

Youth Offending

Introduction

Children and young people in contact with the youth justice system have greater health and well-being needs than other children of their age. The 2013 Young Minds Report shows that 95% of imprisoned young offenders had a mental health issue, and 80% had up to five vulnerabilities including both mental health and behavioural issues, and social problems.

Often the children and young people in contact with the youth justice system will also be known to children's social care. Children and young people in contact with the youth justice system are likely to be among those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), looked after children or at risk of sexual exploitation.

Health outcomes for those in contact with the youth justice system include an increased risk of sexually transmitted disease, substance misuse and early pregnancy in females.

Young people known to the YOS may experience a range of risks associated with their offending behaviour which can include school absence, negative peer influences and special educational needs.

New Referrals to the Youth Justice Service

Table 1 shows the number of referrals made to the Youth Justice Service (YJS) from various sources over the period 2015-2018. Note that the number of referrals does not refer to the number of individuals as some received more than one referral.

Table 1

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Total Referrals	320	271	222	111

This reduction in the number of cases being referred to YJS can partly be accounted for by a corresponding increase in cases being referred for Restorative Interventions (RI), however it is in line with a national trend.

Outcomes for young people referred to the YJS by Type

There are a range of outcomes for young people following referral to the YJS, as shown in table 2.

Table 2

Outcome Type	Outcome	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Court Outcome	Absolute Discharge	4	1	4	1
	Bound Over		1		
	Compensation Order	6		1	2
	Conditional Discharge	18	14	10	8
	Costs	59	42	25	1
	Curfew Order		1		
	Detention and Training Order	3		4	3
	Discontinued	2	2		
	Disqualified from Driving		5	1	
	Fine	7	2	1	1

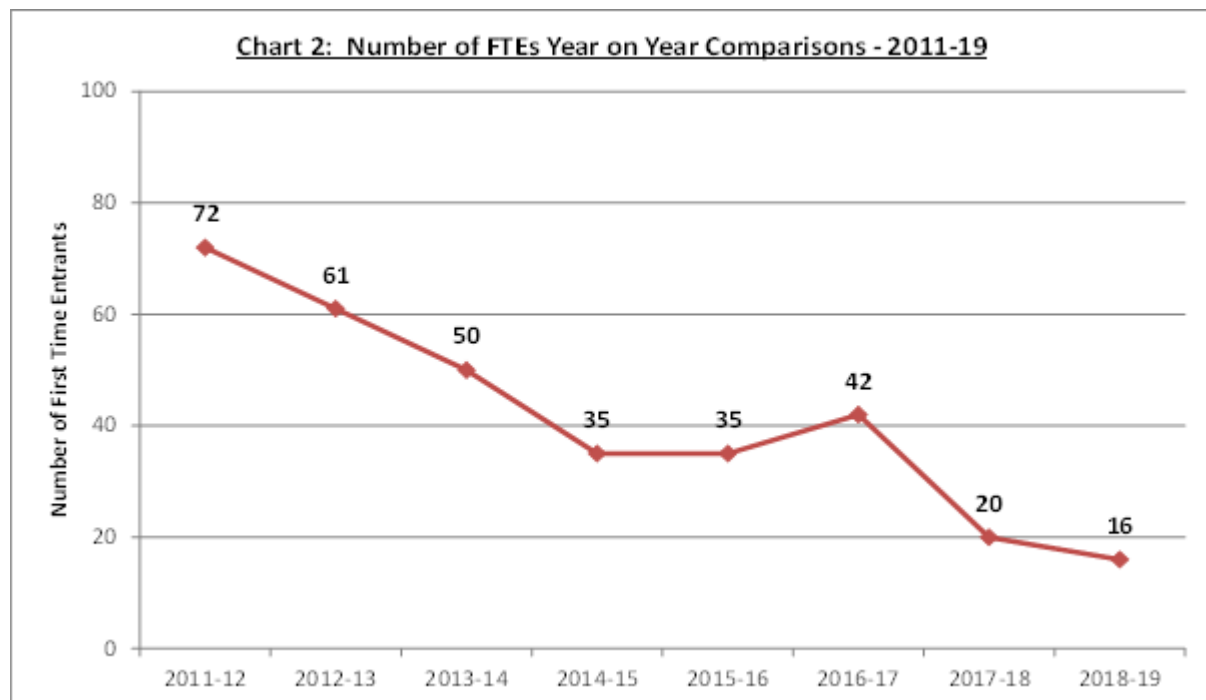
	Football Banning Order	3			
	Licence Recall	2			
	No Separate Penalty	1			
	Not Guilty/Acquitted				1
	Order Revoked	15	19	9	1
	Penalty Points (Motoring)		1		
	Referral Order	30	33	20	17
	Referral Order Extension	14	8	11	2
	Reparation Order	1			
	Restraining Order	2	2	3	
	Section 226 (Life)		2		
	Section 90-92 Detention	1			1
	Sex Offender Order Logged		1		
	Withdrawn/Dismissed	10	6	4	2
	Order to Continue	8	3	8	1
	YRO	21	28	8	13
	YRO - ISS		1	1	

