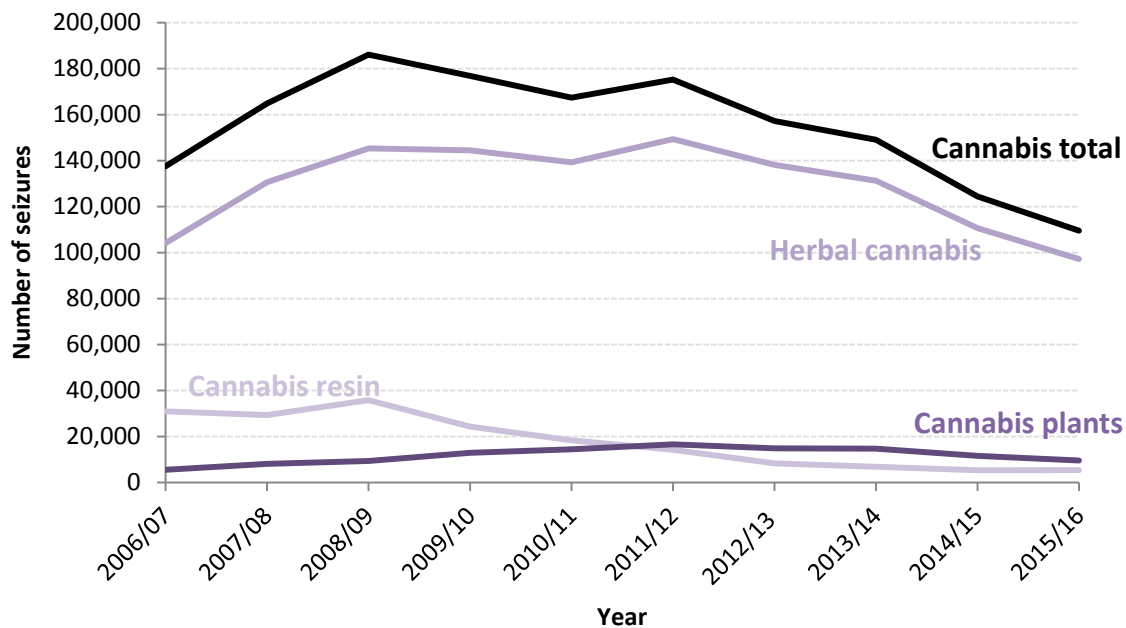


Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 1](#).

Class B drugs

In 2015/16, there were 115,126 seizures of Class B drugs, a 13 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (132,254 seizures). As in previous years, the great majority of Class B seizures were for cannabis, with 95 per cent of all Class B seizures involving at least one form of cannabis (109,527).

- There were 109,527 seizures of cannabis in 2015/16, a 12 per cent decrease on 2014/15 (124,408).
- Seizures of both herbal cannabis and cannabis plants decreased between 2014/15 and 2015/16, whereas there was a slight increase in seizures of cannabis resin over the same time period;
 - Seizures of herbal cannabis (which dominate seizures of cannabis) fell by 12 per cent between 2014/15 and 2015/16 (from 110,626 to 97,218);
 - seizures of cannabis plants decreased by 18 per cent (from 11,612 to 9,578);
 - the number of seizures of cannabis in resin form increased by two per cent over the same time period, from 5,339 to 5,429.
 - There has been a 41 per cent fall in the seizures of cannabis since peaking in 2008/09, at 186,147 seizures. The decline in the number of seizures of cannabis over this period was initially driven by a decrease in cannabis resin. Seizures of herbal cannabis and cannabis plants also began to fall from 2011/12 (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4 Number of cannabis seizures, 2006/07 to 2015/16, 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 4,418 seizures in 2015/16, a 20 per cent decrease since 2014/15, when there were 5,530 seizures.
- In 2015/16, there were 530 seizures of Ketamine, a nine per cent increase on the previous year, when there were 485 seizures.
- In addition, the number of seizures of 'other Class B' drugs in 2015/16 (1,311 seizures) was 12 per cent lower than in 2014/15 (1,493 seizures). The majority of "other Class B seizures" were for cathinone and cannabiniol derivatives.

Class C drugs

There was an 18 per cent decrease in the number of seizures of Class C drugs in 2015/16 compared with 2014/15, a fall of around 1,100 seizures (from 6,244 to 5,128).

- 38 per cent of all seizures of Class C drugs involved benzodiazepines with seizures of this drug in 2015/16 falling by seven per cent compared with 2014/15 (from 2,122 seizures to 1,964).
- In 2015/16 there were 2,278 seizures of 'Other Class C' drugs, a 26 per cent decrease compared with 2014/15.

