



SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY	ANALYSIS OF STOP AND SEARCH: JUNE – AUGUST 2015
<p><b>This SPA analytical product provides longitudinal analysis in order to inform our scrutiny of practice and patterns of activity in relation to this specific policing tactic, to drive best value and to produce an accessible and objective narrative on stop and search that provides reassurance to our stakeholders and the public.</b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>In August 2015, the Scottish Government published the report of the Advisory Group on Stop and Search, chaired by John Scott QC. The report sets out 10 recommendations on the practice of Stop and Search. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating a statutory code of practice covering stop and search, following consultation and subject to review thereafter;</li><li>• Ending the police tactic of “consensual” or non-statutory stop and search when the Code of Practice comes into effect;</li><li>• Police Scotland providing reports and data to the Scottish Police Authority about the use of stop and search (Recommendation 5); and</li><li>• Scottish Government holding consultation on whether to create a specific power for police officers to search children under 18 for alcohol in circumstances where they have reasonable grounds to suspect they have alcohol in their possession.</li></ul> <p>Recommendation 5 of the Advisory Group report in full:</p> <p>“That Police Scotland should provide regular reports to the Scottish Police Authority about the use of stop and search, including all relevant data on all recorded stops and searches, for the purposes of evaluating and monitoring use of the practice through public scrutiny. These data should also be released publicly on a regular basis by the SPA and by Police Scotland so as to ensure openness and transparency and allow for wider research and monitoring purposes.”</p> <p>In response to Recommendation 5 of the Advisory Group report, and in recognition of the Scottish Police Authority’s own scrutiny review of Police Scotland stop and search practice (“Recommendation 10 – “The SPA should publish comprehensive stop and search data on a regular basis”), the Authority has examined high-level trends between June and August 2015.</p> <p><b>Data and analysis</b></p> <p>This analysis is based on management data extracted from Police Scotland’s National Stop and Search database, published as quarterly CSV files and Management reports (note that these data are not Official Statistics).</p>	<p>Stop and search data from April 2013 to May 2015 can be accessed <a href="#">here</a>, and data from June to August 2015 can be accessed <a href="#">here</a>. The analysis also draws on census data (mid-year population estimates for 2014).</p> <p>In June 2015, as part of its Stop and Search Improvement Plan, Police Scotland introduced new data fields. These include items found, disposals used by officers, and the grounds for reasonable suspicion. Importantly, searches and seizures (which do not require a physical search) are now recorded separately (prior to June 2015, all seizures were classified as stop searches). Whilst data from June 2015 onward capture the use of stop and search (and seizure) in more detail, <u><a href="#">the changes also limit comparison with earlier periods.</a></u></p> <p>The following definitions have been adopted by Police Scotland:</p> <p><b>Statutory Stop and Search</b> - A statutory search is one conducted by a Police Officer in the course of their duties where the individual is searched using a specific statutory provision.</p> <p><b>Consensual (non-Statutory) Stop and Search</b> - A consensual search is one conducted by a Police Officer in the course of their duties with the consent of the individual being searched.</p> <p><b>Seizure</b> - A seizure occurs when items are surrendered, or are removed from an individual by a Police Officer, for the purpose of safeguarding the health and well-being of that individual or any other, in circumstances where the stop and search tactic has NOT been utilised and no physical search of an individual has taken place. As noted, seizures were not recorded separately to stop and search prior to the creation of the national stop and search database.</p> <p><b>Positive Stop and Search</b> - A positive stop and search is when an item is recovered where possession of same implies criminality on the part of the individual being searched or any other; or potentially compromises the safety of that individual or any other.</p> <p><b>Recordable Stop and Search</b> - Any unplanned stop and search where the officer has, in the course of their duties, used statutory powers or gained the consent of the individual being searched.</p>



