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## Seizures of drugs in the UK 2001

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This Findings presents initial figures for drug seizures made in the UK by law enforcement agencies during 2001. The statistics in this publication relate to drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which came into force on 1 July 1973. The Act divides drugs into three categories (A, B and C) according to their harmfulness. The statistics cover seizures made during the year by police (including the British Transport Police), together with information from HM Customs and Excise.

### Key points

- Nearly 56 kg of crack was recovered, more than double the amount in 2000 (Table 1). Just under 4 tonnes of heroin was seized, a 16% increase on the previous year. The number of doses/tablets of ecstasy-type drugs seized rose in 2001 to 7.7 million, an increase of 17%.
- The overall number of drug seizures in 2001 rose by just under 5% to about 131,000.
- In 2001, seizures involving Class A drugs increased by 10% to just under 38,000.
- Cannabis seizures accounted for 71% of all seizures.

### Who seized what?

As in previous years, because of their different responsibilities, HM Customs and the National Crime Squad (NCS) generally seized larger amounts while local police forces made a greater number of smaller seizures (Table 2). For some types of drugs, particularly amphetamines and cocaine, 'cutting' occurs and therefore the average purity of police seizures of these drugs is less than the average purity of Customs seizures. The extent of this difference is unknown and no adjustments have been made to the figures to bring them to the same base.

Police seizures of crack, methadone, amphetamines, cannabis plants and benzodiazepines (including temazepam) were greater than either the NCS or Customs in terms of amounts recovered. Most of the cocaine and heroin recovered within the UK (excluding ports and airports) was seized by the NCS. Customs

accounted for most of the cocaine, ecstasy-type drugs, herbal and cannabis resin and anabolic steroids seized. Local police forces seized most of the cannabis plants and crack recovered. This confirms the widespread understanding that crack is largely produced within the UK. These patterns are similar to those for 2000.

Whilst the amount of cocaine seized fell by 28% in 2001 to just under 3 tonnes, the amounts of the other main Class A drugs recovered all rose. Nearly 56 kg of crack was recovered, more than double the amount in 2000 (Figure 1).

Just under 4 tonnes of heroin was seized, a 16% increase on the previous year. The number of doses/tablets of ecstasy-type drugs rose 17% in 2001 to 7.7 million. The amount of methadone recovered was at its highest since 1997. Less than 10,000 LSD doses were seized, all by local police forces.

**Figure 1 Quantity of 'crack' seized by police and Customs, UK, 1991-2001**



The quantity of amphetamines recovered fell by only 2% in 2001 compared to a 14% fall in the previous year. The amount of herbal cannabis seized rose by 5% in 2001 to a little under 27 tonnes, whilst about 59 tonnes of cannabis resin was recovered – an increase of 22% on 2000 but only half the amount seized in 1997. The number of cannabis plants (71,500) seized showed a 49% increase on the previous year.

The amounts of Class C drugs seized tend to vary considerably year on year. The quantity of benzodiazepines seized rose to over 11 kg in 2001, whereas there was little change in respect of temazepam. Considerable quantities of anabolic steroids were seized, mostly by Customs.

**Number of drug seizures**

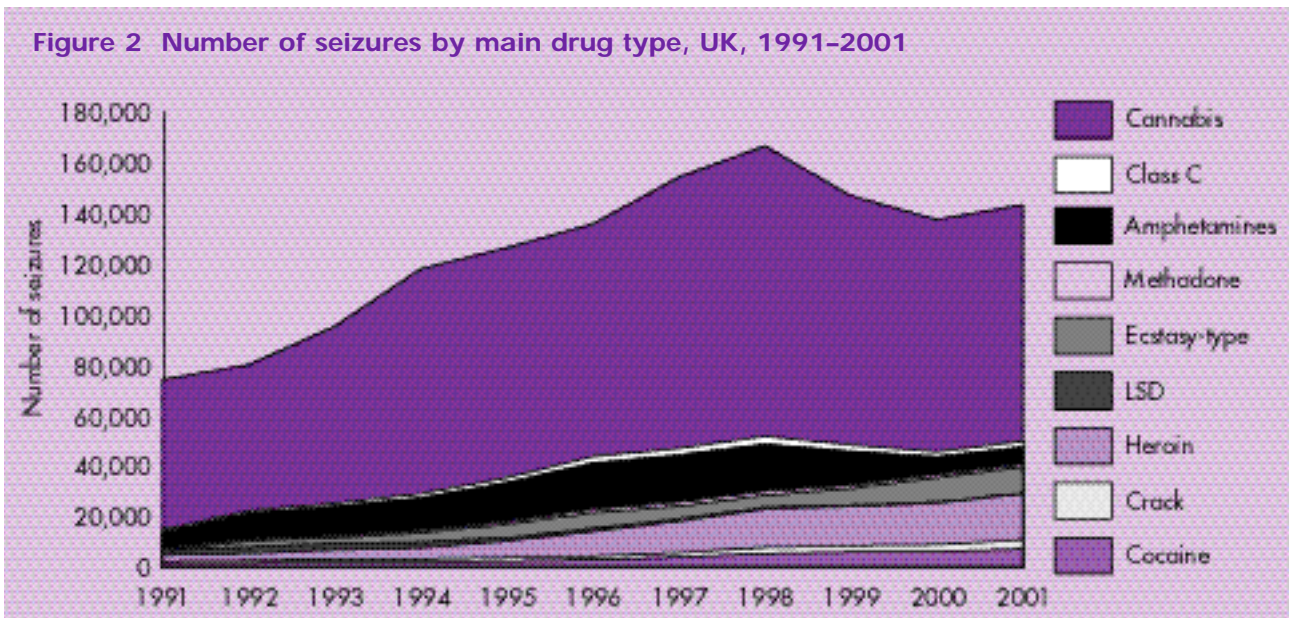
The overall number of drug seizures in 2001 rose to about 131,000, after a two year fall (Table 1). The number of seizures within the UK involving Class A drugs increased by 9.9% to just under 38,000 in 2001. Seizures of cocaine and

