

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2025/26

Children in the youth justice system

Summary points

- The rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system in Bristol in 2024 was 158.7 per 100,000 population. The gap between Bristol and England rates has narrowed significantly since 2014 marking the city average as statistically similar to the national average (138.3 per 100,000) for the first time in 2024.

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 158.7 per 100,000 (12 months to December 2024) (Fig 1). Rates for both Bristol and England have gradually been decreasing since 2010 and for the first time in 2024 Bristol's rate is now statistically similar to the England average.

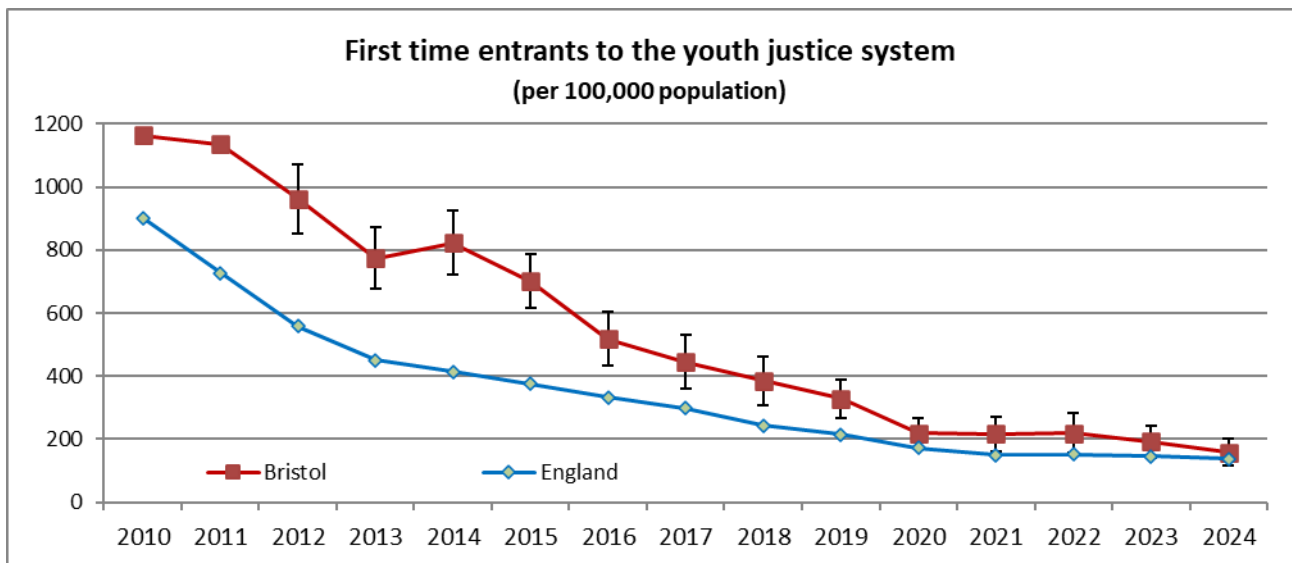


Fig 1: Rate of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System. Source: Ministry of Justice – August 2025

Figure 2 overleaf shows how Bristol compares to the other English core cities. Most cities show a downward trend over the past nine 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 2024, Bristol's rate continued to decrease whilst most other core cities experienced an increase, ranking Bristol as having the second lowest rate, just behind Leeds (154.4 per 100,000).

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 nine year period Bristol has successfully reduced the rate of first-time entrants by nearly 70%, the second highest improvement of all core cities, and higher than the England average of 58.5%. Nottingham experienced the highest improvement of nearly 75%, since 2016.

