

# Ireland: national report for 2015 - Drug markets and crime

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Health Research Board. Irish Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

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## Table of Contents

<b>0. Summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
0.1 National profile.....	3
<b>1. National profile</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.1 Drug market.....	4
1.1.2 Routes of trafficking .....	5
1.1.3 Contextual information on trafficking.....	5
1.1.4 Wholesale drug and precursor market.....	6
1.1.5 Retail drug market .....	7
1.2 Drug related crime.....	9
1.2.1 Court outcomes for drug offences .....	9
1.3 Drug supply reduction activities .....	10
1.3.1 Drug supply reduction .....	10
<b>2. Trends</b> .....	<b>15</b>
2.1 Short term trends (5 years) .....	15
<b>3. Sources, methodology and references</b> .....	<b>18</b>
3.1 Sources .....	18
3.2 Methodology .....	18
3.3 References .....	21
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>22</b>

## 0. Summary

### 0.1 National profile

It is generally accepted that Ireland's serious illicit drug problem emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when heroin demand and supply first emerged. This was initially concentrated in economically deprived areas of Dublin's inner city but would eventually spread throughout the city and over the next few decades, throughout the country. When Ireland's principal drug law, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1977, was being introduced, the drug problem was not seen as particularly significant. This was also reflected in a relatively minimal approach to drug law enforcement. The year 1996 can be regarded as a watershed in terms of the state response to the drugs issue. The assassination of an investigative journalist by people involved in the drug trade led to a concerted state response, on the one hand in terms of the introduction of a series of criminal justice measures targeted against drug supply and the enhancement of law enforcement measures and, on the other, the development of policies around demand reduction, which would ultimately lead to the emergence of the National Drugs Strategy in 2001. Supply reduction is one of the five pillars of the NDS and a number of agencies, including the Naval Service, Customs Drug Law Enforcement and the Garda National Drugs Unit are jointly involved in addressing drug supply and drug-related crime.

- Trends

The total number of drug seizures increased from 5,299 seizures in 2004 to a peak of 10,444 seizures in 2007. Between 2008 and 2010, the number almost halved, to 5,477. This decrease can be explained primarily by the significant decrease in cannabis-type substances seized. The decrease in cannabis seizures between 2008 and 2010 may also be partly explained by a change in the nature of cannabis use, with people moving from resin to more potent forms of cannabis, such as herbal cannabis. Herbal cannabis seizures almost doubled between 2009 and 2011, from 981 to 1,833, and plateaued in the two subsequent years. That there has been a move in consumption away from cannabis resin and towards more potent forms of cannabis is supported by the findings of the 2010/11 all-Ireland prevalence survey on drug use. The reduction in the total number of reported seizures since 2008 may also be explained by a reduction in the number of seizures of other drugs. There was a significant decline in seizures of cocaine and heroin between 2007 and 2011. Although heroin seizures increased slightly in 2012, they decreased again in 2013. Cocaine seizures continued on a downward trend between 2008 and 2013 but the numbers of seizures for both cocaine and heroin increased noticeably in 2014. Seizures of ecstasy-type substances also decreased significantly between 2008 and 2010. However, in 2011, they increased dramatically with further, less spectacular increases in 2012 and 2013. Another factor that may be impacting on the seizure trends for illicit drugs is the illegal street sale of prescription drugs. This has emerged as an important issue in the Irish drug scene in recent years. Another noteworthy development has been the continued increase in the offence of cultivating/manufacturing controlled drugs. Proceedings for this offence have continued to increase since 2005, when there were 29 related proceedings, reaching 167 in 2009 and then more than doubling to 355 in 2011, dropping slightly in 2012. This pattern is reflected in the numbers of recorded incidents for this offence over the same period. The number of legal proceedings for the possession of drugs for personal use (simple possession) decreased in 2009 for the first time since 2004. The number continued to fall in the following two years.

- New developments

The first national study on illicit drug markets in Ireland, conducted by the Health Research Board, was recently published by the National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol (NACDA) in late 2014. The study provides in-depth research and analysis on the various factors that influence the development of local drugs markets; the nature, structure and organisation of the Irish drugs market; the impact of drug-dealing on local communities; and an evaluation of current interventions in response to illicit drug dealing.

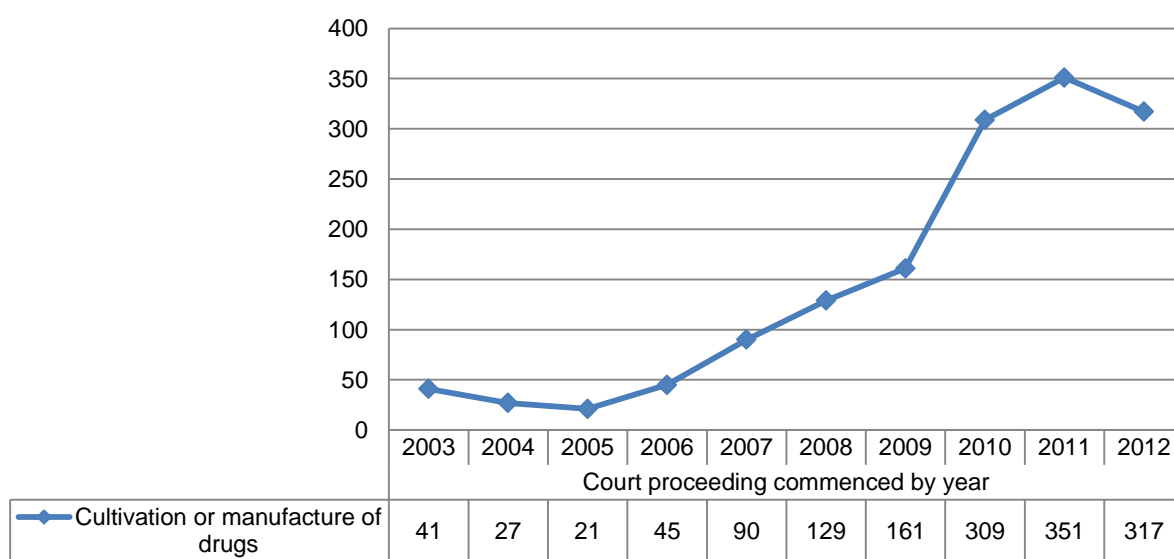
A comprehensive report on policing by the Garda Inspectorate makes over 200 significant recommendations for the future of the police service. A number of recommendations relate to drug law enforcement. Following on from the review of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate, which raised a number of serious concerns about police-recorded crime statistics, the Central Statistics Office also conducted a review of the quality of crime statistics. In particular, the CSO wished to examine the issues highlighted by the Inspectorate. Following a suspension of crime statistics reporting due to the concerns identified by the Inspectorate, the CSO has now resumed crime reporting.

## 1. National profile

### 1.1 Drug market

An indication of patterns of domestic production can be derived from Garda records on cultivation or manufacturing of drugs. Table 1.1.1 shows a steady increase in the number of legal proceedings for cultivation or manufacture of drugs from 2003 to 2009 with a doubling of the numbers the following year, and establishing a consistent pattern for the following three years. These data don't distinguish between cultivation and manufacturing but, considering the rise in the number of cannabis plants seized over the past few years, and the relative importance of plant seizures relative to cannabis resin, which have been declining, we can conclude that a high proportion of the offences under this heading relate to the cultivation category.

The annual report of An Garda Síochána for 2013 (An Garda Síochána 2014) reported that there were 28,851 cannabis plants seized from a total of 394 cultivation and/or manufacture incidents as part of ongoing Operation Nitrogen. The 2014 annual report (An Garda Síochána 2015a) recorded that 15,463 cannabis plants seized were valued at approximately €24.5, a much reduced number from the 2013 figure but still indicative of significant domestic cultivation activity. The annual report also reported that 157 grow houses were detected during 2013 (p. 40).