'crack' rose by 16% and 33% respectively, while those of ecstasy-type drugs (6%) and heroin (10%) showed more modest increases (Figure 2). By contrast, the number of seizures involving LSD and methadone continued to decline.

The number of times Class B drugs were seized rose by about 3% to just under 99,000. The overall number of cannabis seizures fell from a peak of 114,700 in 1998 to 91,700 in 2000 before recovering slightly in 2001 – to 93,500. Within the cannabis category, however, seizures of herbal cannabis in 2001 were just short of the 1998 peak, and those of plants were at their lowest since 1992. Seizures of cannabis resin continued to fall but at a much slower rate than in the previous two years. Despite these changes, cannabis still accounts for 71% of all seizures compared to 85% a decade earlier.

Seizures of Class C drugs such as benzodiazepines, particularly temazepam, and anabolic steroids rose in 2001. The overall total of seizures involving Class C drugs rose between 2000 and 2001 by 17% to about 2,300.

**Figure 2 Number of seizures by main drug type, UK, 1991-2001**



**Table 1 Number of drug seizures and quantity seized by class and drug type, UK, 1991–2001**

Drug class and type	1991	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<b>Class A</b>						
	Number					
Cocaine	1,446	3,837	5,209	5,858	6,005	6,984
Crack	583	1,684	2,488	2,507	2,765	3,688
Heroin	2,640	12,508	15,152	15,519	16,457	18,168
LSD	1,636	852	623	480	297	168
Ecstasy-type	1,735	5,098	4,850	6,637	9,784	10,411
Methadone	427	1,573	1,584	1,215	1,171	1,072
All Class A	8,504	24,791	28,801	30,917	34,510	37,915
<b>Class B</b>						
	Number					
Amphetamines	6,821	18,609	18,630	13,393	7,073	6,799
Cannabis (herbal)	7,515	29,409	32,592	27,092	28,321	32,498
Cannabis plants	1,045	3,791	2,832	2,288	2,038	1,875
Cannabis resin	52,903	79,601	84,983	73,764	65,405	63,748
All Class B	63,715	120,031	127,693	108,332	96,495	98,954
<b>Class C</b>						
	Number					
Benzodiazepines (exc. Temazepam)	483	1,700	2,058	1,924	1,497	1,668
Temazepam	NA	720	913	552	354	452
Anabolic steroids	NA	154	171	106	91	141
All Class C	857	2,634	3,130	2,593	1,957	2,299
<b>Total drug seizures</b>	<b>69,807</b>	<b>139,874</b>	<b>151,749</b>	<b>134,101</b>	<b>125,079</b>	<b>130,894</b>
<b>Class A</b>						
	Quantity (kg)					
Cocaine	1,075.8	2,350.2	2,961.6	2,960.5	3,947.8	2,841.8
Crack	1.8	33.5	25.5	16.4	25.5	55.7
Heroin	492.8	2,235.0	1,348.1	2,346.3	3,386.4	3,929.0
LSD <sup>1</sup>	98.9	158.0	37.5	68.4	25.4	9.4
Ecstasy-type <sup>1</sup>	420.7	2,029.0	2,127.3	6,329.6	6,552.2	7,668.4
Methadone	0.7	117.3	82.5	64.1	110.4	114.6
<b>Class B</b>						
	Quantity (kg)					
Amphetamines	420.6	3,296.3	1,810.8	2,019.2	1,744.5	1,716.6
Cannabis (herbal)	9,524.6	31,120.2	21,729.5	15,885.3	25,489.8	26,741.0
Cannabis plants <sup>2</sup>	8,896	115,057	123,043	55,810	47,947	71,507
Cannabis resin	22,663.0	118,854.3	88,522.3	53,044.7	48,366.3	58,996.8
<b>Class C</b>						
	Quantity (kg)					
Benzodiazepines (exc. Temazepam)	0.7	2.2	2.9 <sup>3</sup>	7.3	3.1	11.4 <sup>4</sup>
Temazepam	NA	4.0	59.2	1.2	0.8	1.1 <sup>5</sup>
Anabolic steroids	NA	455.5	17.6 <sup>6</sup>	73.8	47.3	71.8 <sup>7</sup>