Unknown substances

In 2015/16 there was very little change in seizures of unknown substances compared to the year earlier (from 7,375 seizures in 2014/15 to 7,354 seizures in 2015/16). Prior to 2015/16, recorded seizures of 'unknown' substances had increased year on year. Many of these seizures are likely to involve drugs that weren't sent for forensic testing, or, were sent for testing by forces, but the statistical returns were not updated 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	

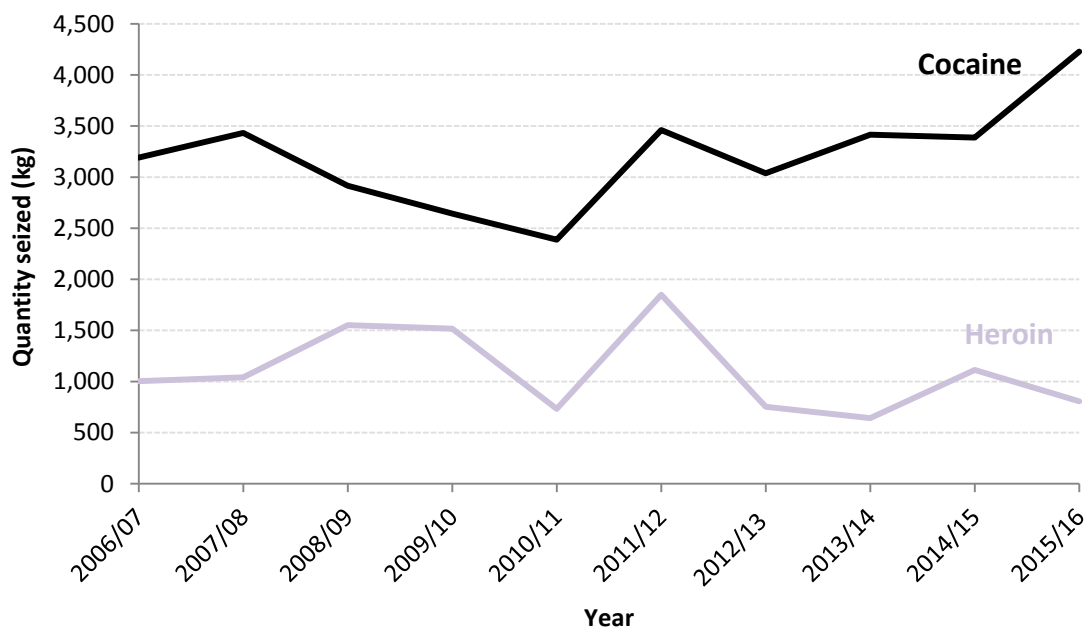
Most drugs can plausibly be seized in a preparation form other than kilograms or doses; therefore, in order to present all seized quantities within a given drug type in terms of one comparable unit (either kilograms or doses), conversion factors are applied to estimate the overall quantity of drugs seized.

See page 12 of the [user guide](#) for more information.

Class A drugs

- In 2015/16, 4,228 kilograms of cocaine were seized by the police and Border Force, a 25 per cent increase on the previous year (3,387 kg), and the largest quantity since 2004¹¹. This large increase was driven by a 31 per cent increase in the quantity of cocaine seized by Border Force, from 2,691 kilograms in 2014/15 to 3,530 kilograms in 2015/16.
- Sixty-three per cent of seizures of cocaine were each under one gram in weight, with two per cent weighing 500 grams or more (Figure 3.2).
- There were 42 kilograms of crack seized in 2015/16, an increase of 10 kilograms since 2014/15, when 32 kilograms were seized. Similarly to cocaine, the majority of seizures of crack (61%) weighed less than one gram each (Summary table 3).
- In 2015/16, 806 kilograms of heroin were seized, a 28 per cent decrease on 2014/15 when 1,113 kilograms were seized. Similar to cocaine and crack, 63 per cent of all seizures of heroin weighed less than one gram each (Summary table 3).
- There has been a decrease of 29 per cent in the quantity of ecstasy seized in 2015/16, compared with 2014/15, from 1,125,003 doses to 801,294 doses. Just over one third of all seizures of ecstasy were of a single dose or less; a further 38 per cent were of quantities of up to 10 doses (Figure 3.3).

