

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Stop and Search Statistics

Financial Year 2017/18

1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018

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Key Statistics

Legislation	Number of persons stopped during 2016/17 ⁽¹⁾	Number of persons stopped during 2017/18 ⁽¹⁾	% change in persons stopped ⁽²⁾
PACE	5,054	5,063	< 0.5%
Misuse of Drugs Act	16,648	17,464	+ 5%
Firearms Order	174	101	- 42%
TACT S43	185	90	- 51%
TACT S43A	80	28	- 65%
TACT 47A	0	0	-
JSA Section 21	2,200	1,505	- 32%
JSA Section 24	7,935	6,245	- 21%

- (1) As more than one legislative power can be used to stop and search/question a person, the sum of the powers used will be greater than the total number of persons stopped and searched/questioned (for example, an individual stopped under PACE and Misuse of Drugs Act will be counted as one person stopped and searched but will have a count of 1 in both the PACE and Misuse of Drugs categories in the table above). Table excludes less frequently used powers; these are summarised in the main body of the report.
- (2) A change in methodology was implemented in 2017/18 regarding the reporting of searches under warrant and searches following arrest. Further details can be found under Comparability on page 3.

- During the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018, 29,882 persons were stopped and searched/questioned. This is 1,392 fewer persons (4%) than the previous financial year when 31,274 were stopped. (Part of this decline has been driven by a change in the data collection methodology, please see page 3 for further information.) Of the 29,882 over a quarter (27%) were in Belfast City policing district. The next highest number was in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon with 14% of all stop and searches occurring here. Over the longer term, stop and search activity peaked in 2009/10 at 53,885 people and has subsequently shown a general decline, falling by 45% to the 2017/18 level.
- Of those 29,882 persons stopped and searched or stopped and questioned, 2,116 were subsequently arrested (7%). This compares to the 6% arrest rate during the previous year (2016/17), the 7% during 2015/16 and the 8% during 2014/15.
- Persons can be stopped and searched or stopped and questioned under a number of legislative powers in Northern Ireland, or combinations of those powers. These powers include the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) (Northern Ireland) Order, Misuse of Drugs Act, Firearms Order, Justice and Security Act and the Terrorism Act.
- Of all 29,882 persons stopped and searched, over half (17,464 or 58%) were searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act (including a combination of Misuse of Drugs Act and other powers), up from 53% the previous year. Of these, 1,083 (6%) were subsequently arrested.
- Counter-terrorism related powers (The Terrorism Act and The Justice Security Act) were used 24% less in 2017/18 to stop and search people than in the previous year. Use of these powers is at its lowest level since 2014/15.
- There were 5,063 persons stopped and searched under PACE (including a combination of PACE and other powers) of whom 926 (18%) were subsequently arrested. There were 101 persons stopped and searched under the Firearms Order (including a combination with other powers) of whom 30 (30%) were subsequently arrested.
- Of those 29,882 persons stopped and searched or stopped and questioned, 14% (4,157 persons) were aged 17 and under. Of those 4,157 persons aged 17 and under, 65% stopped and searched were under the Misuse of Drugs Act (including a combination of Misuse of Drugs Act and other powers). 89% of all those stopped and searched were male, while over 40% were aged 18 to 25.

Contents

Section One: Persons stopped and searched (*Pages 4 to 6*)

This section highlights the numbers of persons stopped / searched by each legislative power (or combination of powers) and the total number of persons stopped / searched by Police Area and District and age.

Section Two: PACE / Misuse of Drugs Act and Firearms Order stops and searches (*Pages 7 to 8*)

This section focuses on the number of persons stopped and searched under PACE, the Misuse of Drugs Act S23 and the Firearms Order S53. Tables in this section include a breakdown of the reason for the PACE stop and search (stolen articles, articles with blade of point, prohibited articles or fireworks), and a breakdown by Police Area and District of the persons stopped and searched.

Section Three: Trend Information (*Pages 9 to 11*)

This section includes longer term trend information on the use of all legislative powers from 2004/2005.