Notes: The total number of seizures is less than the total for the three drug categories as seizures involving more than one drug are counted as a single seizure but are counted separately against each individual drug or drug class involved, and some drug types are not shown. <sup>1</sup> Thousands of doses/tablets. <sup>2</sup> Number of plants. <sup>3</sup> 510,345 tablets were also seized by Customs. <sup>4</sup> 50,180 tablets were also seized by Customs. <sup>5</sup> 55,333 doses were also seized by Customs. <sup>6</sup> 94,583 ampoules were also seized by Customs. <sup>7</sup> 11,629 doses/tablets were also seized by Customs.

**Table 2 Number of drug seizures and quantity seized by class, drug type and agency, UK, 2001**

Drug class and type	Police		Customs		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
<b>Class A</b>					
Cocaine	5,470	78	1,514	22	6,984
Crack	3,645	99	43	1	3,688
Heroin	18,075	99	93	1	18,168
LSD	166	99	2	1	168
Ecstasy-type	10,322	99	89	1	10,411
Methadone	1,067	100	5	0	1,072
<b>All Class A</b>	<b>36,083</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>37,915</b>
<b>Class B</b>					
Amphetamines	6,725	99	74	1	6,799
Cannabis (herbal)	29,974	92	2,524	8	32,498
Cannabis plants	1,874	100	1	0	1,875
Cannabis resin	62,873	99	875	1	63,748
<b>All Class B</b>	<b>95,471</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>3,483</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>98,954</b>
<b>Class C</b>					
Benzodiazepines (exc. Temazepam)	1,664	100	4	0	1,668
Temazepam	443	98	9	2	452
Anabolic steroids	93	66	48	34	141
<b>All Class C</b>	<b>2,180</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2,299</b>
<b>Total drug seizures</b>	<b>125,912</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>4,982</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>130,894</b>
	Quantity (kg)	%	Quantity (kg)	%	kg
<b>Class A</b>					
Cocaine	1,024.5	36	1,817.3	74	2,841.8
Crack	33.7	61	22.0	39	55.7
Heroin	2,801.6	71	1,127.4	29	3,929.0
LSD <sup>1</sup>	9.4	100	0.0	0	9.4
Ecstasy-type <sup>1</sup>	2,349.6	31	5,318.8	69	7,668.4
Methadone	114.6	100	0.0	0	114.6
<b>Class B</b>					
Amphetamines	1,089.1	63	627.5	37	1,716.6
Cannabis (herbal)	7,243.1	27	19,497.9	73	26,741.0
Cannabis plants <sup>2</sup>	71,491	100	16	0	71,507
Cannabis resin	22,518.3	38	36,478.5	62	58,996.8
<b>Class C</b>					
Benzodiazepines (exc. Temazepam)	10.2	89	1.2 <sup>3</sup>	11	11.4 <sup>3</sup>
Temazepam	1.1	100	0 <sup>4</sup>	0	1.1 <sup>4</sup>
Anabolic steroids	1.3	2	70.5 <sup>5</sup>	98	71.8 <sup>5</sup>

Notes: This table uses a snapshot of the HM Customs and Excise DCIS database taken in August 2002. DCIS is a dynamic system and there may be differences between this snapshot and those taken at other times. The total number of seizures is less than the total for the three drug classes as seizures involving more than one drug are counted as a single seizure but are counted separately against each individual drug or drug class involved, and some drug types are not shown.

<sup>1</sup> Thousands of doses/tablets. <sup>2</sup> Number of plants. <sup>3</sup> 50,180 tablets were also seized by Customs. <sup>4</sup> 55,333 doses were also seized by Customs. <sup>5</sup> 11,629 doses/tablets were also seized by Customs.

The 2000 figures given here have been revised to take into account data submitted after publication of Drug seizure and offender statistics, United Kingdom, 2000 by J.M. Corkery (2002). Statistical Bulletin 04/02. London: Home Office. Copies are available from the Communication Development Unit. It is also available together with Area Tables and Supplementary Tables volumes on the Home Office RDS website <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/>

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