

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Stop and Search Statistics

Financial Year 2018/19
1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

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Key Statistics

Legislation	Number of persons stopped during 2017/18 ⁽¹⁾	Number of persons stopped during 2018/19 ⁽¹⁾	% change in persons stopped
PACE	5,063	3,905	-23%
Misuse of Drugs Act	17,464	17,081	-2%
Firearms Order	101	76	-25%
TACT S43	90	58	-36%
TACT S43A	28	16	-43%
TACT 47A	0	0	-
JSA Section 21	1,505	1,283	-15%
JSA Section 24	6,245	6,035	-3%

(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.

During the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019,

- the number of persons stopped and searched/questioned fell for the third consecutive year. During the 12 months 28,116 persons were stopped and searched/questioned, 6% fewer than the previous year. Over a quarter (29%) of all stops were in Belfast. The next highest number was in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon, with 14% of all stops occurring here.
- 1,965 stops (7%) resulted in an arrest. This remains relatively consistent with the arrest rate for the previous 4 years, when it has ranged from 6% to 8%.

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. During the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019,

- there were 3,905 persons stopped and searched under PACE (including a combination of PACE and other powers) of whom 819 (21%) were subsequently arrested. There were 76 persons stopped and searched under the Firearms Order (including a combination with other powers) of whom 19 (25%) was subsequently arrested.
- 6 out of every 10 stops (17,081 or 61%) were conducted under the Misuse of Drugs Act (including a combination of Misuse of Drugs Act and other powers). Of these, 1,058 (6%) resulted in an arrest.
- there were 1,283 persons stopped and questioned under JSA Section 21 and 6,035 persons were stopped and searched under Section 24.
- 13% (3,629 persons) of all stops were on persons aged 17 and under. Of those 3,629 persons, 69% 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 42% 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: Frequency of use of powers (*Page 7*)

Section two highlights the number of times each legislative power has been used to stop and search/question a person. As more than one legislative power can be used to stop and search/question a person the total number of powers used will be greater than the total number of persons stopped and searched/questioned.

Section Three: PACE / Misuse of Drugs Act and Firearms Order stops and searches (*Pages 8 to 9*)

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 Four: Trend Information (*Pages 10 to 12*)

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 onwards. Figures reported for the period pre-2017/18 still contain such searches. The impact is an approximate 2.5% reduction in the total number of persons stopped and searched/questioned from 2017/18 onwards.

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: 2017/18 and 2018/19

Persons stopped under:	2017/18					2018/19				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	TOTAL	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	TOTAL
PACE	1,211	1,172	1,534	1,058	4,975	814	904	1,200	926	3,844
PACE & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	13	14	25	17	69	9	14	10	12	45
PACE & Firearms Order S53	2	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	2
PACE & Firearms Order S53 & TACT S43	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
PACE & JSA S21	0	0	5	0	5	2	0	0	0	2
PACE & JSA S24	2	0	0	2	4	2	2	3	0	7
PACE & JSA S24 & Other legislative power	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
PACE & Other legislative power	1	3	0	1	5	1	2	1	1	5
Misuse of Drugs Act S23	4,278	4,761	4,323	3,967	17,329	4,003	4,269	4,548	4,167	16,987
Misuse of Drugs Act S23 & Other legislative power	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
Firearms Order S53	19	19	25	29	92	13	13	29	16	71
Firearms Order S53 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	1	0	3	1	5	1	0	1	0	2
TACT S43	17	16	11	15	59	6	7	13	9	35
TACT S43A	1	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	3
TACT S43 & TACT S43A	14	4	5	1	24	7	1	0	4	12
TACT S43 & TACT S43A & JSA S21	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
JSA 21	252	262	259	259	1,032	248	225	291	223	987
JSA S21 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	2	0	0	2	4	0	0	4	3	7
JSA S21 & JSA S24	128	99	120	105	452	103	65	50	57	275
JSA S21 & JSA S24 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	0	3	4	0	7	5	0	0	0	5
JSA S21 & JSA S24 & TACT S43	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
JSA S24	1,317	1,165	1,478	1,772	5,732	1,271	1,376	1,633	1,428	5,708
JSA S24 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	15	11	15	7	48	4	8	14	8	34
JSA S24 & TACT S43A	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
JSA S24 & TACT S43 & TACT S43A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
TACT S43 & JSA S21	3	1	0	0	4	2	2	0	1	5
TACT S43 & JSA S24	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
TACT S43 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other legislative powers ⁽¹⁾	5	10	3	7	25	13	12	4	43	72
Total Persons stopped and searched/questioned	7,282	7,540	7,811	7,249	29,882	6,507	6,906	7,803	6,900	28,116

1) 'Other legislative powers' captures stops / searches conducted under the following less frequently used powers: 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 the 2017/18 figures onwards.

**Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned and subsequently arrested under all legislative powers by Police Area and District:
1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019**

Section 1 Table 2

	Persons Stopped	Persons Subsequently Arrested
	Total Persons	Total Persons
Belfast City Policing	8,141	812
North Area Policing	6,897	416
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,005	80
Causeway Coast & Glens	1,660	96
Derry City & Strabane	2,876	166
Mid & East Antrim	1,356	74
South Area Policing	13,078	737
Ards & North Down	930	70
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	4,008	217
Fermanagh & Omagh	1,644	88
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	2,509	166
Mid Ulster	1,861	96
Newry, Mourne & Down	2,126	100
Northern Ireland	28,116	1,965

**Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned under all legislative powers by Police Area and District by age group:
1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019**

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	8,141	0	681	3,143	2,706	969	486	131	25
North Area Policing	6,897	1	868	2,699	1,532	939	635	190	33
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,005	0	132	516	201	97	42	12	5
Causeway Coast & Glens	1,660	1	274	670	377	169	107	51	11
Derry City & Strabane	2,876	0	248	942	661	479	425	111	10
Mid & East Antrim	1,356	0	214	571	293	194	61	16	7
South Area Policing	13,078	1	2,080	5,858	2,990	1,130	655	279	85
Ards & North Down	930	0	120	384	208	102	69	32	15
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	4,008	0	542	1,793	1,052	371	175	60	15
Fermanagh & Omagh	1,644	0	305	690	344	172	78	44	11
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	2,509	0	491	1,095	559	175	116	52	21
Mid Ulster	1,861	1	330	897	337	136	113	38	9
Newry, Mourne & Down	2,126	0	292	999	490	174	104	53	14
Northern Ireland	28,116	2	3,629	11,700	7,228	3,038	1,776	600	143

Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned under all legislative powers by gender and age: 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019

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	24,938	2	44	111	303	516	882	1,292	10,336	6,506	2,696	1,583	544	123
Females	3,167	0	13	19	50	79	140	177	1,360	718	342	193	56	20
Unknown / Other	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	4	0	0	0	0
Total persons	28,116	2	57	130	353	595	1,022	1,472	11,700	7,228	3,038	1,776	600	143

Section Two – Frequency of use of powers

Number of times each power was used by Police Area and District: 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019

Section 2 Table 1

Persons Stopped	Total Stop and Search / Questioned ⁽²⁾	PACE	Misuse of Drugs Act	Firearms Order	TACT S43	TACT S43A	TACT 47A	JSA Section 21	JSA Section 24	Other Legislative powers ⁽¹⁾
Belfast City Policing	8,300	1,367	5,386	28	43	14	0	291	1,153	18
North Area Policing	6,988	760	3,332	15	7	1	0	312	2,521	40
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,018	191	647	4	0	0	0	36	135	5
Causeway Coast & Glens	1,670	181	1,010	1	0	0	0	45	433	0
Derry City & Strabane	2,907	225	938	4	7	1	0	178	1,521	33
Mid & East Antrim	1,393	163	737	6	0	0	0	53	432	2
South Area Policing	13,245	1,778	8,363	33	8	1	0	680	2,361	21
Ards & North Down	983	159	422	0	0	0	0	192	210	0
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	4,055	464	2,648	9	5	1	0	119	806	3
Fermanagh & Omagh	1,653	290	1,131	3	2	0	0	13	214	0
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	2,522	331	1,549	6	0	0	0	159	463	14
Mid Ulster	1,886	265	1,136	7	0	0	0	162	315	1
Newry, Mourne & Down	2,146	269	1,477	8	1	0	0	35	353	3
Northern Ireland	28,533	3,905	17,081	76	58	16	0	1,283	6,035	79

(1) 'Other Legislative powers' captures stops / searches conducted under the following less frequently used powers: 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 onwards.

2) This is the total number of legislative powers used and not the total number of persons stopped and searched/questioned. As more than one legislative power can be used to stop and search/question a person, the total number of powers used will be greater than the 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).

Section Three – 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 ⁽¹⁾ and persons subsequently arrested by reason for search: 2017/18 – 2018/19

Section 3 Table 1

	2017/18										2018/19									
	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	620	92	555	101	709	126	557	100	2,441	419	436	105	463	99	488	87	465	113	1,852	404
Offensive weapon / Blade or point	277	95	298	83	230	68	227	71	1,032	317	209	73	198	71	181	57	257	69	845	270
Going equipped / Prohibited articles	333	49	292	43	356	58	286	38	1,267	188	178	27	204	34	276	51	216	33	874	145
Fireworks	0	0	44	0	269	2	10	0	323	2	6	0	57	0	270	0	1	0	334	0
Drugs	4,309	247	4,789	266	4,370	311	3,996	259	17,464	1,083	4,022	257	4,292	269	4,577	280	4,190	252	17,081	1,058
Firearms	23	4	19	7	28	9	31	10	101	30	15	6	13	1	31	4	17	8	76	19