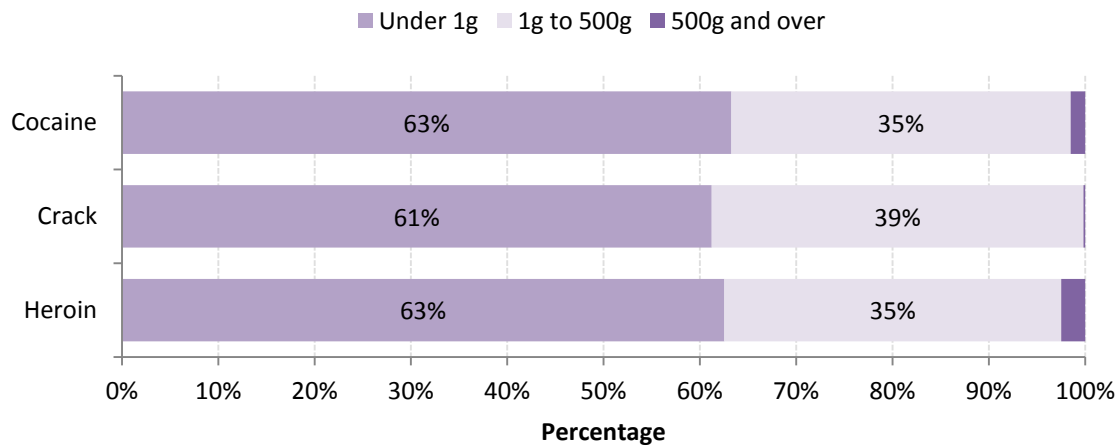
Figure 3.1 Quantity of cocaine and heroin seized, 2006/07 to 2015/16, police forces and Border Force



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

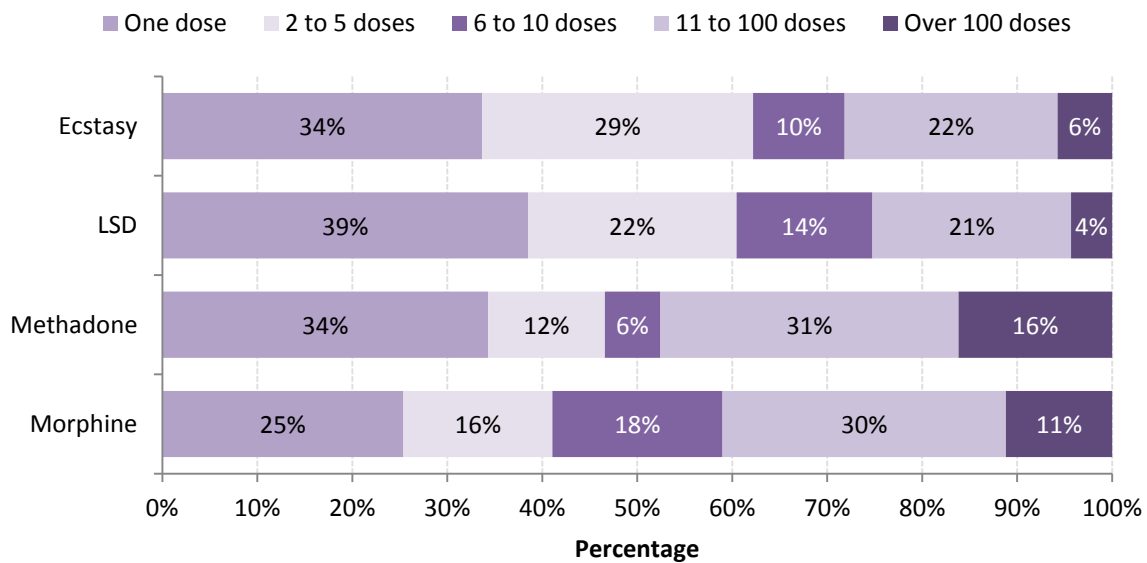
11. Statistics on historical seizures of drugs in England and Wales can be found at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110220105210/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbarchive.html>

Figure 3.2 Distribution of quantities of Class A drugs seized, summarised in grams, 2015/16, police forces and Border Force



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

Figure 3.3 Distribution of quantities of Class A drugs seized, summarised in doses, 2015/16, police forces and Border Force



