

Use of Stop and Search Powers by the Police in Northern Ireland

1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

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PSNI Statistics Branch
Lisnasharragh
42 Montgomery Road
Belfast
BT6 9LD

[PSNI Statistics](#)

☎ 02890 650222 Ext. 24135

💻 statistics@psni.police.uk

Key Statistics

During the 12 months between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020:

- the number of persons stopped and searched/questioned fell for the fourth consecutive year. During this period 25,450 persons were stopped, 9% fewer than the previous year.
- there was a decrease in the use of all legislative powers.
- 9 of the 11 police districts saw stop and search powers used less than the previous year.
- 7% of stops resulted in an arrest. An additional 13% resulted in another form of outcome, e.g. Community Resolution Notice.
- 65% of stops were conducted under the Misuse of Drugs Act* (arrest rate 6%) and 13% of stops were conducted under PACE* (arrest rate 20%).
- 19% of stops were conducted under the Justice and Security Act Section 24* and 4% under the Justice and Security Act Section 21* (with arrest rates of 1% for each power).
- 13% (3,211) of those stopped were aged 17 and under. Of these, more than 2 out of every 3 (70%) were stopped and searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act*.
- 88% of those stopped were male, while 42% were aged 18 to 25.

** alone, or in combination with other powers.*



Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

Keeping People Safe



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1. Things you need to know about this release

Coverage

Stop and search statistics for Northern Ireland are collated and produced by statisticians seconded to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) from the Northern Ireland and Statistics Research Agency (NISRA).

Stop and Search is an operational tool used to prevent, detect and investigate crime as well as to bring offenders to justice. Police officers have a legal power to stop and search members of the public in certain circumstances, from dealing with incidents of anti-social behaviour, to suspecting an individual is carrying drugs, a weapon or stolen property through to countering terrorism. There are a range of legislative powers available to an officer to carry out this task, including the Police and Criminal Evidence Order (PACE), the Misuse of Drugs Act, the Terrorism Act and the Justice and Security (NI) Act. In most circumstances a police officer will need grounds to search an individual. Some stop and search powers (those under the Justice and Security Act) allow individuals to be searched without grounds, for example, to counter terrorism. Further advice and information regarding stop and search can be found [here](#).

Officers are required to make a record of the details of a stop and search at the time of encounter as outlined in the [PACE code of practice](#). This data is downloaded from a stop and search database, validated and published on a quarterly basis. Statistics are presented on a rolling 12 month basis and this quarterly bulletin presents stop and search statistics for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. An [accompanying spreadsheet](#) is available on our website which outlines the data in this bulletin and historic trends.

This bulletin has been revised since our last publication in order to improve the format and content of the report. Additional information has been provided where possible, for example, wider outcomes data and national comparisons. Details of how these statistics are collated, reported and used is included in the [Stop and Search User Guide](#). Further information about this publication, including the legislation reported on, can be found in the Background Notes section at the end of the report. The next quarterly update will be published on 26 August 2020.

Users and uses of the statistics

Uses of the statistics, based on user engagement, information requests and satisfaction survey feedback include policy making and policy monitoring, performance monitoring and public interest, by a range of users including PSNI, the Policing Board, media and academics. Full details can be found in the [Stop and Search User Guide](#).

PSNI Statistics Branch welcomes any user feedback on these statistics, which can be provided via the email address on the cover page.

Official Statistics

This bulletin is an Official Statistics publication meaning it complies with the Code of [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). More information on [Official Statistics](#) is available on the PSNI Statistics website.

2. Summary statistics

Table 1: Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned under all legislative powers during April 2019 to March 2020 compared to the previous 12 months

| April 2018 – March 2019 | | April 2019 – March 2020 | | Percentage change in number of persons stopped |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Number of persons stopped | Subsequent arrest rate | Number of persons stopped | Subsequent arrest rate | |
| 28,116 | 7% | 25,450 | 7% | -9% |

More than one legislative power can be used to stop and search/question a person. For this reason the total number of 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 in Table 1 but will have a count of 1 in both the PACE and Misuse of Drugs categories in Table 2, and other subsequent tables displaying the use of each power.

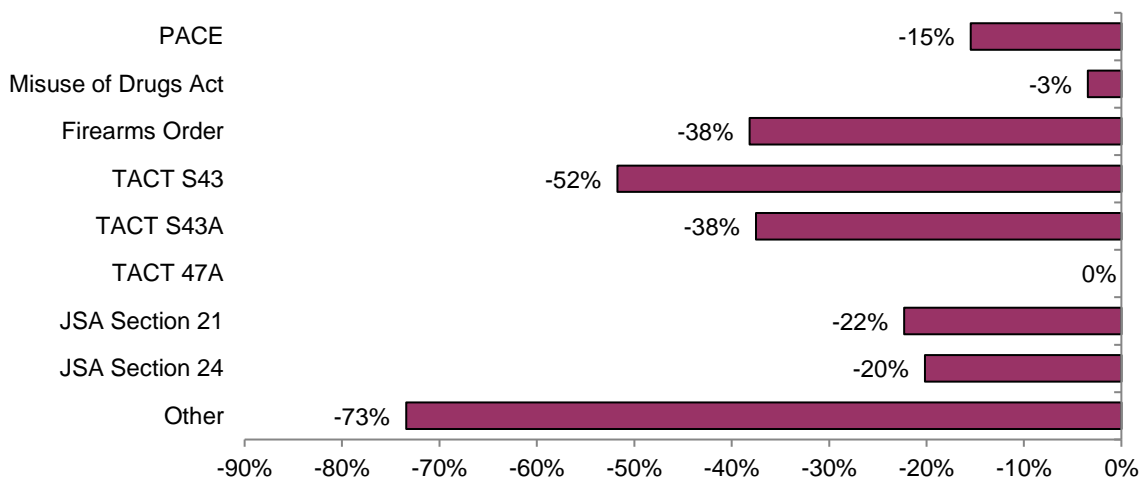
Table 2: Number of times each power was used for a stop and search/question during April 2019 to March 2020 compared to the previous 12 months