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

Number of persons stopped/searched under PACE, Misuse of Drugs Act and Firearms Order ⁽¹⁾ by reason for search by Police Area and District: 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019

Section 3 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	706	368	282	11	5,386	28
North Area Policing	347	172	169	72	3,332	15
Antrim & Newtownabbey	71	39	52	29	647	4
Causeway Coast & Glens	89	35	39	18	1,010	1
Derry City & Strabane	102	66	42	15	938	4
Mid & East Antrim	85	32	36	10	737	6
South Area Policing	799	305	423	251	8,363	33
Ards & North Down	63	43	49	4	422	0
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	228	86	125	25	2,648	9
Fermanagh & Omagh	148	36	52	54	1,131	3
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	162	74	81	14	1,549	6
Mid Ulster	73	29	59	104	1,136	7
Newry, Mourne & Down	125	37	57	50	1,477	8
Northern Ireland	1,852	845	874	334	17,081	76

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

Section Four – 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.

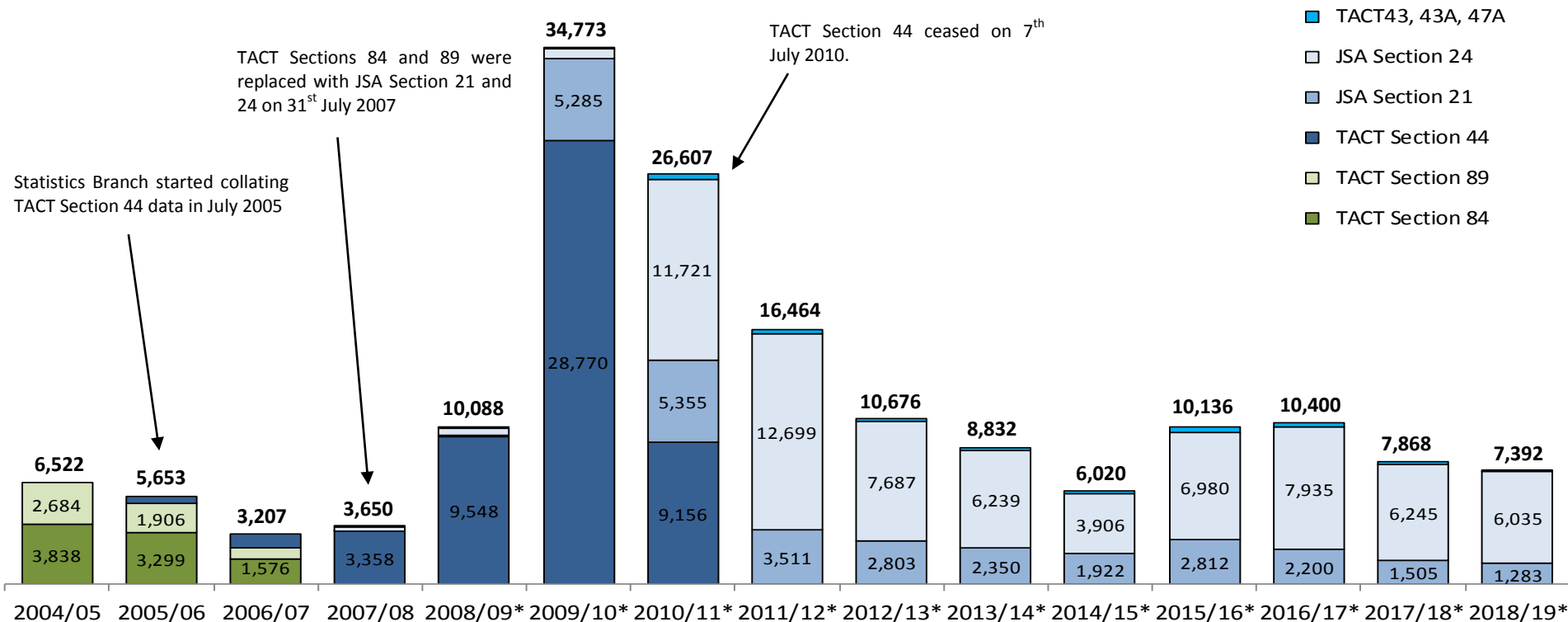
Number of persons stopped/searched or stopped/questioned under each legislation between 1st April 2004 and 31st March 2019 by financial year.

