

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Stop and Search Statistics

Financial Year 2016/17

1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

Published 31st May 2017

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Key Statistics

- During the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017, 31,274 persons were stopped and searched/questioned. This is 2,897 fewer persons (8%) than the previous financial year (1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016) when 34,171 were stopped.
- Of those 31,274 persons stopped and searched or stopped and questioned, 1,944 were subsequently arrested (6%). This compares to the 7% arrest rate during the previous year (2015/16) and the 8% arrest rate two years previously (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 31,274 persons stopped and searched, over half (16,648 or 53%) were searched under the Misuse of Drugs Act (including a combination of Misuse of Drugs Act and other powers), the same proportion as the previous year. Of these, 953 (6%) were subsequently arrested. Of the 16,648 persons stopped, 5,074 were in Belfast City policing district. After Belfast City, the policing district with the greatest number of stops was Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (1,935 stops).
- There were 5,054 persons stopped and searched under PACE (including a combination of PACE and other powers) of whom 893 (18%) were subsequently arrested. There were 174 persons stopped and searched under the Firearms Order (including a combination with other powers) of whom 26 (15%) were subsequently arrested.
- Of those 31,274 persons stopped and searched or stopped and questioned, 12% (3,656 persons) were aged 17 and under (where age is known, which is in approximately 98% of cases). Of those 3,656 persons aged 17 and under, 63% stopped and searched were under the Misuse of Drugs Act (including a combination of Misuse of Drugs Act and other powers).

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.

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: 2015/16 and 2016/17

Persons stopped under:	2015/16					2016/17				
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	TOTAL	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	TOTAL
PACE	1,468	1,637	2,195	1,523	6,823	1,084	1,182	1,522	1,171	4,959
PACE & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	22	33	25	25	105	10	15	15	12	52
PACE & Misuse of Drugs Act S23 & JSA S24	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	2	0	3
PACE & Misuse of Drugs Act S23 & JSA S21	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
PACE & Misuse of Drugs Act S23 & JSA S21 & JSA S24	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
PACE & Firearms Order S53 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	2
PACE & Firearms Order S53 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23 & JSA S24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
PACE & Firearms Order S53	2	2	0	6	10	7	2	0	1	10
PACE & JSA 21	0	0	4	1	5	6	0	1	1	8
PACE & JSA 24	3	1	0	3	7	2	4	3	6	15
PACE & TACT S43	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
PACE & Other legislative power	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Misuse of Drugs Act S23	3,892	4,220	4,816	4,889	17,817	3,446	4,159	4,659	4,249	16,513
Misuse of Drugs Act S23 & Other legislative power	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	3
Firearms Order S53	58	38	38	43	177	46	35	30	32	143
Firearms Order S53 & JSA S21	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	2
Firearms Order S53 & JSA S24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Firearms Order S53 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	4	0	2	1	7	1	5	0	6	12
Firearms Order S53 & other legislative power	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	2
Firearms Order S53 & JSA S21 & JSA S24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
TACT S43	19	36	28	18	101	26	22	25	21	94
TACT S43A	6	2	2	2	12	4	1	4	1	10
TACT S47A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TACT S43 & TACT S43A	9	20	35	36	100	40	11	5	8	64
TACT S43 & TACT S43A & JSA S21	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1
TACT S43A & JSA S21	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
JSA 21	375	323	348	854	1,900	265	325	339	390	1,319
JSA S21 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	5	0	7	7	19	3	2	0	1	6
JSA S21 & JSA S24	100	159	198	413	870	175	174	224	263	836
JSA S21 & JSA S24 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	4
JSA S21 & JSA S24 & TACT S43	0	0	0	2	2	0	3	0	0	3
JSA S21 & other legislative power	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
JSA S24	988	1,295	1,339	2,436	6,058	1,391	1,642	1,816	2,149	6,998
JSA S24 & other legislative power	0	1	5	1	7	2	3	0	2	7
JSA S24 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	1	2	11	12	26	9	13	16	10	48
JSA S24 & TACT S43A	1	0	1	1	3	0	0	1	0	1
TACT S43 & JSA S21	4	3	0	0	7	0	4	1	6	11
TACT S43 & JSA S24	2	2	0	0	4	2	6	0	1	9
TACT S43 & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
TACT S43A & JSA S21 & JSA S24	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
TACT S43 & TACT S43A & JSA S21 & JSA S24	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
TACT S43A & Misuse of Drugs Act S23	0	1	0	3	4	0	0	0	0	0
Other legislative powers	21	24	21	15	81	12	27	69	19	127
Total Persons stopped and searched/questioned	6,989	7,801	9,080	10,301	34,171	6,540	7,642	8,738	8,354	31,274

