

Analysis of young people becoming First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System in Doncaster in 2016

Purpose

This paper is to help the South Yorkshire Police and the Doncaster Youth Offending Service understand the key factors around young people who became first time entrants (FTEs) to the youth justice system in Doncaster in 2016. This is with a view to informing a strategy to drive down numbers of FTEs in future years.

Data Source

The data for 2016 has been taken from the Doncaster Youth Offending Service case management system (Careworks) and is therefore locally-held data. It may therefore be slightly different from the official FTE data which is based on Police National Computer (PNC) data. PNC data provided by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Youth Justice Board (YJB) is not yet available for this period and in any case is only summary (not case-level) data.

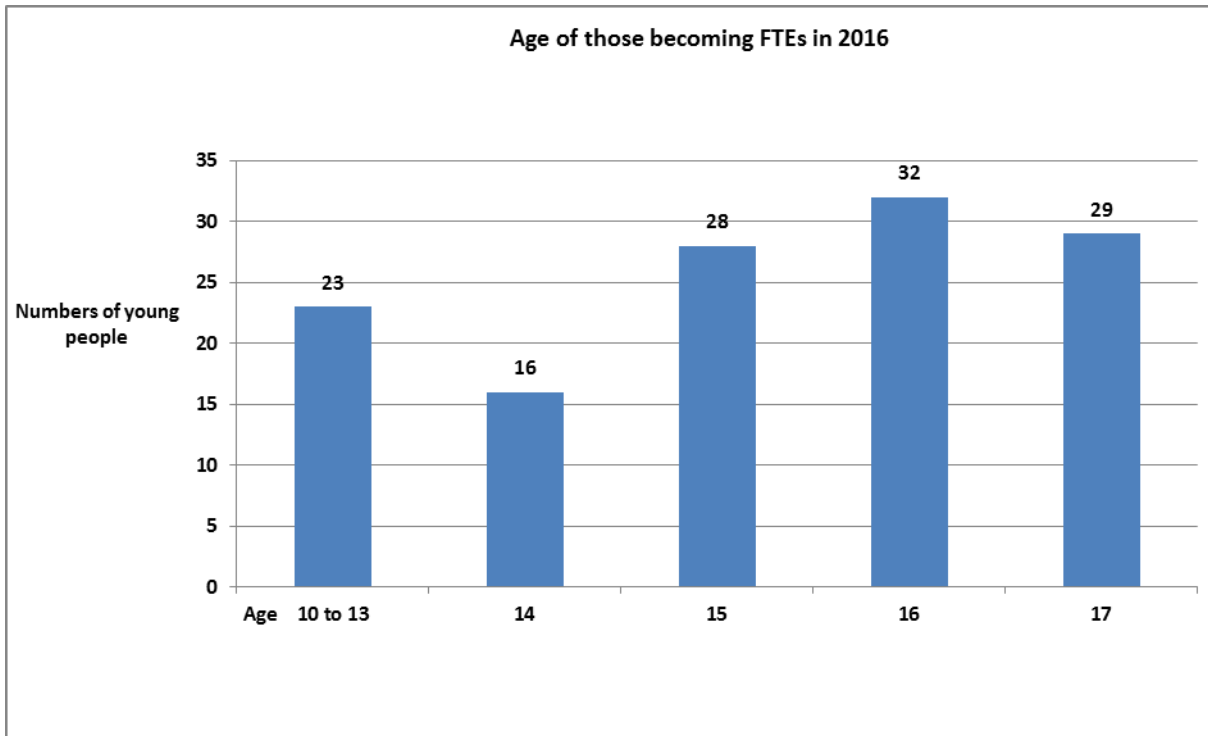
Data

Overall numbers

According to locally-held data, in 2016 there were 128 FTEs in Doncaster. This compares to 156 FTEs in 2015 (official PNC data). This represents a reduction of 18% between the two years. The Youth Justice Plan sets a target of 15% reductions in 2016/17 and 2017/18 and therefore if the official data, (once released), confirms the local data then the targets are being surpassed.

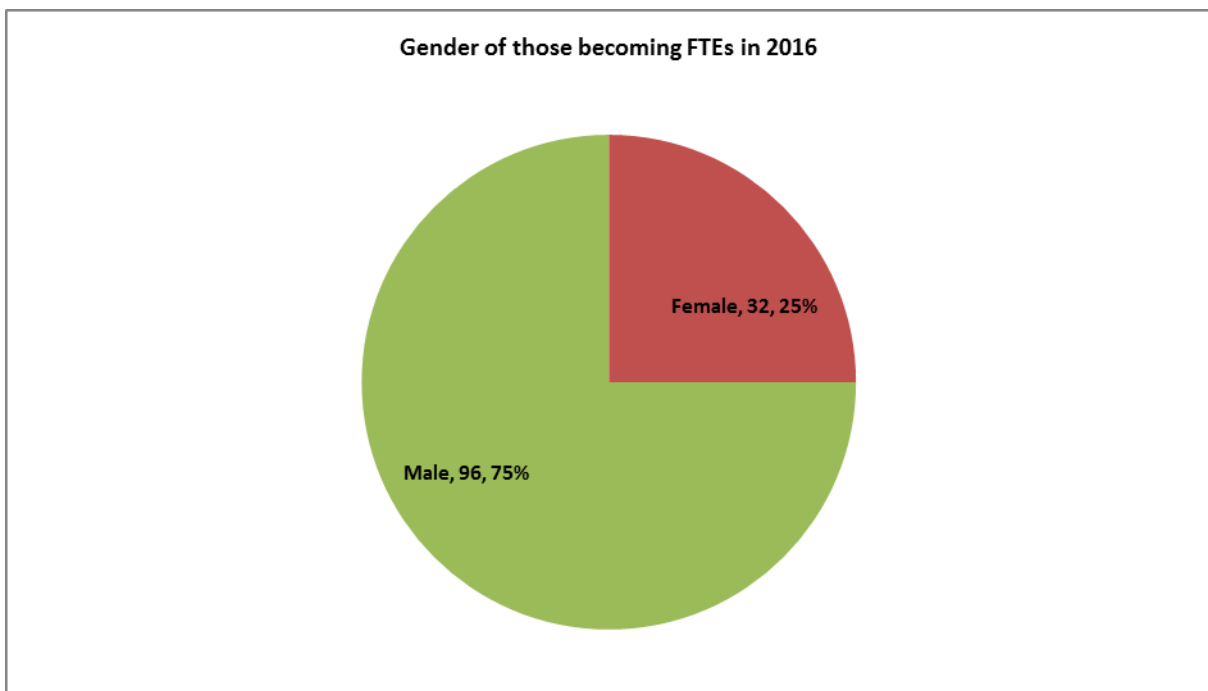
Demographics of FTEs in 2016

The ages of those becoming FTEs in 2016 are shown in the chart below:



