

## E2

## Seizures of controlled drugs

### Key Points

- The number of drug seizures in Scotland rose between 1985 and 1998 however since 1998 there has been a fall of 12 per cent. (Table E2.1)
- The number of Class A seizures by Scottish police increased by 35% between 1998 and 2000, whilst the number of Class B seizures fell by 17 per cent, and the number Class C seizures almost halved. (Table E2.3)
- The quantities of heroin, cocaine and crack seized in Scotland peaked in 1999, but fell back in 2000. (Table E2.3)

This section provides a selection of information on seizures of drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The source of statistics concerned with seizures of controlled drugs is a range of bulletins published annually by the Home Office under the general title “Statistics of drug seizures and offenders dealt with”. The figures relating to Scotland are published in the “Scotland tables” which may be obtained from the Home Office at the address given in page 167.

The number of drug seizures in Scotland rose nearly four-fold between 1985 and 1995 (Table E2.1), and increased by a further 41 per cent by 1998. However, in 1999 there was a fall of 3 per cent in Scotland compared to 10 per cent across the UK as a whole (excluding HM Customs & Excise). There were further falls in 2000, of 9 per cent in Scotland and 7 per cent across UK police forces.

Corkery (2002) believes that the fall in 1999 and 2000 is probably due to two main factors<sup>1</sup>. Firstly, in recent years law enforcement agencies have been focusing more of their attention on Class A drugs such as heroin, cocaine and crack cocaine, in line with the aims of the UK Drug Strategy. Secondly, many ‘stops and searches’ under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 result in quantities of illegal drugs being recovered, usually Class B drugs such as cannabis and amphetamines. Following the publication in February 2001 of the MacPherson Report on the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, there was a substantial fall in the number of such ‘stops and searches’, and hence in drug seizures.

Table E2.3, which gives a breakdown of drug seizures over time by main drug, demonstrates these facts. It can be seen that the number of Class A seizures by Scottish police increased by 35 per cent between 1998 and 2000, whilst the number of Class B seizures fell by 17 per cent, and the number Class C seizures almost halved. There were increases in the number of seizures of heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, and ecstasy-type drugs during this period. Seizures of amphetamines and cannabis resin (the main form of cannabis recovered) fell substantially.

The number of seizures, however, is not necessarily reflective of the quantity of drugs recovered. Table E2.3 also shows that the quantities of heroin, cocaine and crack seized in Scotland peaked in 1999, but fell back in 2000. By contrast, the amounts of ecstasy-type drugs and methadone reached record levels in 2000. Between 1998 and 2000, there was also a moderate increase in the seizures of benzodiazepines. The quantity recovered of cannabis resin declined further in 2000, as did the amount of amphetamines. The quantity of herbal cannabis rose slightly but is still at a low level. It is important to note that large seizures can disproportionately affect the quantities seized, leading to large changes from year to year; an effect shown by the quantities of ecstasy-type drugs seized since 1995.

Table E2.2 shows that the number of seizures of different drug types does not appear to be necessarily related

to the number of residents in a police force area. For example, for the second year running, Grampian Police made more seizures of crack cocaine than Strathclyde Police; the number of heroin seizures in Strathclyde were proportionately much higher (about 870 per million population) than those in other UK police force areas (average of about 270 per million population)<sup>2</sup>.

Similarly, with regard to amounts recovered, the patterns do not always relate to population densities. For example, there were more ecstasy-type drugs recovered by the Dumfries & Galloway force than by Strathclyde Police. Quantities of cannabis resin seized are normally fairly even across all force areas, apart from Strathclyde which dominates the picture, as it does also with heroin and cocaine.

## References

- 1 Corkery, J.M. (2002). *Drug seizure and offender statistics, United Kingdom, 2000*. Statistical Bulletin 4/02. London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.
- 2 Corkery, J.M. (2002). *Drug seizure and offender statistics, United Kingdom, 2000*. Table A1.4 Statistical Bulletin 4/02. London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

