

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Police Recorded Drug Seizure and Arrest Statistics

Monthly Update Report covering the period to 31st December 2014

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Background

This bulletin provides the latest monthly figures on drug seizures and arrests recorded by the police in Northern Ireland up to 31st December 2014. The figures for the current financial year are provisional and may be subject to change. It includes details of the number of drug seizure incidents, the weight or quantity of drugs seized by drug type, the estimated street value and the number of persons arrested for drug offences. The statistics are presented at the Northern Ireland level and are also disaggregated by Policing District (see Map 1 at back of the bulletin). Information at Policing Area level is published in an accompanying excel spreadsheet which can be found on the PSNI Drug Seizure Statistics website: http://www.psnipolice.uk/directory/updates/updates_statistics/updates_drug_statistics.htm.

In response to requests from key users of the statistics we have expanded both the scope and the content of this report to provide more detail on a wider range of drug types seized by the police.

Please note that the drugs seized by the Border Force are reported by the Home Office and therefore are excluded from the PSNI figures in accordance with national guidance and also in order to avoid duplication of the statistics when collated at UK level.

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Summary of Key Results

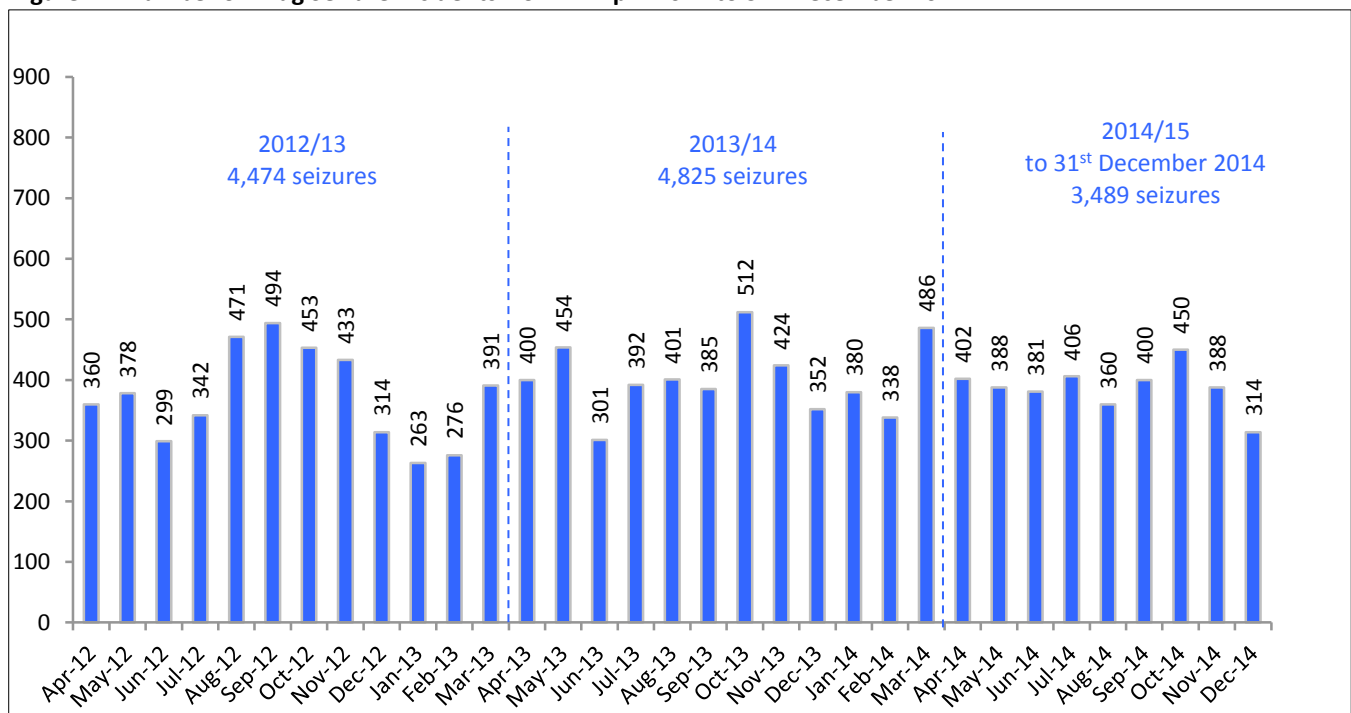
From 1st April to 31st December 2014, 3,489 drug seizure incidents took place in Northern Ireland. The drugs seized within this time period had an estimated street value of £10,144,356. As with previous years the vast majority of seizures in Northern Ireland involved the seizing of cannabis (mainly herbal). This is similar to the situation in England and Wales where cannabis seizures account for the majority of all seizures. Within the same period, 2,149 persons were arrested for drug offences in Northern Ireland.