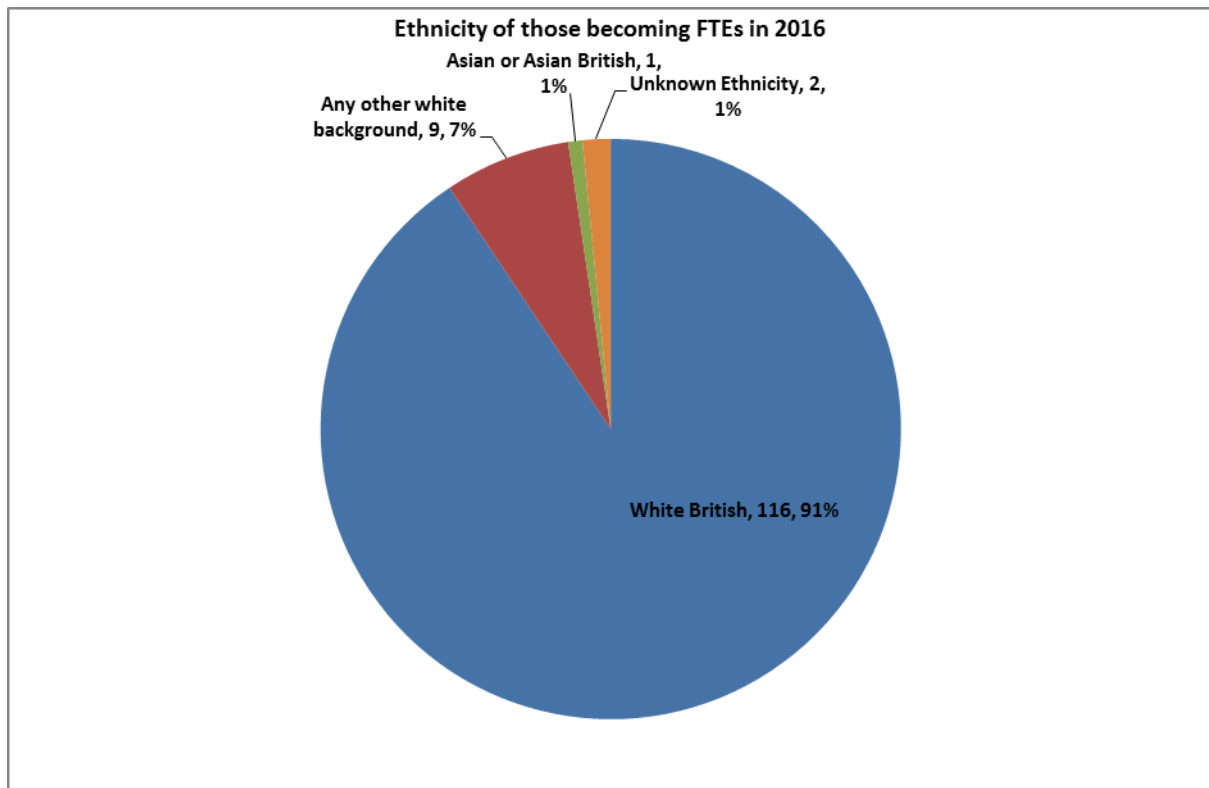
So the peak age for entry into the Doncaster youth justice system (YJS) is 16. This is a key transition age between school and work / training / college, etc.

The pie chart below shows the gender breakdown:



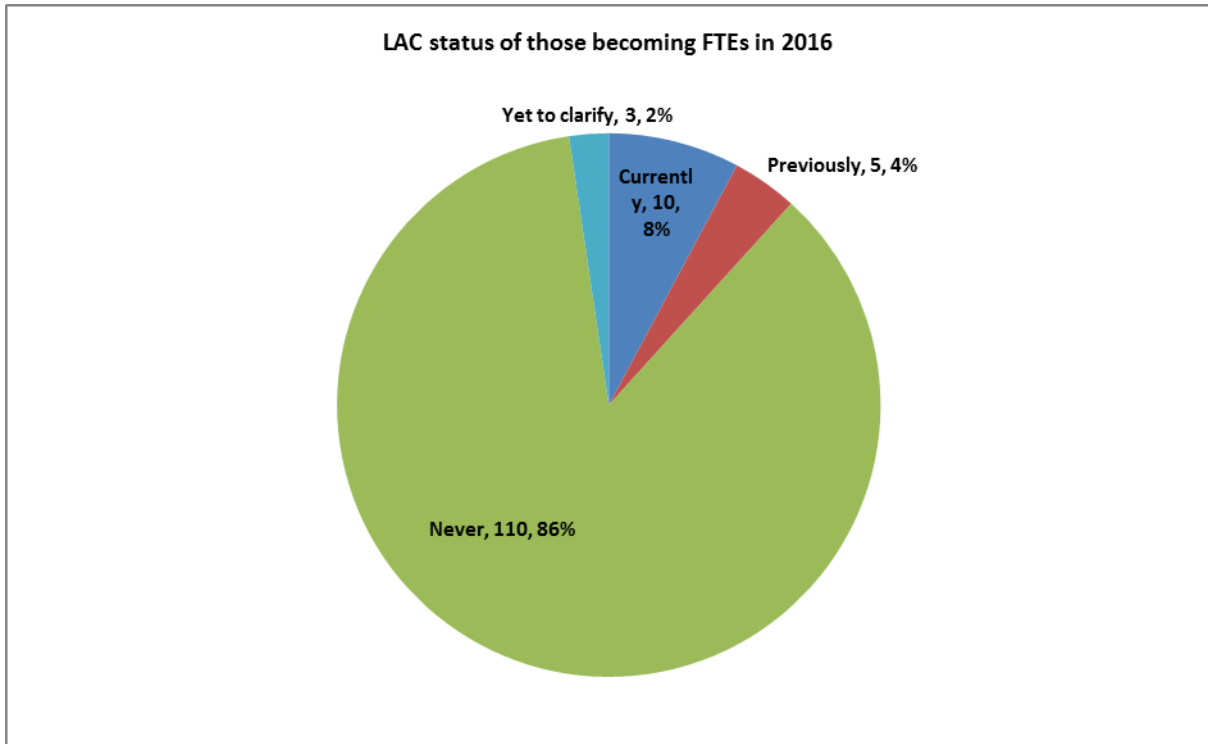
A quarter of FTEs are girls. This is a very similar proportion to girls who are “already” within the local YJS, (24%) so suggests some stability in the proportion of girls in the YJS in the near future.

The graph below shows the ethnicity of FTEs:



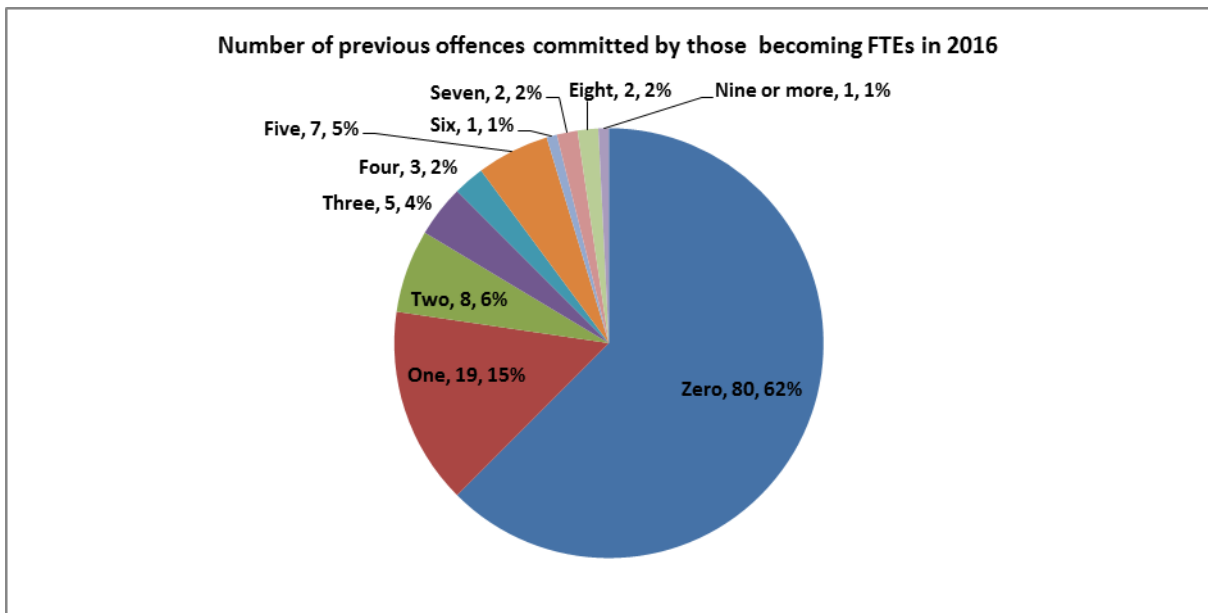
The vast majority are White British and the next largest group “Any other white background” includes those with East European heritage.

The chart below shows whether the FTEs are currently or previously have been LAC (looked after Children) by the local authority:



As Corporate Parents of ten young people who became FTEs in 2016 the local authority and Children’s Services Trust should check that all possible was done to prevent them from becoming FTEs and that their LAC status did not in any way contribute to the outcome.