Section 4 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)	2018/19 ^(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	21,062
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	74
- Section 47A ⁽⁵⁾								0	0	70	0	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	1,283
- Section 24 ⁽²⁾				251	372	621	11,721	12,699	7,687	6,239	3,906	6,980	7,935	6,245	6,035
Other legislative powers ⁽⁶⁾								294	417	190	97	140	32	79	
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	28,553
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	28,116
PACE / Misuse of Drugs Act / Firearms Order	69%	74%	83%	81%	66%	41%	46%	56%	66%	73%	78%	71%	67%	74%	74%
All Terrorism Act Powers	31%	26%	17%	18%	32%	49%	19%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<0.5%	<0.5%
All JSA Powers	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	10%	35%	44%	33%	26%	21%	28%	31%	25%	26%
Other legislative powers	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%
All Powers⁽⁸⁾	100%	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. Searches under Schedule 5 to the Terrorism Act 2000, which are searches under warrant, are excluded from 2017/18 figures onwards. Further details can be found under Comparability on page 3.
- (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 onwards. Figures reported for the period pre-2017/18 still contain such searches. The impact is an approximate 2.5% reduction in the total number of persons stopped and searched/questioned from 2017/18 onwards.

Use of Terrorism-related Stop and Search/Stop and Question Legislation between 2004/05 and 2018/19

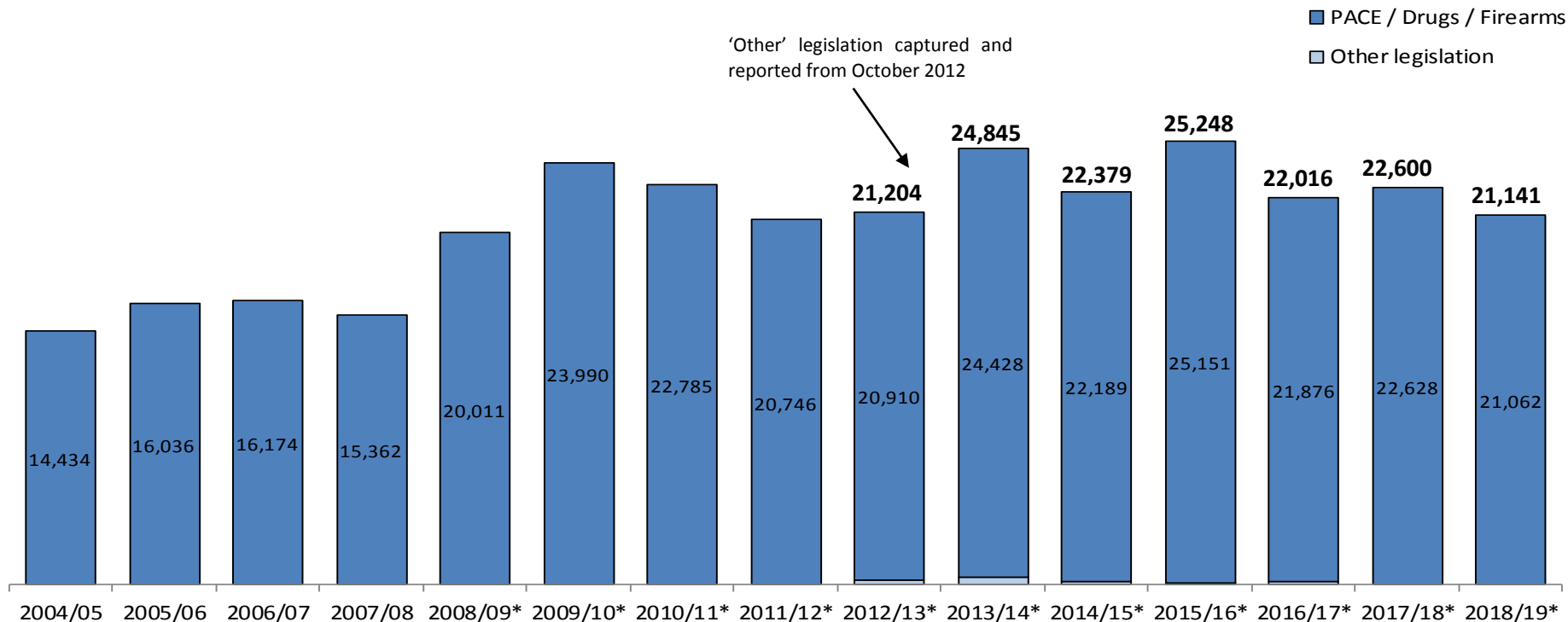


* Combinations of powers were not counted pre-08/09 therefore these figures are a count of the number of persons stopped. Figures from 08/09 are a count of the number of times each individual power was used.

** 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 4 Figure 2

Use of Non-Terrorism-related Stop and Search Legislation between 2004/05 and 2018/19



* 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. Searches under Schedule 5 to the Terrorism Act 2000, which are searches under warrant, are excluded from 2017/18 figures onwards. Further details can be found under Comparability on page 3.

*** 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 onwards. Figures reported for the period pre-2017/18 still contain such searches. The impact is an approximate 2.9% reduction in the total use of non-terrorism-related powers from 2017/18 onwards.