

Statistical Bulletin

Crime and Justice Series

An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

DRUG SEIZURES BY SCOTTISH POLICE FORCES, 2010-11

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1. Introduction

This bulletin presents figures for drug seizures made by police forces in Scotland in 2010-11. The statistics in this bulletin relate to drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which divides drugs into three classes A, B and C. For the purpose of this bulletin, the drug classifications at the end of the reporting period, March 2011, have been applied to the data. The publication contains data for 2010-11 only.

The previous [Drug Seizures by Scottish Police Forces](#) bulletin was published by the Scottish Government in June 2008 and contained data from 1996-97 to 2006-07. This bulletin published drug seizures data for 2006-07 for the first time and revised data for 2005-06. There has since been a break in the series and as a result, there are no data available for the three year period 2007-08 to 2009-10. Additionally, due to the break in the series, the data for 2010-11 are not directly comparable with the data for 1996-97 to 2006-07.

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 the UK Government Department of Health. The UK Focal Point on Drugs collate drug seizures statistics from England & Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and submit the data to the [European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction](#) (EMCDDA) and the [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#) (UNODC).

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, anabolic steroids, diazepam, GHB, ketamine, temazepam and other benzodiazepines.

The future of the Drug Seizures by Scottish Police Forces bulletin is currently being considered as part of a wider Justice Analytical Services Statistics Review. The findings of the review, as well as the statutory requirements for the UK to provide data on drug seizures, will determine the future frequency and content of the Drug Seizures by Scottish Police Forces bulletin.

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2. Number of Drug Seizures ([Table 1](#))

The total number of drug seizures by Scottish police forces in 2010-11 was 27,319. Please see [Note 4.4](#) for further information on how the numbers of seizures are calculated.

2.1 Class A Drugs ([Tables 1 and 2](#))

There were 6,232 seizures involving class A drugs in 2010-11, with 22.8% of all seizures involving at least one class A drug.

Among class A drugs, the highest number of seizures in 2010-11 was for heroin. There were 3,484 seizures of heroin by Scottish police forces in 2010-11. Within each of the eight Scottish police forces, heroin was the most seized class A drug, with the exception of Northern Constabulary. For Northern Constabulary the highest number of class A drug seizures involved cocaine.

After heroin, the class A drug that was seized most often was cocaine, with 2,086 seizures involving cocaine. Of all the seizures that involved class A drugs, 55.9% involved a seizure of heroin and 33.5% involved a seizure of cocaine.

There were very limited numbers of seizures involving LSD, methylamphetamine, morphine and "other class A drugs", with less than 30 seizures involving any of these particular drug types. The number of seizures involving LSD and methylamphetamine were particularly low, as there were five and one seizures respectively.

2.2 Class B Drugs ([Tables 1 and 3](#))

There were 18,164 seizures involving class B drugs in 2010-11, with 66.5% of all seizures involving at least one class B drug.

Of the 18,164 seizures of class B drugs by Scottish police forces, 16,871 of them involved a seizure of at least one type of cannabis, this was 92.9% of all class B drug seizures. The largest number of cannabis seizures involved cannabis resin, 10,046 seizures, followed by herbal cannabis, 6,777 seizures, and finally there were 970 seizures that involved cannabis plants.

Of the remaining types of class B drugs there were 1,151 seizures of amphetamines, 382 seizures of "other class B drugs" and only four seizures of barbiturates. All four seizures of barbiturates were made by Central Scotland Police.

2.3 Class C Drugs ([Tables 1 and 4](#))

There were 4,256 seizures involving class C drugs in 2010-11, with 15.6% of all seizures involving at least one class C drug. Of the three different classes of drug seizures, class C drugs made up the smallest proportion of the total number of seizures.

Diazepam was involved in 84.7% of all class C drug seizures, 3,605 seizures in total. From the same family of drugs as diazepam, there were a further 54 seizures of temazepam and 65 seizures of other benzodiazepines. Apart from "other class C drugs" for which there were 555 seizures, there were limited numbers of seizures for the remaining listed types of class C drugs.