The chart below shows how many offences had been committed by the FTEs prior to the episode leading to their FTEs status.

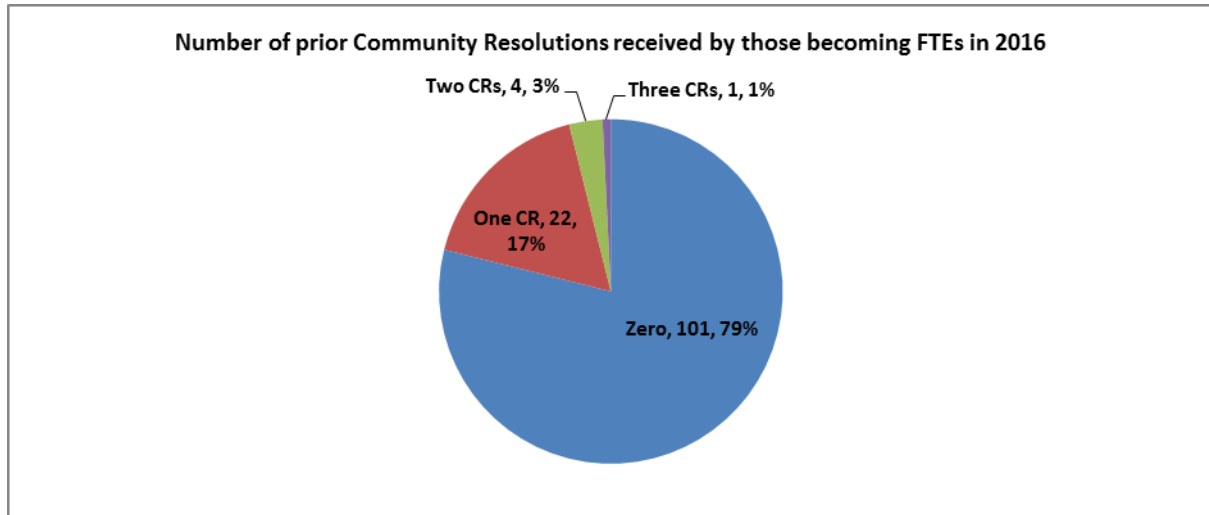


Approaching two-thirds had no offences at all prior to the episode resulting in them entering the YJS in 2016. These are the sorts of cases most easily diverted from the YJS, and we may need to increase

our understanding of why they were not diverted. If we wish to reduce further the number of FTEs then it is these young people who should be focussed on.

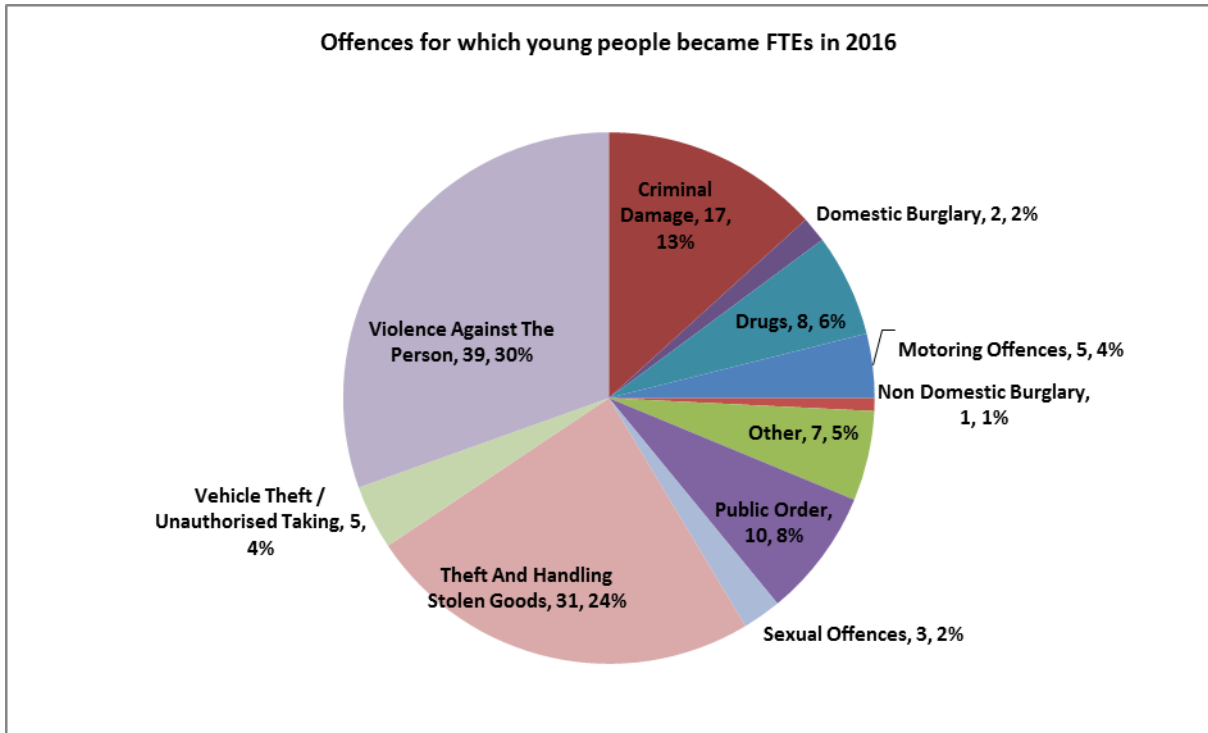
On average the FTEs had committed 1.26 offences before the episode that brought them into the YJS. This figure can be used as a benchmark for future analysis.

The chart below looks at the number of previous Community Resolutions received by the FTEs:



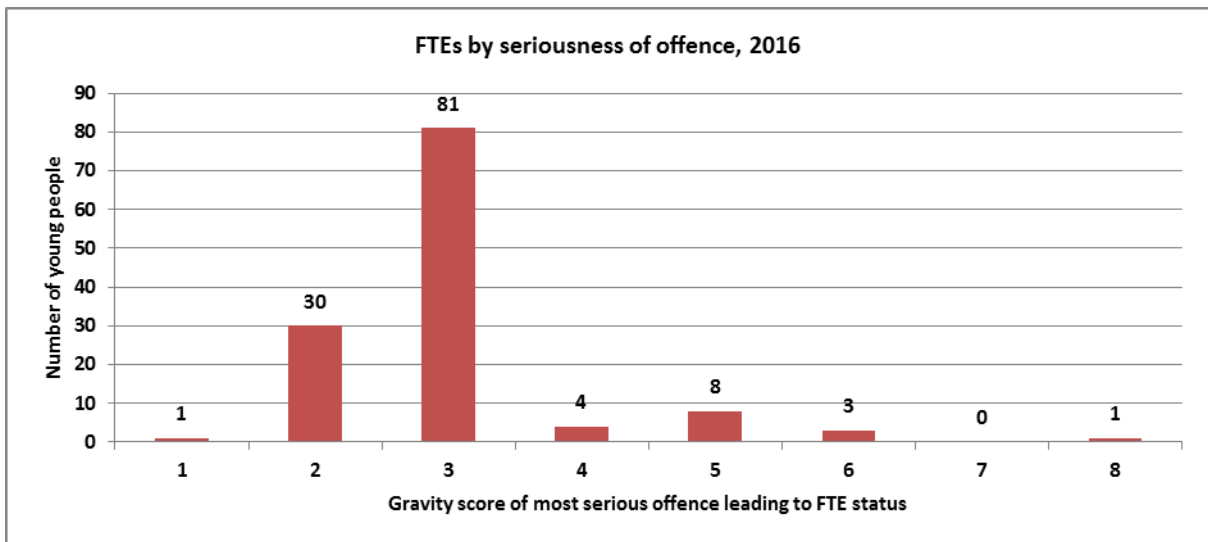
This shows that well over three-quarters had not received any Community Resolutions (sometimes referred to as RJ disposals) prior to them becoming FTEs. Again, these are the sorts of cases most easily diverted from the YJS, and we need to increase our understanding of why they were not diverted. The average number of prior Community Resolutions received by FTEs was 0.26.