## E2.1 | Seizures of controlled drugs : 1985, 1990, 1995 - 2000

police force area or other organisation<sup>1</sup>

	1985	1990	1995 <sup>r</sup>	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Police and other authorities								
Scotland	<b>3 242</b>	<b>5 990</b>	<b>12 661</b>	<b>13 835</b>	<b>16 571</b>	<b>17 809</b>	<b>17 197</b>	<b>15 698</b>
Central	78	283	633	589	598	829	613	332
Dumfries & Galloway	45	119	414	453	444	509	420	272
Fife	103	243	526	498	659	655	538	450
Grampian	220	324	1125	1 391	1 518	1 682	1 468	1 152
Lothian & Borders	546	805	728	1 472	2 376	2 424	2 773	2 526
Northern	192	248	463	472	556	399	668	446
Strathclyde	1 848	3 463	7 937	7 990	9 370	10 046	9 635	9 650
Tayside	210	486	835	970	1 049	1 261	1 082	870
Other authorities	**	19	-	-	1	4	-	-
England	21 767	45 910	88 115	92 614	105 875	113 758	99 979	92 639
Wales	1 452	2 102	5 573	5 882	8 365	9 566	7 735	7 673
Northern Ireland	219	172	847	1 291	1 201	1 508	2 108	1 791
British Transport Police	**	380	803	780	1 012	1 287	1 712	1 514
Regional Crime Squad/ National Crime Squad (England & Wales)	**	**	**	**	123	68	161	163
Force missing, not recorded <sup>2</sup>	**	**	3	4	-	-	-	-
UK Total	<b>26 680</b>	<b>53 454</b>	<b>107 999</b>	<b>114 402</b>	<b>133 147</b>	<b>143 996</b>	<b>128 892</b>	<b>119 478</b>
HM Customs & Excise	3 786	7 405	6 337	7 949	6 727	7 753	5 209	4 867
Total - all seizures	<b>30 466</b>	<b>60 859</b>	<b>114 339</b>	<b>122 355</b>	<b>139 874</b>	<b>151 749</b>	<b>134 101</b>	<b>124 345</b>

- 1 Seizures from joint operations involving HM Customs & Excise and the police are generally recorded against HM Customs & Excise. Seizures made by the Scottish Crime Squad are recorded by the appropriate police force.
- 2 Among English and Welsh police forces; not recorded before 1993.

\*\* Not available  
r Revised.

Source : Home Office.

## E2.2 | Seizures<sup>1</sup> of controlled drugs (number and quantity seized) : 2000

police force area or other organisation<sup>2</sup>; drug type

	NUMBER OF SEIZURES								
	All drugs	Class A Drugs							Total Class A
		Total	Cocaine	Crack cocaine	Heroin	LSD	Ecstasy-type	Methadone	
Police and other authorities									
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>15 860</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>2 813</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1 210</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>4 392</b>
Central	360	4	-	68	-	18	1	-	88
Dumfries & Galloway	275	8	-	70	-	22	-	-	98
Fife	452	13	-	78	3	33	-	1	121
Grampian	1 152	36	31	251	3	154	11	5	448
Lothian & Borders	2 560	69	1	311	13	205	29	16	575
Northern	486	4	-	17	2	46	1	3	68
Strathclyde	9 702	244	1	1 976	14	617	66	49	2 801
Tayside	873	27	1	42	-	115	3	12	193
England	92 639	4 176	2 598	12 498	194	7 056	1 016	557	25 858
Wales	7 673	91	27	563	26	826	16	61	1 551
Northern Ireland	1 791	25	2	59	14	342	-	4	433
British Transport Police	1 514	29	27	185	8	83	4	10	331
Regional Crime Squads	163	33	4	34	-	42	1	1	99
<b>UK Total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>135 500</b>	<b>5 164</b>	<b>2 726</b>	<b>18 965</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>10 769</b>	<b>1 259</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>37 056</b>
HM Customs & Excise	4 867	1 148	26	173	16	146	7	129	1 515
<b>Total - all seizures</b>	<b>140 367</b>	<b>6 312</b>	<b>2 752</b>	<b>19 138</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>10 915</b>	<b>1 266</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>38 571</b>

	QUANTITY SEIZED (kgs <sup>4</sup> )							
	Class A Drugs							Other
	Cocaine	Crack cocaine	Heroin	LSD (doses)	Ecstasy-type	Methadone		
Police and other authorities								
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>43.0</b>	<b>2 984</b>	<b>226 477</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>1.8</b>	
Central	0.0	-	3.3	-	806	0.0	-	
Dumfries & Galloway	0.3	-	0.7	-	81 382	-	-	
Fife	1.3	-	1.7	6	8 849	-	0.2	
Grampian	1.1	0.1	2.6	38	14 667	0.9	1.2	
Lothian & Borders	5.7	0.0	6.5	2 093	38 654	2.6	0.0	
Northern	0.0	-	0.2	237	1 058	0.0	-	
Strathclyde	13.1	0.0	27.8	610	74 089	8.1	0.4	
Tayside	1.5	0.0	0.3	-	6 972	-	-	
Other authorities								
England	153.5	12.6	441.2	7 034	771 596	96.0	12.1	
Wales	2.4	0.1	6.5	398	46 098	0.8	0.1	
Northern Ireland	1.7	-	3.1	330	571 271	-	-	
British Transport Police	-	-	4.6	168	24 322	-	-	
Regional Crime Squads	1 393.7	1.5	1 494.5	-	1 034 343	0.1	-	
<b>UK Total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>1 597.0</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>2 035.9</b>	<b>13 898</b>	<b>2 900 584</b>	<b>120.2</b>	<b>15.9</b>	
HM Customs & Excise	2 370.7	10.8	1 391.9	14 484	3 862 200	0.7	31.0	
<b>Total - all seizures</b>	<b>3 967.7</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>3 427.8</b>	<b>28 382</b>	<b>6 762 784</b>	<b>120.9</b>	<b>46.9</b>	