**Figure 1.1.1 Court proceedings for the cultivation or manufacture of drugs, 2003–2012**

Source: Central Statistics Office website 2014

Two recent reports provide useful information on domestic production of drugs. There has been an increase in domestic cannabis cultivation in recent years according to a joint assessment of cross-border organised crime by An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2015). The report states that, although law enforcement personnel often disrupt grow houses where cannabis is cultivated, this does not appear to deter these operations as start-up and running costs are low and potential profits are high. Foreign national organised crime groups (OCGs) are frequently involved in the running of these operations and often use other foreign nationals to work as gardeners (p.16).

Forced labour in the production of cannabis is the subject of a research report by the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) (Migrant Rights Centre Ireland 2014), which provides details of human trafficking for cannabis production, focusing on cases and reports where Vietnamese and Chinese

nationals were involved. The report highlights the increase in domestic cannabis cultivation in Ireland in the last five years, noting the dismantling of 500 cannabis cultivation sites by the Gardaí during 2011.

The An Garda Síochána and PSNI assessment reported that the first find in Ireland of Alphaphenylacetoacetonitrile (APAAN), a precursor of the internationally controlled substance 1-phenyl-2-propanone (P-2-P), also known as benzyl methyl ketone (BMK), was in September 2013.

The availability of and market for crystal methamphetamine in Ireland is highlighted in the joint assessment of cross-border crime through various seizures that have been made in recent years: 'The market in Ireland would appear to be centred around a small number of Eastern European nationals, who use over-the-counter pharmaceutical products containing pseudoephedrine to produce the illegal substance. Large scale production has not been seen' (p.19).

### **1.1.2 Routes of trafficking**

Interdictions by the Revenue Commissioners' Customs Service provide useful information on the origin, and sometimes intended final destination, of drugs being brought into the country. Ireland's long coastline is considered vulnerable to traffickers seeking less guarded routes to bring drugs to the United Kingdom and Europe from South America, North Africa and other drug-producing regions. Following extensive information exchange and planning with its European partners, Revenue's Customs Drugs Law Enforcement (CDLE), supported by the Irish Naval Service and An Garda Síochána, led an operation, which resulted in the seizure of 1,025 kg of cocaine from a yacht, the SV *Makayabella*, which had sailed from the Caribbean in September 2014. The crew was arrested and the owner of the yacht was later prosecuted. In all, the Customs Service made 72 seizures of cocaine and heroin during 2014, with an estimated combined value of €73.45m. A total of 673 kg of herbal cannabis and cannabis resin were intercepted in 505 separate seizures. (Revenue Commissioners 2015)

In various anti-trafficking operations the Garda National Drugs Unit made 43 seizures in 2014, which they described as significant – of cocaine, heroin, herbal cannabis, cannabis resin and ecstasy. They arrested 60 people in connection with drugs trafficking offences (An Garda Síochána 2015a).

A joint assessment of cross-border organised crime by An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) reports that 'West African organised crime groups continue to be active in the importation of cocaine into both jurisdictions. Commonly noted importation methods include baggage concealments, the use of air freight and internal concealment using "drug mules". Although not commonplace, seizures of liquid cocaine by authorities in Ireland over the past year indicate that this method of importation is occurring' (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2015) (p. 20).

### **1.1.3 Contextual information on trafficking**

In 2014 the GNDU arrested 60 people in trafficking-related offences, making 43 significant seizures. Seizure data from the 2014 Garda annual report confirm the continuing importance of cannabis herbs and plants, over resin, in the cannabis market. The weight of cannabis herb seized was more than double that of resin and had a total value calculated as nearly eight times more than the total value of resin seized.

A study on illicit drug markets in Ireland (Connolly J and Donovan A M 2014) provides an analysis of local drugs markets and of the nature, structure and organisation of the Irish drugs market. This exploratory study was conducted over a 36-month period (from 2008 to 2010) and included a cross-section of four local drug markets: two urban, one suburban and one rural drug market (anonymised as A–D). The main drug sold across all four sites surveyed in the study was cannabis. Heroin, crack cocaine and prescription drugs could be purchased at different levels in all areas. All the main drugs were available in all four study locations, although heroin was a relatively recent phenomenon in site C. The research indicated that some dealers sell multiple substances. Garda data also suggest a degree of overlap between drug types, with multiple substances often being seized from the same individual in supply type offences. However, there are also many sellers who concentrate on only one substance, such as cannabis.

There were a number of key differences in how drug markets operated in different locations; some were loosely structured and some highly co-ordinated.

- Site D was highly structured in terms of distributing heroin, cocaine and cannabis, with several high-level suppliers involved in drug importation and distribution over this very wide area. The middle market in this location was reportedly heavily populated with individuals and groups or ‘gangs’ supplying kilograms or more. Although crack cocaine had originated with West Africans in site D, it now involved more Irish sellers.
- In site C the distribution of drugs such as cannabis and cocaine was concentrated among a small number of established families. Heroin distributors were described as non-local, both Irish and non-Irish, who had arrived in the area with an addiction. The heroin market was also described as less structured and easier to penetrate from a law-enforcement perspective.
- In site B the heroin supply was regarded as having originated within specific families but more recently it involved a looser network of individuals. Heroin was not imported directly but sourced from the major cities of Dublin and Limerick. Cocaine distribution in site B was more structured and lucrative and dominated by a particular group of individuals who used legitimate businesses as a means of transporting drugs throughout the region.

Of the 1,378 CDLE seizures of illegal or controlled drugs between January and June 2009, the period of the study, 90% were of cannabis herb or resin. The vast majority (90%) of these seizures weighed less than 28g and were most likely for personal use. CDLE made 52 seizures of illegal substances that weighed 1kg or more (4% of total seizures). Cocaine and cannabis herb accounted for 89% of these seizures. It is not possible to determine accurately the proportion of the drugs that were destined for the Irish market or whether these seizures had any significant impact on drug availability in Ireland.

#### **1.1.4 Wholesale drug and precursor market**

A joint assessment of cross-border organised crime by An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) makes a number of observations about criminal organisation on the island of Ireland (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2015). It reports that although OCGs can have an ‘innate hierarchical structure’, there is also a great deal of ‘fluidity amongst individuals within the groups’, where for example OCGs ‘opportunistically form around specific short-term schemes. Within this criminal fraternity, a number of facilitators exist who operate niche roles necessary for criminal operations and these figures often provide assistance to a number of groupings’ (p. 8). The drugs industry remains, according to the joint assessment, ‘the main driver behind the activities of organised crime groups in Ireland and Northern Ireland’ (p. 8).

Diversification and interaction with international criminal networks are also seen as key to the growth of OCGs where ‘an environment of co-operation exists amongst higher level OCGs who work together in efforts that generate profits for all involved. Extensive association networks facilitate these criminals as it allows them to be involved in a number of ventures and “side line” enterprises’ (p. 8). Such organisation and networking, it is reported, facilitates criminal expansion, boosts finances and increases the resilience of OCGs in the face of law enforcement activities. Along with the emergence of foreign national OCGs in Ireland, there is also, it is reported, ‘substantial interaction between OCGs operating on both sides of the border’, while links between dissident republicans and OCGs are also a concern: ‘Despite their public denouncement of organised criminality, dissident republicans heavily depend on organised crime to fund their terrorist activities. A relationship of friction and facilitation appears to exist between OCGs and some dissident elements. “Taxing”/extortion of drug dealers by dissident republicans has occurred in recent years’ (p. 8).

#### **Adulterants**

The laboratory of Forensic Science Ireland (FSI) analyses drugs seized by the Garda. The following adulterants were detected in diamorphine samples submitted: caffeine was detected in 79% of samples; paracetamol in 65%; other adulterants (diazepam, phenacetin, griseofulvin, benzocaine) in 16%; and no adulterants in 12% of cases submitted.

Levamisole was by far the most common adulterant present in cocaine samples submitted for purity quantification. Other adulterants include benzocaine, caffeine, lignocaine, and phenacetin. Six per cent of samples had four adulterants present, 14% had three, 24% had two, 31% had one, and 24% had none.

### 1.1.5 Retail drug market

Numbers of seizures of illicit drugs

The Garda send drugs seized to the laboratory of Forensic Science Ireland (FSI) for analysis. FSI prepare a quarterly report for the Garda and the data presented here are from the combined report for 2014. This tells us the number of cases involving drugs initiated by the Garda and gives a picture of the relative frequency of the various types of illicit drugs seized. Table 1.1.5.1 lists in descending order the illicit drugs associated with cases being investigated by the Garda.