The chart below looks at the type of offence which resulted in the young person becoming an FTE:



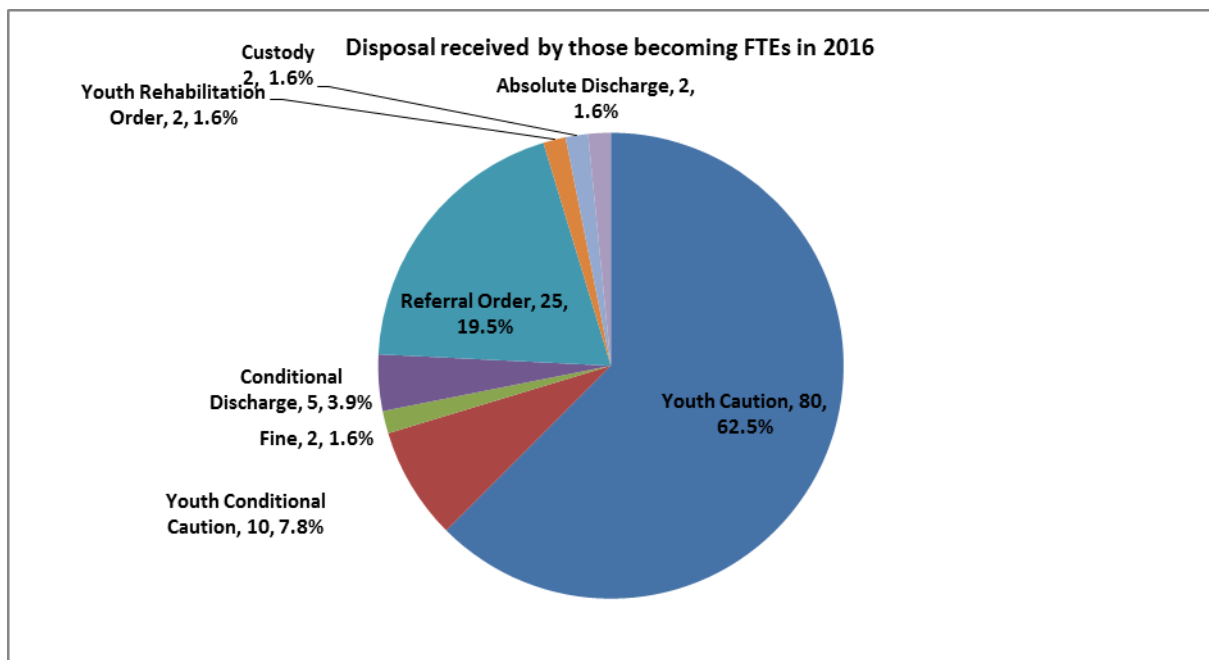
Well over half had committed violent offences or theft / handling. It should be remembered that violent offences include some minor offences such as Common Assault.

The graph below shows the breakdown of the offences by seriousness based on the YJB gravity score matrix which ranks seriousness of offences from 1 - 8:



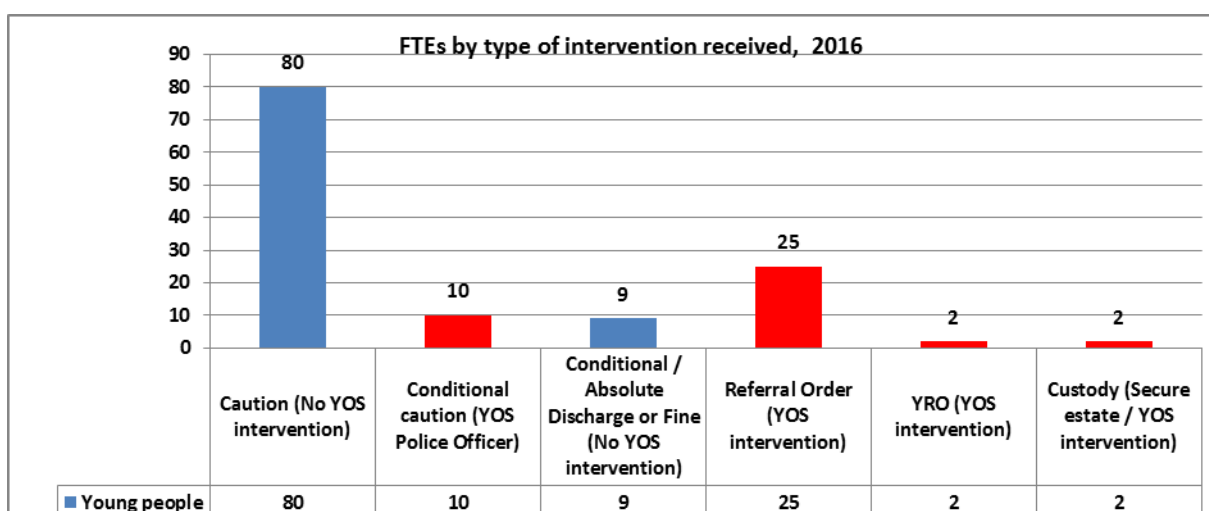
The vast majority of offences leading to FTE status were at gravity scores 2 and 3. These include: Theft / Handling, Criminal Damage, Possession of Class B Drugs, Common Assault, Being Found on Enclosed Premises, and some Public Order offences. The average gravity score of the index offence leading to FTE status was 3. This figure can be used as a benchmark for future analysis.

The graph below shows the types of disposal received by the FTEs in 2016:



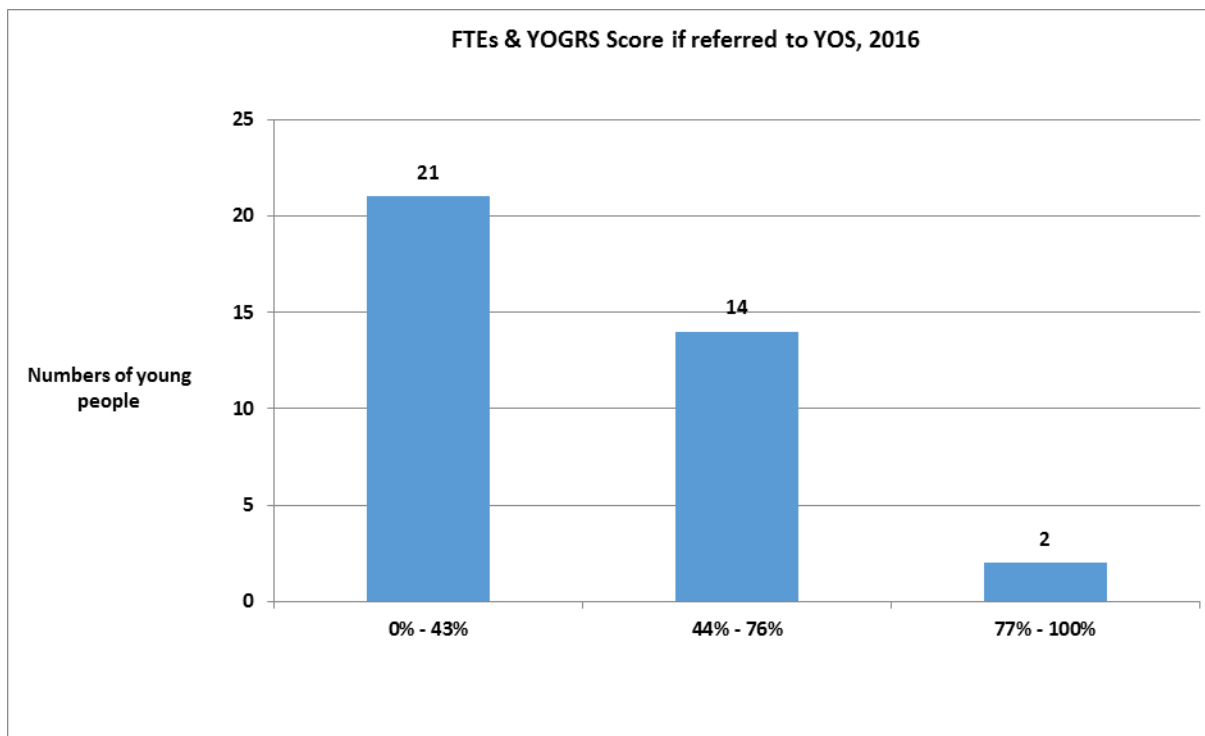
Approaching two-thirds (62.5%) received the lowest formal sanction of Youth Caution, which involves no intervention other than the police caution itself. A further 8% received a Conditional Caution which involves assessment and intervention from the Youth Offending Service. The remaining 30% all went to court without ever having received any caution / conditional caution. The majority of these (25) received a Referral Order, 2 received Youth Rehabilitation Orders and 2 went straight to custody. However 9 others who went straight to Court did not receive any disposal involving YOS intervention (Absolute/ Conditional Discharges and Fines).