Note: The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 commenced on 26th May 2016. The number of stop and searches carried out under this Act has been small since its commencement and so in this report such stops are reported under 'Other legislative powers'. We will continue to monitor the frequency of its use and consider for inclusion as a power on its own.

An accompanying [Excel Spreadsheet](#) is available on our website which outlines the data in this report.

Comparability: An internal review was carried out to assess the PSNI's compliance with PACE legislation governing the recording of stop and searches under Articles 3-5. The review found that searches under the authority of a warrant and searches carried out after an arrest had been recorded, and subsequently reported, as searches under Articles 3–5 when in fact they are governed by other articles of PACE. In order to fully comply with PACE legislation and more accurately report the usage of stop and search powers, searches under the authority of a warrant and searches that have been carried out after an arrest have been excluded from the 2017/18 figures. The impact is a 2.5% reduction in the total number of persons stopped and searched/questioned during 2017/18. Further quantification is provided in the report below.

Data Quality: This report uses information extracted from the PSNI's integrated database designed to capture stop & search information. Officers can either populate this database directly by using their mobile data device when performing a stop & search or complete a hard copy form to be input by local police districts. Validation checks are performed on the information before publishing this data and duplicate entries are removed.

Section One – Persons stopped and searched

Section 1 Table 1 – Number of persons stopped and searched/stopped and questioned by each legislative power: 2016/17 and 2017/18

Persons stopped under:	2016/17					2017/18 ⁽²⁾				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	TOTAL	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	TOTAL
PACE	1,084	1,182	1,522	1,171	4,959	1,211	1,172	1,534	1,058	4,975
PACE & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	10	15	15	12	52	13	14	25	17	69
PACE & Misuse of Drugs Act S23 & JSA S24	0	1	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
PACE & Misuse of Drugs Act S23 & JSA S21 & JSA S24	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
PACE & Firearms Order S53 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
PACE & Firearms Order S53 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23 & JSA S24	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
PACE & Firearms Order S53	7	2	0	1	10	2	0	0	1	3
PACE & Firearms Order S53 & TACT S43	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
PACE & JSA S21	6	0	1	1	8	0	0	5	0	5
PACE & JSA S24	2	4	3	6	15	2	0	0	2	4
PACE & JSA S24 & Other legislative power	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
PACE & Other legislative power	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	5
Misuse of Drugs Act S23	3,446	4,159	4,659	4,249	16,513	4,278	4,761	4,323	3,967	17,329
Misuse of Drugs Act S23 & Other legislative power	0	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	1	1
Firearms Order S53	46	35	30	32	143	19	19	25	29	92
Firearms Order S53 & JSA S21	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Firearms Order S53 & JSA S24	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Firearms Order S53 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	1	5	0	6	12	1	0	3	1	5
Firearms Order S53 & other legislative power	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Firearms Order S53 & JSA S21 & JSA S24	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
TACT S43	26	22	25	21	94	17	16	11	15	59
TACT S43A	4	1	4	1	10	1	0	1	0	2
TACT S43 & TACT S43A	40	11	5	8	64	14	4	5	1	24
TACT S43 & TACT S43A & JSA S21	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
JSA 21	265	325	339	390	1,319	252	262	259	259	1,032
JSA S21 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	3	2	0	1	6	2	0	0	2	4
JSA S21 & JSA S24	175	174	224	263	836	128	99	120	105	452
JSA S21 & JSA S24 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	2	0	2	0	4	0	3	4	0	7
JSA S21 & JSA S24 & TACT S43	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
JSA S21 & other legislative power	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
JSA S24	1,391	1,642	1,816	2,149	6,998	1,317	1,165	1,478	1,772	5,732
JSA S24 & other legislative power	2	3	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0
JSA S24 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	9	13	16	10	48	15	11	15	7	48
JSA S24 & TACT S43A	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
TACT S43 & JSA S21	0	4	1	6	11	3	1	0	0	4
TACT S43 & JSA S24	2	6	0	1	9	0	0	0	0	0
TACT S43 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
TACT S43A & JSA S21 & JSA S24	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
TACT S43 & TACT S43A & JSA S21 & JSA S24	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Other legislative powers ⁽¹⁾	12	27	69	19	127	5	10	3	7	25
Total Persons stopped and searched/questioned⁽²⁾	6,540	7,642	8,738	8,354	31,274	7,282	7,540	7,811	7,249	29,882