**Table 1.1.5.1. Seizures of illicit drugs, and associated Garda cases, 2014**

Drug	Number of cases
Cannabis herb	1628
Diamorphine	954
Cocaine	405
MDMA	386
Cannabis plant	340
Cannabis resin	258
Amphetamine	75
PVP	64
Methadone	56
Methylamphetamine	24
Ketamine	11
LSD	11
MDPV	6
Mephedrone	3

Source: FSI unpublished data, 2015

A number of cases were related to prescription medicines which, it was suspected, had been traded illegally. The most common of these were Alprazolam, Flurazepam and Phenazepam.

#### **Pack sizes and purity of drugs seized**

A total of 43 analyses of diamorphine seizures involving 36 cases were undertaken by FSI on seizures made between 14 September 2013 and 3 September 2014. Overall, pack sizes ranged from 1.473 g to 996.9 g. The diamorphine purity results ranged from trace level to 80%, with an overall average purity of 35%.

A total of 55 analyses of cocaine seizures involving 42 cases were also undertaken on seizures between 14 September 2013 and 3 September 2014. Overall, pack sizes ranged from 0.859 g to 1,767.0 g. The cocaine purity results ranged from trace level to 87%, with an overall average purity of 48%.

### Drug prices

**Table 1.1.5.2. Drug prices based on current market value of controlled drugs, October 2015**

Drug	Category	Per Gram/Tablet	Per Kilo
Alprazolam	Benzodiazepine	€2 Tablet	N/A
Amphetamine	Phenethylamine	€15 per gram	€15,000
AM2201	Synthetic Cannabinoid	€20 per gram	€20,000
AMT	Tryptamine	€200 per gram	€200,000
Benzylpiperazine	Piperazine	€5 tablet/€50 gram	€50,000
Butylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
BKMBDB	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Bromazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 Tablet	N/A
Cannabis Resin	Cannabis	€6 per gram	€6,000
Cannabis Herb	Cannabis	€20 per gram	€20,000

<b>Drug</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Per Gram/Tablet</b>	<b>Per Kilo</b>
Cannabis Plants*	Cannabis	€800	
Cocaine	Cocaine	€70 per gram	€70,000
Chlordiazepoxide	Benzodiazepine	€1 Tablet	N/A
Clobazam	Benzodiazepine	€1 Tablet	N/A
Clonazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 Tablet	N/A
CPP	Piperazine	€5 tablet/€50 gram	€50,000
Diamorphine	Heroin	€140 per gram	€140,000
Dimethylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Diazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
DMT	Tryptamine	€200 per gram	€200,000
DMAA	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram	€60,000
Ethcathinone	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Ethylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Flephedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Fluorotropacocaine	NPS	€50 per gram	€50,000
Fluroamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€15 per gram	€15,000
Flunitrazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
Flurazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
GHB	Solvent	€1 per ML	€1,000 Litre
GBL	Solvent	€1 per ML	€1,000 Litre
JWH 018	Synthetic Cannabinoid	€20 per gram	€20,000
JWH 073	Synthetic Cannabinoid	€20 per gram	€20,000
JWH 250	Synthetic Cannabinoid	€20 per gram	€20,000
Ketamine	Hallucinogen	€60 per gram	€60,000
Khat	Hallucinogen	€0.50 per gram	€500
LSD	Acid/Hallucinogen	€10 per tab	N/A
Lysergamide	Hallucinogen	€20 per gram	€20,000
Lorazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
Lormetazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
MAM 2201	Synthetic Cannabinoid	€20 per gram	€20,000
MBZP	Piperazine	€5 tablet/€50 gram	€50,000
MCPP	Piperazine	€5 tablet/€50 gram	€50,000
MDMA	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram	€60,000
MDEA	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram	€60,000
MDA	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram	€60,000
MDPBP	Cathinone	€50 gram	€50,000
MDPV	Cathinone	€50 gram	€50,000
MEC	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Methadone	Opiate	€20 per 100ml	N/A
Mephedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Methylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Methedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Methylamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram	€60,000
Methoxyamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram	€60,000
Methoxetamine	Hallucinogen	€60 per gram	€60,000
Methylphenidate	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram	€60,000
Mirtazapine	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
MMC	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Naphyrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Nitrazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
Pentadrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
Phentermine	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram	€60,000
Phenazepam (Not Controlled)	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
PMA	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram	€60,000
PMMA	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram	€60,000
Prazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
Psilocin	Hallucinogen	€10 per gram	€10,000
Psilocybin	Hallucinogen	€10 per gram	€10,000
PVP	Cathinone	€50 per gram	€50,000
RCS4	Synthetic Cannabinoid	€20 per gram	€20,000
Salvinorin A	Hallucinogen	€20 per gram	€20,000
STS 135	Synthetic Cannabinoid	€20 per gram	€20,000
Temazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
Triazolam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet	N/A
UR144	Synthetic Cannabinoid	€20 per gram	€20,000
Zolpidem	Sleeping agent	€2 per tablet	N/A
Zopiclone (Not Controlled)	Sleeping agent	€2 per tablet	N/A
2CB	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram	€60,000
2CE	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram	€60,000
2CI	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram	€60,000
25INBOME	Hallucinogen	€10 per tab	N/A



<b>Drug</b> 5AKB48 (Not Controlled)	<b>Category</b> Synthetic Cannabinoid	<b>Per Gram/Tablet</b> €20 per gram	<b>Per Kilo</b> €20,000
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Source: Unpublished data, Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau, 2015

\*Cannabis plants are valued based on the potential yield of the plant. An actual market value can only be applied when plants are fully mature and ready for sale. Charges contrary to Section 15A of the Misuse of Drugs Act (as amended) are not applied for in relation to nursery plants or plants that are not fully mature.

## 1.2 Drug related crime

### 1.2.1 Court outcomes for drug offences

The Courts Service Annual Report for 2014 provides statistics on the outcomes of prosecutions for drug offences between January and December 2014 (Courts Service 2014). Table 1.2.1.1 shows the outcomes of trials involving 10,842 defendants, prosecuted in the District Court, the lowest court in the system where most drug offences are dealt with. This total represented a 22% increase on the number of cases prosecuted in 2012 (n=14,008). It resulted in 11,390 indictable offences, the outcomes of which are presented in Table 1.2.1.1.

**Table 1.2.1.1 Sentences for drug offences in the District Court, 2014**

<b>Sentence</b>	<b>Imprisonment</b>	<b>Fines</b>	<b>Community service/probation</b>	<b>Struck out</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>	<b>Taken into consideration*</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Suspended</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of offences</b>	358	2,253	297	2713	305	1,488	1,830	510	<b>11,390</b>

Source: (Courts Service 2014)

