

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2024/25

Children in the youth justice system

Summary points

- The rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system in Bristol in 2023 was 195.7 per 100,000 population, significantly higher than the national average (143.4 per 100,000). The gap between Bristol and England rates is significantly narrower than in 2010.

Findings

Young people in the criminal justice system are more likely to make unhealthy life style choices and are less likely to succeed in education and are more likely to have adverse health outcomes in adulthood. The Bristol Youth Justice Service is a multi-agency team who work with young offenders.

First time entrants to youth justice system

The rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system¹ in Bristol is 195.7 per 100,000 (12 months to December 2023) (Fig 1). Rates for both Bristol and England have gradually been decreasing since 2010 and whilst Bristol's rate remains significantly higher than the England average the gap has reduced considerably.

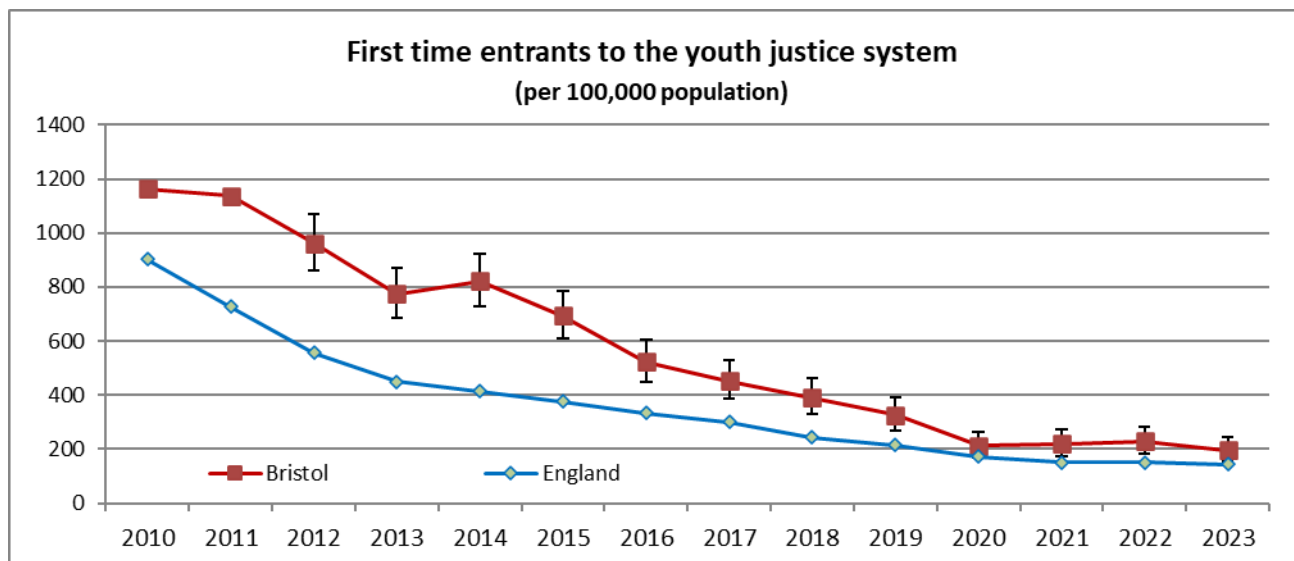


Fig 1: Rate of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System. Source: PHOF – August 2024

Figure 2 overleaf shows how Bristol compares to the other English core cities. Most cities show a downward trend over the past eight years although rates have increased slightly in 2021 compared to the previous year for half of the core cities. In 2016 Bristol had the fourth lowest rate of first-time entrants of all core cities and has generally ranked mid-table ever since with the exception of 2022 when it had the third highest rate. In 2023, Bristol's rate was 5th lowest behind Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Newcastle, only Manchester, Nottingham and Sheffield had higher rates.

¹ 10-17 year olds receiving their first reprimand, warning or conviction. Figures calculated by PHE's Population Health Analysis team using crime data supplied by Ministry of Justice and population data supplied by Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Over the same eight year period Bristol has successfully reduced the rate of first-time entrants by nearly 63%, the third highest improvement of all core cities. Birmingham and Newcastle have seen improvements of 77% and 68% respectively, higher than the England average of 57.0%.