During the 12 months to 31st December 2014, there were 4,693 drug seizure incidents in Northern Ireland and the drugs seized had a street value of £12.6million. There were 2,845 persons arrested for drug offences over those 12 months.

Section 1 – Seizure Incidents

There has been a year on year increase in the number of drug seizure incidents across Northern Ireland since 2006/07. During 2013/14 there were 4,825 seizure incidents recorded compared with 4,474 in 2012/13, an increase of 7.8%. However, in the 12 months to 31st December 2014, there were 4,693 drug seizure incidents, a decrease of 2.7% on the 2013/14 figure.

Figure 1 – Number of Drug Seizure Incidents from 1st April 2012 to 31st December 2014



During the first nine months of 2014/15 (1st April to 31st December 2014), 3,489 seizure incidents have been recorded by the police. This is a 1.6% decrease on the same period in 2012/13 when 3,544 seizure incidents occurred, and a 3.6% decrease on the same period from 2013/14 when 3,621 seizure incidents were recorded.

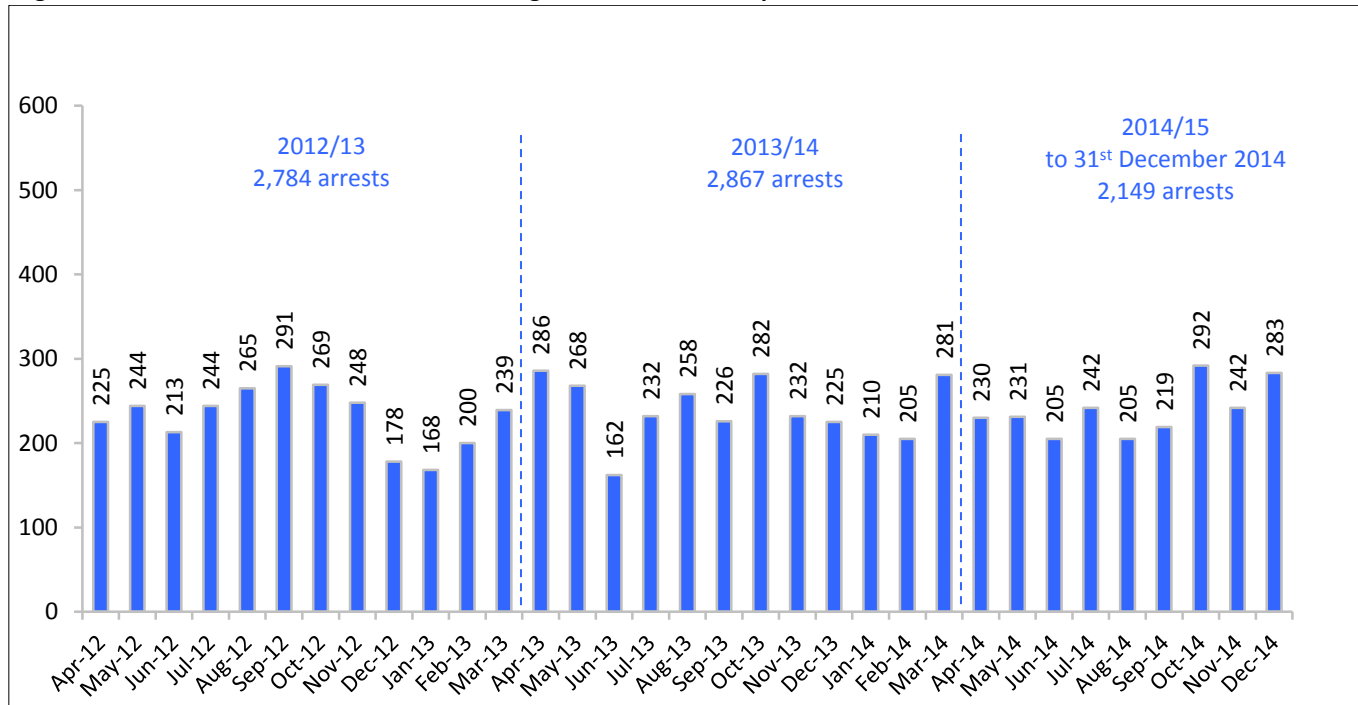
So far in 2014/15 the largest number of seizure incidents have occurred in the South Belfast Policing Area (398 incidents) followed by 289 incidents in Foyle. The largest drug seizure in the financial year to date was on the 25th November 2014 in Dungannon when 50kg of cocaine powder were seized with an estimated street value of over £2,500,000.