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<p><b>OUR FINDINGS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The overall number of stop and searches undertaken from June to August 2015 shows a <b>substantial decline</b> from the number recorded during the same periods in the years 2013 and 2014.</li><li>2. The number of recorded searches also fell moderately across the three month period between June and August 2015.</li><li>3. Although not directly comparable with previous years, it is clear that the ratio of consensual searches to statutory (or legislative) searches has reversed from past years, with the proportion searches which are consensual now substantially lower than those which are statutory.</li><li>4. Detection rates were significantly <b>higher for statutory</b> searches.</li><li>5. No consensual searches of children under the age of 12 were recorded between June and August 2015. Officers recorded three searches on children below the age of 12 using legislative powers in relation to the misuse of drugs, stolen property, and bladed weapons respectively.</li><li>6. There is a <b>significant variation</b> in rates of stop and search per head of population between the North, East, and West Command areas and even between neighbouring local authorities within command areas. Search rates within each Command do, however, tend to be higher in local authority areas where rates of violent crime are also relatively higher.</li><li>7. The majority of searches continue to occur in the West Command area, although the proportional value (compared to the East and North) fell slightly between June and August 2015.</li><li>8. Seizures (where no physical search has occurred) are also reported using the new database. Most seizures take place in the West Command, and pertain to alcohol.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>9. The majority of recorded alcohol removals resulted from seizure rather than stop and search.</li><li>10. Young people continue to be a focus of search activity. The number of stop and searches recorded between June and August peaks across 16-18 year olds. When solely considering consensual stop and searches, the most prevalent ages for searches skew even younger, peaking for 15-17 year olds.</li><li>11. The detection rates for younger people are considerably lower than for adults, specifically those between 20 and 40.</li><li>12. The majority of searches fall on males of white ethnicity.</li></ol>



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<p><b>KEY STOP AND SEARCH STATISTICS: JUNE TO AUGUST 2015</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Officers recorded <b>22,787</b> searches between June and August 2015. This compares to <b>119,940</b> stop searches in the same period in 2014, <b>81% less</b>. However, due to changes in recording and procedural practices, these figures should be treated with caution; while indicative of the downward direction in search activity, are not wholly comparable.</li><li>• <b>6984</b> seizures of items (where no stop and search has taken place) were recorded June –August 2015. Over <b>90%</b> of these seizures were for alcohol.</li><li>• The <b>West</b> Command area accounted for <b>70.6%</b> of recorded searches and <b>89.7%</b> of recorded seizures, consistent with previous years. For example, the West command area accounted for 79% of recorded searches in the same period in the 2014 (note: last year’s figure will not have recorded seizures separately)</li><li>• <b>27.9%</b> of recorded searches for the period were consensual.</li><li>• <b>23.6%</b> of stop searches for the period yielded a positive result. Broken down by search type, <b>9.2%</b> of consensual stop searches saw positive returns compared to <b>29.2%</b> for statutory searches.</li><li>• <b>88% of searches were on males and 12% on females during this timeframe</b></li><li>• <b>87%</b> of stop searches (where an ethnicity was recorded as known) were conducted on people who identified as White Scottish; for reference, 84% of respondents to the 2011 census identified as this category. By comparison, no more than 0.6% of total searches were recorded for any single non-white minority group.</li><li>• Officers recorded <b>51</b> incidents in which the person did not give their consent for a search. This figure equated to 0.8% of recorded consensual searches. Of these refusals, <b>7 involved young people aged 17 and under</b>.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Sixteen year olds accounted for 6% of all recorded searches and 8.7% of consensual searches.</b> The detection rate for 16 years olds is 15.4%, compared to the average figure of 23.6%.</li><li>• <b>Detection rates were highest among those aged between 20 and 40 years –</b> this rate equates to 27%, over 3 percentage points higher than the average.</li><li>• Of the <b>7070 items of alcohol found</b> during the period, <b>92.5% were as a result of seizures</b>, compared to 7.5% from stop searches.</li><li>• The majority of stop searches (<b>71.5%</b>) listed ‘drugs’ as the reason for search, compared to 10.5% for alcohol. Weapon searches accounted for 8.8% of all searches, similar to the number conducted for stolen property.</li><li>• 48% of all consensual alcohol searches were conducted on individuals aged under 18.</li><li>• The under 18 age group had alcohol stated as the reason for: 122 consensual searches, 44 statutory searches, and 1512 seizures.</li><li>• Across all searches conducted (regardless of the reason for search and age group), 274 found weapons, compared to 4104 where drugs were found.</li></ul>



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Chart 1: Number of Searches and Seizures by Local Policing Area, June-Aug 2015