1 As a seizure can involve more than one drug, figures for individual drugs cannot be added to produce totals.

2 Seizures from joint operations involving HM Customs & Excise and the police are generally recorded against HM Customs & Excise (Number of seizures) or the lead agency (quantity seized). Seizures made by the Scottish Crime Squad are recorded by the appropriate police force.

3 Includes seizures made by British Transport Police in England and Wales.

4 All quantities are in kilogrammes except for LSD and Ecstasy-type (doses), and cannabis plants.

Note : These figures are different to those published in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin in May 2002 since these figures include data received after publication.

Source : Home Office.

## Seizures<sup>1</sup> of controlled drugs (number and quantity seized) : 2000

E2.2

police force area or other organisation<sup>2</sup>; drug type *continued*

## NUMBER OF SEIZURES

Class B Drugs				Class C Drugs			Unknown			
Cannabis	Amphet- amines	Other	Total Class B	Benzo- diazepines	Temez- epam	Anabolic steroids	Total Class C	Total		
<b>12 070</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>12 578</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>9</b>	Police and other authorities
										<b>Scotland</b>
276	22	3	<b>290</b>	7	-	-	-	<b>7</b>	-	Central
187	13	-	<b>195</b>	4	-	-	-	<b>4</b>	-	Dumfries & Galloway
361	43	8	<b>383</b>	12	-	-	-	<b>12</b>	1	Fife
808	38	26	<b>842</b>	37	12	-	-	<b>45</b>	1	Grampian
2 133	123	77	<b>2 217</b>	93	14	3	4	<b>103</b>	1	Lothian & Borders
442	22	4	<b>450</b>	1	-	-	-	<b>1</b>	-	Northern
7 169	355	132	<b>7 466</b>	365	65	-	28	<b>428</b>	6	Strathclyde
694	48	21	<b>735</b>	20	9	-	8	<b>33</b>	-	Tayside
66 938	5 478	324	<b>70 964</b>	856	198	47	46	<b>1 113</b>	385	England
5 989	662	8	<b>6 408</b>	75	43	9	1	<b>125</b>	13	Wales
1 474	68	1	<b>1 518</b>	11	5	5	-	<b>20</b>	-	Northern Ireland
1 203	54	1	<b>1 236</b>	3	1	-	-	<b>4</b>	2	British Transport Police
86	25	-	<b>97</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	Regional Crime Squads
<b>99 830</b>	<b>7 615</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>105 379</b>	<b>2 023</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>2 528</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>UK Total<sup>3</sup></b>
3 643	97	5	<b>3 386</b>	7	6	27	11	<b>50</b>	-	HM Customs & Excise
<b>103 473</b>	<b>7 712</b>	<b>881</b>	<b>108 765</b>	<b>2 030</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>2 578</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>Total - all seizures</b>

QUANTITY SEIZED (kgs<sup>4</sup>)

Class B Drugs				Class C Drugs			Unknown				
Cannabis (herbal)	Cannabis plants	Cannabis resin	Cannabis liquid	Amphet- amines	Other	Benzo- diazepines	Temez- epam	Anabolic steroids	Other		
<b>16.3</b>	<b>1 261</b>	<b>602.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	Police and other authorities	
										<b>Scotland</b>	
0.2	-	7.5	-	6.1	0.0	0.0	-	-	-	Central	
1.2	65	100.7	-	2.2	-	0.0	-	-	-	Dumfries & Galloway	
0.8	113	55.1	-	1.7	0.0	0.1	-	-	-	Fife	
0.5	71	34.5	-	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.0	-	-	Grampian	
5.1	312	61.1	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	-	Lothian & Borders	
6.1	26	4.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	-	-	-	-	Northern	
2.4	644	301.4	-	19.4	0.0	1.1	0.0	-	0.0	Strathclyde	
0.0	30	38.3	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	Tayside	
881.0	37 285	8 269.5	1.4	453.1	3.1	0.5	0.3	1.0	-	2.5	England
14.1	2 117	147.0	0.3	21.7	-	0.3	0.3	0.1	-	0.9	Wales
6.0	262	303.6	-	2.8	-	-	-	0.1	-	0.4	Northern Ireland
0.8	22	2.9	-	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	British Transport Police
8 371.9	6 874	19 040.4	-	537.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	Regional Crime Squads
<b>9 306.3</b>	<b>49 082</b>	<b>28 969.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1 088.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>UK Total<sup>3</sup></b>
16 182.9	-	19 834.4	2.8	718.0	-	-	0.2	46.2	8.6	-	HM Customs & Excise
<b>25 489.2</b>	<b>49 082</b>	<b>48 803.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>1 806.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>Total - all seizures</b>