Notes: '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.

Source: Statistics Branch, Police Service of Northern Ireland

Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned and persons subsequently arrested under all legislative powers by Police Area and District: 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

Section 1 Table 2

	Persons Stopped	Persons Subsequently Arrested
	Total Persons	Total Persons
Belfast City Policing	9,094	822
North Area Policing	9,558	408
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,477	83
Causeway Coast & Glens	2,149	110
Derry City & Strabane	3,754	141
Mid & East Antrim	2,178	74
South Area Policing	12,622	714
Ards & North Down	873	50
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	3,480	188
Fermanagh & Omagh	1,323	111
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	3,014	203
Mid Ulster	1,166	65
Newry, Mourne & Down	2,766	97
Northern Ireland	31,274	1,944

**Number of persons stopped and searched/questioned under all legislative powers by Police Area and District by age group:
1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017**

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	9,094	95	812	3,402	2,659	1,255	699	153	19
North Area Policing	9,558	188	1,168	3,483	2,241	1,330	867	229	52
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,477	16	197	666	349	158	64	19	8
Causeway Coast & Glens	2,149	95	249	869	506	190	157	67	16
Derry City & Strabane	3,754	13	411	1,190	887	617	508	107	21
Mid & East Antrim	2,178	64	311	758	499	365	138	36	7
South Area Policing	12,622	382	1,676	5,334	2,759	1,287	788	284	112
Ards & North Down	873	11	136	321	175	91	80	30	29
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	3,480	70	364	1,612	815	343	198	56	22
Fermanagh & Omagh	1,323	26	200	549	323	127	73	23	2
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	3,014	149	480	1,204	627	281	175	65	33
Mid Ulster	1,166	24	177	502	237	139	67	15	5
Newry, Mourne & Down	2,766	102	319	1,146	582	306	195	95	21
Northern Ireland	31,274	665	3,656	12,219	7,659	3,872	2,354	666	183

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: 2015/16 – 2016/17

Section 2 Table 1

	2015/16										2016/17									
	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	789	151	910	143	1107	131	919	113	3,725	538	575	106	617	102	683	115	637	87	2,512	410
Offensive weapon / Blade or point	316	90	322	90	302	84	247	66	1,187	330	205	54	219	66	229	67	215	63	868	250
Going equipped / Prohibited articles	393	54	411	74	557	77	396	53	1,757	258	327	45	334	61	419	67	339	59	1,419	232
Fireworks	1	0	31	2	261	4	1	1	294	7	8	1	34	0	212	0	1	0	255	1
Drugs	3,926	249	4,258	302	4,862	274	4,943	316	17,989	1141	3,477	201	4,196	250	4,695	256	4,280	246	16,648	953
Firearms	64	19	41	8	41	9	53	8	199	44	56	11	44	6	31	1	43	8	174	26

Note: 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.

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 2016 to 31st March 2017

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	937	420	514	27	5,074	50
North Area Policing	524	204	335	61	4,221	56
Antrim & Newtownabbey	115	39	106	8	795	16
Causeway Coast & Glens	89	50	75	17	1,265	8
Derry City & Strabane	262	70	97	10	1,186	6
Mid & East Antrim	58	45	57	26	975	26
South Area Policing	1,051	244	570	167	7,353	68
Ards & North Down	51	15	33	0	503	13
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	304	73	182	23	1,935	7
Fermanagh & Omagh	89	22	50	16	951	7
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	349	68	179	24	1,658	13
Mid Ulster	60	18	29	53	783	18
Newry, Mourne & Down	198	48	97	51	1,523	10
Northern Ireland	2,512	868	1,419	255	16,648	174

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 2017 by financial year.

