| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-2034  Responded to: 24th July 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## 1. Arrests and Stop and Search

## Anual number of arrests for cannabis and cocaine-related offences, disaggregated by:

## Possession

## Possession with intent to supply (PWITS)

## Trafficking

## Production/cultivation (for cannabis)

In response to your request for arrest data specifically, the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 removed the separate concepts of arrest and detention and replaced them with a power of arrest without warrant - where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting a person has committed, or is committing, an offence.

When a person is arrested, a statement of arrest should be read over as soon as reasonably practicable, and details recorded in the arresting officer’s notebook.

A person is ‘Not Officially Accused’ (a suspect) when arrested and not cautioned and charged. They are ‘Officially Accused’ once arrested and cautioned and charged. If conveyed to a police station, the arrested person will have their details recorded in our National Custody System.

There are situations however whereby a person must be released from police custody prior to their arrival at a police station - effectively they are ‘de-arrested’ - where the reasonable grounds for suspicion no longer exist. In those circumstances, the details of an arrested person are not held electronically.

As a result, we are unfortunately unable to collate comprehensive arrest data, as case-by-case assessment of all officer notebooks would be required - in addition to the partial arrest data held in the National Custody System.

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request and I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

For the reasons outlined above, Police Scotland do not collate data on arrests. Instead, data is compiled and published based on recorded and detected crimes:

[Crime data - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/crime-data/)

In this case, ‘detected’ crimes are those where an accused has been identified and there exists a sufficiency of evidence under Scots Law to justify consideration of criminal proceedings.

## Number of stop and searches where cannabis or cocaine was the suspected substance (with outcomes, where available)

Unfortunately, I estimate that it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request. I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

By way of explanation, I can advise that the only way to provide an accurate response would be to manually review every stop-and-search crime report pertaining to a drug related offence to ascertain whether the substance traced was cannabis and/ or cocaine specifically. Given the volume of reports that would be required to be read through for the 24-year period requested, this exercise would far exceed the cost limit set out in the Fees Regulations.

To be of assistance, for more general drug-related data, I can refer you to our Stop and Search statistics publicly available on the Police Scotland website:

[Data Publication - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/stop-and-search/data-publication/)​

**2. Drug Seizures**

* **Annual quantity of cannabis and cocaine seized (kg/grams)**
* **Street or estimated value if recorded**
* **Location categories (e.g. public space, home or vehicle)**
* **If applicable, please confirm the internal classification or coding systems your force uses to record these seizures and offences (e.g. offence codes, controlled substance tags used to record your internal categories).**

***Please also distinguish, where possible, between the following types of cannabis and cocaine, as follows:***

**For cannabis:**

* **Resin forms (e.g. hashish), including THC% levels if known**
* **Herbal forms under 10% THC (e.g. ganja or “legacy” cannabis)**
* **High THC herbal forms (e.g. skunk, sinsemilla), with THC levels of 10% and above**
* **Synthetic cannabinoids (SSCs) such as Spice, K2, or HHC**
* **THC edible products containing over 1mg of tetrahydrocannabinol per product**
* **Known street-names of substances seized with THC and CBD levels, if recorded**

**For cocaine:**

* **Powdered cocaine**
* **Crack cocaine (rock form)**

**3. Demographics and Geographic Data of Offenders**

* **Age breakdowns of individuals arrested or charged for the above offences (e.g. under 18, 18–24, 25–34, etc.)**
* **Gender and ethnicity breakdowns, where collected**
* **The borough names or policing districts controlled by your force**
* **Total number of cannabis or cocaine associated offences recorded within each borough / district**

**4. Outcomes and Classification Frameworks**

* **Annual number and description of disposal types used for the above cannabis or cocaine offences: e.g. warnings, community resolutions, cautions, charges or other outcomes**
* **Any associated offence codes, outcome codes, or internal classification systems used to record cannabis or cocaine-related offences.**
* **If these are recorded within a database or information system (e.g. crime recording systems), please include the relevant code labels or field descriptors.**

**5. Drug-Linked Secondary Offences**

**Any recorded incidents where cannabis or cocaine may not have been the primary offence but is noted as a contributing factor in the following offences (but not limited to):**

* **Violence against the person**
* **Domestic abuse-related incidents**
* **Public order or anti-social behaviour offences**
* **Weapons offences**
* **Youth offending charges or safeguarding referrals**