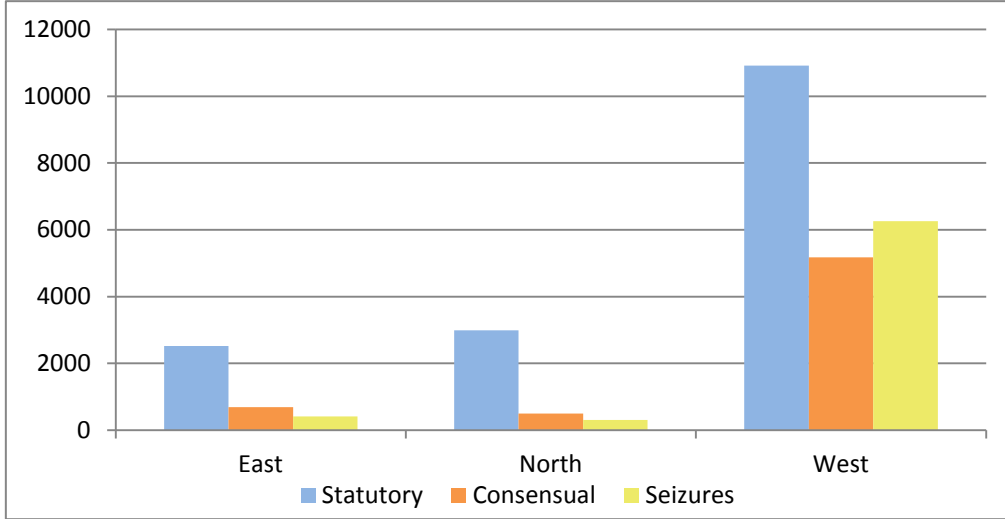
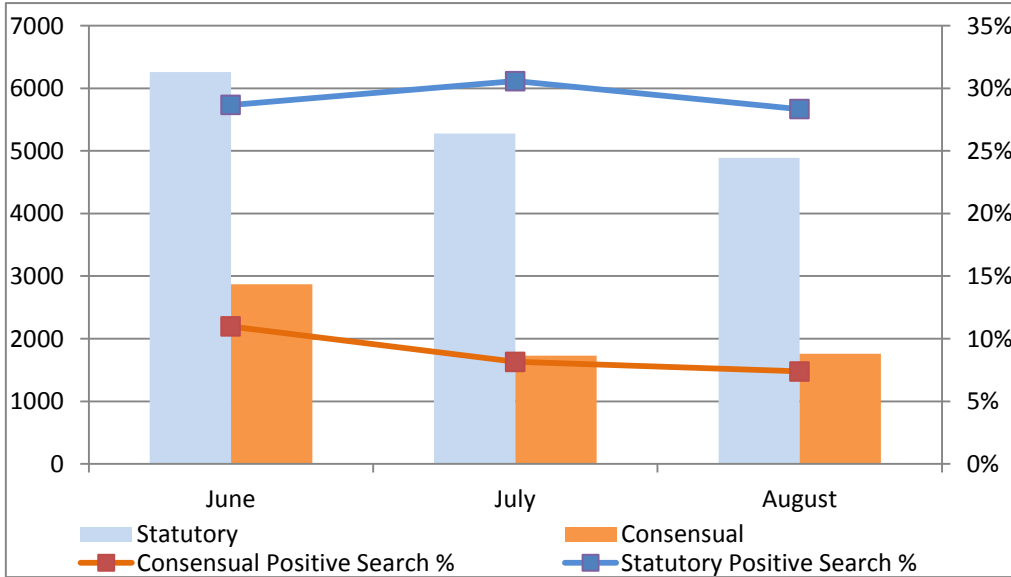


Chart 2: Number of Searches by Month, June-Aug 2015



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Chart 3: Number of Searches and Seizures by Age Group, June-Aug 2015