1) 'Other legislative powers' captures stops / searches conducted under the following less frequently used powers: Schedule 5 to the Terrorism Act 2000, Section 139B of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, Schedule 5 to the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011, Article 6 Crossbows (Northern Ireland) Order 1988, Article 25 Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, Article 23B of The Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 and the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. Searches under Schedule 5 to the Terrorism Act 2000, which are searches under warrant, are excluded from 2017/18 figures. See point (2) for more details.

2) Persons searched under the authority of a warrant and searches that have been carried out after an arrest have been excluded from the 2017/18 figures. This reduces the total number of persons stopped and search/questioned during 2017/18 by 2.5% from 30,636 to 29,882. Provisional figures previously published for Q1 to Q3 2017/18 have been updated as follows to reflect this change; Q1 from 7,440 to 7,282, Q2 from 7,710 to 7,540 and Q3 from 8,021 to 7,811.

**Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned and subsequently arrested under all legislative powers by Police Area and District:
1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018**

Section 1 Table 2

	Persons Stopped	Persons Subsequently Arrested
	Total Persons	Total Persons
Belfast City Policing	8,083	818
North Area Policing	8,611	546
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,255	104
Causeway Coast & Glens	1,898	140
Derry City & Strabane	3,491	203
Mid & East Antrim	1,967	99
South Area Policing	13,188	752
Ards & North Down	759	42
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	4,188	220
Fermanagh & Omagh	1,590	111
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	2,792	209
Mid Ulster	1,361	57
Newry, Mourne & Down	2,498	113
Northern Ireland	29,882	2,116

**Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned under all legislative powers by Police Area and District by age group:
1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018**

Section 1 Table 3

Persons Stopped	Total Persons	Age not specified	Aged 17 and under	Aged 18 to 25	Aged 26 to 35	Aged 36 to 45	Aged 46 to 55	Aged 56 to 65	Aged over 65
Belfast City Policing	8,083	29	866	3,057	2,487	1,006	487	129	22
North Area Policing	8,611	31	1,304	3,351	1,849	1,148	639	221	68
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,255	3	173	627	249	127	62	8	6
Causeway Coast & Glens	1,898	12	329	798	393	176	107	59	24
Derry City & Strabane	3,491	4	498	1,159	740	578	366	117	29
Mid & East Antrim	1,967	12	304	767	467	267	104	37	9
South Area Policing	13,188	113	1,987	5,989	2,877	1,159	704	268	91
Ards & North Down	759	1	111	325	151	72	57	33	9
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	4,188	18	622	1,889	982	357	239	63	18
Fermanagh & Omagh	1,590	12	263	662	352	156	90	35	20
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	2,792	29	419	1,310	623	215	129	48	19
Mid Ulster	1,361	7	187	677	270	130	68	12	10
Newry, Mourne & Down	2,498	46	385	1,126	499	229	121	77	15
Northern Ireland	29,882	173	4,157	12,397	7,213	3,313	1,830	618	181

Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned under all legislative powers by gender and age: 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018

Section 1 Table 4

Persons Stopped	Total Persons	Age												
		Not specified	12 and under	13	14	15	16	17	18 to 25	26 to 35	36 to 45	46 to 55	56 to 65	Over 65
Male	26,637	152	43	130	381	617	951	1,450	11,145	6,518	2,935	1,624	535	156
Females	3,227	20	7	38	70	100	161	207	1,243	693	375	206	82	25
Unknown / Other	18	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	9	2	3	0	1	0
Total persons	29,882	173	50	168	451	717	1,113	1,658	12,397	7,213	3,313	1,830	618	181