The chart below shows the FTE disposals and whether they involve YOS intervention:



Only 30% of FTEs (39 young people) received any sort of disposal involving YOS intervention (shown in red above).

37 of the 39 young people referred to the YOS had had assessments completed at the point this report was being prepared (January 2017). The assessment produces a percentage likelihood of the young person reoffending within 2 years and the breakdown is shown below:



The average likelihood of reoffending within 2 years for all FTEs in 2016 was 46%. We can use this figure as a benchmark for analysis in future years. The more that young people who are less likely to reoffend are diverted from the YJS the higher the average likelihood of reoffending score for those who do become FTEs will be. The key is to ensure that those young people who do not need to be in the YJS are effectively diverted from it.

Triage

Currently there is no effective triage process in Doncaster. There is no panel established to review potential FTE cases to determine if they may be diverted from the youth justice system altogether. The police alone decide whether cases should be dealt with by way of community resolution, referral to EPIC, caution or prosecution. There is a meeting of managers within the EPIC team to allocate the cases referred from the police, but this meeting has no decision-making over which cases should and should not be diverted from the youth justice system. This meeting has been referred to as the "Triage Panel" but this is misleading.

South Yorkshire Police are now rolling out triage across the county, and Barnsley is the first area to implement the new process. At a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner in February 2017 it was agreed that Doncaster could begin working out how triage will operate in the borough, and meetings between the police and Youth Offending Service are arranged.

Summary

It should be recognised that 2016 was a transition year for the management of diversion from the Doncaster YJS. This is due to a number of factors:

- The 2016/17 Youth Justice Plan set a demanding target of a 15% reduction in FTEs in 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- The EPIC team, tasked with reducing numbers of FTEs, became operational in July 2016
- A meeting was held with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for South Yorkshire on 21/12/2016 to inform him of the previously very poor FTE performance for South Yorkshire as a whole (highest rate in the country) and Doncaster (5th highest amongst all YOT areas) and to inform him of the work being undertaken in Doncaster to address this. A further meeting held on 21/02/2017 with the PCC and senior police officers agreed that Doncaster should go ahead and develop a triage process.
- The processes whereby young people become FTEs may be reviewed and clarified by the drawing up of a flow chart showing the key agencies, key decision-making points and key actions to be taken by each agency at each point. The flow chart, if agreed, would ensure that no young person admitting the offence can become an FTE without the case being considered by the Triage Panel.
- It is particularly important to ensure correct processes have been followed where the young people concerned are looked after children (LAC) as in these cases the council, the Trust and its partners have a Corporate Parenting responsibility.

Entering the YJS can have a very detrimental effect on young people's life chances, particularly in relation to future employment, as it gives the young person a criminal record. It is therefore not something which should happen without appropriate alternatives being considered.

FTE numbers should reduce in the future, particularly if all potential FTEs are considered first by the Triage Panel. Indeed there are already encouraging signs that we are on track to surpass the target reductions set. (Please refer to Appendix A which compares FTE performance in 2015 and 2016.)

However, it is of concern that amongst those who did become FTEs during 2016, so few (only around one fifth) had previously had a Community Resolution and that so many (approaching two-thirds) had no previous offences.

Recommendations

South Yorkshire Police and the Doncaster Youth Offending Service are recommended to consider putting measures in place to ensure that young people are not unnecessarily brought into the local YJS. Actions to achieve this may include:

- South Yorkshire Police and Doncaster Youth Offending Service working together to establish an effective Triage Panel. This would involve agreeing comprehensive Terms of Reference and a new process for consideration of cases for caution / prosecution or diversion.
- Once a Triage panel is established, South Yorkshire Police to ensure that all cases where young people may become First Time Entrants are first discussed at the Panel with a view to an alternative being considered.
- South Yorkshire Police and Doncaster Youth Offending Service to develop and agree Terms of Reference and guidance to help the new Triage Panel decide the sorts of cases which can appropriately be diverted and the sorts of case which need to progress to caution / prosecution.

APPENDIX A

The reduction of first time entrants (FTEs) to the youth justice system

The measure is the rate per 100,000 local youth population who enter the youth justice system by receiving a caution, conditional caution or a sentence.

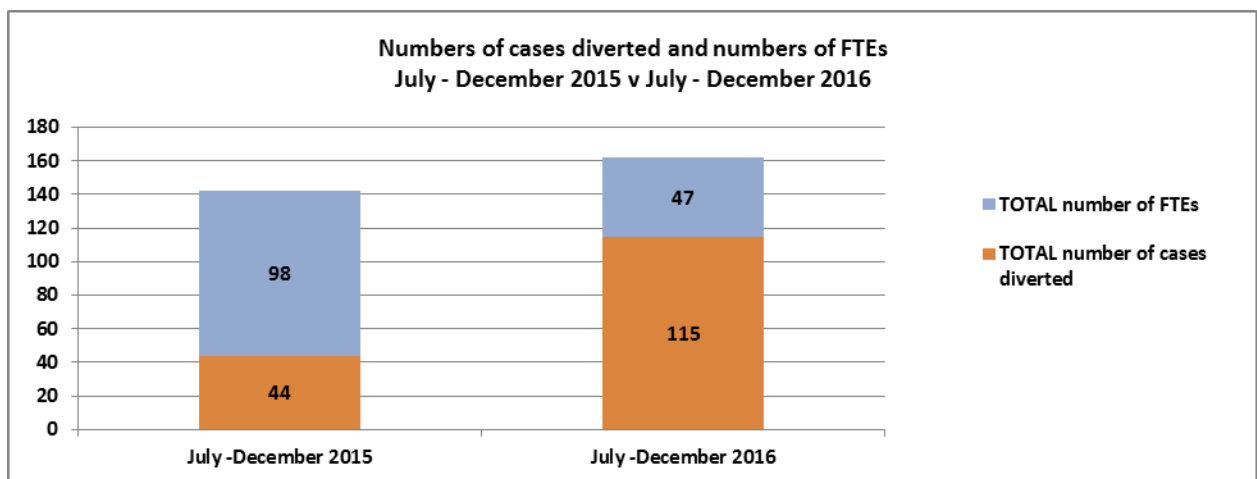
According to the latest official data Doncaster has the 5th highest FTE rate in England, and South Yorkshire as a whole has the highest rate in England. The Doncaster Youth Justice Plan 2016/17 sets a target of 15% reduction each year, 2016/17 and 2017/18. The strategy for achieving these reductions is for the new EPIC team to provide a robust alternative option for those young people who would otherwise enter the youth justice system for the first time. However there needs to be a process agreed between South Yorkshire Police and Doncaster Youth Offending Service for determining which cases can be diverted from the youth justice system.

The EPIC Team has only been fully operational since July 2016. Therefore in order to ascertain the impact of EPIC we need to compare the number of FTEs over the last 2 quarters (July – December 2016) with the same period in 2015. We do not yet have official PNC data on FTEs for the period July – December 2016, but we do have locally collected data. Therefore the caveat for the data given below is that it is unofficial.