| Legislation | April 2018 – March 2019 | | April 2019 – March 2020 | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Number of persons stopped | Subsequent arrest rate ⁽¹⁾ | Number of persons stopped | Subsequent arrest rate ⁽¹⁾ |
| PACE | 3,905 | 21% | 3,300 | 20% |
| Misuse of Drugs Act | 17,081 | 6% | 16,495 | 6% |
| Firearms Order | 76 | 25% | 47 | 26% |
| TACT S43 | 58 | 7% | 28 | 14% |
| TACT S43A | 16 | 6% | 10 | 0% |
| TACT 47A | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| JSA Section 21 | 1,283 | 1% | 997 | 1% |
| JSA Section 24 | 6,035 | 1% | 4,818 | 1% |
| Other ⁽²⁾ | 79 | 6% | 21 | 14% |

(1) For those persons stopped under a combination of legislative powers (1% of stops) and subsequently arrested, the arrest will be counted under each power. Reason for arrest may not be linked to the initial reason of the stop and search.

(2) 'Other' legislative powers are listed in Section 10.2

Figure 1: Percentage change in the number of stop and searches/questions by power during April 2019 to March 2020 compared to the previous 12 months



3. Levels of stop and search over the longer term

Figure 2: Ten year trend in the total number of persons stopped and searched/questioned

