

First-time entrants and school exclusions

Youth Justice Board (YJB) data for January 2024 to December 2024 highlights that Bridgend Youth Justice Service (YJS) reported 30 first-time entrants, at a rate of 217 per 100,000 of the population. This was a significant increase from the data from the previous year, which was 19 first-time entrants at a rate of 137 per 100,000.

This marked a 58% increase, which was the largest across our comparators within our YJS 'family' as identified by the YJB. The majority of YJS areas within our 'family' have seen a decrease. Bridgend was one of three areas within the 'family' that has seen an increase in first-time entrants, albeit these increases were 24% and 16%, which are significantly lower than Bridgend Youth Justice Service (BYJS).

In response to this, BYJS identified the first-time entrants for the first three quarters of 2024-2025 with the aim of establishing if there had been issues identified within school prior to them entering the criminal justice system.

There were 26 children and young people identified from April to December 2024. These children and young people were checked against information held on the Capita management information system to establish if they had received any school exclusions.

Of the 26 names, three did not have any records on Capita. This was most likely due to them being close to 18 at age of entering the justice system and having left school a few years prior. One child was recorded as electively home educated. There were some, 27% (seven children) that had no exclusions recorded. Three of the children, 12%, had been permanently excluded. In total, 65% (17 children) had received either a fixed term or permanent exclusion from school.

The data on those that had received permanent or fixed term exclusions was analysed further and found that 65% of children had received five or more fixed term exclusions, and 24% had received eight or more. A high proportion of children, 71% (12 children) had received an exclusion for verbally threatening or abusive behaviour towards another pupil or adult. Nine children, 53%, had received an exclusion for physical abuse or assault. Three had received exclusions for drug or alcohol related incidents, one for racist abuse, and one for sexual misconduct.

Of the children that had received exclusions, 65% (11 children) were previously known to the Youth Justice Service. This means they will have been offered or received an intervention for prevention services. Six were not known to the service prior to becoming a first-time entrant and receiving a formal outcome.

Considerations

- BYJS is notified of all fixed term exclusion incidents involving violence or weapon(s).
- Each of these pupils automatically triggers a multi-agency discussion in the Prevention and Diversion (PAD) Panel.
- School and the Youth Justice Management Board are apprised quarterly of the above.