## E2.3 | Number and quantity<sup>1</sup> of seizures<sup>2</sup> of class A, B and C drugs; Scotland : 1985, 1990, 1995 - 2000

drug type

	Number of seizures							
	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
<b>All class A</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>1 494</b>	<b>2 449</b>	<b>2 699</b>	<b>3 254</b>	<b>3 781</b>	<b>4392</b>
Cocaine	41	25	69	117	191	254	334	405
Crack cocaine	**	1,000	1	2	3	18	34	34
Heroin	388	114	738	1 206	1 787	2 424	2 597	2813
LSD	53	171	107	139	100	84	57	35
Ecstasy-type <sup>3</sup>	-	8	524	889	527	465	780	1210
Methadone	7	19	44	112	111	118	118	111
Other Class A	35	88	91	132	131	94	80	86
<b>All Class B</b>	<b>3 000</b>	<b>5 536</b>	<b>11 354</b>	<b>11 666</b>	<b>14 419</b>	<b>15 167</b>	<b>14 234</b>	<b>12 578</b>
Amphetamines	370	354	1 526	2 084	2 095	2 104	1 655	664
Cannabis(herbal)	296	110	586	1 031	574	447	511	397
Cannabis plants <sup>4</sup>	127	40	273	263	191	127	112	82
Cannabis resin	2 526	5 212	9 902	9 446	12 567	13 508	12 837	11 827
Other Class B	3	103	115	197	303	349	249	271
<b>All Class C</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>1 124</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>1 211</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>638</b>
Benzodiazepines	**	238	288	449	458	650	680	539
Temazepam	**	**	344	624	326	570	280	100
Anabolic steroids	**	**	**	-	-	-	-	3
	Quantity seized (kgs)							
	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
<i>Class A</i>								
Cocaine	0.400	0.089	0.797	2.447	4.570	27.42	33.381	22.842
Crack cocaine	**	**	-. <sup>6</sup>	-. <sup>6</sup>	0.008	0.355	0.409	0.18
Heroin	6.600	2.615	9.128	34.739	23.701	40.19	205.703	42.985
LSD <sup>5</sup>	0.001	2 041	1 414	14 762	1 475	489	592	2 984
Ecstasy-type <sup>3,5</sup>	-	413	126 473	98 849	122 355	56 553	93 104	226 477
Methadone	-. <sup>6</sup>	0.006	0.012	0.039	0.303	0.089	2.701	11.635
Other Class A	-. <sup>7</sup>	-. <sup>7</sup>	0.500	0.014	0.009	0.073	0.003	1.837
<i>Class B</i>								
Amphetamines	5.000	6.000	31.000	70.257	1 761.232	113.000	53.000	35.142
Cannabis(herbal)	708.700	102.529	18.377	90.273	66.812	813.948	14.807	16.396
Cannabis plants <sup>4</sup>	718	175	2 519	2 068	34 782	52 906	1 790	1261
Cannabis resin	71.800	104.239	353.588	398.946	3 603 222	11 943.373	1 126.357	602.888
<i>Class C</i>								
Benzodiazepines	**	0.252	0.195	0.586	0.151	0.642	1.874	2.323
Temazepam	**	**	0.320	3.024 <sup>8</sup>	0.045	58.620	0.382	0.014
Anabolic steroids	**	**	**	-	-	-	-	0.002

1 Drugs are seized in a variety of forms but where possible, for the purpose of this table, amounts have been converted to weights. Seizures of unspecified quantities are not included.

2 As a seizure can involve more than one drug, figures for individual drugs cannot be added together to produce totals.

3 MDMA up until 1995.

4 Number of plants.

5 Number of doses. Data for 1985 are in kgs; from 1990, data refer to number of doses.

6 Less than 0.5 gram.

7 Less than 50 grams.

8 Equals 381 369 capsules.

\*\* Not available.

Note : Figures for 1990 onwards are different to those published in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin since these figures include data received after publication. The figures for 1985-1995 (inclusive) include Scottish Customs.

Source : Home Office.