	Order Varied		1		
	Victim Surcharge	31	23	16	
Pre-court Outcome	Caution 2			7	4
	Youth Caution	7	20	12	4
	Youth Conditional Caution	2	9	2	4
	Restorative Intervention	108	60		
	Triage	25	52	40	25
	Police Reprimand	17	1		
	Final Warning	6	5		
Grand Total		403	343	189	89

First Time Entrants to Criminal Justice System

The following Chart 1 depicts the First Time Entrants (FTE) trend from 2011-12 to 2018-19. These annual figures reveal a longer term trend of a 78% reduction in FTEs up to the end of the 2018/19 financial year.

Chart 1



Think Family Programme

The Think Family Programme aims to support those families with multiple and complex problems and to help those families reach their potential through the following four principles:

- Families will have an assessment that takes account of the needs of the whole family
- They will have an action plan that takes account of all relevant family members
- They will have a lead/key worker that is recognised by the family and other professionals involved with the family
- The objectives in the family action plan will be aligned to Hartlepool's Think Family Outcomes Plan

Families will be identified for the Think Family programme where they meet two or more of six headline problems set out by Government. These are:

- Parents or children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- Children who have not been attending school regularly

- Children of all ages who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a Child In Need or Child Protection Plan
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness
- Families affected by domestic violence and abuse (including stalking, honour based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage)
- Parents and children with a range of health problems

The lead/key worker will co-ordinate support for the family and help them achieve significant and sustained progress against the outcomes identified as part of their plan.

Table 3 shows the number of individuals, families and children under 18 involved in the Think Family Programme since 2015-16.

Table 3

Year	Number of Individuals attached to the programme	Number of Families attached to the programme	Number of under 18s in those families attached to the programme
15/16	968	250	571
16/17	1255	329	733
17/18	1374	343	805
18/19	424	108	245
Total	4021	1030	2354

Safer Hartlepool Partnership Strategic Assessment: Link Between Youth ASB and Youth Offending

Analysis of youth related anti-social behaviour for the 2017 Safer Hartlepool Partnership Strategic Assessment revealed that more than 600 individuals were involved in more than 1200 incidents during the reporting period. Repeat

perpetrators were also identified with 170 individuals involved in 820 incidents, equating to almost one third (31.3%) of all youth related ASB incidents in this year.

Forty eight individuals were recorded as being involved in 5 or more incidents in this year with the highest number perpetrated by any one individual being 38 incidents. The average age of repeat perpetrators in this year was 13 years and 9 months.

During this assessment period, it is also evident that anti-social behaviour is a precursor to criminal behaviour with a dip sample of the current cohort of Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPO's) identifying that many were known to the Police and Local Authority as perpetrators of anti-social behaviour in their early teenage years.