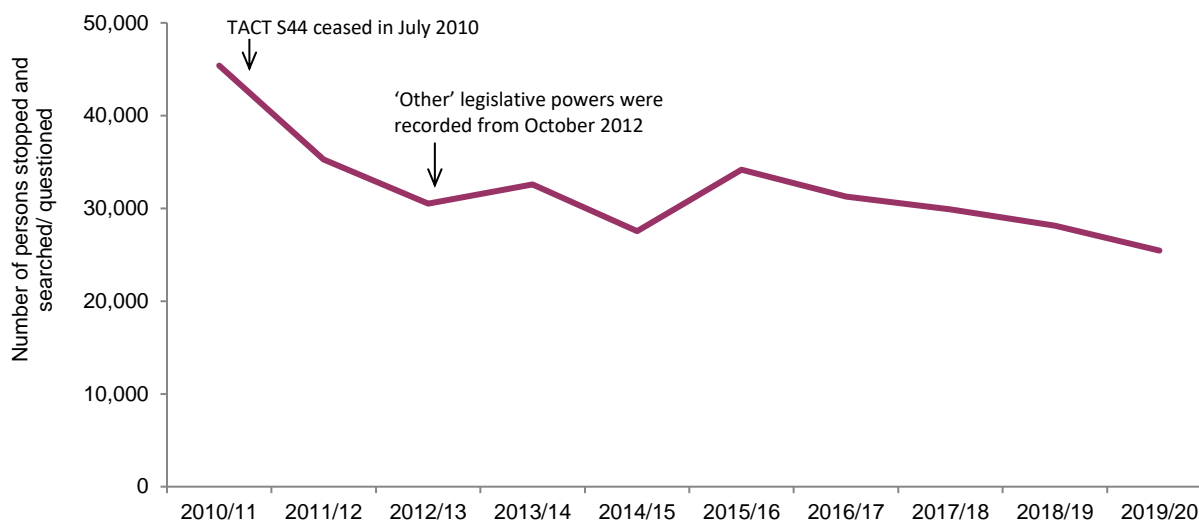


Table 3: Ten year trend in the use of stop and search/question powers

| | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 | 16/17 | 17/18 | 18/19 | 19/20 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| PACE / Misuse of Drugs / Firearms | 22,785 | 20,746 | 20,910 | 24,428 | 22,189 | 25,151 | 21,876 | 22,628 | 21,062 | 19,842 |
| TACT - Section 44 | 9,156 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| - Section 43/43A | 375 | 254 | 186 | 173 | 192 | 344 | 265 | 118 | 74 | 38 |
| - Section 47A ⁽³⁾ | - | 0 | 0 | 70 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| JSA - Section 21 | 5,355 | 3,511 | 2,803 | 2,350 | 1,922 | 2,812 | 2,200 | 1,505 | 1,283 | 997 |
| - Section 24 | 11,721 | 12,699 | 7,687 | 6,239 | 3,906 | 6,980 | 7,935 | 6,245 | 6,035 | 4,818 |
| Other legislative powers | - | - | 294 | 417 | 190 | 97 | 140 | 32 | 79 | 21 |
| Total uses of each legislative power ^(2,4) | 49,392 | 37,210 | 31,880 | 33,677 | 28,399 | 35,384 | 32,416 | 30,528 | 28,553 | 25,716 |
| <i>Total number of persons stopped and searched/questioned ^(2,4)</i> | <i>45,394</i> | <i>35,268</i> | <i>30,502</i> | <i>32,590</i> | <i>27,539</i> | <i>34,171</i> | <i>31,274</i> | <i>29,882</i> | <i>28,116</i> | <i>25,450</i> |

Table 4: Percentage of stops carried out under non-counter terrorism powers and counter-terrorism powers

| | 10/11 | 11/12 | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 | 16/17 | 17/18 | 18/19 | 19/20 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| PACE / Misuse of Drugs / Firearms | 46% | 56% | 66% | 73% | 78% | 71% | 67% | 74% | 74% | 77% |
| Counter Terrorism Powers ⁽⁵⁾ | 54% | 44% | 33% | 26% | 21% | 29% | 32% | 26% | 26% | 23% |
| Other legislative powers | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 0.7% | <0.5% | <0.5% | <0.5% | <0.5% | <0.5% |
| All Powers ⁽⁶⁾ | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

(1) Figures in this section are based on financial year.

(2) The difference between **total uses of each legislative power** and **total number of persons stopped and searched/questioned** will be due to persons stopped under combinations of powers being counted under each legislation used (e.g. someone stopped under PACE and the Misuse of Drugs Act will have a count of one under each of these powers).

(3) 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.

(4) 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 (impact is an approximate 2.5% reduction in the total number of persons stopped).

(5) TACT S43, S43A and JSA S21, S24.

(6) Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

(7) Figures from 2004/05 can be found in the accompanying spreadsheet.

4. Persons stopped and searched during the past 12 months

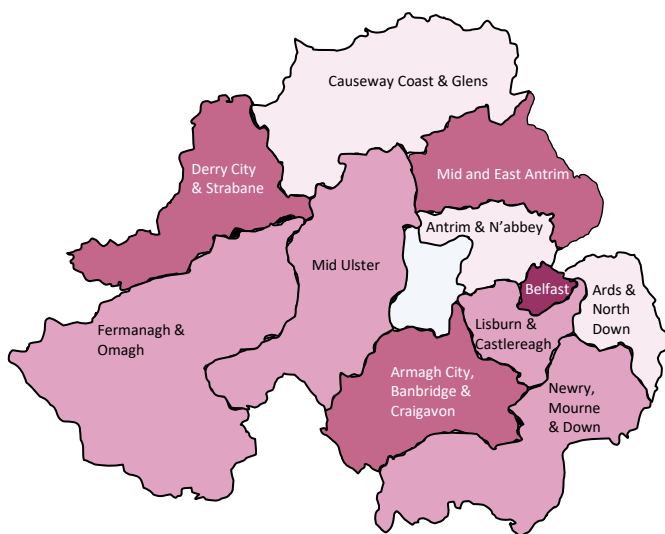
4.1 By policing district

Table 5: Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned and subsequently arrested under all legislative powers during April 2019 to March 2020 by police district

| Police District | Total persons stopped | Total persons arrested | Arrest rate ⁽¹⁾ |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Belfast City | 7,164 | 759 | 11% |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh City | 1,780 | 142 | 8% |
| Ards & North Down | 911 | 54 | 6% |
| Newry, Mourne & Down | 2,119 | 77 | 4% |
| Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon | 3,334 | 181 | 5% |
| Mid Ulster | 1,837 | 87 | 5% |
| Fermanagh & Omagh | 1,395 | 67 | 5% |
| Derry City & Strabane | 2,319 | 158 | 7% |
| Causeway Coast & Glens | 1,337 | 72 | 5% |
| Mid & East Antrim | 2,137 | 106 | 5% |
| Antrim & Newtownabbey | 1,117 | 73 | 7% |
| Northern Ireland | 25,450 | 1,776 | 7% |

(1) Although the arrest rate can be used as an indicator of the effectiveness of a stop and search there are a number of other possible outcomes that could indicate a successful search, which are presented in Section 4.3 (Table 11).

Figure 3: Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned under all legislative powers per 1,000 population in each police district during April 2019 to March 2020



| Police District | Persons stopped per 1,000 population ⁽¹⁾ |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Belfast City | 21 |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh City | 12 |
| Ards & North Down | 6 |
| Newry, Mourne & Down | 12 |
| Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon | 16 |
| Mid Ulster | 12 |
| Fermanagh & Omagh | 12 |
| Derry City & Strabane | 15 |
| Causeway Coast & Glens | 9 |
| Mid & East Antrim | 15 |
| Antrim & Newtownabbey | 8 |
| Northern Ireland | 14 |

(1) Rates per 1,000 are calculated using NISRA's mid-2018 [population estimates](#), the latest available data at police district level.