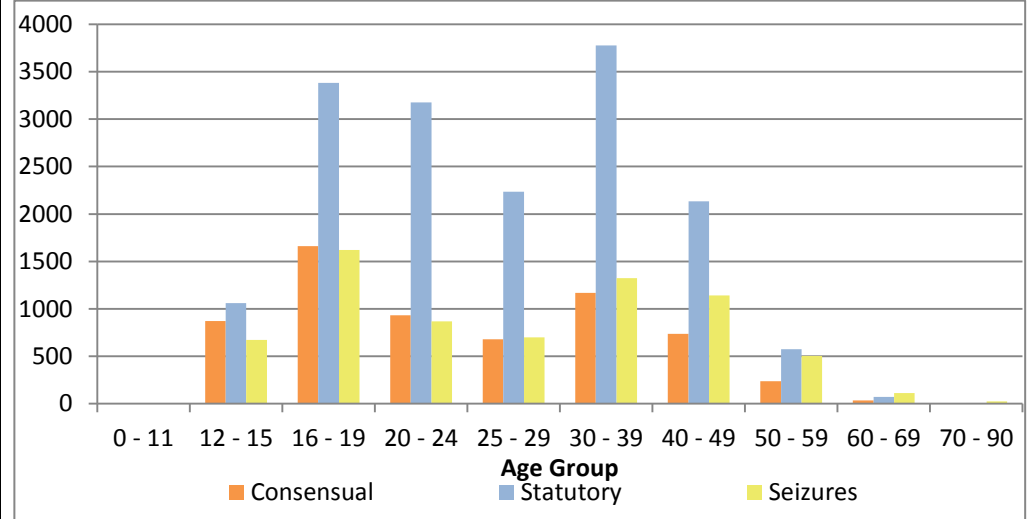
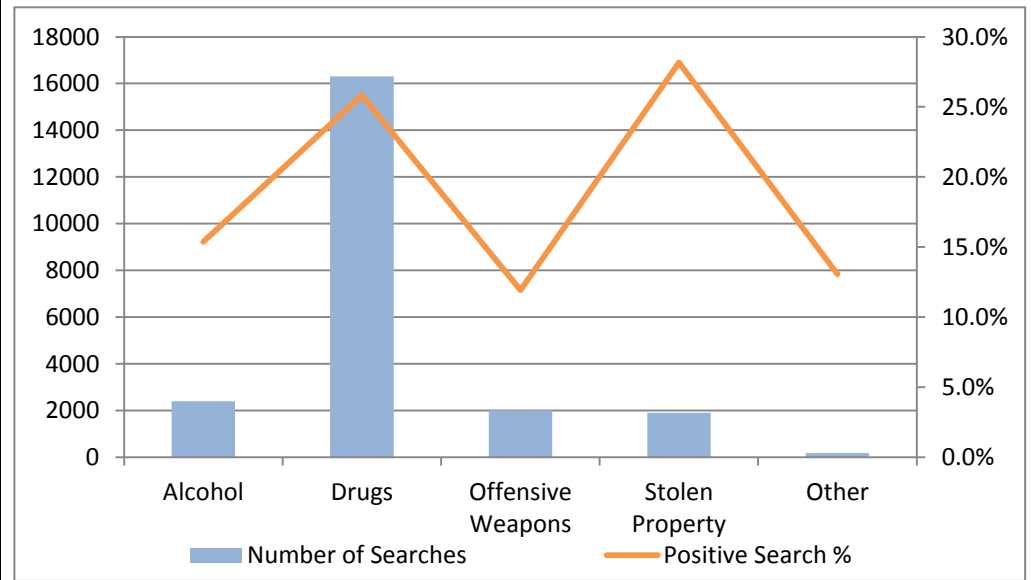