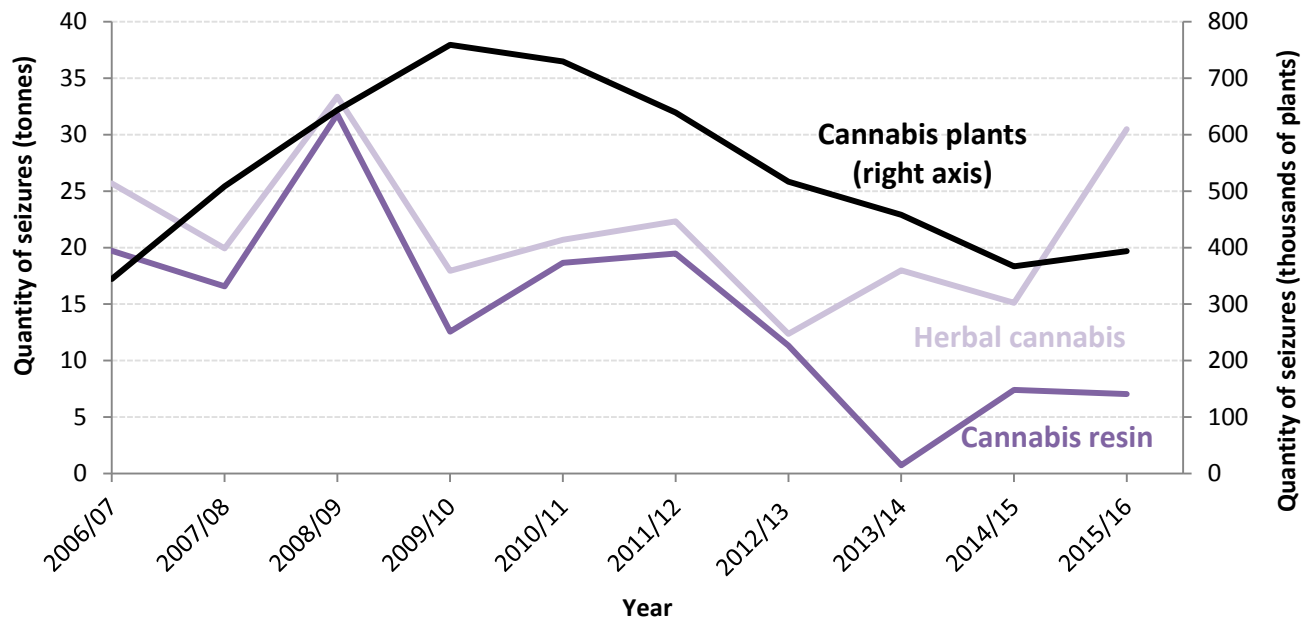
Source: Home Office, [Supplementary table 2](#)

Class B drugs

Cannabis

- In 2015/16, 30,493 kilograms of herbal cannabis were seized, just over twice as much as in 2014/15 (an increase of 102%) and the highest amount since 2008/09 (when 33,363 kgs were seized). This large increase was down to the quantity of seizures by Border Force increasing from 10,458 kilograms in 2014/15 to 27,132 kilograms in 2015/16 (up 159%). Looking at police force seizures of herbal cannabis only, there was a 28 per cent reduction in the quantity seized (from 4,648 kilograms in 2014/15 to 3,361 kilograms in 2015/16).
- Over the same time period, the quantity of cannabis resin seized decreased from 7,405 kilograms in 2014/15 to 7,035 kilograms in 2015/16 (down by 5%).

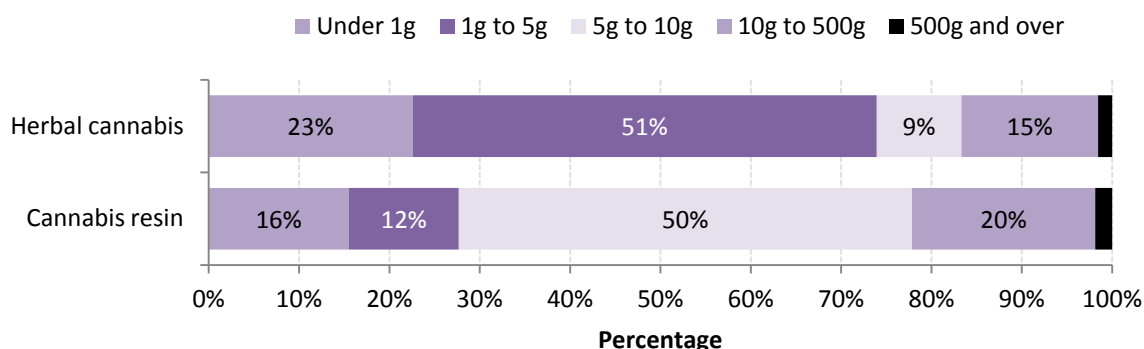
Figure 3.4 Quantity of cannabis seized, 2006/07 to 2015/16, police forces and Border Force



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

- The majority of seizures of cannabis weighed over one gram each. In 2015/16, 23 per cent of seizures of herbal cannabis were of quantities weighing less than 1 gram, around one half (51%) were of quantities weighing between 1 gram and 5 grams and the remaining 26 per cent weighed 5 grams or more (Figure 3.5).
- 16 per cent of seizures of cannabis resin weighed under one gram, and a further 12 per cent were of quantities weighing between 1 gram and 5 grams.