3. Quantities of Drugs Seized

3.1 Large Seizures

There can be considerable fluctuation in the quantities of drugs seized over time. Whilst most drug seizures consist of relatively small quantities, annual totals of drugs seized can be greatly influenced by a small number of large seizures.

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. Care must be taken when comparing quantities.

When large quantities are present in the raw data, the relevant police force was contacted for confirmation. Each police force holds definitive data about their seizures.

3.2 Class A Drugs ([Table 5](#))

Although there were more seizures involving heroin, the quantity of cocaine seized was larger. There were 145.2 kg of cocaine seized by police forces in Scotland in 2010-11, compared to 95.6 kg of heroin.

In 2010-11, there were 36.6 litres of methadone seized, along with 10,000 tablets of ecstasy-type substances and 9.1 kg of crack. The other types of listed class A drugs were seized in much smaller quantities.

The [Scottish Policing Performance Framework \(SPPF\) Annual Report](#) contains information on the quantities of class A drugs seized by the police in Scotland. The last report was published in October 2011 and contains data for the period 2007-08 to 2010-11. The figures in the Drug Seizures by Scottish Police Forces bulletin are not directly comparable with the figures in the SPPF due to the different time periods the data were collected. Accurate information about drug seizures may take up to nine months to be processed depending on the complexity of the operation and other operational factors. For further information please see [Note 4.6](#). Furthermore, the figures contained in the SPPF are for all types of class A drugs and not just the subset included in this bulletin. However, this will likely have a minimal effect on the figures as the main types of class A drug are included in this bulletin.

The figures in the SPPF for the quantities of class A drugs seized in 2010-11 are lower than the figures shown in this bulletin.

The SPPF shows that the quantities of class A drugs seized, in terms of weight in kg and liquids in litres, have increased over the last four years and also in the most recent year between 2009-10 and 2010-11. The number of class A tablets seized has decreased in the latest year, as well as since 2007-08. The decrease in the number of class A tablets seized between 2007-08 and 2010-11 is considerable, with the decrease being 95.1%.

3.3 Class B Drugs ([Table 6](#))

Over a tonne of cannabis resin was seized in 2010-11 by Scottish police forces. A further 867.2 kg of herbal cannabis was also seized. There were 34,799 cannabis plants seized

in 2010-11. Of the cannabis plants seized 89.1% were seized by just three forces: Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, Lothian and Borders Police and Strathclyde Police. There were 261.0 kg of amphetamines seized and only 200 barbiturate tablets seized. In weight terms there were more amphetamines seized than either cocaine or heroin.

3.4 Class C Drugs ([Table 7](#))

With the exception of diazepam and anabolic steroids, the quantities of class C drugs seized was small compared to the quantities of either class A or class B drugs seized.

There were 678,100 diazepam tablets seized by Scottish police forces in 2010-11 and 46,400 tablets of anabolic steroids. Each of the eight Scottish police forces seized quantities of diazepam. However, only Grampian Police, Strathclyde Police and Tayside Police seized anabolic steroids, with 95.5% of these tablets being seized by Strathclyde Police.

Table 1: The number¹ and percentage of seizures of controlled drugs by class of drug and by police force area, 2010-11

Drug Class	Central	Dumfries & Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian & Borders ⁴	Northern	Strathclyde	Tayside	Scotland
Class A	191	197	187	721	1,108	312	2,974	542	6,232
Class B ²	777	525	802	1,395	2,639	1,239	9,590	1,197	18,164
Class C ³	176	117	133	334	496	321	2,287	392	4,256
Total¹	1,144	839	1,122	2,450	4,243	1,872	13,520	2,129	27,319
Percentage of Total Seizures									
Class A	16.7	23.5	16.7	29.4	26.1	16.7	22.0	25.5	22.8
Class B	67.9	62.6	71.5	56.9	62.2	66.2	70.9	56.2	66.5
Class C	15.4	13.9	11.9	13.6	11.7	17.1	16.9	18.4	15.6

- Notes:
1. Seizures involving more than one class of drug are counted as a single seizure in the total number of seizures but are counted separately against each individual drug class involved. For more information please see [Note 4.4](#).
 2. Figures for class B drugs include mephedrone and other cathinone-based drugs, which became controlled drugs in April 2010.
 3. Figures for class C drugs include GBL, 1,4-Butanediol, oripavine and BZP, which became controlled drugs in December 2009.
 4. Lothian and Borders Police are unable to provide seizures figures for some drug types. For more information please see [Note 4.11](#).