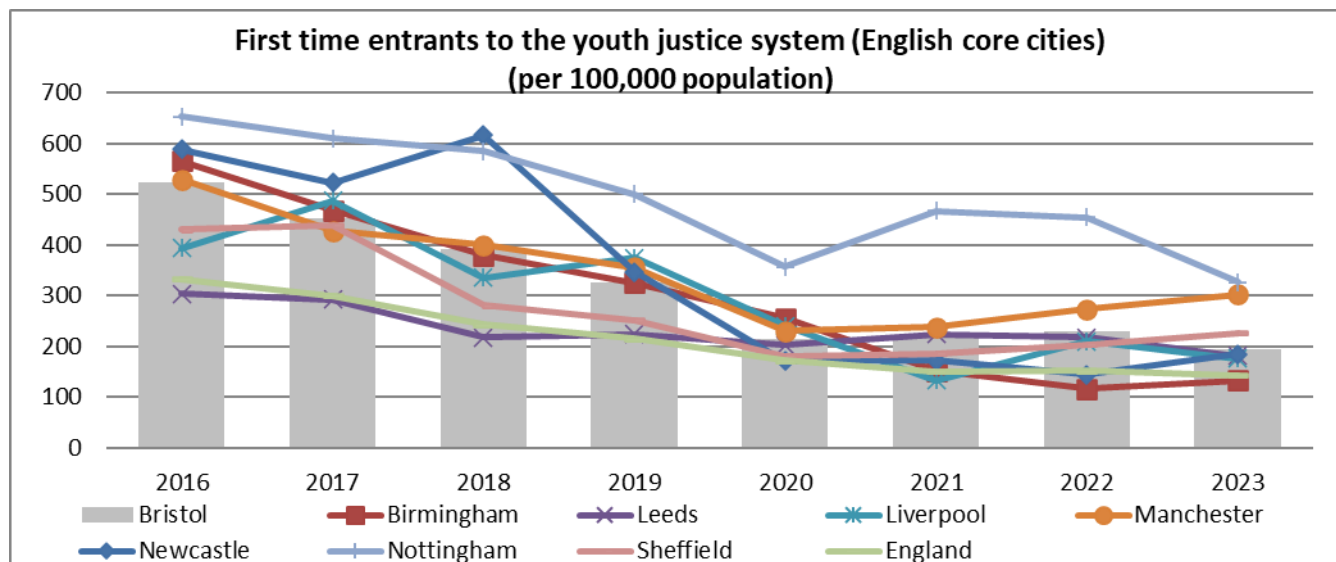


Fig 2: Rate of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System – English core cities. Source: PHOF - Aug 2024

Children in the youth justice system by ward

The data is based on the child’s address when they committed the crime and not the location of the crime itself.

Across all the wards, data shows that there were 579 individual children committing 1,425 offences² in Bristol during the three year period April 2021 to March 2024. During this three year period the number of individual children committing offences was lower in 2023/24 than in 2021/22 but the number of offences has increased.

Across Bristol the rate of offenders per 1,000 of the population (aged 10-17) was 14.4 for the three year period (i.e. April 2021 to March 2024), a slight increase on the previous period (14.2).

Of the thirty-four wards in Bristol, fifteen had a higher rate in offenders than the citywide figure. The wards ranged from no children committing offences in Clifton Down to 1.3 per 1,000 population (aged 10-17) in Southville to 32.1 in Filwood (fig 3).