Section Two – Police and Criminal Evidence legislation (PACE) / Misuse of Drugs Act / Firearms Order

Number of persons stopped/searched under PACE, Misuse of Drugs Act and Firearms Order and persons subsequently arrested by reason for search: 2016/17 – 2017/18

Section 2 Table 1

	2016/17										2017/18 ⁽²⁾									
	Apr-Jun		Jul-Sep		Oct-Dec		Jan-Mar		TOTAL		Apr-Jun		Jul-Sep		Oct-Dec		Jan-Mar		TOTAL	
	Search	Arrests	Search	Arrests	Search	Arrests	Search	Arrests	Search	Arrests	Search	Arrests	Search	Arrests	Search	Arrests	Search	Arrests	Search	Arrests
Stolen property / articles	575	106	617	102	683	115	637	87	2,512	410	620	92	555	101	709	126	557	100	2,441	419
Offensive weapon / Blade or point	205	54	219	66	229	67	215	63	868	250	277	95	298	83	230	68	227	71	1,032	317
Going equipped / Prohibited articles	327	45	334	61	419	67	339	59	1,419	232	333	49	292	43	356	58	286	38	1,267	188
Fireworks	8	1	34	0	212	0	1	0	255	1	0	0	44	0	269	2	10	0	323	2
Drugs	3,477	201	4,196	250	4,695	256	4,280	246	16,648	953	4,309	247	4,789	266	4,370	311	3,996	259	17,464	1,083
Firearms	56	11	44	6	31	1	43	8	174	26	23	4	19	7	28	9	31	10	101	30

Note:

1) Multiple reasons for some searches can be recorded. Therefore, the total number of persons searched and arrested may not equal the sum of all reasons.

2) Persons searched under the authority of a warrant and searches that have been carried out after an arrest have been excluded from the 2017/18 figures. Provisional figures previously published for Q1 to Q3 2017/18 have been updated in the above table to reflect this change. As a result the total number of persons stopped and searched during Q1 to Q3 2017/18 under the powers listed in this table has reduced by 2.9%.

Number of persons stopped/searched under PACE, Misuse of Drugs Act and Firearms Order by reason for search by Police Area and District: 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018

Section 2 Table 2

	PACE				Non-PACE	
	Stolen Articles	Articles With Blade or Point	Prohibited Articles	Fireworks	Misuse of Drugs Act S23	Firearms Order
Belfast City Policing	845	469	435	26	4,967	22
North Area Policing	524	251	325	111	4,247	33
Antrim & Newtownabbey	109	65	83	11	749	9
Causeway Coast & Glens	110	61	45	65	1,163	6
Derry City & Strabane	206	66	123	12	1,387	4
Mid & East Antrim	99	59	74	23	948	14
South Area Policing	1,072	312	507	186	8,250	46
Ards & North Down	62	15	42	5	409	2
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	348	89	175	71	2,451	9
Fermanagh & Omagh	123	34	70	20	1,108	11
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	301	100	110	6	1,729	6
Mid Ulster	67	22	32	59	887	4
Newry, Mourne & Down	171	52	78	25	1,666	14
Northern Ireland	2,441	1,032	1,267	323	17,464	101

Note: Multiple reasons for some searches can be recorded. Therefore, the total number of persons searched may not equal the sum of all reasons.

Section Three – Trend Information

The following table and figures illustrate longer-term trend information for the number of stop and searches/stop and questions carried out since 2004/2005.