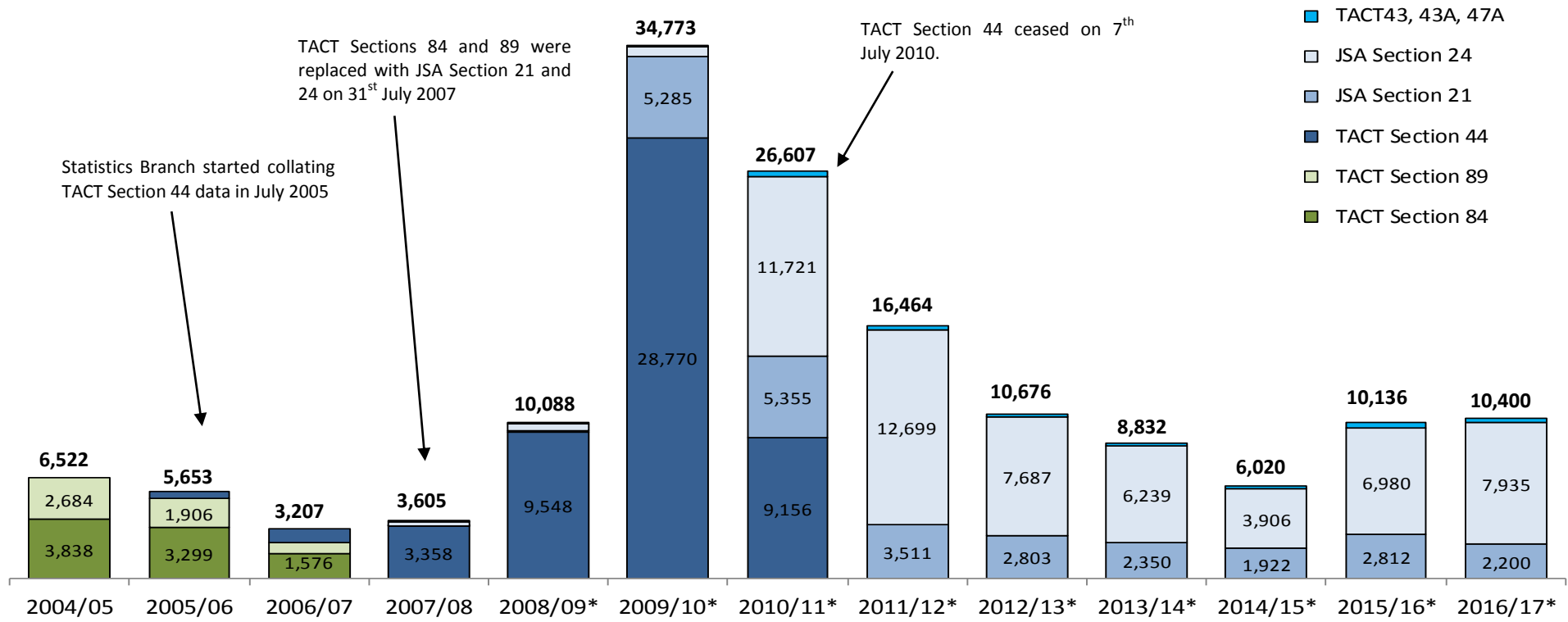
Section 3 Table 1

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⁾
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
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
- Section 47A ⁽⁵⁾								0	0	70	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
- Section 24 ⁽²⁾				251	372	621	11,721	12,699	7,687	6,239	3,906	6,980	7,935
Other legislative powers ⁽⁶⁾									294	417	190	97	140
Total uses of each legislative power	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
Total no. of persons stopped/searched⁽⁷⁾	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
PACE / Misuse of Drugs Act / Firearms Order	69%	74%	83%	81%	66%	41%	46%	56%	66%	73%	78%	71%	67%
All Terrorism Act Powers	31%	26%	17%	18%	32%	49%	19%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
All JSA Powers	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	10%	35%	44%	33%	26%	21%	28%	31%
Other legislative powers	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	<0.5%	<0.5%
All Powers⁽⁸⁾	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.

