

Agenda item 10.

Briefing Note for Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

23 November 2021

Youth Justice - First Time Entrants

1. Aim

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide committee members with an oversight of first time entrants and a narrative of our performance in this area.

2. Context

2.1 Walsall Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a statutory multi-agency service under Section 37 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act in partnership with the Local Authority, Walsall Children's Services, West Midlands Police, National Probation Service and Health. The YJS is also supported by numerous other partners who contribute to the YJS' agenda.

2.2 The principle aim of the YJS partnership is to prevent and reduce offending and re-offending behaviour in children and young people and we have three national key performance indicators:

- a) Reducing the number of young people entering the justice system for the first time (FTE)
- b) Reducing re-offending
- c) Reducing the use of custodial disposals.

2.3 The number of first time entrants in the youth justice system is a measure within the Council's corporate plan. Benchmarking data was taken from between 1/4/2020 and 21/03/2021 and the target was set at 53 (180 per 100,000 of the 10-17 population) - **target direction of travel** – to decrease

3 What are First Time Entrants? (FTE)

3.1 FTE are defined as young people living in England and Wales aged between 10 to 17 years old who received their first caution or conviction for a recordable offence. Published FTE data is taken from the Police National Computer (PNC).

4. What is our performance and how do we compare?

4.1 This table shows the published FTE data (PNC):

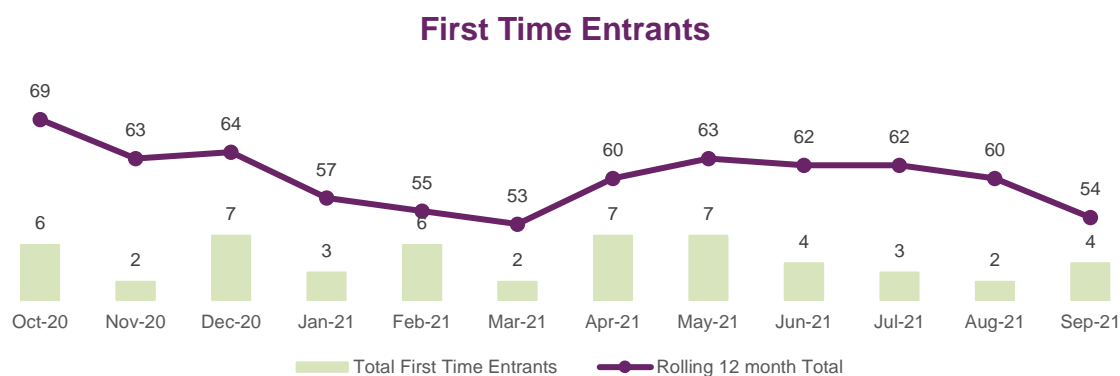
	Jan 14- Dec 14	Jan 15 – Dec 15	Jan 16 – Dec 16	Jan 17 – Dec 17	Jan 18 – Dec 18	Jan 19 – Dec 19	Jan 20 – Dec 20

Number of FTE	117	100	77	68	70	81	57
Rate per 100,000 of the population	426	364	281	245	249	282	192

4.2 Published performance data is only available up to December 2020. Since 2014 the YJS, via its preventative activities and partnership working, has seen a continued reduction in the number of FTE with the exception of 2019 where there was a spike in the number of FTE's. A detailed deep dive into this cohort identified high levels of risk, vulnerability and trauma and exceptional circumstances including a single incident with multiple defendants, all of which warranted the outcomes imposed.

4.3 The latest published data (December 2020) shows a 31.8% improvement on FTE rates FTE compared to the previous 12 month period. Walsall's performance (192 per 100,000) continues to be lower (better) than the West Midlands average (219 per 100,000 of the 10-17 population), but higher than our statistical family (169 per 100,000) and the England average (172 per 100,000).

4.4 The graph shows our current performance taken from the Youth Justice Service database 'ChildView', yet reflected in published data.



4.5 In March 2021, when the FTE target of 53 (180 per 100,000 of the 10-17 population) was set for the corporate plan, the number of FTEs was at its lowest for over 7 years. Performance for Q1 is recorded as 62 young people (210 per 100,000 of the 10-17 population) and therefore ragged red. We can see from the table above that ChildView data indicates at the end of Q2 54 young people were FTE and that performance is once again improving.

4.6 Current data from the YJS database, ChildView, indicates that the 12 month period ending in March 2021 has seen the lowest number of young people entering the system since this indicator has been recorded undoubtedly due to the impact of COVID upon policing and the Courts.

4.7 Officers are working with colleagues in Children's Services Performance Team to review the corporate target in light of the above.

5. What is our response to reducing and maintaining a low number of FTEs?

5.1 Over the past 12 months we have continued to develop our response to reducing and maintaining the low numbers of Walsall young people that formally enter the youth justice system. This has included:

- Re-aligning resources to increase the number of crime prevention practitioners (from 3 to 4) who support young people subject to out of court disposals and diversion interventions.
- Working with the Police to deliver 'Operation Checkpoint', a pilot that enables our partnership to defer a prosecution to enable diversion intervention to take place.
- Creating an early 'triage' system with the Police to identify young people involved in or who are on the periphery of youth violence.
- Developing an improved diversion pathway with the Police and partners (such as; Beacon Substance Misuse, NHS Liaison and Diversion and our sport partners) to ensure that young people are diverted away from the justice system.

Prepared by Phil Rutherford

Youth Justice Strategic Lead

Philip.rutherford@walsall.gov.uk