Local Performance Data on FTEs

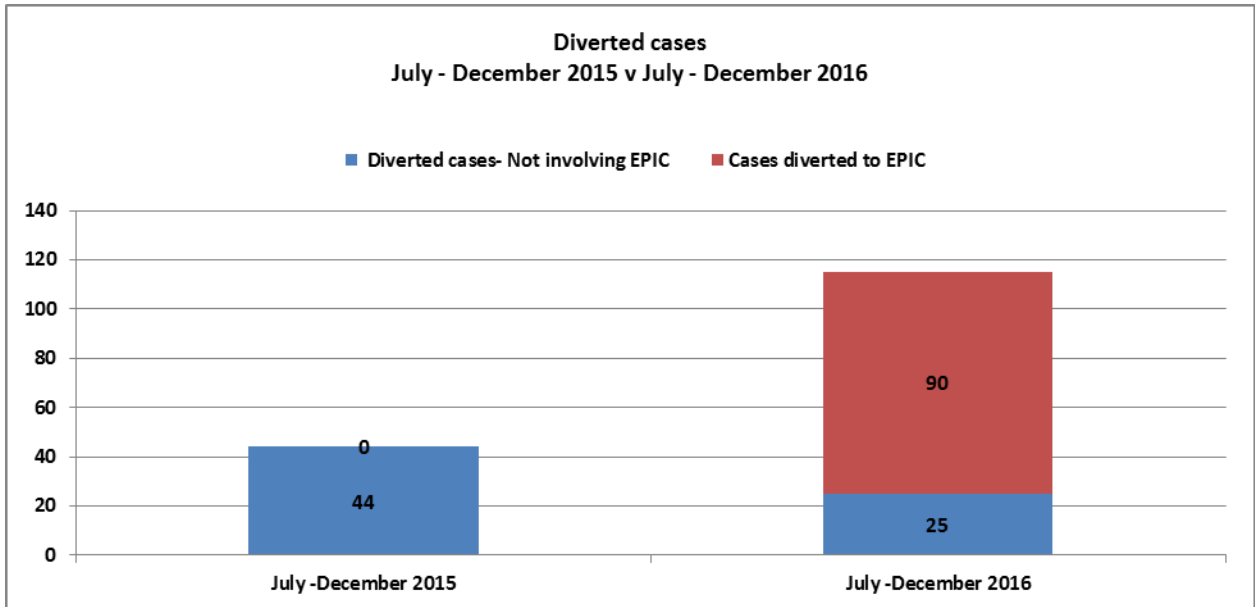
According to local data there were 47 first-time entrants (FTEs) to the youth justice system in Doncaster in the period July - December 2016.

There were 98 FTEs in the period July – December 2015. This amounts to a 52% reduction. The change in outcomes is shown in the chart below:



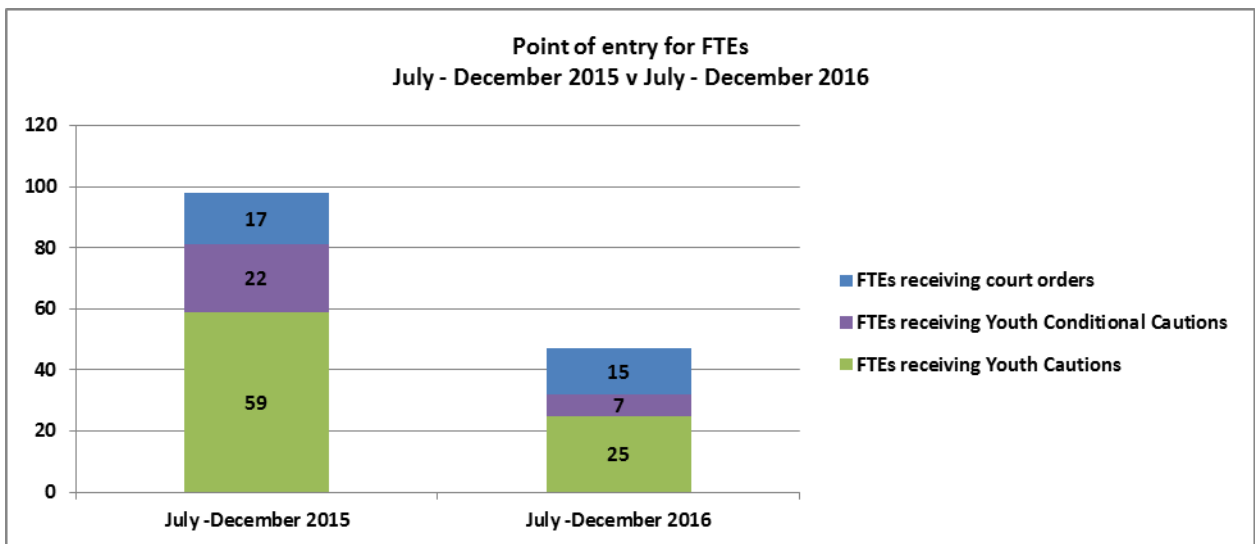
However the chart above also shows a slight overall increase in the total number of cases which were potential FTEs.

The graph below looks just at the “diverted” cases in each year:

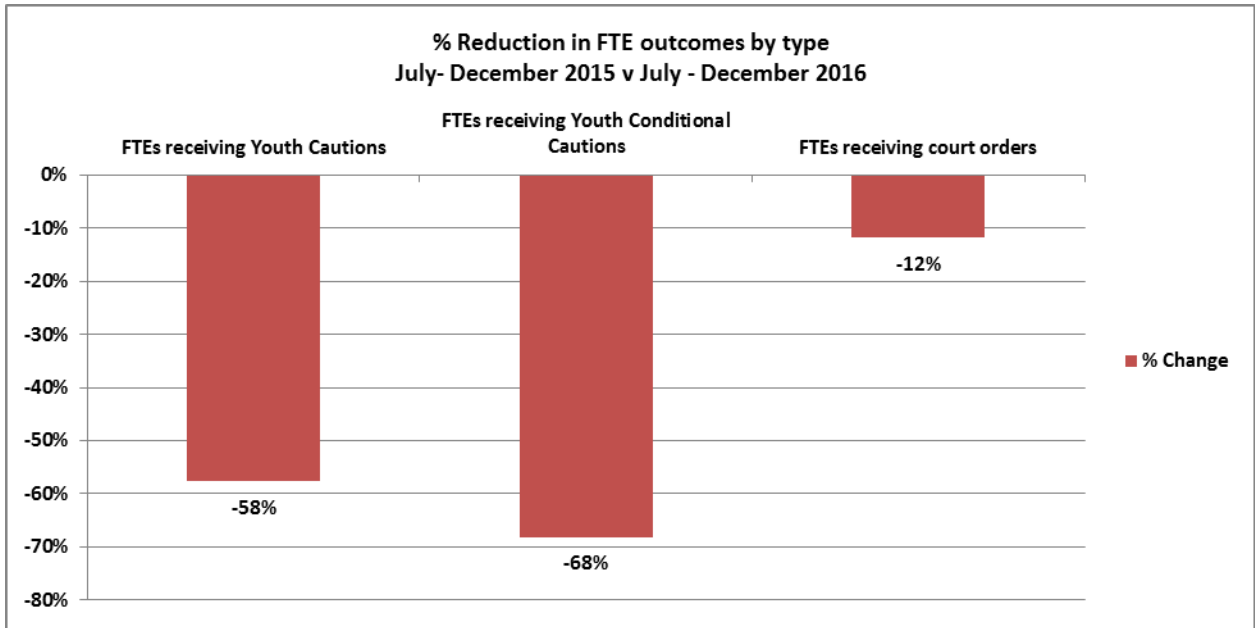


It shows that whilst there was no EPIC option in 2015, there were 90 triage referrals to EPIC in 2016. However, the reduction in “non-EPIC” diverted cases suggests that some young people are now being referred to EPIC who previously would nevertheless have been diverted from the youth justice system.