4.2 By age, gender and ethnicity

Table 6: Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned and subsequently arrested under all legislative powers during April 2019 to March 2020, by age and gender

| Age Group ^(1,2) | Persons stopped and searched/questioned | | | | Persons subsequently arrested | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Unknown/Other | Total | Male | Female | Unknown/Other | Total |
| 12 and under | 54 | 6 | 0 | 60 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 13 to 17 | 2,700 | 451 | 0 | 3,151 | 133 | 12 | 0 | 145 |
| 18 to 25 | 9,275 | 1,393 | 5 | 10,673 | 501 | 85 | 0 | 586 |
| 26 to 35 | 6,092 | 714 | 2 | 6,808 | 596 | 66 | 0 | 662 |
| 36 to 45 | 2,367 | 302 | 2 | 2,671 | 224 | 28 | 0 | 252 |
| 46 to 55 | 1,245 | 186 | 0 | 1,431 | 81 | 18 | 0 | 99 |
| 56 to 65 | 459 | 70 | 0 | 529 | 21 | 6 | 0 | 27 |
| Over 65 | 110 | 15 | 0 | 125 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Not specified | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 22,304 | 3,137 | 9 | 25,450 | 1,561 | 215 | 0 | 1,776 |

(1) Age may be officer perceived.

(2) Figures are provided in the accompanying spreadsheet by single year of age for the 13 to 17 year group.

Table 7: Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned and subsequently arrested under all legislative powers during April 2019 to March 2020, by ethnicity ⁽¹⁾

| | Persons stopped and searched/questioned | Persons subsequently arrested |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| White | 24,219 | 1,644 |
| Irish Traveller ⁽¹⁾ | 491 | 60 |
| Chinese or Other | 276 | 36 |
| Black | 137 | 13 |
| Asian | 95 | 7 |
| Mixed | 91 | 6 |
| Not specified | 141 | 10 |
| Total | 25,450 | 1,776 |

(3) Ethnicity may be officer perceived. A degree of undercounting may exist for the Irish Traveller category as some Irish Travellers are likely to be categorised as White.

Table 8: Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned and subsequently arrested during April 2019 to March 2020, by gender and power ⁽¹⁾

| | Persons stopped and searched/questioned ⁽¹⁾ | | | | Persons subsequently arrested ^(1,2) | | | |
|-----------------|--|--------|-----------------|---------------|--|--------|-----------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Unknown / Other | Total | Male | Female | Unknown / Other | Total |
| PACE | 2,888 | 411 | 1 | 3,300 | 558 | 107 | 0 | 665 |
| Misuse of Drugs | 14,380 | 2,108 | 7 | 16,495 | 921 | 104 | 0 | 1,025 |
| Firearms | 42 | 5 | 0 | 47 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| TACT S43 | 26 | 2 | 0 | 28 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| TACT S43A | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TACT 47A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| JSA Section 21 | 791 | 206 | 0 | 997 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| JSA Section 24 | 4,390 | 427 | 1 | 4,818 | 68 | 3 | 0 | 71 |
| Other | 19 | 2 | 0 | 21 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 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. Similarly, the sum of arrests will be greater than the total number of persons arrested.

(2) Reason for arrest may not be linked to the initial reason of the stop and search.

Table 9: Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned during April 2019 to March 2020, by age and power ⁽¹⁾

| | Persons stopped and searched/questioned | | | | | | | | | Total |
|---------------------|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|---------------|---------------|
| | 12 and under | 13 to 17 | 18 to 25 | 26 to 35 | 36 to 45 | 46 to 55 | 56 to 65 | Over 65 | Not specified | |
| PACE | 41 | 733 | 1,008 | 869 | 353 | 210 | 70 | 16 | 0 | 3,300 |
| Misuse of Drugs Act | 18 | 2,222 | 8,078 | 4,423 | 1,276 | 380 | 85 | 12 | 1 | 16,495 |
| Firearms Order | 0 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 47 |
| TACT S43 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 11 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 28 |
| TACT S43A | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| TACT 47A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| JSA Section 21 | 0 | 29 | 272 | 248 | 190 | 154 | 68 | 36 | 0 | 997 |
| JSA Section 24 | 1 | 167 | 1,367 | 1,321 | 881 | 712 | 307 | 61 | 1 | 4,818 |
| Other | 0 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 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.
(2) Age may be officer perceived.
(3) Figures are provided in the accompanying spreadsheet by single year of age for the 13 to 17 year group.

