

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 001449
Date 23 August 2017

Illegal cigarettes/tobacco sale

Request:

Under the Freedom of Information Act can you please provide me with the following information:

1. Please can you tell me how many checks for suspected illegal cigarettes/tobacco being sold were carried out by your trading standards team on 2012, 2013,2014,2016 and 2017?
2. Please provide details of the quantity and value of illegal cigarettes/tobacco seized during each year outlined above. Ideally can the quantity be outlined by number of cigarettes? If needs be please estimate. Can this data be broken down by the years above?
3. Can you outline the number of people prosecuted for selling counterfeit and non-duty tobacco products? Can this data be broken down by the years above?

Response:

YEAR APRIL TO MARCH	2012 and 2013	2014	2016	2017
NUMBER OF CHECKS	No figures	25	24	5
QUANTITY OF CIGARETTES	No figures	52,919	65,434	5947
QUANTITY OF HAND ROLLING TOBACCO	No figures	10.95 kg	13.2 kg	2.5 kg
VALUE	No figures	No figures	No figures	No figures
NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS	No figures	0	2	1

Contextual information:

1. There are no figures for 2012 and 2013 because we changed visit recording software providers and not all the previous historical data migrated.
2. We cannot comment on the value of the items because many of the brands are from outside this country and not intended for this country and so there is no legitimate product to compare with. HMRC may be able to provide a value for lost duty.
3. Enforcement action is taken in line with our enforcement policy and so not all seizures (and the subsequent investigations) lead to prosecutions. Where there are prosecutions it does not follow that that an offender identified in year X will be prosecuted in the same year as the investigation may stretch over into the next year.