During the 12 months to 31st December 2014, there were 4,693 drug seizure incidents recorded by the police. This is a 3.1% increase on the previous 12 months period from 1st January 2013 to 31st December 2013, when 4,551 seizure incidents occurred.

Section 2 – Drug-Related Arrests

As with the number of drug seizure incidents, the number of persons arrested for drug offences has been steadily increasing since 2004/05. During 2013/14, there were 2,867 arrests compared with 2,784 in 2012/13, an increase of 3.0%. In the 12 months to 31st December 2014, there were 2,845 drug-related arrests, 22 fewer than in 2013/14, a decrease of 0.8%.

Figure 2 – Number of Persons Arrested for Drug Offences from 1st April 2012 to 31st December 2014



So far within this financial year to date, there have been 2,149 persons arrested for drug offences in Northern Ireland. In comparison with previous years, the number of persons arrested from 1st April 2014 to 31st December 2014 is 1.3% lower than for the same period two years ago in 2012/13 (2,177 arrests), and 1.0% lower than the same period last year (2013/14) when 2,171 persons were arrested.

During the period from 1st April to 31st December 2014, the largest number of people arrested for drug offences was in the South Belfast Policing Area where 296 persons were arrested. This was followed by Foyle (186 arrests) and Lisburn (159 arrests).

In the 12 months to 31st December 2014, there were 2,845 persons arrested for drug offences in Northern Ireland. This is 67 more than for the previous 12 months when 2,778 persons were arrested, an increase of 2.4%.

Section 3 – Commercial Cannabis Cultivation Statistics

Incidents Involving the Seizure of Cannabis Plants by PSNI

Of all incidents involving the seizure of cannabis plants or cannabis cultivation equipment in financial year 2014/15 to 31st December 2014, 91 were classified as a cannabis farm as per the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition¹.

Table 1 – Incidents Involving the Seizure of Cannabis Plants and Classification as Farms as per ACPO Definition 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 to date

	1 st April 2012 - 31 st March 2013	1 st April 2013 - 31 st March 2014	Financial Year to Date 1 st April 2014 - 31 st December 2014
Cases where 25 plants or more were seized	44	53	37
Cases where no plants or less than 25 plants were seized and factory equipment was recovered	46	77	54
Total number of incidents classified as cannabis farms	90	130	91

Cannabis Farms Discoveries by Policing Area

The highest number of cannabis farms discovered by the PSNI between 1st April and 31st December 2014 was in East Belfast (14).

Table 2 – Cannabis Farm Discoveries by Policing Area 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 to date

Policing Area	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15 to date	Policing Area	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15 to date
Antrim	1	2	3	Dungannon & S Tyrone	1	2	1
Ards	5	1	6	Fermanagh	3	3	6
Armagh	2	3	3	Foyle	3	3	2
Ballymena	2	5	4	Larne	5	5	2
Ballymoney	1	2	0	Limavady	0	5	1
Banbridge	4	2	1	Lisburn	7	8	6
East Belfast	6	6	14	Magherafelt	1	1	1
North Belfast	9	16	12	Moyle	0	2	2
South Belfast	6	8	5	Newry & Mourne	10	12	2
West Belfast	4	7	1	Newtownabbey	3	7	2
Carrickfergus	0	2	1	North Down	1	1	3
Castlereagh	1	2	0	Omagh	0	2	1
Coleraine	3	6	0	Strabane	1	2	0
Cookstown	1	2	1				
Craigavon	3	8	4				
Down	7	5	7	Northern Ireland	90	130	91

¹ 2012 ACPO definition: Cultivation of cannabis should be regarded as 'commercial' if:

Twenty-five or more cannabis plants, at any stage of growth, are being or have been grown **OR** Any premises shall be deemed a cannabis farm if the premises, or part therein, have been adapted to such an extent that normal usage would be inhibited and usually present within the premises, or part therein, are items solely concerned for the production of cannabis, i.e.: hydroponics system, high intensity lighting, ventilation/extraction fans, any other associated equipment, and/or abstraction of electricity.