Table 10: Percentage of persons stopped and searched/questioned in each age group by power during April 2019 to March 2020

| | Persons stopped and searched/questioned | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | 12 and under | 13 to 17 | 18 to 25 | 26 to 35 | 36 to 45 | 46 to 55 | 56 to 65 | Over 65 | Not specified |
| PACE | 69% | 23% | 9% | 13% | 13% | 14% | 13% | 13% | 0% |
| Misuse of Drugs Act | 30% | 70% | 75% | 64% | 47% | 26% | 16% | 9% | 50% |
| Firearms Order | 0% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 0% |
| Counter Terrorism ⁽¹⁾ | 2% | 6% | 15% | 23% | 40% | 59% | 70% | 76% | 50% |
| Other | 0% | <1% | 0% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0% | 0% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

- (1) TACT S43, S43A and JSA S21 and S24.
(2) Age may be officer perceived.
(3) Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

4.3 Outcomes of stop and searches/questions

Table 11: Principal outcome of persons stopped and searched/questioned under all legislative powers during April 2019 to March 2020

| Outcome | Number | (%) |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Arrest | 1,776 | (7%) |
| Community Resolution | 1,712 | (7%) |
| Report to PPS | 1,560 | (6%) |
| Penalty Notice for Disorder | 21 | (<1%) |
| No Further Action Disposal | 20,381 | (80%) |
| Total | 25,450 | (100%) |

- (1) The outcome may not be linked to the initial reason of the stop and search.
(2) Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

5. Frequency of use of powers

Table 12: Number of times all powers were used during April 2019 to March 2020 by quarter ⁽¹⁾

| | April to June | July to September | October to December | January to March | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------|
| PACE | 782 | 754 | 1,035 | 729 | 3,300 |
| Misuse of Drugs Act | 3,952 | 4,109 | 4,527 | 3,907 | 16,495 |
| Firearms Order | 15 | 17 | 10 | 5 | 47 |
| TACT S43 | 7 | 12 | 6 | 3 | 28 |
| TACT S43A | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 10 |
| TACT 47A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| JSA Section 21 | 288 | 271 | 274 | 164 | 997 |
| JSA Section 24 | 1,075 | 1,269 | 1,395 | 1,079 | 4,818 |
| Other | 2 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 21 |
| Total ⁽¹⁾ | 6,124 | 6,441 | 7,253 | 5,898 | 25,716 |

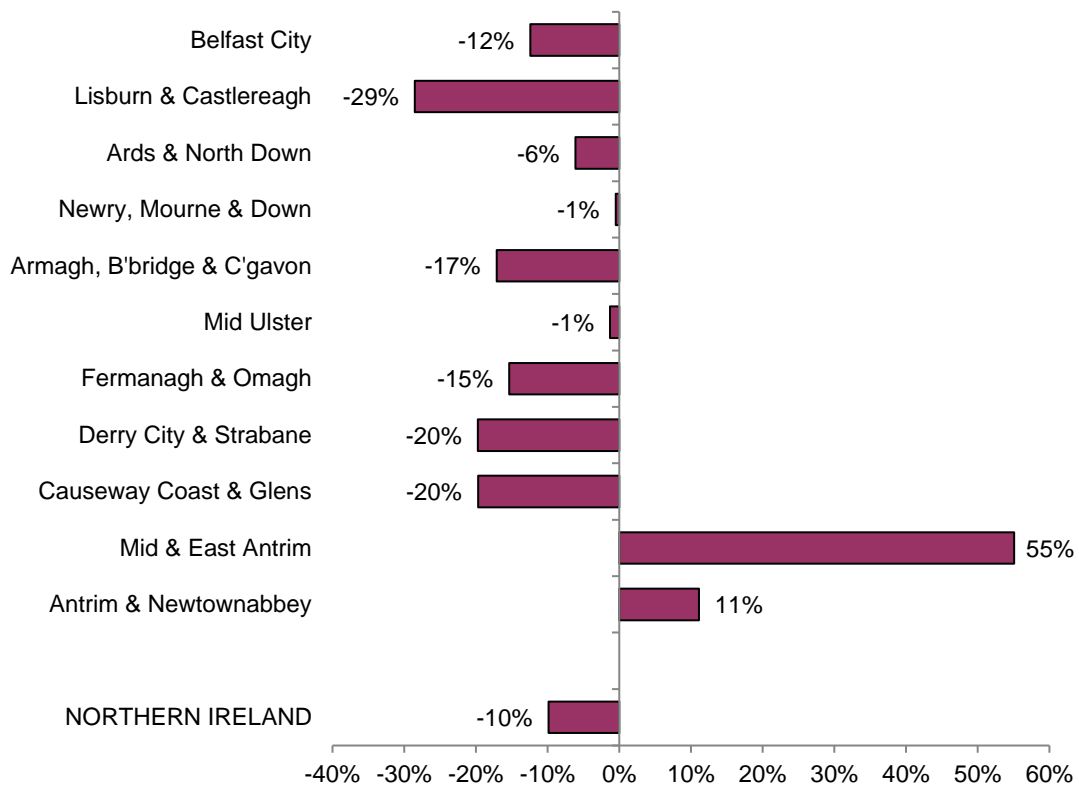
(1) As more than one legislative power can be used to stop and search/question a person, the sum of the powers used will be greater than the total number of persons stopped and searched/questioned.