Table 2: The number¹ of seizures of class A drugs made by police forces in Scotland by drug type, 2010-11

Drug Type	Central	Dumfries & Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian & Borders ²	Northern	Strathclyde	Tayside	Scotland
Cocaine	42	48	41	216	347	117	1,157	118	2,086
Crack	-	-	-	118	7	31	27	6	189
Ecstasy-type Substances	14	12	16	14	6	34	154	19	269
Heroin	125	128	120	339	684	109	1,618	361	3,484
LSD	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	5
Methadone	14	9	10	28	64	11	109	21	266
Methylamphetamine	-	-	-	1	NA	-	-	-	1
Morphine	-	-	-	3	NA	2	8	8	21
Other class A	2	-	-	2	-	5	9	8	26
Total¹	191	197	187	721	1,108	312	2,974	542	6,232

Notes:

1. Seizures involving more than one class of drug are counted as a single seizure in the total number of seizures but are counted separately against each individual drug class involved. For more information please see [Note 4.4](#).
2. Lothian and Borders Police are unable to provide seizures figures for some drug types. For more information please see [Note 4.11](#).

Table 3: The number¹ of seizures of class B drugs made by police forces in Scotland by drug type, 2010-11

Drug Type	Central	Dumfries & Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian & Borders ³	Northern	Strathclyde	Tayside	Scotland
Herbal Cannabis	156	184	223	581	1,218	326	3,763	326	6,777
Cannabis resin	577	218	414	633	1,005	675	5,930	594	10,046
Cannabis plants	18	112	90	49	212	22	412	55	970
Total Cannabis¹	751	514	727	1,263	2,435	1,023	9,183	975	16,871
Amphetamines	80	11	71	77	142	156	509	105	1,151
Barbiturates	4	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	4
Other class B ²	11	-	4	55	62	60	73	117	382
Total¹	777	525	802	1,395	2,639	1,239	9,590	1,197	18,164

Notes:

1. Seizures involving more than one class of drug are counted as a single seizure in the total number of seizures but are counted separately against each individual drug class involved. For more information please see [Note 4.4](#).
2. Figures for „other class B drugs“ include mephedrone and other cathinone-based drugs, which became controlled drugs in April 2010.
3. Lothian and Borders Police are unable to provide seizures figures for some drug types. For more information please see [Note 4.11](#).

Table 4: The number¹ of seizures of class C drugs made by police forces in Scotland by drug type, 2010-11

Drug Type	Central	Dumfries & Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian & Borders ³	Northern	Strathclyde	Tayside	Scotland
Anabolic Steroids	-	-	-	12	NA	-	5	2	19
Diazepam	172	79	126	248	489	134	2,110	247	3,605
GHB	-	-	1	-	NA	-	-	-	1
Ketamine	-	-	-	4	NA	4	17	6	31
Other Benzodiazepines	-	36	-	-	NA	1	-	28	65
Temazepam	-	2	3	4	7	7	18	13	54
Other class C ²	20	-	3	66	NA	175	195	96	555
Total¹	176	117	133	334	496	321	2,287	392	4,256

Notes:

1. Seizures involving more than one class of drug are counted as a single seizure in the total number of seizures but are counted separately against each individual drug class involved. For more information please see [Note 4.4](#).
2. Figures for „other class C drugs“ include GBL, 1,4-Butanediol, oripavine and BZP, which became controlled drugs in December 2009.
3. Lothian and Borders Police are unable to provide seizures figures for some drug types. For more information please see [Note 4.11](#).