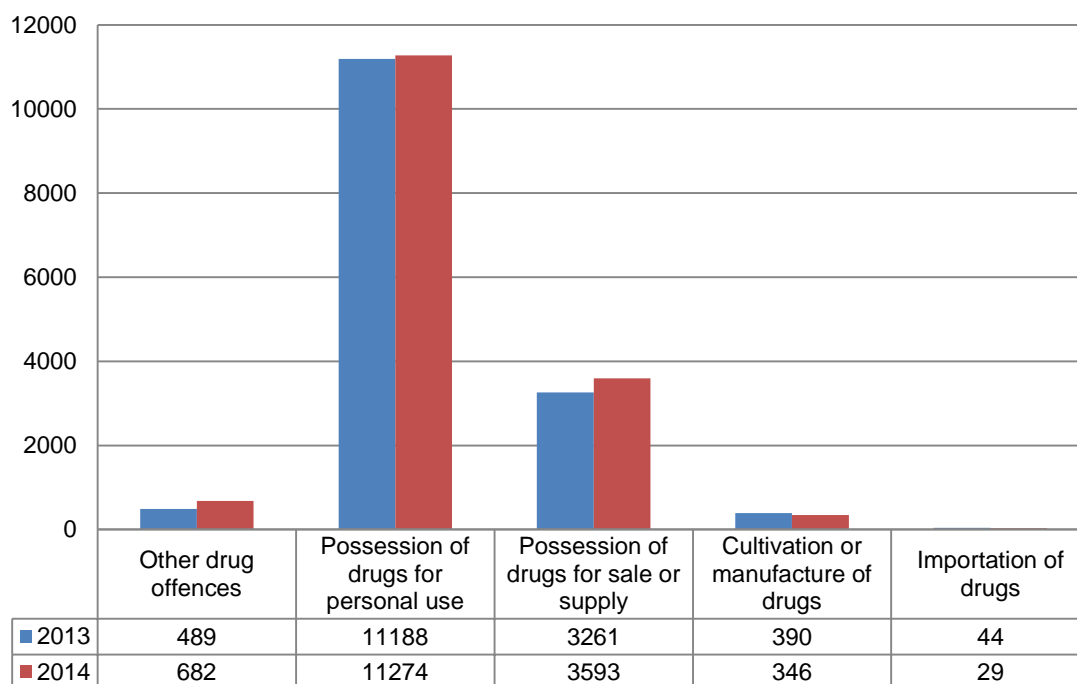
The Courts Service reported that in 2014 the Circuit Criminal Court heard 1,878 drug offences involving 533 defendants. The Circuit Court has a higher jurisdiction than the District Court and can thus impose a more severe sentence. Of the prosecutions in the Circuit Criminal Court, 1,610 led to guilty pleas, there were 68 convictions and 41 acquittals. These trials resulted in 311 imprisonments and 335 suspended sentences (Courts Service 2014).

### Prison committals for drug offences

The Irish Prison Service (IPS) annual report for 2014 provided statistics on the number of persons in custody under sentence (i.e. not on remand) on a given day in the year (28 November) and also on the number of committals under sentence by sentence length (Irish Prison Service 2014). On 28 November 2014, the number of those in custody for controlled drug offences comprised 15% (485/3,204) of the total prison population. Of those in custody for drug offences, 225 were serving sentences of more than 5 years, and 81 of these had sentences of 10 years or longer. Only 24 prisoners were serving terms of 12 months or less. Of the 761 committals to prison during 2014, 407 were for sentences of 3 months or less. The same person may have been committed a number of times during the year, which partially explains the differences in the proportion of short sentences between those committed to prison and those serving sentences at the end of November 2014.

### Recorded incidents of drug offences

An incident may consist of more than one criminal offence. So a primary offence or detection may refer to one offence within an incident. Sometimes a charged offence may be different from the offence originally identified in the incident Figure 1.2.1. Nevertheless, incidents are a useful indicator of the level of particular types of criminal activities (Central Statistics Office 2014).



**Figure 1.2.1.1 Recorded incidents of drug offences, 2013–2014**  
Source: CSO website

### 1.3 Drug supply reduction activities

#### 1.3.1 Drug supply reduction

##### a) Key priorities of supply reduction

##### ***National Drugs Strategy 2009–2016***

The ‘priorities’ for supply reduction between 2009 and 2016 as set out in the National Drugs Strategy 2009–2016 (NDS) are as follows:

- significantly reduce the volume of illicit drugs available in Ireland,
- prevent the emergence of new markets and the expansion of existing markets for illicit drugs,
- disrupt the activities of organised criminal networks involved in the illicit drugs trade in Ireland and internationally and to undermine the structures supporting such networks,
- target the income generated through illicit drug trafficking and the wealth generated by individuals involved in the illicit drugs trade, and
- tackle and reduce community drug problems through a co-ordinated interagency approach.

(The overall strategic objective and aims, and operational targets and key performance indicators for Supply Reduction, as set out in the NDS, are listed in Section 1.1.1 of the Drug Policy Workbook.)

##### ***An Garda Síochána annual plan 2015***

The annual policing plan of the Garda Síochána sets out the strategic priorities for An Garda Síochána as determined by the Minister for Justice and Equality under Section 20 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005. Although only mentioned once in the 2015 policing plan (An Garda Síochána), under ‘policing communities’, the reduction of illicit drug supply is implicit in two other strategic priorities as well:

- *Crime* To combat serious crime in all its forms, in particular violent crime, organised crime including human trafficking, and white collar crime;
- *Policing communities* To provide a visible policing service which meets the needs of both urban and rural communities, tackles anti-social behaviour, burglaries and drug-related crime; and ensures the public safety of our town and city centres; and

- *Reducing re-offending* To support an inter-agency approach to reducing rates of recidivism and to tackle serial offenders; including continued development of the Diversion programme for young offenders.

## **b) Areas of activity of supply reduction**

The following account describes the range of operations in the of areas drug interdiction, organised crime, policing communities, and reducing reoffending. The account is drawn from information published in the reporting period (August 2014 – August 2015) on the web sites and in the annual reports of the key agencies involved in supply reduction activities, and in responses to Parliamentary Questions.

### ***Drug interdiction (Revenue web site)***

The Revenue's *Intelligence Unit* gathers data with a view to identifying possible drugs smuggling routes into Ireland via passenger and cargo traffic, analysing the movement of persons and goods on those routes, and profiling, targeting and routine surveillance of suspect persons or consignments. Many seizures result from profiling techniques based on risk analysis. The Intelligence Unit transmits intelligence and details of suspect traffic to the local *operational units*, whose functions include the examination of suspect passengers' baggage and freight consignments, the search of suspect persons, vehicles, vessels, pleasure craft, aircraft etc. and the transmission of information to the Intelligence Unit for further action.

The Revenue's *Maritime Unit*, based in Cork, is equipped with rigid inflatable boats and two Revenue customs cutters tasked with the prevention, detection, interception and seizure of controlled drugs, fiscal goods, arms/ ammunition/explosives, prohibited and restricted goods, smuggled or illegally imported into, or intended to be exported out of, Ireland/EU. When not engaged in operational duties, Maritime Unit personnel are involved in coastal intelligence work.

*Drug detector dog units* are deployed by the Revenue Customs Service at strategic locations throughout the country, including ports and airports. The *Customs Drugs Watch Programme*, first launched in 1994, encourages those living in coastal communities, maritime personnel and people living near airfields to report unusual occurrences to Customs.

*Drug-related cash seizures* are undertaken by Customs under s. 38 of the Criminal Justice Act 1994 as amended by s. 20 of the Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Act 2005. The majority of drug-related cash seizures are made at cash export from the State, but increasingly seizures are also being made at import and inland. These seizures continue to have a major impact on the activities of both national and international drug traffickers. Investigations are carried out throughout the EU and worldwide following a drug-related cash seizure. Cash forfeited under this Act is transferred for the benefit of the Exchequer.

### ***Organised crime***

Europol have identified the need for a community-wide approach to tackling organised crime groupings (OCGs), including law enforcement, customs, business interests and government policy (*Fitzgerald F 2015a*). An Garda Síochána are acutely aware that effective targeting of OGCs is best advanced by using multi-disciplinary approaches. This includes the use of the proceeds of crimes legislation including money-laundering legislation and the powers of the Criminal Assets Bureau (Maloney 2015 08 May).

An Garda Síochána develop and implement operations and strategies aimed at targeting, dismantling and disrupting criminal networks, utilising advanced analytical and intelligence methodologies. They interact with a number of law enforcement agencies outside the jurisdiction, and, together with Revenue, provide intelligence for such drug interdiction operations to the international intelligence centre, the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N), in Lisbon. An Garda Síochána and Revenue have fulltime officers based at MAOC-N.

### ***Policing communities***

*Anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and drug-related crime* in Dublin city were the subject of a recent response to a Parliamentary Question by the Minister for Justice and Equality (*Fitzgerald F 2015b*).

Describing the Dublin City Centre Policing Plan, the Minister stated: 'This [plan] involves a high-visibility uniformed presence on key thoroughfares, as well as the use of undercover Gardaí as appropriate. As part of the Garda Plan a range of dedicated policing operations and measures are in place to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in the city centre. The resumption of Garda recruitment and the deployment of the first group of newly attested Gardaí are of course key components in providing visible policing in the city centre and elsewhere.'