Terrorism related legislation - Section 3 Figure 1

Use of Terrorism-related Stop and Search/Stop and Question Legislation between 2004/05 and 2016/17

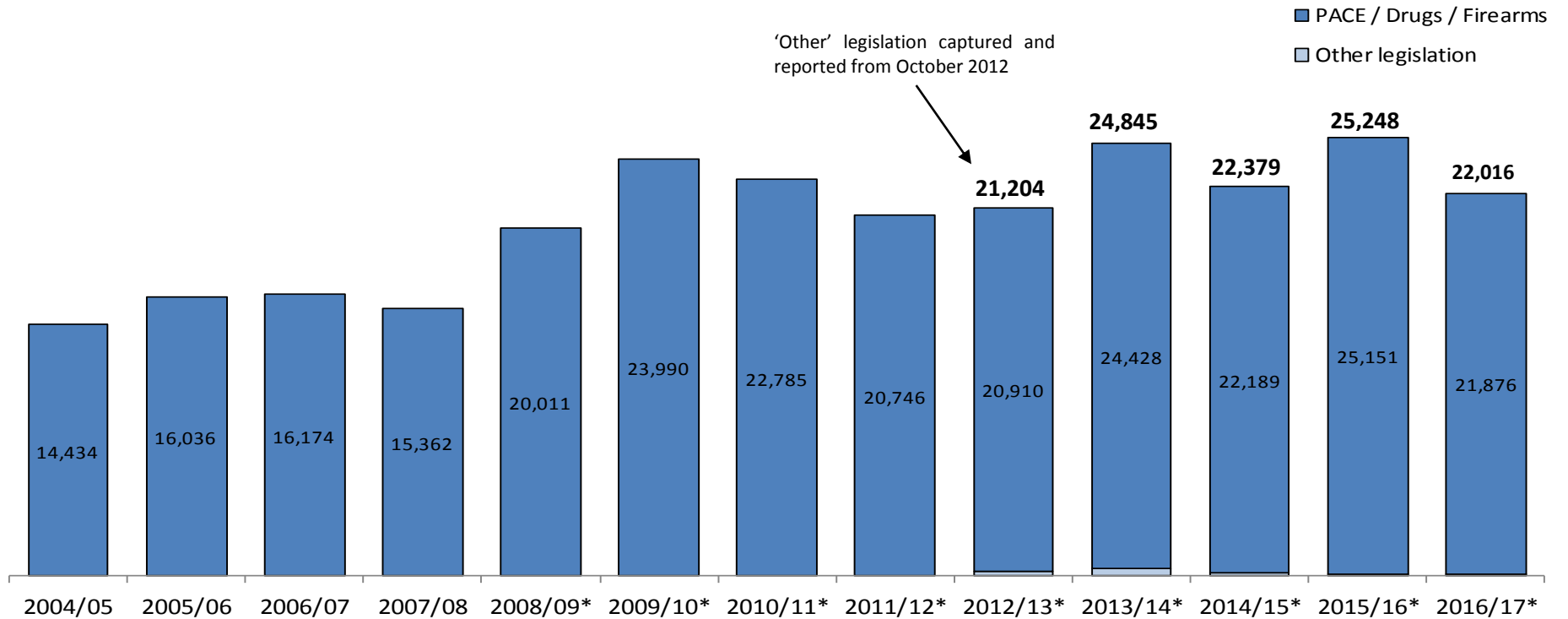


* Combinations of powers were not counted pre-08/09 therefore these figures are a count of the number of persons stopped. Figures from 08/09 are a count of the number of times each individual power was used.

** 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 2016/17



* 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.