Table 5: The quantity of class A drugs seized^{1,2} by police forces in Scotland by drug type, 2010-11

Drug Type	Units ³	Central	Dumfries & Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian & Borders ⁴	Northern	Strathclyde	Tayside	Scotland
Cocaine	kg	1.8	7.6	9.1	3.9	18.3	4.1	99.1	1.2	145.2
Crack	kg	-	-	-	3.6	2.1	0.1	0.1	3.1	9.1
Ecstasy-type Substances	tablets (000s)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.9	0.5	7.0	1.3	10.0
Heroin	kg	0.4	4.2	6.1	8.2	25.1	1.2	45.4	5.1	95.6
LSD	tablets (000s)	0.1	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	0.0	0.1
Methadone	litres	0.7	0.1	2.4	7.9	6.8	0.7	16.1	1.9	36.6
Methylamphetamine	kg	-	-	-	0.0	NA	-	-	-	0.0
Morphine	litres	-	-	-	0.1	NA	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.5

Notes:

1. Where the quantity of a seizure is recorded as 'trace' it is not included in these figures.
2. Drugs can be seized in a variety of forms or preparation types. In this table, quantities of drugs have been converted to weights (kg), liquids (litres) or tablets (000s). To present all seized quantities within a given drug type in terms of one comparable unit, conversion factors are applied to estimate the overall quantity for that drug.
3. Tablets include doses, dots and squares.
4. Lothian and Borders Police are unable to provide seizures figures for some drug types. For more information please see [Note 4.11](#).

Table 6: The quantity of class B drugs seized^{1,2} by police forces in Scotland by drug type, 2010-11

Drug Type	Units ³	Central	Dumfries & Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian & Borders ⁴	Northern	Strathclyde	Tayside	Scotland
Herbal Cannabis	kg	0.7	330.4	7.3	17.9	133.5	13.8	356.9	6.7	867.2
Cannabis resin	kg	23.6	46.9	8.4	85.3	98.0	16.8	775.9	13.5	1,068.4
Cannabis plants	plants	143	8,363	1,700	817	7,679	82	14,948	1,067	34,799
Amphetamines	kg	3.5	0.0	1.6	16.0	9.4	8.8	179.1	42.5	261.0
Barbiturates	tablets (000s)	0.2	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	0.2

Notes:

1. Where the quantity of a seizure is recorded as 'trace' it is not included in these figures.
2. Drugs can be seized in a variety of forms or preparation types. In this table, quantities of drugs have been converted to weights (kg), liquids (litres) or tablets (000s). To present all seized quantities within a given drug type in terms of one comparable unit, conversion factors are applied to estimate the overall quantity for that drug.
3. Tablets include doses, dots and squares.
4. Lothian and Borders Police are unable to provide seizures figures for some drug types. For more information please see [Note 4.11](#).

Table 7: The quantity of class C drugs seized^{1,2} by police forces in Scotland by drug type, 2010-11

Drug Type	Units ³	Central	Dumfries & Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian & Borders ⁴	Northern	Strathclyde	Tayside	Scotland
Anabolic Steroids	tablets (000s)	-	-	-	1.8	NA	-	44.3	0.2	46.4
Diazepam	tablets (000s)	15.6	9.4	37.3	34.5	201.5	18.8	330.2	30.7	678.1
GHB	litres	-	-	0.1	-	NA	-	-	-	0.1
Ketamine	kg	-	-	-	0.0	NA	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
Other Benzodiazepines	tablets (000s)	-	-	-	0.0	NA	0.0	-	0.9	1.0
Temazepam	tablets (000s)	-	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.8

Notes:

1. Where the quantity of a seizure is recorded as 'trace' it is not included in these figures.
2. Drugs can be seized in a variety of forms or preparation types. In this table, quantities of drugs have been converted to weights (kg), liquids (litres) or tablets (000s). To present all seized quantities within a given drug type in terms of one comparable unit, conversion factors are applied to estimate the overall quantity for that drug.
3. Tablets include doses, dots and squares.
4. Lothian and Borders Police are unable to provide seizures figures for some drug types. For more information please see [Note 4.11](#).

