

Police stop and search figures rise but more arrests follow



Police Scotland has been in existence for just over a year now, and today they have published their figures for crime reported and detected in the capital. This is in the form of management information rather than official statistics, and it is important to realise that The Scottish Government will also issue their own set of crime figures later in the year. Each crime recorded may of course relate to the same incident, where for example someone breaks into a house and then assaults the homeowner that may be recorded as separate incidents.

The good news is that with the introduction of new shift patterns meaning more police on the beat, the figures show that the number of criminals being caught is also on the increase. That is a completely different thing from saying that crime is increasing; it simply means that the police are doing a better job in finding the culprits.

As always it would be easy to pick out certain figures and make much of them, but the figures deserve to be regarded in the light of an overall view that Edinburgh is a pretty safe place to live.

That said, it is clear that the police are more proactive from a closer examination of exact numbers. In the last year to April 2013, just before the Lothian and Borders Police were swept into Police Scotland, they had stopped and searched 21,031 people. This year that figure has increased by almost 40% to 29,152, of which many more are men than women and of whom 10 were under the age of 9.

The number of rape cases reported to the police rose by 10% but detections, where a successful case was brought against the person who was then arrested and charged, doubled.

There were 4,101 incidents of housebreaking or attempted housebreaking reported across the city which is an increase on last year's figure of 2,956, but roughly the same number were actually caught and charged in the same period last year.

The number of those reported for possession of drugs has risen by only 3.3% whereas those reported to be supplying drugs rose by 14.4% which could be for a number of reasons, one of which is improved intelligence.

Chief Superintendent Mark Williams who is Divisional Commander of the Police said:-“I think these figures are good. The public in Edinburgh asked us to focus on some really important areas to them. That included drug dealing, violent crime, anti-social behaviour, dangerous driving and in all of those areas we have seen some fantastic improvements. We have reduced violent crime overall across the city. We have arrested and locked up more drug dealers than we did the year before, and there has been a 15% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads. So overall those headlines are very important and they reflect the desires of Edinburgh's communities.”

The Edinburgh Reporter met Mark Williams in his office to hear about what he thought the important statistics were.