

E1 Drug-related offences and court proceedings

Key Points

Overview of drug related offences

- In 2003, there were 40 465 drug-related offences recorded by Scottish police forces, which is a rate of 800 per 100 000 population. (Table E1.1)
- In 2003, 77 per cent (31 141) of drug-related offences were for possession. A further 22 per cent (8 807) were for possession with intent to supply. (Table E1.2)
- The number of persons convicted of drug offences in Scottish Courts in 2002 was 5 763. Seventy-seven per cent were for possession (4 438) and 22 per cent were for possession with intent to supply (1 265). (Table E1.3)
- Just over three quarters (76%) of those persons convicted of possession received a fine, while half of those persons convicted of possession with intent to supply were given a custodial sentence. (Table E1.4)

5 year trends – 1999 to 2003 Drug-related offences

- Between 1999 and 2000, the annual number of drug-related offences remained stable at around 31 900 and 31 400. In 2001, the number of drug-related offences increased by 15 per cent to 36 175, and between 2001 and 2002 they rose by a further 12 per cent to 40 379. This has remained similar in 2003 with 40 465 offences recorded. This represents an overall increase of 27 per cent in the last 5 years. (Table E1.1)

5 year trends – 1998 to 2002 Drug-related court proceedings

- From 1998 to 2002 the number of persons convicted of drug offences in Scottish courts decreased from 6 929 to 5 763, representing a 17 per cent decrease in the past 5 years. (Table E1.3)
- Since 1998 the majority of persons convicted of drug offences were male (nearly 88%), with an average age of 27 years. (Table E1.3 and Table E1.4)

Geographical profile

- The rate of drug-related offences recorded per 100 000 population was highest in Glasgow City (1 750), Inverclyde (1 252) and West Dunbartonshire (1 207). (Table E1.1)
- The majority of council areas have experienced an overall rate increase per 100 000 population between 1999 and 2003; exceptions were Ayrshire South, Borders, Renfrewshire East and Shetland Islands which were either stable or showed slight reductions. (Table E1.1)

Background information

Recorded crime

Statistics on drug-related offences recorded by the police are available from quarterly statistical returns made by the Scottish police forces to the Scottish Executive Justice Department. For further information see: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/bulletins/00338-00.asp>

Criminal proceedings in Scottish Courts

Statistics on persons convicted for drug-related offences are available from the Scottish Executive Justice Department's court proceedings database. For further information see: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/bulletins/00312-00.asp>

The data is derived from information held on the police operational computer at the Scottish Criminal Record office (SCRO).

Offences are recorded in the year in which the offender was sentenced, which may not necessarily be the year in which the offence was committed. Where a person is proceeded against for more than one crime or offence, only the main charge is counted, (i.e. the one with the severest penalty). The drug related court proceeding figures for 2003 were not available at time of publication.