² Source: Police National Computer database via BCC Youth Offending Team, 2023

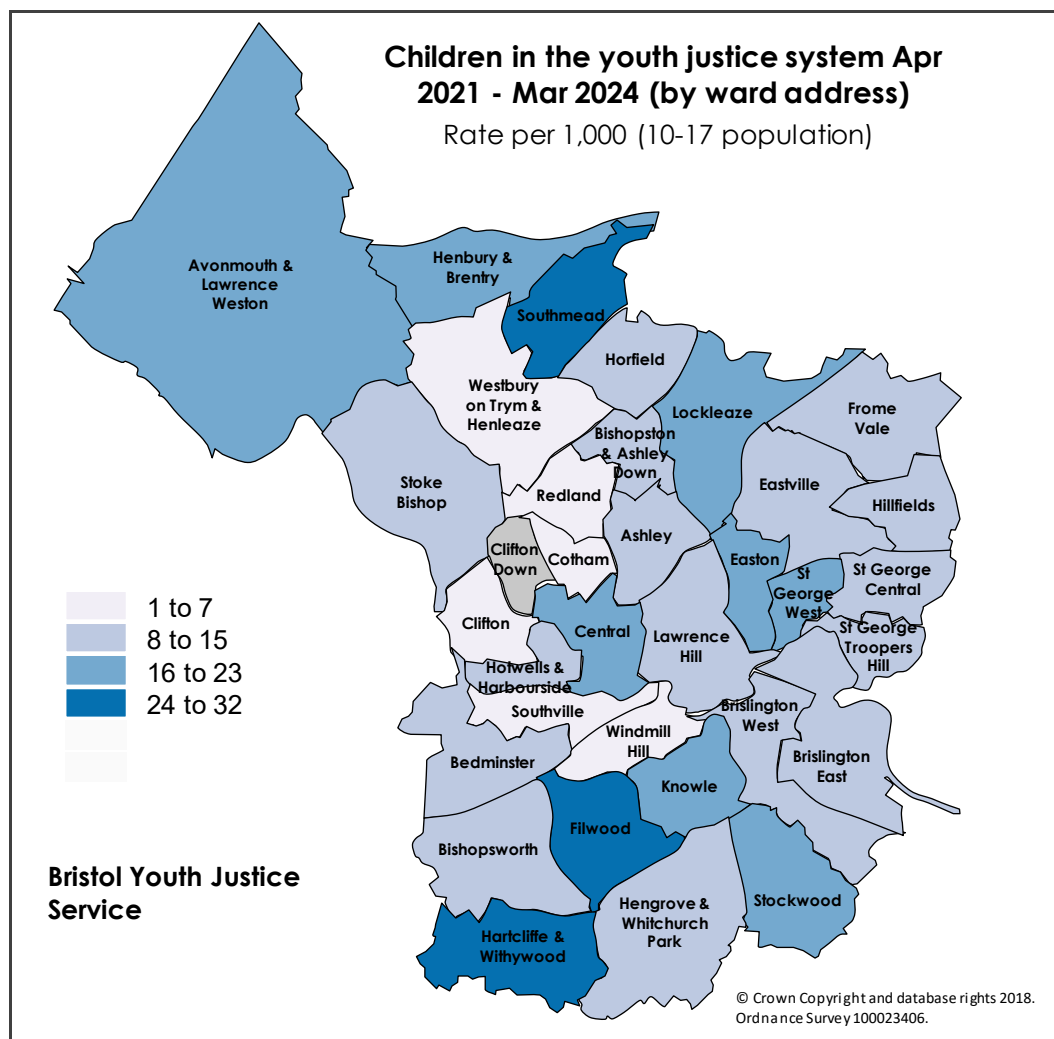


Fig 3 Rate of individual children in the youth justice system 2021-24 (Youth Justice Service)

Equalities data:

Over the period April 2021 to March 2024, 70.3% of youth offenders were of white ethnicity, 13.6% of black ethnicity, 11.2% of mixed ethnicity, 0.7% of Chinese ethnicity and 2.3% were of unknown ethnicity. In terms of gender for the same 3 year period, a total of 77.5% were male and 22.1% were female. Gender was unknown / not recorded for two offenders.

Further data / links:

- Children in the Youth Justice System data – [Wider Determinants of Health Profile](#)

Covid-19 impact:

The periods of lockdown saw a reduction in offending by young people, this was countered by an immediate return to levels of offending when restrictions were reduced in communities. The courts did not suffer any significant back logs and cases were managed effectively.

Date updated: August 2024

Date of next update: September 2025