Figure 3.5 Distribution of quantities of herbal cannabis and cannabis resin seized, 2015/16, police forces and Border Force



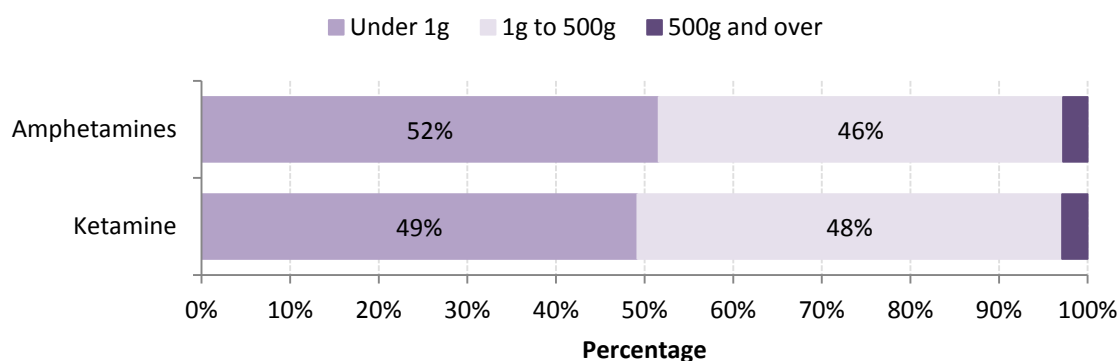
Source: Home Office, [Supplementary Table 2](#).

- In 2015/16, there were 393,702 cannabis plants seized, an increase of seven per cent since 2014/15 when 366,841 plants were seized. Up until this year there had been a continuing downward trend in the number of cannabis plants seized since the peak in 2009/10 (758,943 plants seized).
- Almost half (47%) of seizures of cannabis plants were of quantities of five plants or fewer (Figure 3.6).

Other Class B drugs

- In 2015/16, there were 459 kilograms of amphetamines seized, a 25 per cent decrease on 2014/15. This continues the downward trend since 2012/13 when 1,437 kilograms were seized.
- There were 56 kilograms of ketamine seized in 2015/16, the same quantity that was seized in 2014/15. The majority of police force seizures of ketamine weighed less than 500 grams, with 53 per cent weighing less than one gram. Border Force seized 13 quantities weighing 500 grams or more.

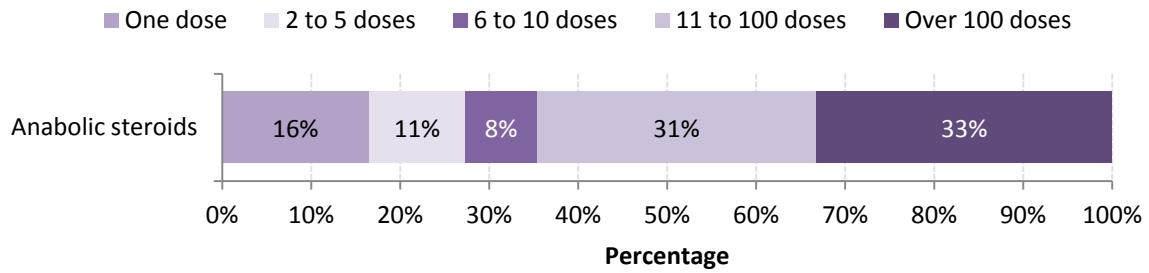
Figure 3.7 Distribution of quantities of Class B drugs seized, summarised in kilograms, 2015/16, police forces and Border Force



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

Class C drugs

- Total seizures of anabolic steroids decreased from 16 million doses in 2014/15 to just under 5 million (4,949,039) doses in 2015/16. This large decrease of 69 per cent was down to an unusually large number of seizures made by Border force in 2014/15. The quantity of anabolic steroids seized in 2015/16 was the second highest seen since 2007/08. Anabolic steroids seized by police forces increased by 76 per cent over the same period, from 309,574 doses in 2014/15 to 545,121 doses in 2015/16.

Figure 3.8 Distribution of quantities of anabolic steroids, 2015/16, police forces and Border Force

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

- The total quantity of benzodiazepines seized in 2015/16 was 28 per cent less than in 2014/15 (344,478 doses in 2014/15 compared with 246,544 doses in 2015/16) and the quantity of temazepam seized was down by 70 per cent from 4,381 doses in 2014/15 to 1,336 doses in 2015/16.

4 Seizures by authority

This chapter looks at the seizures of drugs by authority, separating seizures made by Border Force from those seizures made by the police. Seizures from joint operations involving Border Force and the police are recorded against the lead agency that takes possession of the seized drugs. 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.