Research from the Local Government Association: Risk Factors for Youth Offending

A review of evidence by the LGA[\[1\]](#) found an emerging body of robust evidence for a link between experiencing family violence, and subsequent participation in youth offending. The evidence shows:

- The more risk factors, for example, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) experienced by young people, the greater the likelihood of participation in youth offending.
- The timing of experiencing family violence matters in terms of likelihood of youth offending.
- Young people who offend are often known to children's social care services. 43 per cent of young people who were convicted or deemed at risk of offending had had previous contact with children's social services and 15 per cent had current contact.
- There are links between a specific sub-type of family violence and involvement in youth offending, for example, between youth offending and experiencing: sibling violence, violence against women and girls (VAWG), childhood physical abuse, child to parent violence and witnessing domestic violence.

The Review also highlighted that there are a number of protective factors that reduce the risk that young people exposed to family violence will go on to offend; and, equally, a range of risk factors which increase this likelihood. These are shown in Tables 1 and 2 below:

Table 1: Protective factors influencing the link between family violence and youth offending

Individual factors	Family factors	Community factors
High self-esteem	Good sibling relationships High quality relationships with supportive adults	Good peer relationships Safe school environment

Table 2: Risk factors influencing the link between family violence and youth offending

Individual factors	Family factors	Community factors
Low social competency Experience of depression Failure at school Experiences of family violence that start in or persist into adolescence Substance abuse	Running away from home	Delinquent peers Verbal and physical abuse with peers

Current services

The National Youth Justice System primarily exists to ensure that children and young people between the age of 10 and 17 (who are arrested and charged with a criminal offence) are dealt with differently to adult offenders, to reflect their particular welfare needs.

In summary, young people who offend are:

- Dealt with by youth courts;
- Given different sentences in comparison to adults and

- When necessary, detained in special secure centres for young people.

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority and statutory partners to secure and coordinate local youth justice services for young people, area who come into contact with the Youth Justice System as a result of their offending behaviour. This is achieved through the established Youth Justice Service.

The primary functions of Youth Justice Services are to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people and reduce the use of custody.

Hartlepool Youth Justice Service was established in April 2000 and is a multi-agency service made up of representatives from Children's Services, Police, Probation, Public Health, Education, Community Safety and the local voluntary/community sector. Hartlepool Youth Justice Service seeks to ensure that:

- All young people entering the youth justice system benefit from a structured needs assessment to identify risk and protective factors associated with their offending behaviour in order to inform effective interventions.
- Courts and Referral Order panels are provided with high quality reports that enable them to make informed decisions.
- Orders of the Court are managed in such a way that they support the primary aim of the youth justice system, alongside managing risk of harm and ensuring there is due regard to the welfare of the young person.
- Services provided to courts are of a high quality and ensure that magistrates and the judiciary have confidence in the supervision of young people.
- Comprehensive bail and remand management services are in place locally for young people remanded or committed to custody, or on bail while awaiting trial or sentence.
- The needs and risks of young people sentenced to custodial sentences (including long-term custodial sentences) are assessed to ensure effective resettlement and management of risk.
- Those receiving youth justice services are treated fairly regardless of race, language, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or any other factor, and actions are put in place to address discrimination if identified

In addition to the above, the remit of the service has widened significantly in recent years due to both national and local developments relating to prevention, diversion and restorative justice and there is a now requirement to ensure that:

- Strategies and services are in place locally to prevent young people from becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour;
- Out-of-court disposals deliver targeted and bespoke interventions for those at risk of entering the Youth Justice System
- Assistance is provided to the Police when determining whether Youth Cautions should be issued and
- Restorative approaches are used, where appropriate, with victims of crime and ensures that restorative justice is central to work undertaken with young people who offend.

[1] Local Government Association, *The Relationship between Family Violence and Youth Offending*, June 2018