Source: <http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2012/20120430CBACCoCPP.pdf>

Section 4 – Distribution by Drug Type and by Policing Area and District

Table 3: Drug Seizures and Arrests 2012/13 - 2014/15

Drugs Seized ¹		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15 Financial Year to Date (April to December 2014)	
		No. of Seizures	Amount Seized	No. of Seizures	Amount Seized	No. of Seizures	Amount Seized
Amphetamine (Class B)	Powder (kg)	75	22.8	79	8.2	47	4.4
	Wraps	7	14	10	113	4	8
	Tablets	16	2,283	7	197	1	27
Benzodiazepines (Class C)	Tablets	444	95,542	475	148,366	411	99,629
	Powder (gms)	6	3.1	2	1.1	1	1
Cannabis (Class B)	Resin (kg)	737	404.6	600	30.8	255	76
	Herbal (kg)	2,609	361.0	3,059	299.3	2,274	126.1
	Plants	230	6,813	245	10,155	171	9,776
	Oil (gms)	0	.	0	.	0	.
	Joints	301	410	346	465	265	343
Cocaine (Class A)	Powder (kg)	354	11.6	397	25.2	378	67.5
	Wraps	23	36	33	67	19	41
Ecstasy (Class A)	Tablets	143	6,286	113	8,263	68	5,937
	Powder (gms)	18	352.4	14	1113.3	14	32.3
LSD (Class A)	Tablets/Doses	0	.	3	97	3	52
	Microdots	1	5	3	130	4	88
Psychoactive Stimulants (Class B)	Powder (kg)	164	11.3	191	17.1	30	0.1
	Wraps	5	26	3	3	0	.
	Tablets	3	63	4	467	0	.
Opiates (Class A)	Powder (kg)	31	1	38	0.3	32	0.3
	Tablets	3	61	22	487	2	304
	Ampoules	0	.	0	.	1	2
	Millilitres	9	1,217.1	13	419.0	8	2,412.5
	Wraps	16	85	14	43	26	127
Other Drugs ²	Powder (kg)	47	2.1	83	1.2	70	1.9
	Tablets	64	7,288	62	57,710	42	2,964
	Millilitres	27	2,645.0	15	1,204.0	4	53.0
	Wraps/Twists	1	1	2	11	1	6
	Ampoules	20	1,218	29	26,004	8	41
	Psilocin	3	46	3	75	2	35
	Microdots	0	.	2	387	0	.
Total Seizure Incidents³		4,474		4,825		3,489	
Estimated Street Value		£10,202,057		£9,833,044		£10,144,356	
Persons Arrested		2,784		2,867		2,149	

¹Not all drug seizures are subject to forensic testing to officially confirm the drug type seized. When testing is not applied, the PSNI's drug seizure statistics are classified in accordance with the investigating officer's assessment of the drug type seized based on their experience and knowledge of the illegal drug trade in Northern Ireland.

²Other drugs include Steroids, Ketamine, GHB and magic mushrooms.

³As each seizure incident can involve more than one drug type, seizure figures for individual drugs cannot be added together to produce totals.

Note: In this table, where the quantity of drugs seized is 0.0, this means the quantity seized was less 0.05 grams, Mls or kgs while '.' indicates that no drugs were seized. More detailed information on the drugs and quantities seized is published in the 'accompanying spreadsheet'. It also provides this information by Policing Area and District.