Table 13: Number of times all powers were used during April 2019 to March 2020 by police district ⁽¹⁾

| Police District | PACE | Misuse of Drugs | Firearms Order | TACT S43 | TACT S43A | TACT 47A | JSA S21 | JSA S24 | Other |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| Belfast City | 1,118 | 5,019 | 15 | 14 | 6 | 0 | 228 | 863 | 5 |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh City | 234 | 1,152 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 86 | 326 | 2 |
| Ards & North Down | 127 | 446 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 185 | 160 | 0 |
| Newry, Mourne & Down | 233 | 1,519 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 36 | 340 | 2 |
| Armagh City, B'bridge & C'gavon | 415 | 2,301 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 66 | 566 | 1 |
| Mid Ulster | 229 | 1,250 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 103 | 279 | 0 |
| Fermanagh & Omagh | 147 | 956 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 279 | 0 |
| Derry City & Strabane | 237 | 1,057 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 80 | 941 | 6 |
| Causeway Coast & Glens | 138 | 861 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 47 | 289 | 1 |
| Mid & East Antrim | 287 | 1,243 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 45 | 581 | 1 |
| Antrim & Newtownabbey | 135 | 691 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 106 | 194 | 3 |
| Northern Ireland | 3,300 | 16,495 | 47 | 28 | 10 | 0 | 997 | 4,818 | 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.

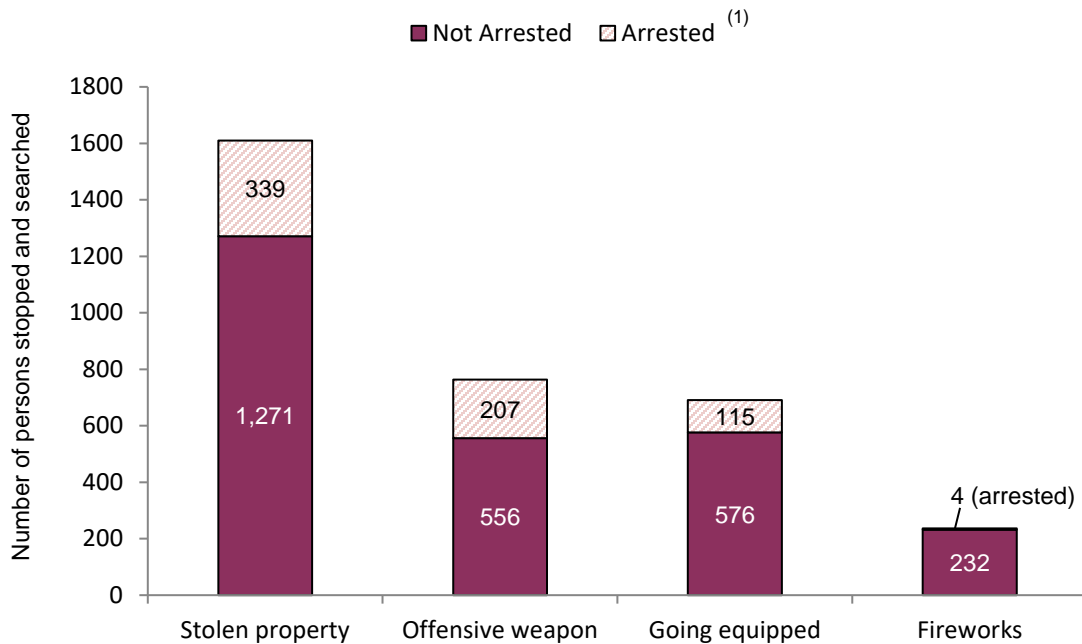
Figure 4: Percentage change in the use of all legislative powers by policing district during April 2019 to March 2020 compared to the previous 12 months



(1) The percentage change in the use of individual powers by policing district can be found in the accompanying spreadsheet.

6. Reason for search under PACE

Figure 5: Number of persons stopped and searched under PACE during April 2019 to March 2020 by reason for search



(1) The reason for arrest may not be linked to the initial reason of the search.

7. Vehicles stopped and searched during the past 12 months

Vehicle searches include vehicle-only searches as well as those in which a vehicle was searched together with any persons in it. **Therefore figures in Table 14 should not be added to other figures in this report to get the total number of stop and searches** as this would result in the double counting of an occupant of a vehicle searched.

Table 14: Number of times each power was used to stop and search a vehicle during April 2019 to March 2020 compared to the previous 12 months ⁽¹⁾

| Legislation ⁽²⁾ | April 2018 – March 2019 | April 2019 – March 2020 | Percentage change |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| | Number of vehicles stopped | Number of vehicles stopped | |
| PACE | 1,025 | 722 | -30% |
| Misuse of Drugs Act | 4,982 | 5,271 | 6% |
| Firearms Order | 30 | 22 | -27% |
| TACT S43 | 30 | 19 | -37% |
| TACT S43A | 15 | 11 | -27% |
| TACT 47A | 0 | 0 | - |
| JSA Section 24 | 14,600 | 10,428 | -29% |
| Other | 16 | 12 | -25% |

(1) As more than one legislative power can be used to stop and search a vehicle, the sum of the powers used will be greater than the total number of vehicles stopped and searched.

(2) JSA S21 is excluded from this table as it is a stop and question power.