4. Notes on Statistics used in this Bulletin

- 4.1 This is the first time since June 2008 that information on drug seizures made by Scottish police forces has been published by the Scottish Government. Prior to this, the Scottish Government had published statistics on the drug seizures made by Scottish police forces twice before. These publications contained data from 1996-97 to 2006-07. Historically the Home Office collected and published the data. The Home Office collected police data from the Scottish Police forces until March 2006.
- 4.2 The statistics in this bulletin and accompanying tables relate to the seizure of drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) 1971, which came into force on 1 July 1973. The Act divides drugs into three categories according to their harmfulness. A full list of drugs in each category is given in [Schedule 2 to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#), as amended by Orders in Council.
- 4.3 This bulletin does not contain information from HMRC, British Transport Police and seizures outwith Scotland as a result of Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA) operational activity. SCDEA seizures in Scotland are included in the police force data included in this bulletin. It is not possible to distinguish which seizures had SCDEA involvement.
- 4.4 Seizures involving more than one drug are counted as a single seizure in the total number of seizures, but are counted separately against each individual drug or drug class involved. As a seizure can involve more than one drug, figures for individual drug classes cannot be added together to produce totals. Therefore the number of seizures of drug by class can add up to more than the total number of seizures.

For example, if in a single seizure quantities of cocaine, heroin, herbal cannabis and ketamine were seized, the number of seizures would be as follows:

Overall it would be counted as one seizure. In terms of the different classes of drug it would count as one seizure of class A drugs, one seizure of class B drugs and one seizure of class C drugs. Finally, in terms of the different types of drugs it would be counted as one seizure each of cocaine, heroin, herbal cannabis and ketamine.

- 4.5 A seizure is the result of an operation that is recorded by the police. If the operation undertook raids on several properties this will be recorded as one seizure. Similarly, a single seizure may result in multiple offences and multiple perpetrators.
- 4.6 Accurate information about drug seizures may take up to nine months to be processed depending on the complexity of the operation and other operational factors. Also, as operations continue, updated information may be available at police force level. Inevitably, the data in this bulletin provide a snap-shot of what the police have recorded at a given time. The definitive number of seizures and quantities recovered at police force level are held by individual forces
- 4.7 Drugs can be seized in a variety of forms or preparation types. In Tables [5](#), [6](#) and [7](#) quantities of drugs have been converted to weights (kg), liquids (litres) or tablets (000s). To present all seized quantities within a given drug type in terms of one

comparable unit, conversion factors are applied to estimate the overall quantity for that drug.

- 4.8 A number of changes to drug classifications have occurred during the time period relating to this publication.
- Figures for class B drugs include mephedrone and other cathinone-based drugs, which became controlled drugs in April 2010.
 - Figures for class C drugs include GBL, 1,4-Butanediol, oripavine and BZP, which became controlled drugs in December 2009.
- 4.9 Although care is taken in completing and analysing the returns used to compile the figures in this bulletin, the figures are subject to the inaccuracies of any large scale recording system involving different organisations. In order for the reliability of the data to be ensured, a reconciliation exercise was conducted where each police force was asked to check their own data and supply revised figures where necessary during the data analysis stage of this publication.
- 4.10 Not all drugs that come into the possession of the police have been “seized” in the strictest sense of the word. For example, a member of the public may hand in what appear to be drugs that have been found in the street. These items will be recorded at individual police stations and then destroyed.
- 4.11 Lothian and Borders Police were unable to provide seizure numbers and quantities, where applicable, for the following types of drugs: methylamphetamine, morphine, barbiturates, anabolic steroids, GHB, ketamine, other benzodiazepines and „other class C drugs“. This is for logistical, procedural and operational reasons.
- 4.12 The figures in the tables in this bulletin are generally shown to one decimal place in order to provide a comprehensive record of the information collected. However, the figures are not necessarily accurate to the last digit shown. In some tables components may not add to totals (or the total) because they have been rounded independently.
- 4.12 The following symbols are used throughout the tables in this bulletin:
- = denotes nil figure or too small to display.
NA = denotes figure is not available.
- 4.13 Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, the estimated costs of responding to statistical surveys and data collection are to be published.

The estimated cost of compliance for supplying and validating the data for this bulletin is: £300.

Details of the calculation methodology are available on the Scottish Government Crime and Justice website at:

www.Scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/costcalculation

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