Table 4: Drug Seizures and Arrests in the 12 Months to 31st December 2014 compared with the previous 12 Months

Drugs Seized ¹		12 Months to December 2013		12 Months to December 2014	
		No. of Seizures	Amount Seized	No. of Seizures	Amount Seized
Amphetamine (Class B)	Powder (kg)	79	2.3	64	11.5
	Wraps	8	111	6	10
	Tablets	11	429	2	38
Benzodiazepines (Class C)	Tablets	454	112,076	533	148,415
	Powder (gms)	3	1.6	1	1
Cannabis (Class B)	Resin (kg)	652	246.2	355	82.2
	Herbal (kg)	2,797	254.4	3,075	222.1
	Plants	243	9,713	225	12,126
	Oil (gms)	0	.	0	.
	Joints	307	393	361	480
Cocaine (Class A)	Powder (kg)	367	29.9	496	70.3
	Wraps	29	59	32	61
Ecstasy (Class A)	Tablets	110	3,211	93	11,474
	Powder (gms)	14	780.3	15	365.3
LSD (Class A)	Tablets/Doses	2	92	4	57
	Microdots	2	129	5	89
Psychoactive Stimulants (Class B)	Powder (kg)	192	18.4	49	0.9
	Wraps	5	7	1	1
	Tablets	5	481	0	.
Opiates (Class A)	Powder (kg)	39	0.2	42	0.4
	Tablets	22	486	4	313
	Ampoules	0	.	1	2
	Millilitres	13	418.1	9	2,413.5
	Wraps	12	61	31	132
Other Drugs ²	Powder (kg)	67	0.9	94	2.2
	Tablets	57	50,708	56	12,698
	Millilitres	18	2,398.5	6	223.0
	Wraps/Twists	2	11	1	6
	Ampoules	26	25,562	15	549
	Psilocin	4	77	2	35
	Microdots	2	387	0	.
Total Seizure Incidents³		4,551		4,693	
Estimated Street Value		£10,402,071		£12,609,995	
Persons Arrested		2,778		2,845	

¹Not all drug seizures are subject to forensic testing to officially confirm the drug type seized. When testing is not applied, the PSNI's drug seizure statistics are classified in accordance with the investigating officer's assessment of the drug type seized based on their experience and knowledge of the illegal drug trade in Northern Ireland.

²Other drugs include Steroids, Ketamine, GHB and magic mushrooms.

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Table 5: Number of Drug Seizures and Arrests by Policing Area and District between 1st April 2013 to 31st December 2013 (PFYTD) and 1st April 2014 to 31st December 2014 (FYTD)

	Seizures Incidents			Arrests		
	PFYTD (Apr 13 – Dec 13)	FYTD (Apr 14 – Dec 14)	Difference	PFYTD (Apr 13 – Dec 13)	FYTD (Apr 14 – Dec 14)	Difference
A District	446	386	-60	194	253	59
North Belfast	236	240	4	109	156	47
West Belfast	210	146	-64	85	97	12
B District	502	533	31	296	392	96
East Belfast	134	135	1	75	96	21
South Belfast	368	398	30	221	296	75
C District	429	414	-15	214	175	-39
Ards	76	85	9	37	38	1
Castlereagh	84	77	-7	48	27	-21
Down	201	155	-46	85	59	-26
North Down	68	97	29	44	51	7
D District	475	518	43	319	302	-17
Antrim	98	95	-3	79	58	-21
Carrickfergus	39	37	-2	17	23	6
Lisburn	224	286	62	164	159	-5
Newtownabbey	114	100	-14	59	62	3
E District	651	613	-38	292	328	36
Armagh	54	85	31	29	38	9
Banbridge	89	112	23	49	73	24
Craigavon	249	177	-72	99	114	15
Newry & Mourne	259	239	-20	115	103	-12
F District	263	246	-17	227	185	-42
Cookstown	48	54	6	28	43	15
Dungannon & South Tyrone	73	62	-11	64	37	-27
Fermanagh	65	84	19	71	76	5
Omagh	77	46	-31	64	29	-35
G District	475	447	-28	338	287	-51
Foyle	299	289	-10	225	186	-39
Limavady	88	87	-1	69	62	-7
Magherafelt	51	45	-6	25	27	2
Strabane	37	26	-11	19	12	-7
H District	380	332	-48	291	226	-65
Ballymena	147	114	-33	116	74	-42
Ballymoney	17	12	-5	15	14	-1
Coleraine	150	141	-9	121	107	-14
Larne	22	37	15	13	17	4
Moyle	44	28	-16	26	14	-12
Policing Area not Assigned	0	0	0	0	1	1
Northern Ireland	3,621	3,489	-132	2,171	2,149	-22