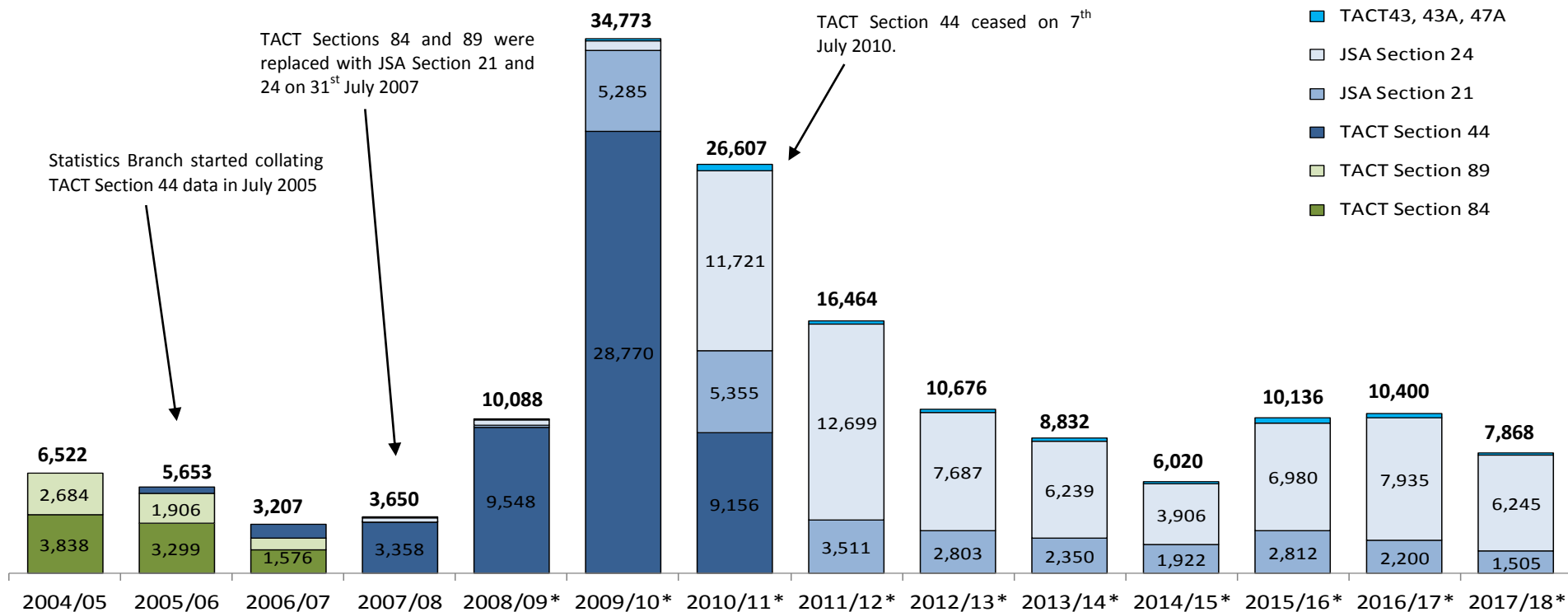
Number of persons stopped/searched or stopped/questioned under each legislation between 1st April 2004 and 31st March 2018 by financial year.

Section 3 Table 1

Legislation	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09 ⁽¹⁾	2009/10 ⁽¹⁾	2010/11 ⁽¹⁾	2011/12 ⁽¹⁾	2012/13 ⁽¹⁾	2013/14 ⁽¹⁾	2014/15 ⁽¹⁾	2015/16 ⁽¹⁾	2016/17 ⁽¹⁾	2017/18 ^(1,9)
PACE / Misuse of Drugs Act / Firearms Order	14,434	16,036	16,174	15,362	20,011	23,990	22,785	20,746	20,910	24,428	22,189	25,151	21,876	22,628
TACT - Section 84 ⁽²⁾	3,838	3,299	1,576											
- Section 89 ⁽²⁾	2,684	1,906	718											
- Section 44 ⁽³⁾		448	913	3,358	9,548	28,770	9,156							
- Section 43/43A ⁽⁴⁾				13	56	97	375	254	186	173	192	344	265	118
- Section 47A ⁽⁵⁾								0	0	70	0	0	0	0
JSA - Section 21 ⁽²⁾				28	112	5,285	5,355	3,511	2,803	2,350	1,922	2,812	2,200	1,505
- Section 24 ⁽²⁾				251	372	621	11,721	12,699	7,687	6,239	3,906	6,980	7,935	6,245
Other legislative powers ⁽⁶⁾								294	417	190	97	140	32	
Total uses of each legislative power⁽⁹⁾	20,956	21,689	19,381	19,012	30,099	58,763	49,392	37,210	31,880	33,677	28,399	35,384	32,416	30,528
Total no. of persons stopped and searched/questioned^(7,9)	20,956	21,689	19,381	19,012	30,099	53,885	45,394	35,268	30,502	32,590	27,539	34,171	31,274	29,882
PACE / Misuse of Drugs Act / Firearms Order	69%	74%	83%	81%	66%	41%	46%	56%	66%	73%	78%	71%	67%	74%
All Terrorism Act Powers	31%	26%	17%	18%	32%	49%	19%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<0.5%
All JSA Powers	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	10%	35%	44%	33%	26%	21%	28%	31%	25%
Other legislative powers	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%
All Powers⁽⁸⁾	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