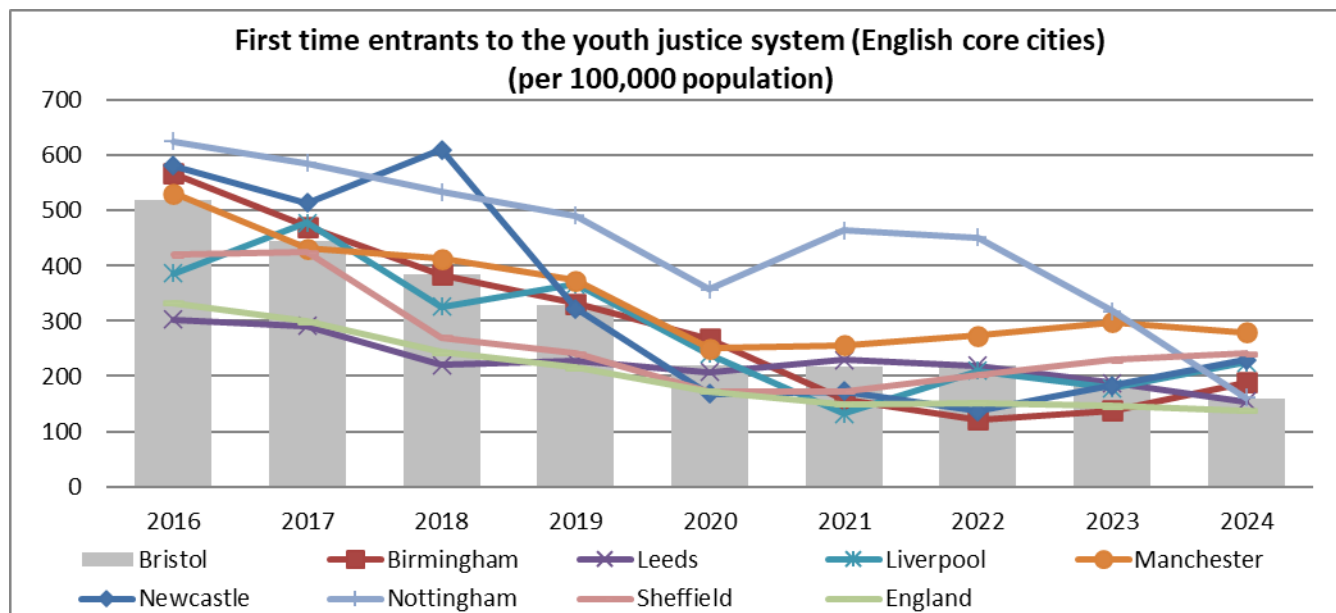


Fig 2: Rate of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System – English core cities. Source: Ministry of Justice - Aug 2025

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 501 individual children committing 1,359 offences² in Bristol during the three year period April 2022 to March 2025. During this three year period the number of individual children committing offences was lowest in 2024/25 with the lowest number of offences committed.

Across Bristol the rate of offenders per 1,000 of the population (aged 10-17) was 12.5 for the three year period (i.e. April 2022 to March 2025), a decrease on the previous period (14.4).

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 1.4 per 1,000 population (aged 10-17) in Redland to 29.7 in Filwood (fig 3).

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

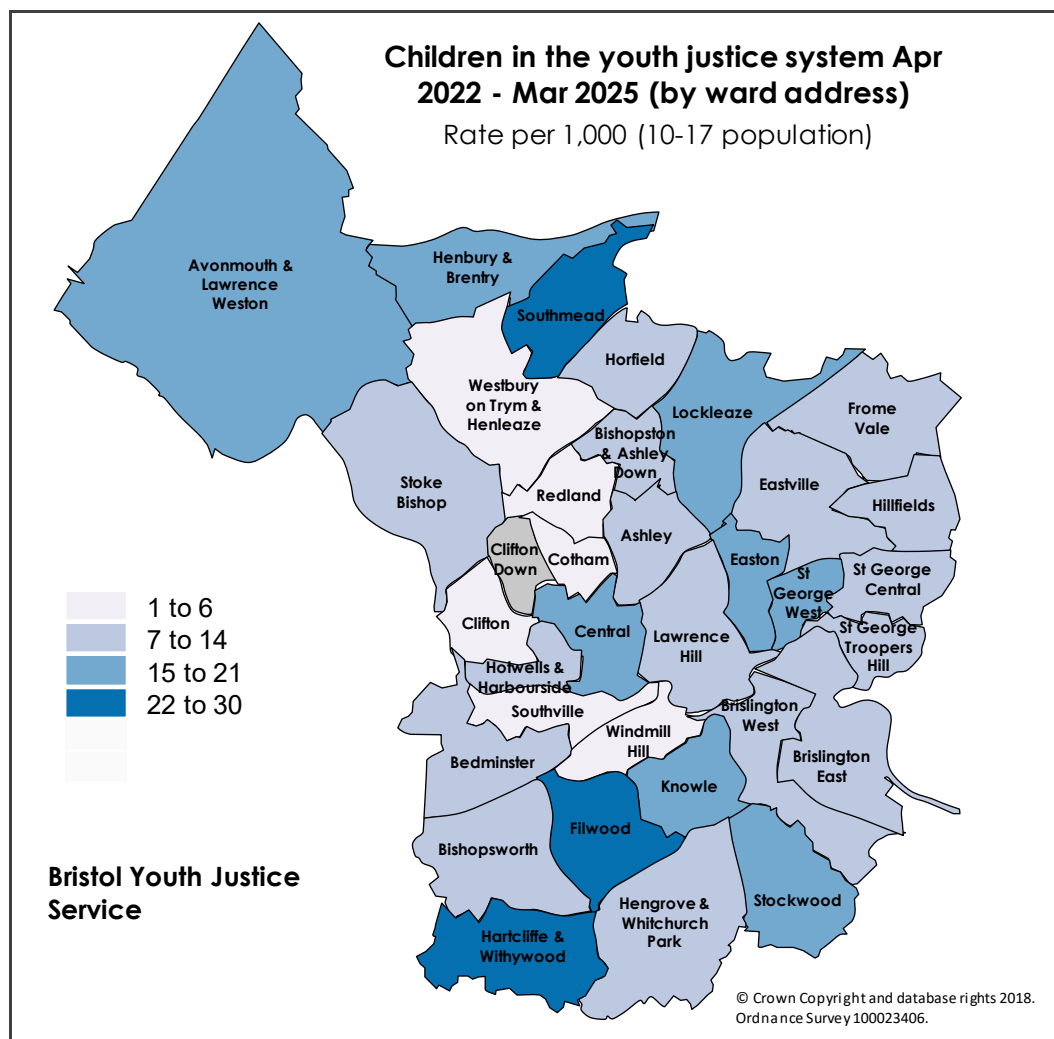


Fig 3 Rate of individual children in the youth justice system 2022-25 (Youth Justice Service)

Equalities data:

Over the period April 2022 to March 2025, 66.7% of children who have offended were of white ethnicity, 14.2% of black ethnicity, 12.2% of mixed ethnicity, 1.8% of Chinese ethnicity and 1.4% were of unknown ethnicity. In terms of gender for the same 3 year period, a total of 80.2% were male and 19.8% were female.

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: September 2025

Date of next update: September 2026