Acknowledging that the issues involved are not simply policing ones, the Minister went on to emphasise the need for a coordinated and comprehensive response to problem drug misuse: 'I think it is generally accepted that the complex issues which contribute to drug addiction and related behaviours must be addressed in a coordinated and cross-cutting manner. In response to the particular issues arising in Dublin City Centre a multi-agency street outreach approach is being used to work with vulnerable and high-risk individuals and an offender management programme is being piloted to address repeat offending in the Dublin City area. These measures, combined with the Government's initiatives to tackle homelessness, are helping to address the broader aspects of the problems referred to by the Deputy. Finally, I welcome the continued close engagement between An Garda Síochána, Dublin City Council and other agencies as well as ongoing consultation with key stakeholders, such as the Dublin City Business Forum.'

*Test purchase operations* by the Gardaí target mid-range and low-level drug dealers nationwide. In 2014, 55 dealers were arrested in respect of 251 criminal offences using this tactical measure (An Garda Síochána 2015a).

*Drug-related violence and intimidation* were the subject of a response to another Parliamentary Question by the Minister for Justice and Equality (Fitzgerald F 2015, 24 March). 'This was a key issue of concern raised during the consultation phase in the development of our National Drugs Strategy 2009–2016. Under action 5 of the National Drug Strategy An Garda Síochána is charged with leading on the development of a framework to provide an appropriate response to the issue of drug-related intimidation in the community. In line with that action a framework known as the "Drug-Related Intimidation Programme" was developed by the Garda National Drugs Unit and the community based National Family Support Network and was introduced nationwide in 2013. Under this programme nominated Garda Inspectors for every Garda Division have been designated by the Garda Commissioner to ensure that a confidential, safe and effective means of dealing with reports of intimidation is readily available. These Inspectors act as a direct point of contact for any individuals (or for representatives acting on their behalf) in responding to intimidation being reported. More details of the operation of this programme are provided on the websites of both An Garda Síochána and the National Family Support Network at [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie) and [www.fsn.ie](http://www.fsn.ie).'

The Minister went on to acknowledge that discussions are taking place in a number of fora with a view to developing understanding of the nature and extent of the problem of drug-related intimidation as it affects local communities. She concluded, 'Of course, any proposals for a more innovative approach to the problem, whether adopted from international experience or building on the current approach under the National Drugs Strategy, and which offer further value in tackling the problem as it occurs in this jurisdiction can be given due consideration.'

### ***Reducing re-offending***

The *Youth Justice Action Plan 2014-2018* (Irish Youth Justice Service 2014) contains an action to 'profile substance misuse among young people subject to community sanctions/ probation service supervision'. This profiling would, according to the action plan, assist the Probation Service to develop more effective interventions. The action plan also promotes early intervention and prevention programmes targeting those at risk of offending behaviour through the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme (GJDP) and the Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs.) (See Section 2.2. in the Legal Framework national report for a description of these two Diversion schemes.)

### **c) Organisational structures/co-ordinating bodies**

Responsibility for the prevention of drug trafficking rests primarily with the Customs Service of the Revenue Commissioners, while responsibility for the prevention of drug-related crime within Ireland rests primarily with An Garda Síochána. In addition to the exchange of information between the

Customs Drugs Law Enforcement Head Office and the Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau, which is part of An Garda Síochána, nation-wide liaison also occurs at local level between nominated Customs and Garda officers. Other state agencies engaged in supporting supply reduction activities include the Criminal Assets Bureau and Forensic Science Ireland. The Naval Service and the Air Corps co-operate with Customs and An Garda Síochána, when called upon, through the Joint Task Force on Drugs Interdiction.

### ***Revenue's Customs Drugs Law Enforcement, Investigations and Prosecutions Division<sup>[1]</sup>***

Revenue Customs officers have the primary responsibility for the prevention, detection, interception and seizure of controlled drugs being smuggled into or out of Ireland. All the strategic management functions, relating to drugs issues, are attached to the Investigations and Prosecutions Division and include:

- gathering national and international intelligence and the dissemination of this intelligence as necessary. (Since the creation of the National Freight Intelligence Unit, Customs have seen a significant increase in both the quantities of drugs and fiscal product, which have been seized by Customs officers.);
- analysis of national and international drug smuggling trends;
- research, planning and organisation of both national and international operations targeting drug smuggling and related issues;
- liaison with other national and international enforcement agencies and government bodies, and organisation of and participation in operations at both national and international level, including joint inter-agency operations; and
- management of Customs' 13 detector dog teams located nationwide, Customs' Memorandum of Understanding Programme (MOU), the Customs Drugs Watch Programme, and the Drug Precursor Programme.

Both the Customs Drugs Watch programme and the MOU programme are specifically referred to in the National Drug Strategy 2009–2016, under the heading of Supply Reduction.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) initiative is a programme of co-operation between Customs and the business community on the prevention of smuggling, in particular drug smuggling. Customs have established working links with some thousands of diverse companies ranging from airlines, air express couriers and shipping companies to airport and harbour authorities, freight forwarders, exporters, road hauliers, chemical companies, yachtsmen. The MOU programme provides for the training of company staff by Customs liaison officers to heighten drug smuggling awareness and practical advice is offered to help prevent vehicles being used to smuggle drugs and other contraband goods. In addition, company staff are provided with ready channels of communication with Customs.

The Drug Precursor Programme is a mechanism for co-operation between Customs and the chemical industry, set up in order to detect the diversion of chemicals for illicit purposes. The programme is designed to increase the awareness of customs officers and members of the chemical trade, alike, to the possibility of legitimate chemicals being diverted to the manufacture of illicit drugs. As part of this programme the Customs service now has dedicated Precursor Liaison Officers located in key areas around the country. These officers have been trained in the identification and handling of chemicals and are tasked with liaising with members of the chemical trade, with the purpose of identifying suspicious activity.

### ***An Garda Síochána***

Supply-reduction activity ranges from participation in international and cross-border operations to street-level policing of supply and possession offences and undercover operations targeting specific individuals or groups or in specific locations, such as nightclubs, where drugs are consumed.

The Garda National Drugs Unit (GNDU), founded in 1996, had overall primary responsibility for drug law enforcement within Ireland. The GNDU carried out long-term strategic and short-term tactical investigations into the activities of Organised Crime Gangs (OCGs) based both in Ireland and on the European continent. In February 2015, taking cognisance of the target-focused operations of both

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<sup>[1]</sup> Information downloaded on 24 September 2015 from <http://www.revenue.ie/en/customs/customs-drugs-watch-law-enforcement.html>

the Organised Crime Unit (OCU) and the GNDU, the Garda Commissioner merged the OCU and the GNDU to create a robust new entity, the Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau to effectively tackle organised crime as it currently exists in this country. The newly amalgamated unit is expected to benefit from the skill sets of both the OCU and the GNDU personnel, establishing an enforcement and investigative unit which will manage national and international drug trafficking and organised crime investigations.

### ***Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB)<sup>[2]</sup>***

Established in 1996, the CAB's statutory remit under the Proceeds of Crime Act 1996, as amended by the 2005 Act, and Social Welfare and Revenue legislation, is to carry out investigations into the suspected proceeds of criminal conduct. CAB uses a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary partnership approach in its investigations into the suspected proceeds of criminal conduct. CAB staff are drawn from An Garda Síochána, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners (including Customs), the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Justice and Equality. CAB also works closely with international crime investigation agencies, and has successfully targeted proceeds of foreign criminality.

CAB supports the roll-out of the Garda Divisional Profiler programme by providing lectures, training and expertise, with particular reference to targeting middle-ranking drug-dealers and others benefiting by derived assets from criminal activity. In turn, CAB receives intelligence, information and evidence from profilers.

In order to continue to identify and trace assets which are the proceeds of crime, and to present testimony before the Courts, CAB has established a bureau analysis unit, adopted international best practices in the area of forensic analysis, and adopted the use of enhanced training. Through making earlier or preliminary applications relating to lower-value assets, the CAB has begun to target more middle-ranking criminals. While this approach may not realise extensive financial returns, it demonstrates CAB's ability to react to local community concerns.