Table 6: Number of Drug Seizures and Arrests by Policing Area and District in the 12 Months to 31st December 2014 compared with the previous 12 Months

	Seizures Incidents			Arrests		
	12 Months to December 2013	12 Months to December 2014	Difference	12 Months to December 2013	12 Months to December 2014	Difference
A District	556	509	-47	243	303	60
North Belfast	288	307	19	132	183	51
West Belfast	268	202	-66	111	120	9
B District	610	674	64	388	488	100
East Belfast	169	175	6	98	115	17
South Belfast	441	499	58	290	373	83
C District	537	575	38	250	248	-2
Ards	97	121	24	48	53	5
Castlereagh	109	105	-4	59	38	-21
Down	249	216	-33	94	84	-10
North Down	82	133	51	49	73	24
D District	615	698	83	412	392	-20
Antrim	131	130	-1	102	76	-26
Carrickfergus	46	49	3	26	28	2
Lisburn	290	386	96	210	210	0
Newtownabbey	148	133	-15	74	78	4
E District	823	827	4	371	433	62
Armagh	70	107	37	38	46	8
Banbridge	106	142	36	62	88	26
Craigavon	323	241	-82	126	151	25
Newry & Mourne	324	337	13	145	148	3
F District	337	342	5	301	249	-52
Cookstown	66	75	9	46	51	5
Dungannon & South Tyrone	89	92	3	76	51	-25
Fermanagh	85	109	24	98	103	5
Omagh	97	66	-31	81	44	-37
G District	600	601	1	446	392	-54
Foyle	368	379	11	281	253	-28
Limavady	115	116	1	102	83	-19
Magherafelt	71	71	0	37	38	1
Strabane	46	35	-11	26	18	-8
H District	473	467	-6	367	339	-28
Ballymena	187	156	-31	141	100	-41
Ballymoney	23	27	4	23	26	3
Coleraine	184	204	20	154	171	17
Larne	24	47	23	19	25	6
Moyle	55	33	-22	30	17	-13
Policing Area not Assigned	0	0	0	0	1	1
Northern Ireland	4,551	4,693	142	2,778	2,845	67

Notes

Statistics on drug seizures are based on electronic and paper returns that are completed by police officers when they make a drug seizure. The statistics are checked for completeness with local districts and with the PSNI Organised Crime Branch and are also cross-referenced against other internal records of drug seizures. Not all drugs are tested to authenticate substances. When testing is not applied, the PSNI's drug seizure statistics are classified in accordance with the investigating officer's assessment of the drug type seized based on their experience and knowledge of the illegal drug trade in Northern Ireland.

The statistics contained in this bulletin are based on drug seizures that were recorded by the police. As a result, increases or decreases in the quantity and type of drugs seized along with drug-related arrests can be affected by specific targeted police operations thus accounting for some of the year on year variations (i.e. increased police enforcement action can result in increased seizures and arrests). Also, not all drug use will come to the attention of the police and therefore these statistics should be considered along with other measures of drug prevalence in Northern Ireland for users to get a more comprehensive overview of the drug situation in Northern Ireland.

Copies of this bulletin are available from the PSNI Internet site:

http://www.psni.police.uk/directory/updates/updates_statistics/updates_drug_statistics.htm.

Annual reports are available back to 2003/04 on the PSNI internet site and during the financial year drug seizure statistics are published on a monthly basis and are provisional and may be subject to change. Statistics on drug seizures at Policing Area level are published separately in an accompanying excel spreadsheet which is also available on this internet page.

We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics. If you would like to forward your views, receive notification of new publications or be kept informed of developments relating to PSNI statistics, please email your contact details using the email address provided below.

For further information about drug seizure statistics for Northern Ireland, or to contact PSNI Statistics Branch:

Email: statistics@psni.police.uk;

Write to: Drug Seizure Statistician, PSNI Statistics Branch, Lisnasharragh, 42 Montgomery Road, Belfast, BT6 9LD; or

Telephone: 028 9065 0222 ext. 24135

Map 1: PSNI Policing Districts from 1st April 2007