**7. Online and Parcel-Based Drug Distribution**

* **Any measurable data showing how often social media platforms (e.g. Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram), websites or dark web marketplaces were used to facilitate cannabis or cocaine sales**
* **Actual or estimated number of cannabis or cocaine sales conducted via digital / online means**
* **Number of seizures or interceptions involving parcel-based drug distribution (e.g. Royal Mail, courier services, drop boxes, etc.)**

**8. Encrypted Communication Devices**

**Please provide the number of arrests and charges involving the use of the following encrypted communication platforms or modified devices (including discontinued services), specifically in relation to cannabis or cocaine offences:**

* **EncroChat**
* **Sky ECC**
* **ANOM / ANØM**
* **Phantom Secure**
* **Ciphr or other modified encrypted handsets**

**Offences may include:**

* **Possession**
* **Possession with intent to supply (PWITS)**
* **Trafficking or importation into the UK**

**Also, please provide:**

* **Number of encrypted devices seized and linked to cannabis or cocaine-related offences**
* **Number of prosecutions where encrypted messages, images or drop-coordinates were used as evidence**
* **Whether your force uses any internal tags, codes or intelligence flags to track encrypted device use in drug-related offences - please include these, if available**

**9. Acquisitive Offences with Drug-Linked Motivation**

* **Any recorded acquisitive offences committed where cannabis or cocaine were contributing factors, including (but not limited to):**
  + **Theft (including shoplifting or vehicle-related theft)**
  + **Burglary (residential and non-residential)**
  + **Robbery and aggravated robbery**
  + **Fraud or deception offences**

**10. Harassment and Abuse Offences Involving Drug Influence**

* **Any recorded harassment, intimidation, or verbal abuse offences where cannabis or cocaine were noted as contributing factors, including:**
  + **Towards members of the public**
  + **Towards police officers or other emergency services personnel**

In response to the requests made above (questions: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10), unfortunately, I regret to inform you that I estimate it would cost well in excess of the current FOI cost threshold of £600 to process your request. I am therefore refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

Firstly, it is important to note that crimes are recorded in accordance with the Scottish Government Justice Directorate (SGJD) crime classifications and are not thereafter sub-categorised. Thus, drug related offences are not thereafter sub-categorised by drug type, nor is there a marker etc. available on the Police Scotland crime recording systems which would be able to indicate the involvement of any specified drugs (cannabis and/ or cocaine).

Additionally, the crime recording systems have no facility whereby the details of the accused can be easily extracted, nor can any specific circumstances - such as whether social media was involved etc. - be easily identified.

Again, the only way to provide an accurate response to these questions would be to individually review *all* crime reports for the time-period specified (2000-2024).

**6. Drug-Related Motoring Offences**

* **Annual number of arrests or charges under Section 5A of the Road Traffic Act 1988**

In terms of arrest data, unfortunately, I am refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) - Excessive Cost of Compliance. Please refer to our response to your first request for a more detailed explanation.

However, for recorded and detected crimes, these statistics are available on our website: [Crime data - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/crime-data/)

Accordingly, the information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it […] is exempt information”.

* **Annula number of positive roadside swab tests for cannabis or cocaine with relation to the above offences**

Unfortunately, I am refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

By way of explanation, all crime reports whereby the offence relates to Section 5A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 would need to be reviewed to establish whether the roadside swab test was positive for cannabis and/ or cocaine.

* **Demographic breakdowns of motoring offenders (e.g. age, gender)**

Unfortunately, I am refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

By way of explanation, all relevant crime reports would need to be reviewed to establish the details of the accused (age, gender etc.).

* **Any recorded collisions or accidents involving cannabis or cocaine use**
  + **Please indicate the substance detected**
  + **Method of detection (e.g. swab, blood test)**
  + **Resulting legal outcome where known**

Unfortunately, I am refusing to provide the information sought in terms of section 12(1) of the Act - Excessive Cost of Compliance.

By way of explanation, there are no relevant markers on our road traffic collision system which would indicate either cannabis and/ or cocaine use – thus, all road traffic collision reports whereby the contributory factor was recorded as ‘impaired by drugs’ would need to be reviewed for the time-period specified (2000-2024).

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@foi.scot) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible.   
If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.