### ***Forensic Science Ireland<sup>[3]</sup>***

The Drugs section of Forensic Science Ireland (formerly known as the Forensic Science Laboratory) examines and analyses substances seized by [An Garda Síochána](#) or [Revenue's Customs Service](#) officers and sometimes the Military Police, that are thought to contravene the Misuse of Drugs Act. Items that possibly come into contact with such substances, e.g. weighing scales, knives, equipment from clandestine labs, may be examined to determine if traces of a controlled substance are present. A number of analytical procedures are used in the laboratory to determine if a substance is a controlled drug, the most common of which is gas chromatography coupled with mass spectrometry (GC/MS). The results of the analysis are issued in a certificate-of-analysis that is presented as evidence in the court.

### ***Joint task force on drug interdiction (JTF)***

The Joint Task Force on Drug Interdiction (JTF) was established in 1993 as a government measure to improve law enforcement in relation to drugs and consists of members of An Garda Síochána, Revenue and the Naval Service. The JTF is brought together when the agencies with primary responsibility in this area, An Garda Síochána and Revenue, review intelligence received and consider that a joint operation with the Naval Service and/or the Air Corps should be mounted. The Naval Service is legally empowered under the Criminal Justice Act 1994 (as amended by the Criminal Justice [Illicit Traffic by Sea] Act 2003) to engage in drug interdiction operations. The Air Corps provides air support if required, and on occasion may be requested to carry members of Revenue in an observational capacity for the purposes of monitoring vessels suspected of drug trafficking. The Air Corps provides an important intelligence gathering capability on the request of the JTF (Department of Defence 2015) (p. 37).

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<sup>[2]</sup> Downloaded on 25 September 2015 at <http://www.garda.ie/Controller.aspx?Page=28>

<sup>[3]</sup> Downloaded on 25 September 2015 at <http://www.forensicscience.ie/Services/Forensic-Areas/Drugs/#sthash.iVlhE7YT.dpuf>

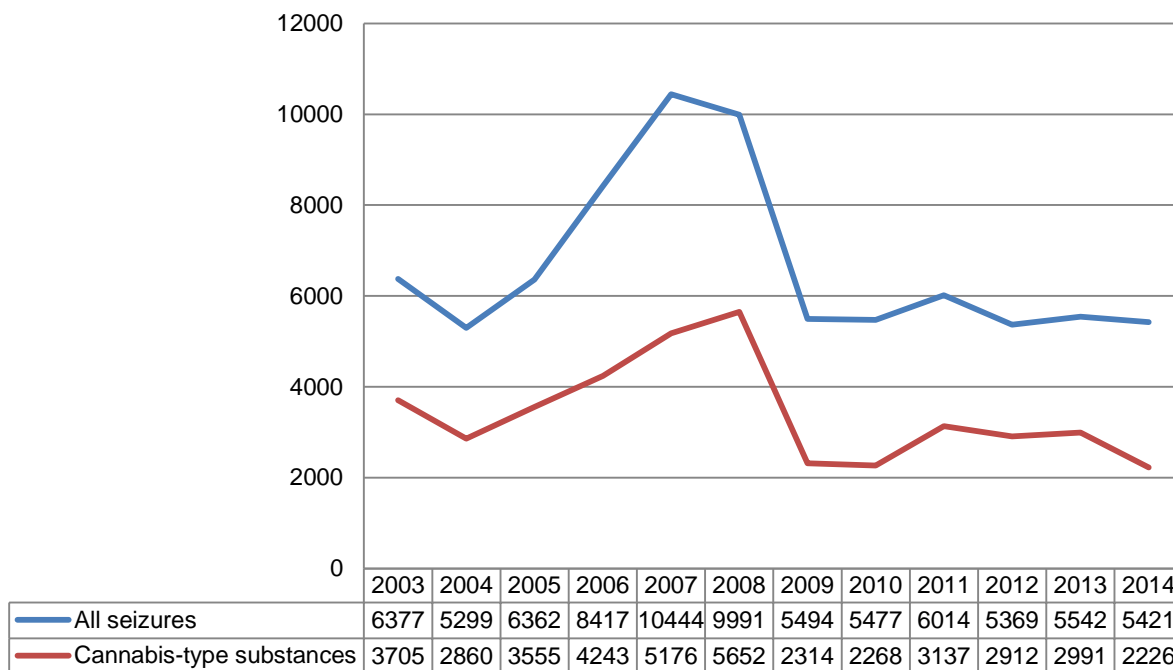
## 2. Trends

### 2.1 Short term trends (5 years)

The number of drug seizures in any given period can be affected by such factors as law enforcement resources, strategies and priorities, and by the vulnerability of traffickers to law enforcement activities. However, drug seizures are considered indirect indicators of the supply and availability of drugs.

#### Cannabis

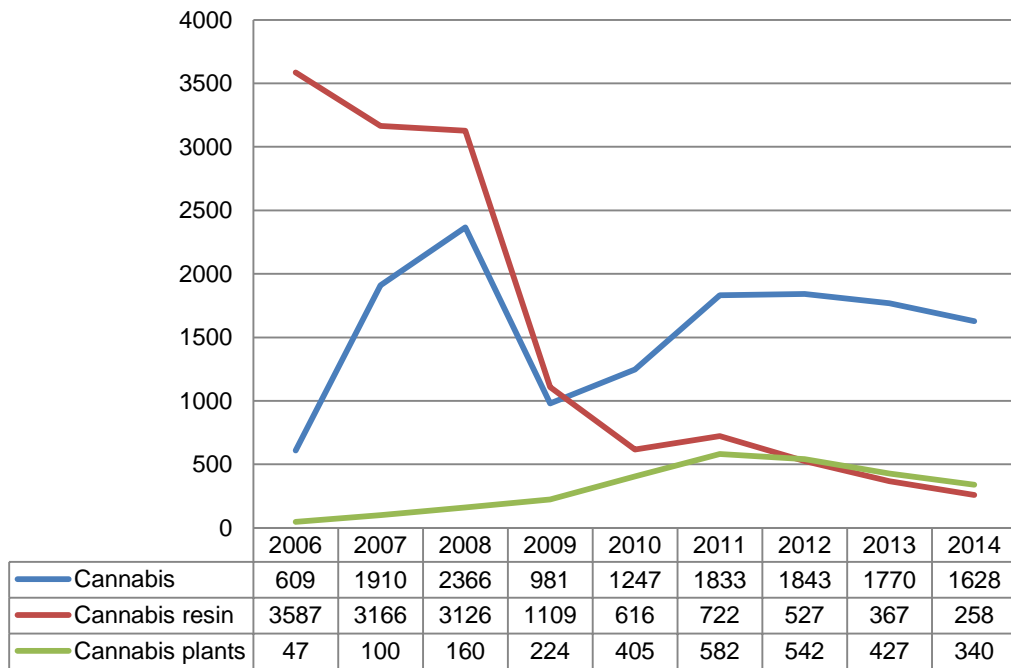
Cannabis seizures account for the largest proportion of all drugs seized. Figure 2.1.1 shows trends in cannabis-related seizures and total seizures between 2003 and 2014. The total number of drug seizures increased from 5,299 seizures in 2004 to a peak of 10,444 in 2007. Between 2008 and 2010, the number almost halved, to 5,477. Following a slight increase in 2011, cannabis seizures have trended downwards slightly.