Chart 4: Total Number of Searches by Reason and rate of Positive Search





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<p><b>TIME SERIES ANALYSIS</b></p> <p><i>Please note that references to data preceding June 2015 have been made to provide context, but should figures not be treated as definitive, given Police Scotland's changes to operational and recording practices in recent months.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The number of stop and searches conducted between June and August 2015 was approximately <b>97,500 less than the total recorded within the same period during 2014</b> – a reduction of over 81%. Even if recorded seizures are added to the June to August 2015 stop and search value (as the previous year's practices would have seen some seizure activity recorded amongst stop searches), the reduction is still 75%.</li><li>• The proportion of those searches recorded as consensual has <b>decreased from 66.2% of all searches to 27.9%</b>, when comparing June-August 2015 to the year before.</li><li>• The overall positive search rate is <b>0.6 percentage points lower</b> than recorded for the equivalent 2014 timeframe. However, over half of 2014's positive searches were alcohol-related, many of which are now recorded as seizures and no longer contribute to rates of positive search. To add further context to this, positive searches for drugs <b>increased</b> from 14.4% to 25.8% since last year, and positive searches for weapons rose from 4.2% to 11.9%. <b>The rate of non-alcohol positive searches increased from 13.6% across June to August 2014 to 24.6% for June to August 2015.</b></li><li>• Though still seeing a significant level of search activity, the proportion of all searches conducted on individuals aged 17 and under compared to other age groups <b>has declined by 1.4 percentage points</b> compared to data held for the equivalent 2014 period.</li></ul>	<p><b>GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Although searches in the West Command outnumber the rest of Scotland, the rate at which the number of searches has declined between June and August this year has also been greatest in the West. Further, proportionally more consensual searches take place in the West than elsewhere (32.2% compared to the Scotland-wide rate of 27.9%).</li><li>• The positive rate of search in the West is more than 5 percentage points <b>below</b> both North and East Commands. Detection rates for both statutory and consensual searches are lowest in the West.</li><li>• 9 of the 10 local authorities in Scotland which see the highest rates of stop and search per 10,000 head of population <b>lie within the West command</b>. While some link between the higher rates of search and those authorities with higher rates of violent crime can be seen, Argyll and Bute and South Lanarkshire would appear to be <b>exceptions to this pattern</b>, with particularly high search rates compared to other local authorities within the West despite relatively lower levels of recorded violent crime.</li><li>• Across the North and East local policing areas, rates of search <b>do tend to be highest in the authorities with higher urban populations and/or rates of violent crime</b>, such as City of Edinburgh, Aberdeen City, Dundee City, and Stirling. Despite this, rate of searches per 10,000 head of population can also vary markedly between neighbouring local authorities– the search rate in Highland, for instance, <b>is around three times</b> that of both Moray and Aberdeenshire.</li><li>• There is a possibility that large-scale events held in specific areas can 'inflate' the rate of stop and search beyond routine use of the tactic within communities, for instance, sporting events or the T in the Park music festival in Perth and Kinross.</li><li>• The proportion of consensual searches <b>in South Lanarkshire was 50%, compared to 27.9% Scotland-wide</b>, and was 10 percentage points greater than any other local authority area.</li></ul>



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AGE ANALYSIS

- When grouping into age brackets, it can be seen that the number of searches on 16-19 year olds (over one fifth of the national total) is similar to the level across the entire 30-39 age group.
- This proportion increases further for consensual searches amongst 16-19 years olds – over one quarter; 10 percentage points higher than any of the other age groups listed below.
- The 12-15 and 16-19 age groups see the lowest rates of positive search for statutory searches, and below average detection rates for consensual search.

**Table 1: Stop and Search by selected age group and positive searches**

% of total searches conducted by age group			
Age Group	All Searches	Statutory only	Consensual only
12 – 15	8.5%	6.5%	13.7%
16 – 19	22.1%	20.6%	26.1%
20 – 24	18.0%	19.3%	14.7%
25 - 29	12.8%	13.6%	10.7%
30 – 39	21.7%	23.0%	18.4%
40 - 49	12.6%	13.0%	11.6%
% positive search rates by age group			
Age Group	All Searches	Statutory only	Consensual only
12 – 15	12.6%	16.2%	8.1%
16 – 19	18.8%	23.9%	8.5%
20 – 24	25.8%	31.0%	8.1%
25 - 29	28.1%	33.3%	10.7%
30 – 39	27.3%	32.3%	11.1%
40 - 49	25.3%	30.8%	9.2%
<b>All Ages</b>	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>

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*As well as considering the demographic brackets used within Management Information reporting, all searches for those ages 17 and under have been analysed in line with previous commentary regarding the use of stop and search on non-adults.*

- **40.7%** of searches of individuals aged 17 and under were consensual, more than 10% higher than the overall proportion of consensual searches in Scotland.
- **29.6%** of all consensual searches in the three month period took place on individuals aged 17 and under.
- 7 of the 51 refusals recorded against consensual stop and searches were amongst the 17 and under age group. Although perhaps too small a number to definitively extrapolate, this presents 13.7% of all refusals to consensual searches, far lower than the proportion of consensual searches this group sees (29.6%). This may suggest the 17 and under group are less likely to refuse a search.
- Concerning disposals for younger people, it is of note that 68.9% of the 17 and under group had no further action taken in the event of having an item **seized**. **34.2% of the 17 and under age group**, and 4.7% of all ages, see **no further action** recorded following a **positive** stop and search.
- For alcohol seizures affecting **individuals aged 17 and under**, 13% (196) resulted in a crime report; 8.7% (131) in an interim Vulnerable Persons Database entry (iVPD); and 14.5% (220) in a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). 67.1% (1015) resulted in no further action.
- 13 Getting It Right For Every Child Reviews (GIRFEC) were logged as outcomes; 9 for stop and searches and 4 for seizures. 10 GIRFECs were for those aged 17 and under.