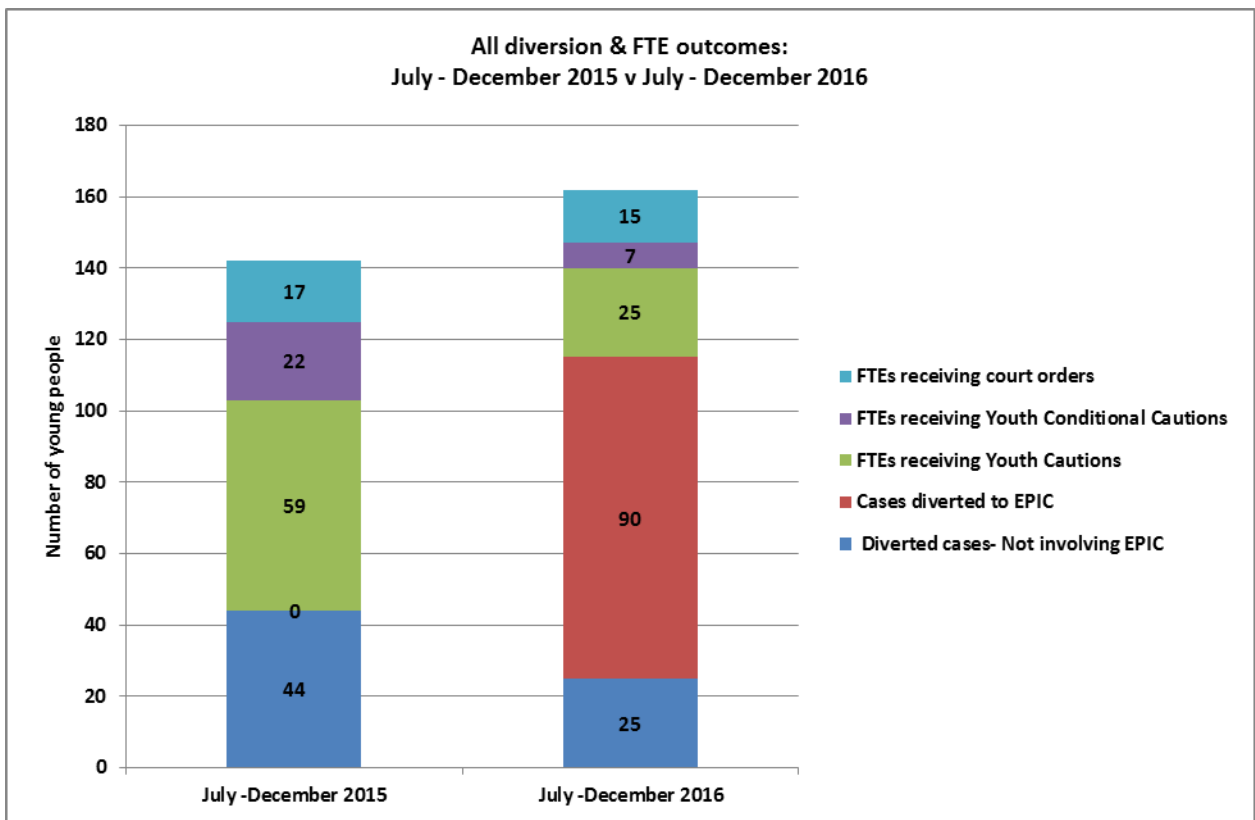
The chart below looks only at the young people who did become FTEs, and the outcome that made them FTEs in the 2 periods:



This shows that the reductions are largely in terms of cautions and conditional cautions, as would be expected. Young people entering the youth justice system for the first time by going straight to court have usually committed more serious offences which are not amenable to diversion. The % reductions in each FTE outcome are shown in the chart below:

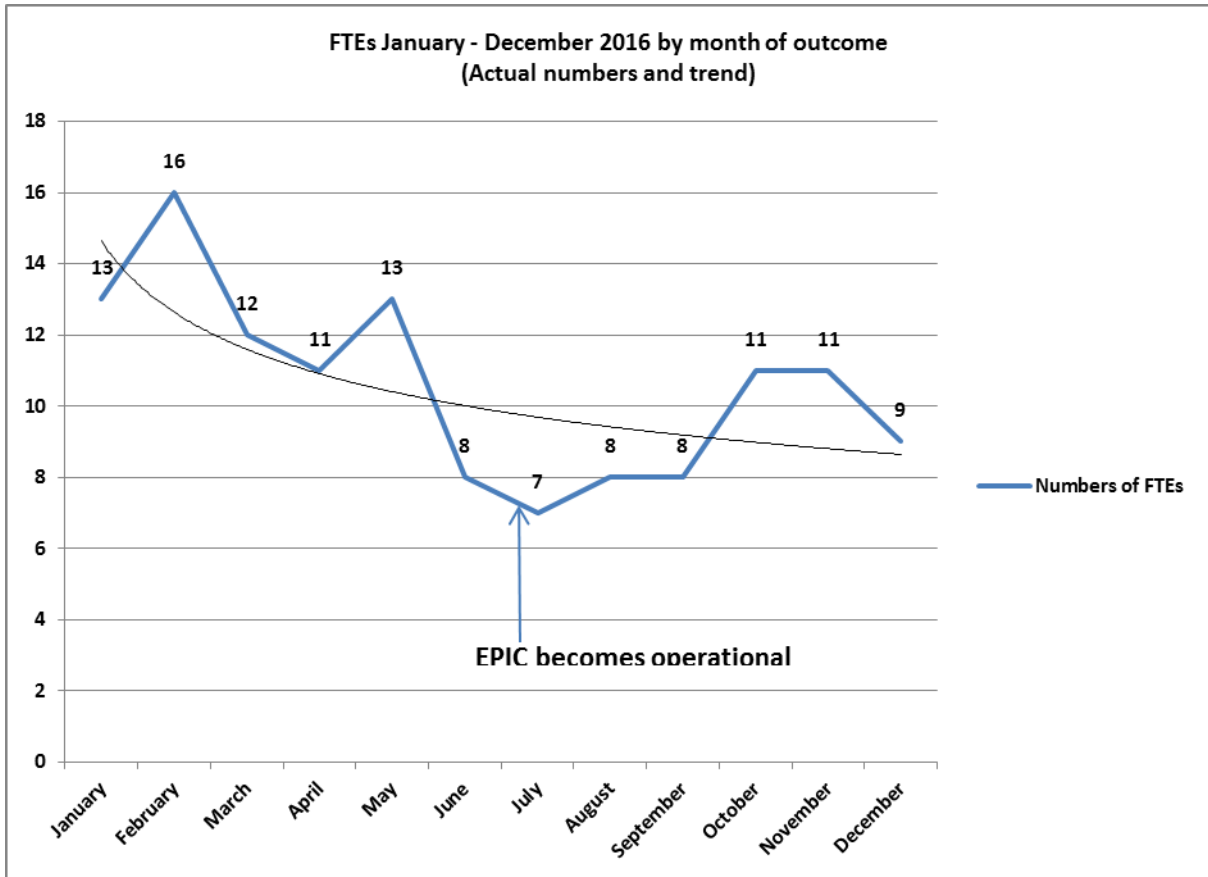


The chart below shows all types of disposal for potential FTEs over the 2 years:



This shows that the new option for 2016, of diversion to EPIC, means more cases overall are deemed to be “potential FTEs”. However it also shows that the impact of the new option is a reduction in use of all the other options, including all 3 ways of becoming an FTE.