**Figure 2.1.1. Trends in the total number of drug seizures and cannabis seizures, 2003–2014**

Source: FSI 2005–2015 unpublished data

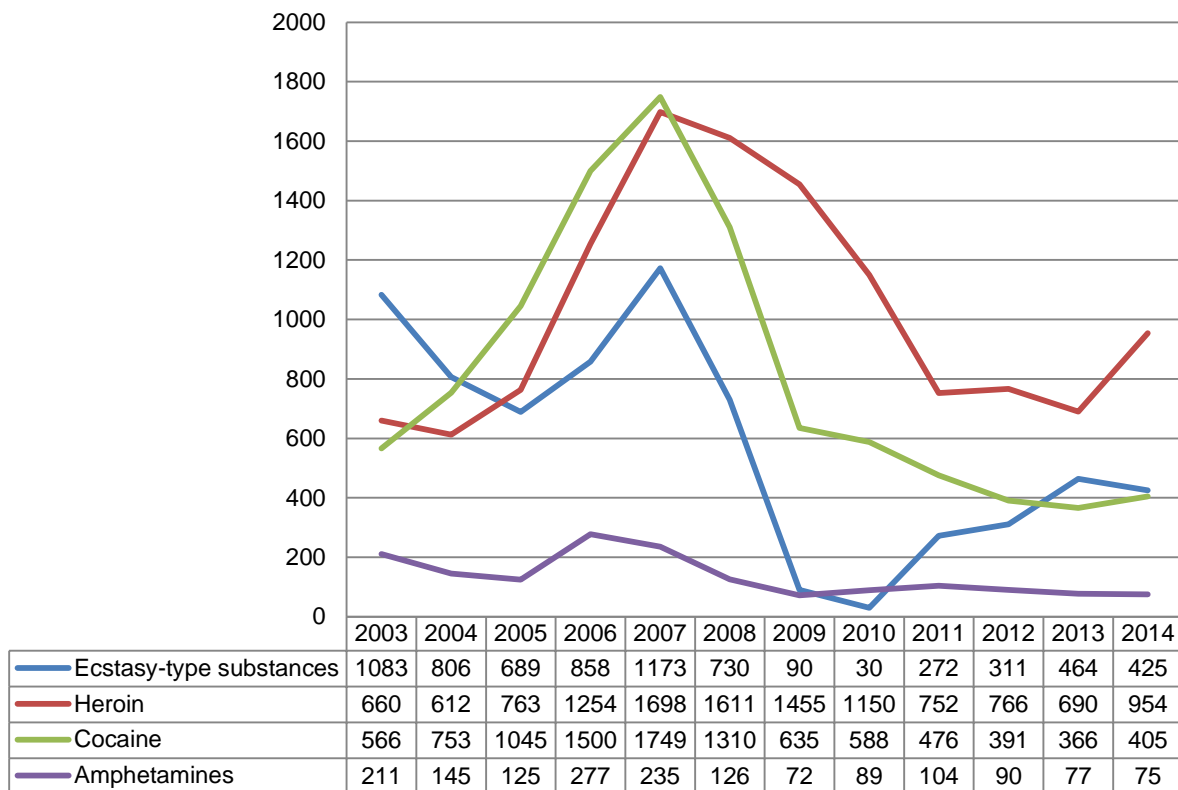
The decrease in cannabis seizures between 2008 and 2010 may also be partly explained by a change in the nature of cannabis use, with people moving from resin to more potent forms of cannabis, such as herbal cannabis. For example, Figure 2.1.2 shows that although seizures of cannabis resin decreased between 2009 and 2014, seizures of cannabis plants increased steadily between 2007 and 2011, with a slight decrease between 2011 and 2014.



**Figure 2.1.2 Trends in the total number of drug seizures by cannabis type, 2006–2014**  
 Source: FSI 2008–2015 unpublished data

### Other controlled drugs

The reduction in the total number of reported cannabis seizures since 2008 shown in Figure 2.1.2 may also be explained by a reduction in the number of seizures of other drugs. Figure 2.1.3 shows trends in seizures for a selection of drugs, excluding cannabis, between 2007 and 2013. There was a significant decline in seizures of cocaine and heroin between 2007 and 2011, and then an increase in heroin seizures in 2014.



**Figure 2.1.3 Trends in the number of seizures of selected drugs, excluding cannabis, 2003–2014**  
 Source: FSI 2008–2015 unpublished data

### Illicit street-level retail market in prescription drugs



Another factor that may be impacting on the seizure trends for illicit drugs is the illegal street sale of prescription drugs. This has emerged as an important issue in the Irish drug scene in recent years (see the 2012 and 2013 National Reports (Health Research Board 2012) (Chapter 1.2), (Health Research Board 2013) (Chapter 10.2.3). The government has been reviewing the Misuse of Drugs Regulations with a view to introducing additional controls on certain prescription drugs being traded illicitly (Health Research Board 2013) (Chapter 1.2.2).

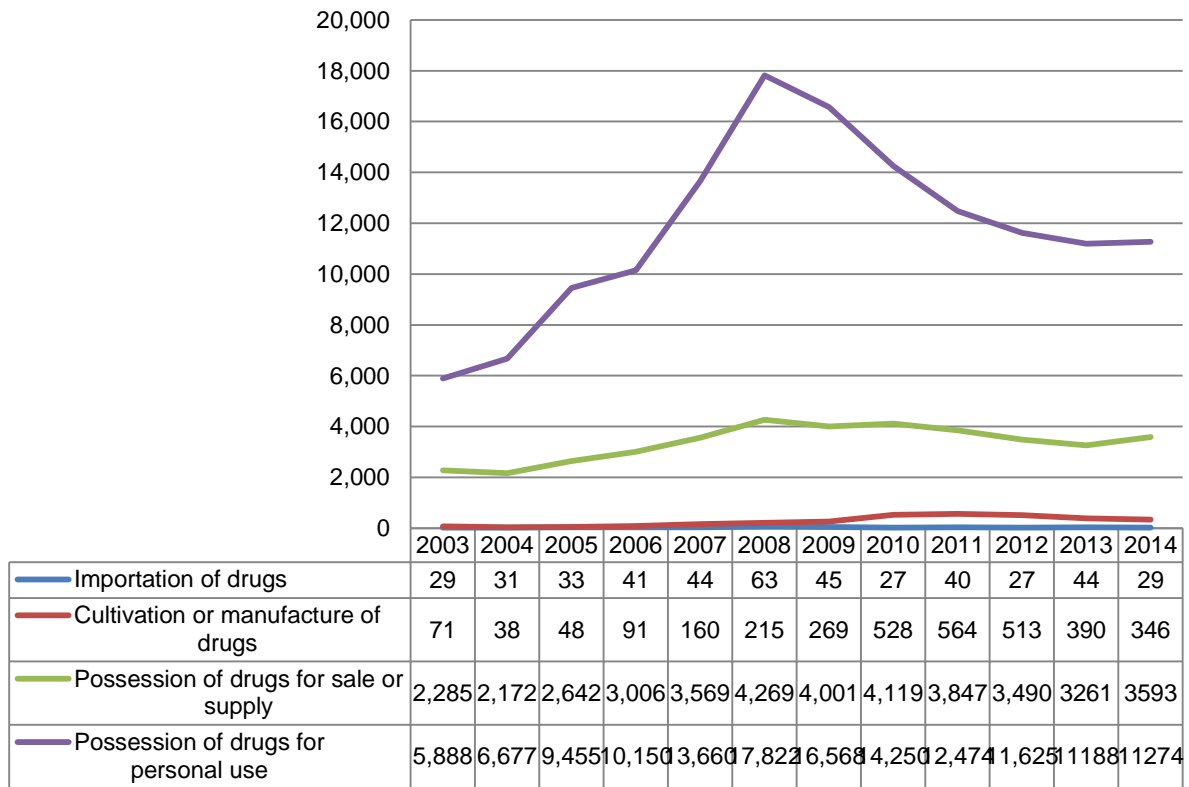
Table 2.1.1 shows trends for some of the main prescription drugs, primarily benzodiazepines and Z-hypnotics, seized by An Garda Síochána and analysed by FSI in recent years.

**Table 2.1.1 Seizures of a selection of benzodiazepines and Z-hypnotics, 2009–2014**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Methadone</b>	15	33	36	33	26	56
<b>Alprazolam</b>	42	89	121	111	145	201
<b>Clonazepam</b>	2	12	16	15	16	13
<b>Diazepam</b>	270	448	479	463	450	420
<b>Flunitrazepam (Rohyp)</b>	7	9	3	9	6	1
<b>Flurazepam</b>	34	37	46	52	35	37
<b>Lorazepam</b>	14	5	2	1	0	1
<b>Temazepam</b>	5	9	5	12	6	4
<b>Triazolam</b>	7	12	13	11	7	12
<b>Zolpidem</b>	8	10	14	16	7	10
<b>Zopiclone</b>	67	138	155	0	205	125

Sources: FSI 2010-2015 unpublished data

The pattern of recorded incidents of controlled drug offences, particularly possession of drugs for personal use, broadly reflects the pattern of seizures of cannabis with peaks in both around 2008 and 2009 (see Figure 2.1.4). This may reflect changing behavior in drug use or greater concentration of Garda resources on other drugs in the years since then.