- (1) Combinations of powers were not counted pre-08/09 therefore these figures are a count of the number of persons stopped. Figures from 08/09 are a count of the number of times each individual power was used.
- (2) Part VII of the Terrorism Act lapsed from midnight on the 31st July 2007. As a result Section 84 of TACT was replaced by Section 24 of the Justice and Security Act (JSA) and Section 89 of TACT was replaced by JSA Section 21 (power to stop and question).
- (3) Statistics Branch started collating TACT Section 44 data in July 2005. TACT Section 44 ceased on 7th July 2010.
- (4) Statistics Branch started collating TACT Section 43 and 43A during quarter 3 of 2007/08.
- (5) TACT Section 47A has been in place since March 2011 although the power has only been authorised for use during one period in May 2013.
- (6) On the 31st October 2012 changes were made to the PSNI's STOPS database to ensure that stop/searches conducted under less frequently used powers would be captured under an 'Other legislative powers' category. 'Other legislative powers' captures stops / searches conducted under the following less frequently used powers: Schedule 5 to the Terrorism Act 2000, Section 139B of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, Schedule 5 to the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011, Article 6 Crossbows (Northern Ireland) Order 1988, Article 25 Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, Article 23B of The Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 and the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.
- (7) The difference between total use of each power and total no. of persons stopped/searched will be due to persons stopped under combinations of powers being counted under each legislation used (i.e. someone stopped under JSA S21 and JSA S24 will have a count of one under each of these powers).
- (8) Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
- (9) An internal review was carried out to assess the PSNI's compliance with PACE legislation governing the recording of stop and searches under Articles 3-5. The review found that searches under the authority of a warrant and searches carried out after an arrest had been recorded, and subsequently reported, as searches under Articles 3-5 when in fact they are governed by other articles of PACE. In order to fully comply with PACE legislation and more accurately report the usage of stop and search powers, searches under the authority of a warrant and searches that have been carried out after an arrest have been excluded from the 2017/18 figures. This reduces the **Total uses of each legislative power** during 2017/18 by 2.5% from 31,307 to 30,528 and reduces the **Total no. of persons stopped and searched/questioned** during 2017/18 by 2.5% from 30,636 to 29,882.

Use of Terrorism-related Stop and Search/Stop and Question Legislation between 2004/05 and 2017/18