Number of seizures

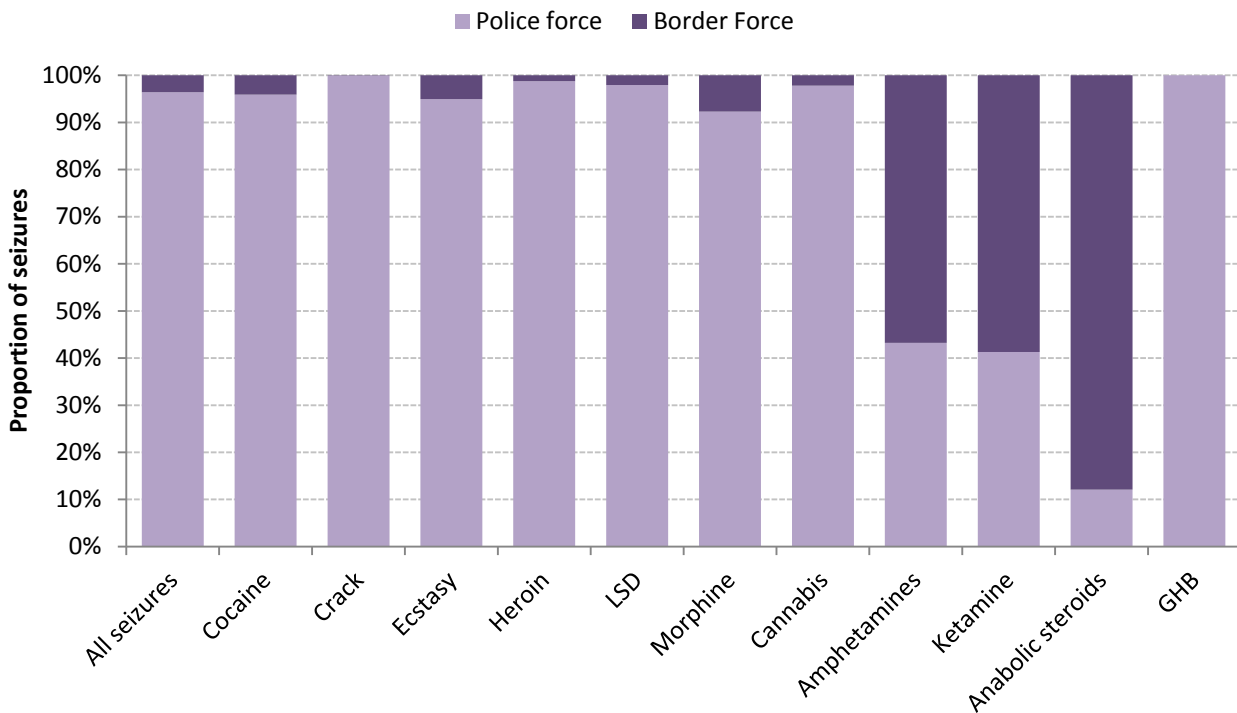
Table 4.1 shows the number of seizures made by police forces and Border Force for each class of drug. In 2015/16, 96 per cent of seizures were made by police forces (143,248); the remaining 5,305 (or 4%) were made by Border Force.

Table 4.1 Number of seizures made by police forces and Border Force, 2014/15 to 2015/16

	Police forces			Border Force		
	2014/15	2015/16	% change	2014/15	2015/16	% change
Class A	28,524	28,553	0	1,181	1,396	18
Class B	129,368	112,567	-13	2,886	2,559	-11
Class C	4,102	3,729	-9	2,142	1,399	-35
All	160,933	143,248	-11	6,126	5,305	-13

- The number of seizures made by police forces in England and Wales fell by 11 per cent in 2015/16 compared with 2014/15, whilst seizures by Border Force over the same time period fell by 13 per cent.
- For police forces, the number of seizures of Class A drugs was similar to the previous year (a difference of 29 seizures). Class B seizures fell by 13 per cent, and Class C seizures fell by 9 per cent over the last year. For Border Force, the large increase in the number of seizures of Class A drugs (up by 18% on 2014/15) was offset by a decrease in the number of seizures of both Class B drugs (down by 11%) and Class C drugs (down 35%).
- 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 64 per cent of seizures of Class C drugs (consistent with previous years). ([Summary Table 4](#)).
- Within Class A seizures, the police were responsible for most seizures of crack (all but three), heroin (99%), LSD (98%), cocaine (96%), ecstasy (95%) and morphine (92%). 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 50 per cent of anabolic steroids seizures and 22 per cent of seizures of “other Class C” drugs (including Benzodiazepines and Temazepam).

Figure 4.1 Proportion of drug seizure numbers by drug type and authority, 2015/16