Finally, the chart below gives a month-by-month breakdown of numbers of FTEs in 2016:

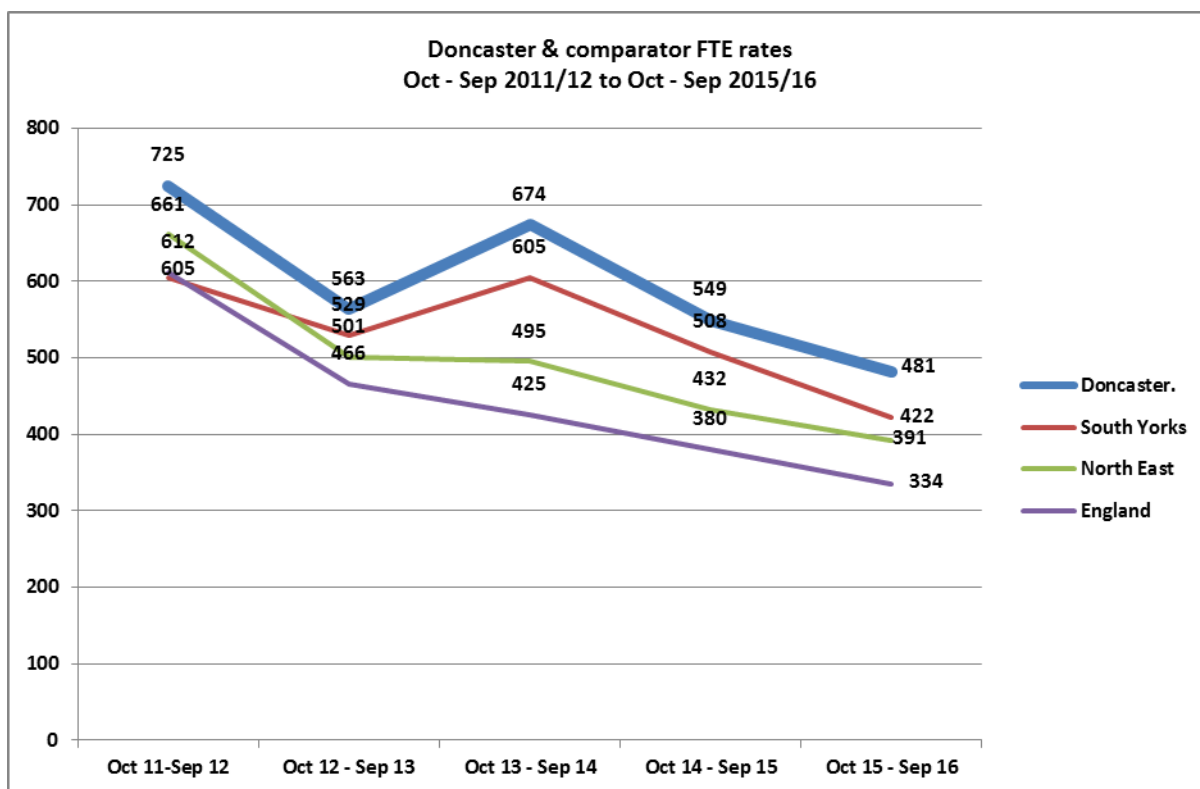


This shows a general decline in the numbers of FTEs once EPIC became operational. There were 73 FTEs in the first 6 months and 54 in the second half of the year, which represents a 26% reduction.

PNC Performance Data on FTEs

Indicator	Direction of travel	Forecast to meet target	Peer comparison	Overall performance
First-time entrants to the youth justice system	Reducing	On target	Higher than all comparators	AMBER

The chart below shows how Doncaster compares to the South Yorkshire Policing area, the North East Region and the whole of England in terms of the FTE rate:

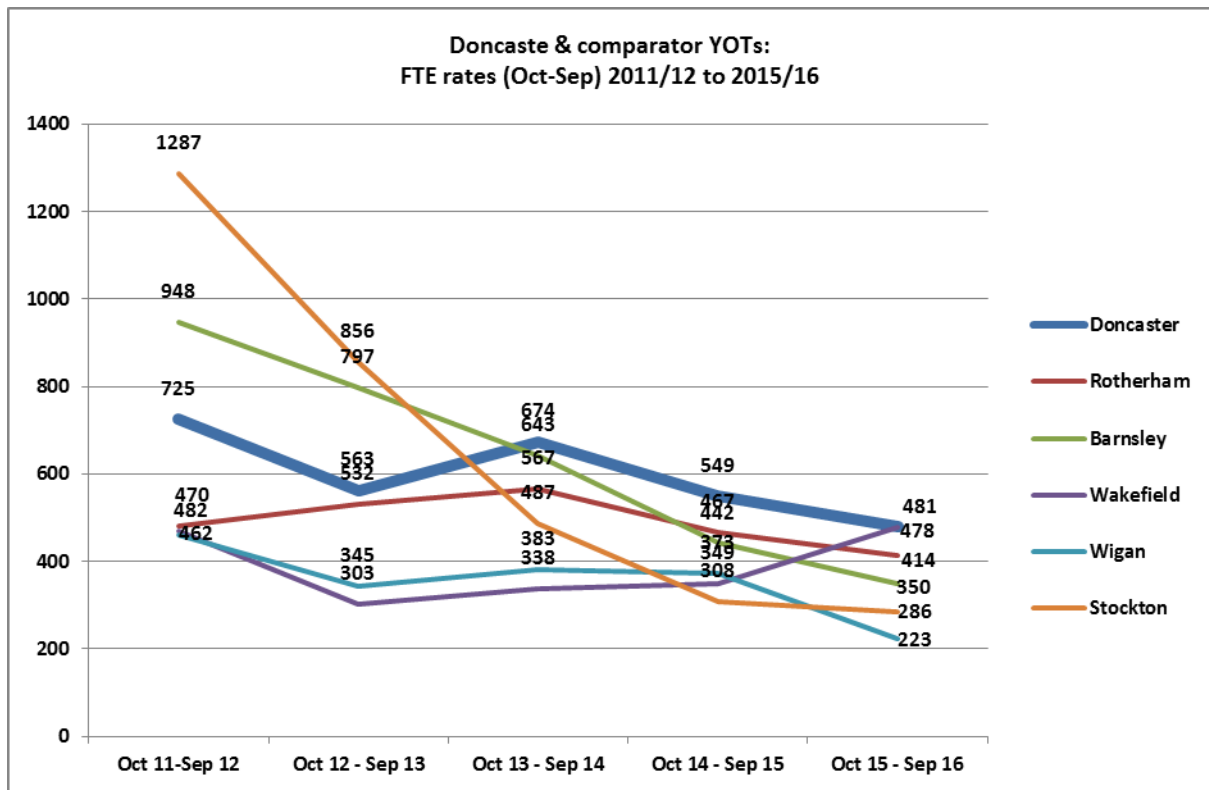


Area	Oct 14 to Sept 15	Oct 15 to Sept 16	% change
Doncaster	549	481	-12.3%
South Yorkshire	508	422	-16.9%
North East Region	432	391	-9.3%
Comparator areas*	388	378	-2.6%
England	380	334	-12%

- The comparator areas are: Rotherham, Barnsley, Wakefield, Wigan and Stockton-on-Tees as these are the most similar areas based on Youth Justice Board methodology.

The measure is the rate per 100,000 local youth population who enter the youth justice system by receiving a caution or a sentence. There were 131 first-time entrants (FTEs) to the youth justice system in Doncaster in the period October 2015 to September 2016, equivalent to a rate per 100,000 youth population of 481. This is a 12% reduction on the previous 12-month period, and is in line with the national reduction rate. However the rate has reduced more quickly in the whole of South Yorkshire, and Doncaster's rate remains higher than the PCC area, the region, the average for comparator areas and England. Doncaster has a target of reducing the rate by 15% in 2016/17 and a further 15% in 2017/18. We are on track to achieve this.

The chart below shows how Doncaster's FTE rate over the last 5 years compares with those for the 5 comparator areas:



It shows that whilst the rate for Doncaster has reduced from 725 to 481 it remains the highest amongst the 6 YOT areas as their rates have also generally reduced during this period.

Summary

The availability of EPIC appears to be having some impact in reducing the numbers of FTEs in Doncaster. However, the FTE rate in Doncaster remains well above that for comparator areas. In order to bring the FTE rate down further there needs to be an effective Triage Panel and process agreed and established by South Yorkshire Police and the Youth Offending Service to determine which cases may be appropriately diverted from the youth justice system.