**Figure 2.1.4 Recorded incidents of drug offences, 2003–2014**

Source: CSO website

### 3. Sources, methodology and references

#### 3.1 Sources

Web sites, annual reports and unpublished data from the following agencies are the ‘notable’ sources of information:

[Central Statistics Office](#)

[Courts Service](#)

[Customs](#)

[Forensic Science Ireland](#)

[Garda Síochána](#)

#### 3.2 Methodology

##### Garda annual crime statistics

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) publishes Garda annual crime statistics using the Irish Crime Classification System (ICCS), which includes a category ‘Controlled drug offences’, which is broken down into ‘Importation/manufacture of drugs’, ‘Possession of drugs’ and ‘Other drug offences’. The CSO’s crime statistics publications replace the crime statistics section in Garda annual reports, which An Garda Síochána ceased to publish in recognition of the CSO’s new responsibility.

According to the CSO’s *Standard report on methods and quality (v3) for Garda recorded crime statistics, 2008–2012* (Central Statistics Office 2014) the methodology used to compile these statistics is broadly as follows:

The data originate in the Garda PULSE (Police Using Leading Systems Effectively) system. The information supplied to the CSO refers only to crime incidents known to An Garda Síochána and recorded as such. Most incidents are recorded centrally at the Garda Information Service Centre (GISC) in Castlebar as a result of telephone contact with locally based gardaí (introduced in 2006). Previously, and in certain situations currently, the local gardaí enter the incidents and updates in the relational database (PULSE) themselves. The CSO receives a copy of this data electronically from the gardaí each month.

Data editing is done at source by the gardaí. The CSO performs a number of checks. For example, it ensures that homicide incidents have been classified correctly according to the court data. Certain missing data have to be obtained from associated narratives or from the gardaí. Checks are carried out to ensure counting rules have been applied correctly to the data. Necessary changes are carried out by the CSO on its data extract and the gardaí are notified of these changes. Consistency checks are also carried out in relation to the presence of suspected offenders with incidents flagged as detected, the presence of a charge or summons and incidents marked as having proceedings commenced. Results are aggregated – no estimation used.

### **Garda Síochána Inspectorate examines crime recording**

The Garda Síochána Inspectorate's remit is to ensure that the resources available to the Garda are used 'so as to achieve and maintain the highest levels of efficiency and effectiveness in its operation and administration, as measured by reference to the best standards of comparable police services'.<sup>1</sup> Its latest report, *Crime investigation*, which consolidates outstanding recommendations from previous reports, includes recommendations with regard to the recording of crime (Garda Inspectorate 2014).

From an examination of entries on the Garda Síochána PULSE IT system, the report identifies a significant number of problems associated with non-recording of crime, inaccurate recording of detection rates and inappropriate criminal prosecutions where original offences are downgraded to less serious offences. This has implications in relation to drug-related intimidation, where the victim might not want to make a written statement of complaint for fear of reprisal by the offender. The report reiterates the rule which is, if there is a reasonable probability that a crime has occurred, and no evidence to the contrary, then even if the victim does not want the matter taken any further, a crime should be recorded. The report recommends that a 'national standard for incident recording' needs to be introduced (Recommendation 3.32).

In order to address the deficiencies identified, the report recommends that the CSO should receive 'all PULSE record incident data including non-crime categories to facilitate analysis and reporting of crime statistics' (Recommendation 4.16); it should have a central role in the development of new crime counting rules (Recommendation 5.4); and the Department of Justice should initiate a process whereby the CSO would have a central role in 'the designation of a baseline year for crime recording' (Recommendation 5.9). It also calls for the appointment of an independent body to conduct annual audits of incident and crime recording standards (Recommendation 5.10).

### **Central Statistics Office (CSO) reviews quality of crime statistics**

Following on from the review by the Garda Síochána Inspectorate, the CSO conducted a review of the quality of crime statistics, and in particular Garda crime data (Central Statistics Office 2015). As part of this study, the CSO obtained access to additional non-crime data from the Garda Síochána, including CAD (Command-Aided Dispatch) and paper records. The main CSO findings are as follows:

- An estimated 20% of crime reported to An Garda Síochána in 2011 via their CAD-equipped divisions does not appear to be captured on the Garda PULSE IT system. These CAD-equipped divisions accounted for approximately half of all recorded crime in Ireland. The comparable figure for PULSE crime incidents created from paper records was 16%.
- 6.7% of all offences created on PULSE in 2012 were created more than a week after they were first reported.
- There were no crime narratives shortened on PULSE and only one case of a narrative being changed inexplicably.
- Across seven major crime categories (assault, burglary, criminal damage, public order, robbery, theft, and unauthorised taking or interfering with a vehicle), an estimated 3% of incidents were incorrectly classified and a further 4% had insufficient information to determine the correct classification.
- Some 7% of incidents classified as 'attention and complaints' (a non-crime category on PULSE) should have been classified as a crime, generally as either fraud or assault. The equivalent figures for 'property lost' and non-crime 'domestic disputes' were 4% and 7% respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.gsnisp.ie](http://www.gsnisp.ie)

- An analysis of 69 ‘assault and assault causing harm’ offences reclassified in the 12 months between January 2012 and January 2013 showed that nearly half (49%) were either not justified or it was unclear from the narrative what the justification was for the reclassification.
- Some 54% of crimes marked as detected had corresponding charges or summons, while 46% did not. The status of ‘detected’ was incorrectly applied to 35% of those crimes marked as detected but without a charge or summons sheet attached. Removing these detections would reduce the overall number of detected crimes by 16%.
- 23% of invalidated crimes were incorrectly classified as such.

Despite these findings, and having suspended crime reporting for part of 2014, the CSO has decided to resume publication of recorded crime data, albeit advising users to consider these issues when interpreting crime statistics. In its report the CSO stated that it would work with An Garda Síochána to improve the reliability of the data, and that it would repeat a similar analysis at regular intervals to monitor data quality.

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## European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) is a decentralised EU agency based in Lisbon. The EMCDDA provides the EU and its Member States with information on the nature, extent, consequences and responses to illicit drug use. It supplies the evidence base to support policy formation on drugs and addiction in both the European Union and Member States.

There are 30 National Focal Points that act as monitoring centres for the EMCDDA. These focal points gather and analyse country data according to common data-collection standards and tools and supply these data to the EMCDDA. The results of this national monitoring process are supplied to the Centre for analysis, from which it produces the annual *European drug report* and other outputs.

The Irish Focal Point to the EMCDDA is based in the Health Research Board. The focal point writes and submits a series of textual reports, data on the five epidemiological indicators and supply indicators in the form of standard tables and structured questionnaires on response-related issues such as prevention and social reintegration. The focal point is also responsible for implementing Council Decision 2005/387/JHA on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances.

### Acknowledgements

Completion of the national focal point's reports to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) depends on the support and cooperation of a number of government departments and statutory bodies. Among those to whom we would like to express our thanks are the staff of the following:

Customs Drugs Law Enforcement, Revenue  
Department of Children and Youth Affairs  
Department of Education and Skills  
Drugs and Organised Crime Unit, An Garda Síochána  
Drugs Policy Division, Department of Justice and Equality  
Drugs Policy Unit, Department of Health  
Forensic Science Ireland  
Health Protection Surveillance Centre, Health Service Executive  
Hospital In-Patient Enquiry Scheme, Health Service Executive  
Irish Prison Service  
National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol, Department of Health  
National Social Inclusion Office, Primary Care Division, Health Service Executive

We also wish to acknowledge the assistance of the coordinators and staff of local and regional Drug and Alcohol Task Forces, voluntary, community-based and other non-governmental organisations.

We wish to thank our HRB colleagues in the Evidence Centre, National Drug Treatment Reporting System, the National Drug-related Deaths Index and the HRB National Drugs Library, all of whom make significant contributions to the preparation of the national report.