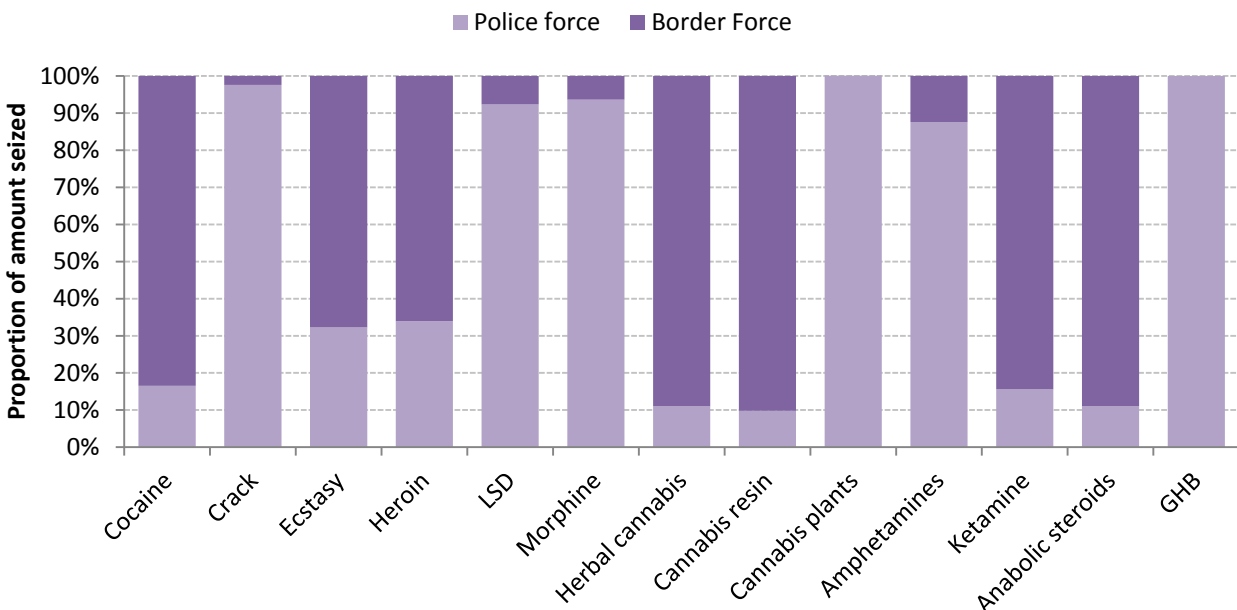
Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 4](#).

Quantity of seizures

Although Border Force accounted for just four per cent of seizures in 2015/16, 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 90 per cent of cannabis resin (6,346 kilograms), 89 per cent of anabolic steroids (4,403,918 doses), 89 per cent of herbal cannabis (27,132 kilograms), 84 per cent of ketamine (47 kilograms), and 83 per cent of cocaine (3,530 kilograms).

Figure 4.2 Proportion of drug seizure quantities by drug type and authority, 2015/16



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

In general, Border Force seized much larger quantities of drugs, per seizure, than police forces. One third (32%) 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, 2015/16

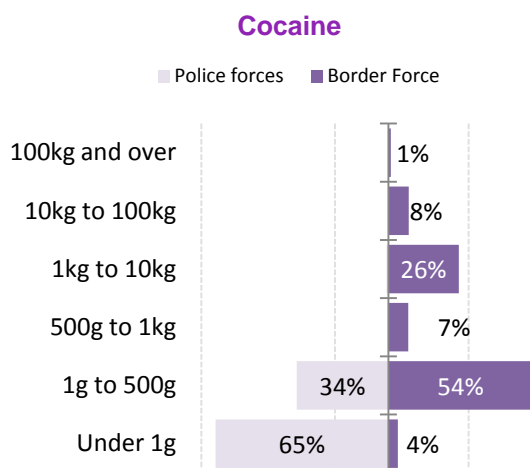


Figure 4.4 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of heroin by authority, 2015/16

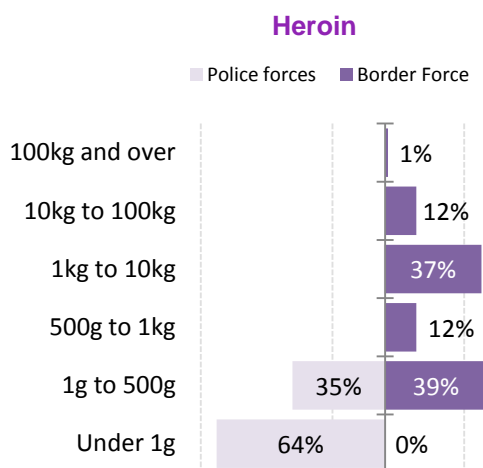


Figure 4.5 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of herbal cannabis by authority, 2015/16