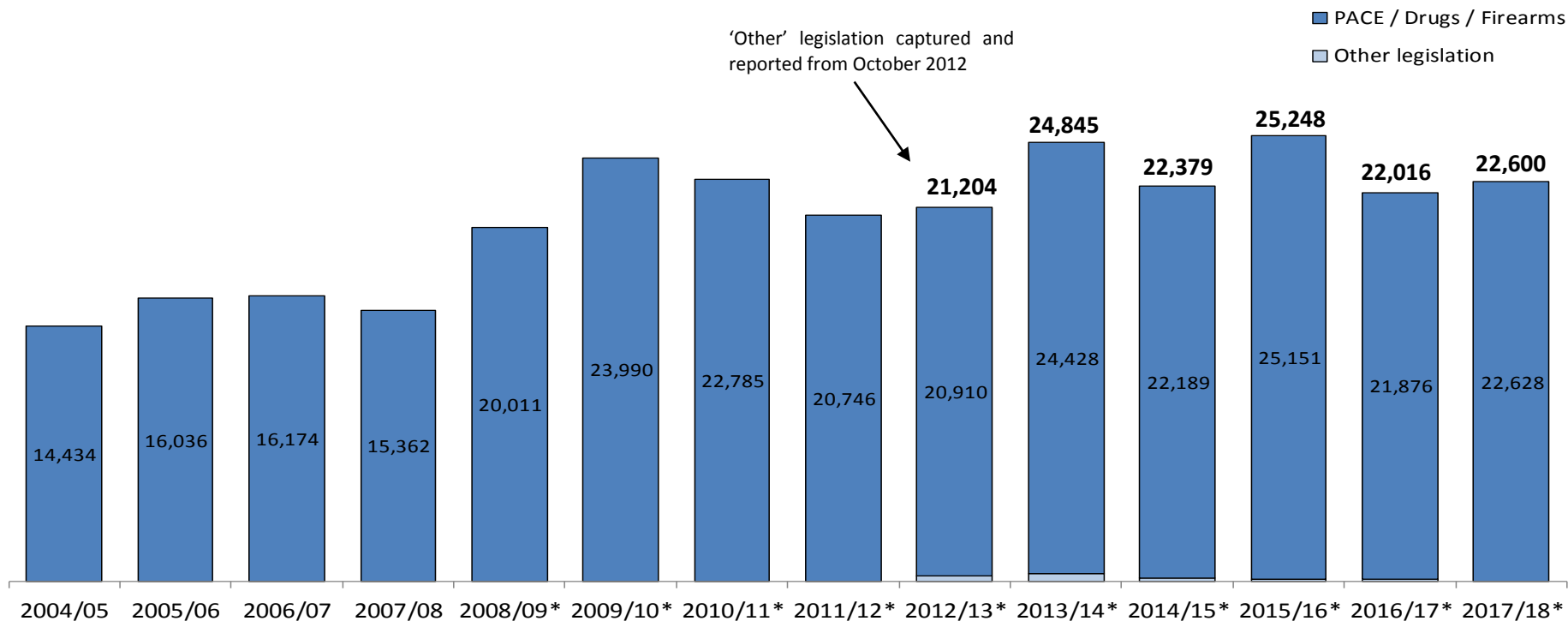


* Combinations of powers were not counted pre-08/09 therefore these figures are a count of the number of persons stopped. Figures from 08/09 are a count of the number of times each individual power was used.

** For presentational purposes the count of less frequently used powers are not displayed in the graph above (e.g. TACT S44 in 2005/2006) but are included in the overall totals at the top of each bar. For a count of those less frequently used powers refer to Section 3 Table 1.

Non-Terrorism related legislation - Section 3 Figure 2

Use of Non-Terrorism-related Stop and Search Legislation between 2004/05 and 2017/18



* Combinations of powers were not counted pre-08/09 therefore these figures are a count of the number of persons stopped. Figures from 08/09 are a count of the number of times each individual power was used.

** On the 31st October 2012 changes were made to the PSNI's STOPS database to ensure that stop/searches conducted under less frequently used powers would be captured under an 'Other legislative powers' category. 'Other legislative powers' captures stops / searches conducted under the following less frequently used powers: Schedule 5 to the Terrorism Act 2000, Section 139B of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, Schedule 5 to the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011, Article 6 Crossbows (Northern Ireland) Order 1988, Article 25 Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, Article 23B of The Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 and the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.

*** For presentational purposes the count of 'Other legislation' (recorded from October 2012) is not displayed in the graph above but is included in the overall totals at the top of each bar. For a count of 'Other legislation' refer to Section 3 Table 1.

**** Persons searched under the authority of a warrant and searches that have been carried out after an arrest have been excluded from the 2017/18 figures. As a result the total use of non-terrorism-related powers during 2017/18 in the chart above has reduced by 2.9%.