8. Comparisons with England and Wales 2018/19⁽¹⁾

Figure 6: Number of stops per 1,000 population during 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 by police force^(1,2,3)

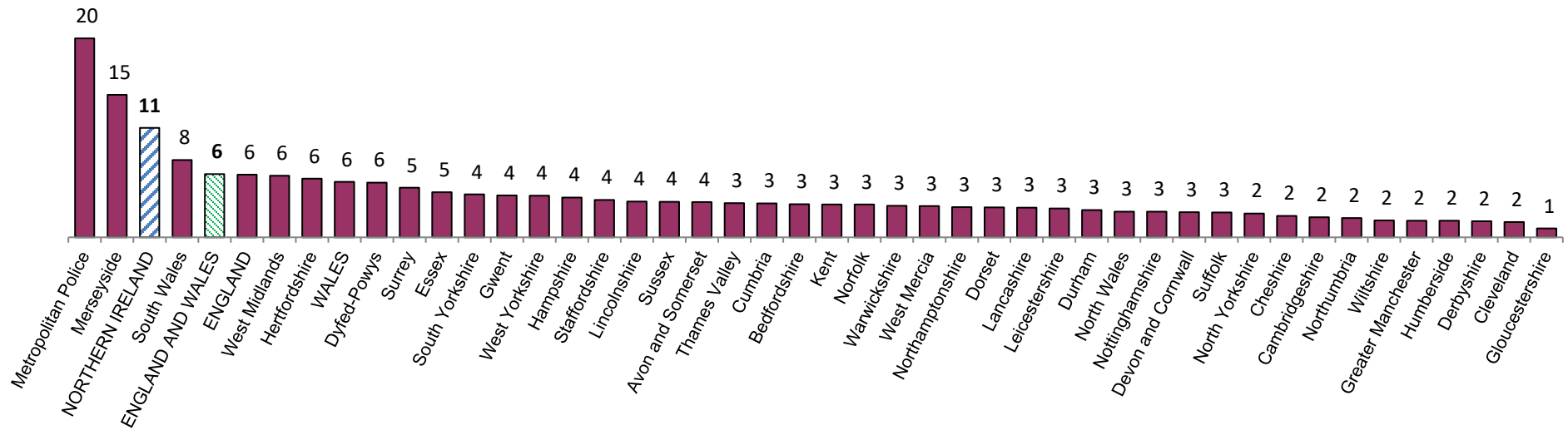
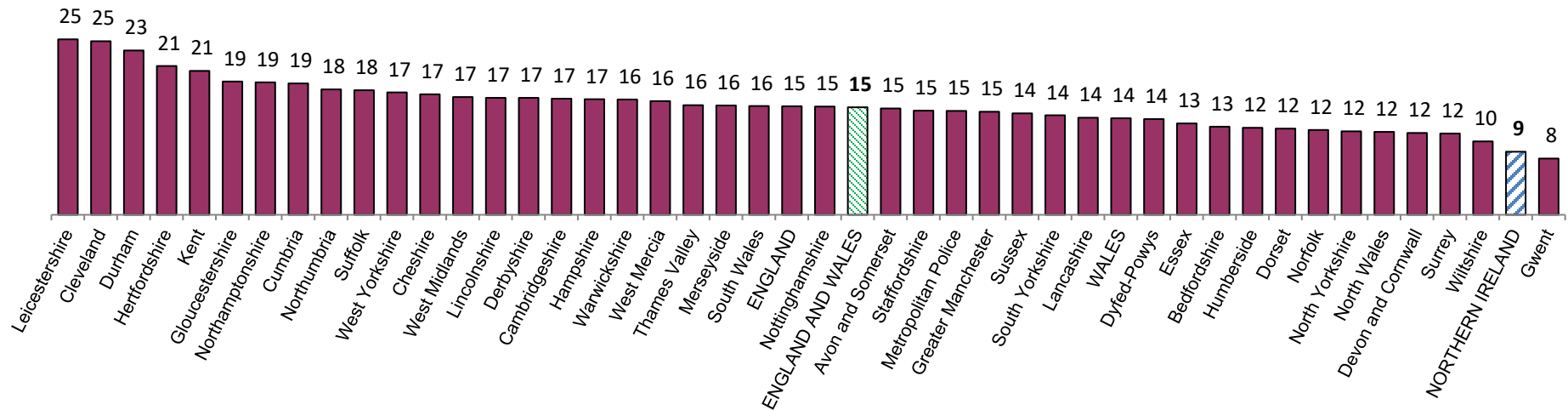


Figure 7: Proportion of stops resulting in an arrest during 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 by police force^(1,2)