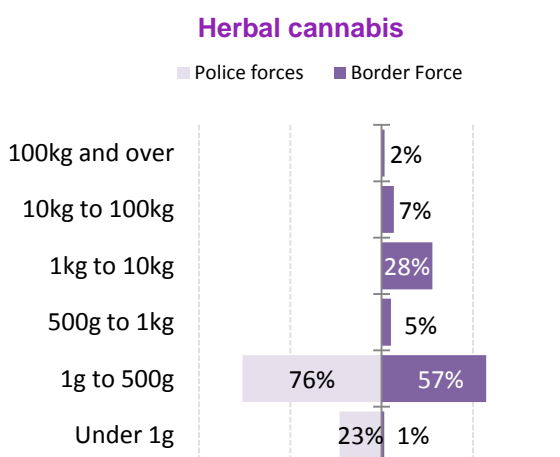
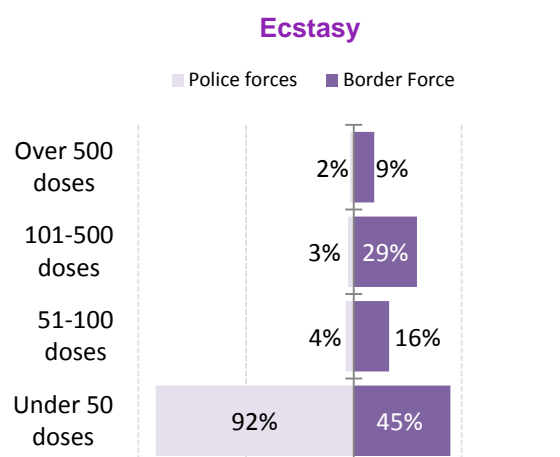


Figure 4.6 Distribution of drug seizure quantities of ecstasy by authority, 2015/16



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

5 Data quality and interpreting the figures

The statistics in *Seizures of drugs in England and Wales* relate to the seizures of drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) 1971, which came into force on 1 July 1973. They cover seizures made during the year by police forces in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police) and Border Force (formerly part of the UK Border Agency (UKBA)). 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 the publication. 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](#).

Imputation

Four police forces (Bedfordshire, Dorset, Essex and Leicestershire) were unable to provide fully accurate data for the 2015/16 period. As a result, data and imputation methods (including using police recorded crime data) have been used to estimate data for three of these forces.

Prior to 2015/16, figures for forces who could not supply data were imputed by using the national trend in drug seizures. While this method produced changes at the national level for drug seizures that were in line with recorded drug offences, this method did not take account of what was happening in an individual police force area. Further information can be found on page five of the [user guide](#).

In 2015/16, police recorded crime data on drug offences¹² were used to impute data for three police forces (Bedfordshire, Leicestershire and Essex) due to the high correlation between the number of seizures of drugs and the number of police recorded drug offences. Essex police were additionally able to supply the Home Office with police recorded drug offence data by type of drug. Therefore, for Essex figures were also imputed by drug type for the breakdown by drug tables¹³. For Bedfordshire and Leicestershire, police recorded drug offences data were used to estimate the number of seizures in those forces, and the percentage change between 2014/15 and 2015/16 in England and Wales (excluding estimated forces) for each drug type were used to impute seizures broken down by drug type and quantities. Further information can be found on page five of the [user guide](#).

Also in 2015/16, Dorset police informed the Home Office that the drug seizure figures they supplied to the Home Office were partial, and 19 per cent lower than the true figure. Figures for Dorset have therefore been increased by 19 per cent rather than imputed.

Figures in this publication include estimates for Bedfordshire, Dorset, Essex, and Leicestershire. The [data tables](#) also include the estimated data, as well as comparisons excluding the estimated data. Over the last five years, Bedfordshire, Dorset, Essex, and Leicestershire have accounted for four per cent (1 in 25) of drug seizures in England and Wales. Therefore, these imputations will have a negligible effect on the trend for drug seizures in England and Wales.

Revision policy

Police forces have the opportunity to resubmit historical 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 (the year after the period they refer to); no revisions were submitted by Border Force for 2014/15, and data prior to 2014/15 also remain unchanged from previous publications. Further information on the data collection process, and quality assurance of the data, can be found on page 16 of the [user guide](#).

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

13. Seizures of drugs in England and Wales, 2015/16, [Summary Table 1](#).

6 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 Government¹⁴ 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 or 2015/16 are not available at the time of publication, but will be published by the Scottish Government in early 2017.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland¹⁵ (PSNI) 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 5,597 drug seizure incidents in Northern Ireland during 2015/16; further breakdowns can be found on the [PSNI website](#).

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.¹⁶

Misuse of drugs

The extent and trends in illicit drug use among adults aged 16 to 59, measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), is published separately by the Home Office.¹⁷ According to the 2015/16 CSEW, around 1 in 12 (8.4%) adults had taken an illicit drug in the last year, a similar proportion to 2014/15, but significantly lower than a decade ago (10.5% in the 2005/06 survey). The trend in last year drug use among 16 to 59 year olds has been flat for 7 years, since the 2009/10 survey.

14 .Latest drug seizure statistics for Scotland were published on 27 October 2015 and are available online at: [The Scottish Government website](#). Data for 2014/15 and 2015/16 will be published in 2017.

15. Latest drug seizure statistics for Northern Ireland are published monthly, and are available online at: [Police Service of Northern Ireland website](#).

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

17. See the latest edition of 'Drug Misuse: Findings from the 2015/16 Crime Survey for England and Wales', available at: [Drug misuse statistics](#).

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

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

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