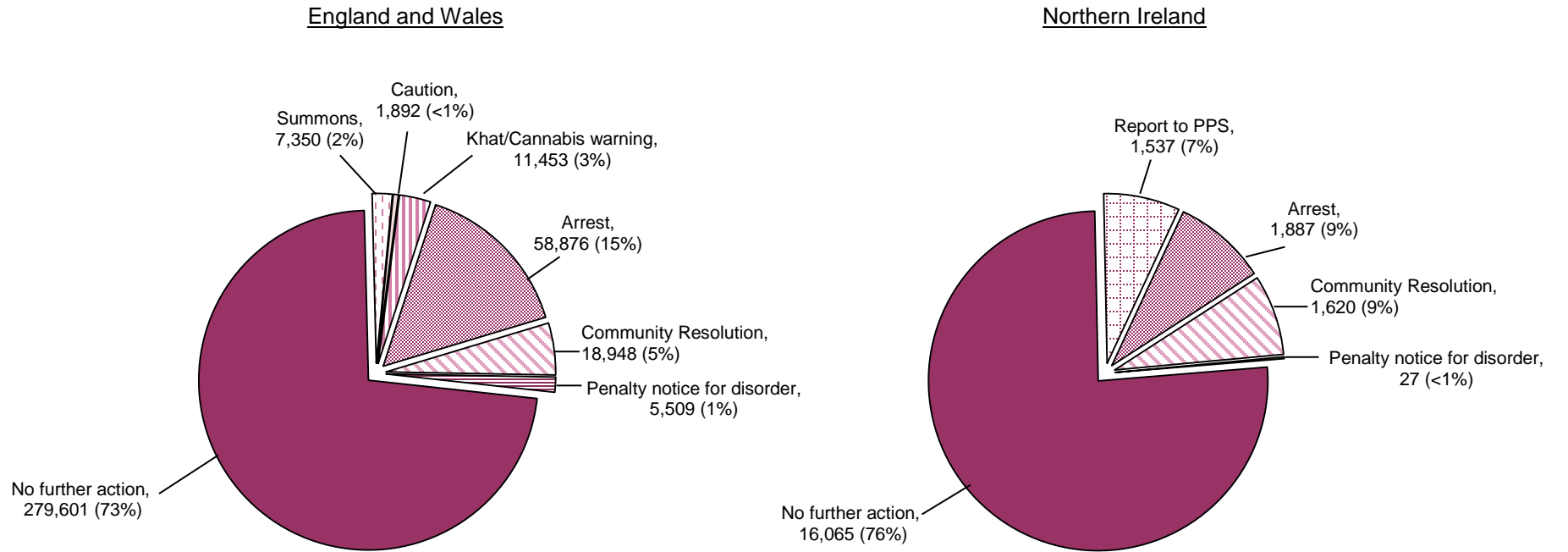


(1) The latest data available for England and Wales is 2018/19 (*Police powers and procedures, England and Wales, year ending March 2019*). For comparability, the 2018/19 NI figures are also shown.

(2) In the interest of comparability, the NI figure excludes stops under JSA Section 21 and 24.

(3) Rates per 1,000 are calculated using NISRA's mid-2018 [population estimates](#).

Figure 8: Principal outcome of stop and search during 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019^(1,2)



27 out of every 100 stops in England and Wales resulted in an outcome

24 out of every 100 stops in Northern Ireland resulted in an outcome

- (1) The latest data available for England and Wales is 2018/19 (*Police powers and procedures, England and Wales, year ending March 2018*). For comparability, the 2018/19 NI figures are also shown.
- (2) In the interest of comparability, the NI figure excludes stops under JSA Section 21 and 24.
- (3) England and Wales figures include vehicle only searches (2% of all searches). Northern Ireland figures do not.
- (4) Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

10. Background notes

Further information on how these statistics are collated, reported and used is included in the Stop and Search User Guide which can be found [here](#).

10.1 Persons, vehicles or both searched

Officers record if each stop and search involved (i) only a person, (ii) only a vehicle or (iii) both.

All of the statistics reported in this publication, except Table 14, are a count of persons stopped and searched, that is, those stops under (i) **plus** those stops under (iii). Table 14 presents the number of vehicles stopped and searched, that is, those stops under (ii) **plus** stops under (iii).

Therefore figures in Table 14 should not be added to other figures in this report to get the total number of stop and searches as this would result in the double counting of an occupant of a vehicle searched.

10.2 Stop and search legislation

The following table summarises the legislative powers available to a PSNI officer to perform a stop and search.

| Legislation | What the police can search for |
|---|--|
| The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, Section 3 | Stolen property, going equipped to steal, offensive weapons including a blade or point, fireworks. |
| Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Section 23 | Controlled drugs |
| Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, Section 53 | Firearms |
| Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007, Sections 21 and 24 | Section 21 gives a police officer the authority to stop and question an individual to establish their identity and movements. Section 24 gives a police officer the authority to search for munitions and wireless apparatus. This can be done if (1) an officer has reasonable suspicion that he will find such items, or (2) he was authorised from an ACC. |
| Terrorism Act 2000, Section 43 and 43A | Anything which may constitute evidence that the individual is a terrorist, where an officer must have reasonable suspicion of terrorism-related activity. Section 43 gives a police officer the authority to search an individual. Section 43A gives a police officer the authority to search a vehicle as well as any individual he reasonably suspects to be a terrorist. |
| Terrorism Act 2000, Section 47A | Anything which may constitute evidence that the individual is a terrorist, but an officer may not necessarily have reasonable suspicion of terrorism-related activity but the search must occur within an area authorised made by a senior police officer and where necessary confirmed by the Secretary of State. |

The PSNI have a number of other legislative powers that give them the authority to carry out a stop and search. These are:

- 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
- The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.

These are less frequently used powers and are reported collectively under '*Other legislative powers*' in this report.

Further information on these powers can be found at legislation.gov.uk.

10.3 Longer term trend 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.