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LIVING IT

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND JUSTICE

Edited by Claire Lightowler, Susie Cameron and Brian Rogers



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OUR MAIN AIM in editing this issue has been to create a space for those who had contact with the justice system as young people to share their experiences and reflections.

This issue represents an attempt to shift power and control a bit from the professionals who usually edit these types of things, to people who have lived it. This started with creating an editorial team that includes members who have committed offences as young people, been young victims of offending, work with young people involved in the justice system and provide support to those working with young people. The process of working on this hasn't been easy but we've loved it and have all benefited hugely from it.

Rather than focusing on services, structures or organisations our starting point has been the issues that are important to young people. This publication is slightly different from other editions of *Scottish Justice Matters* because to ensure space is given to those who have lived it, there are fewer contributions from the research and professional community, though their voices are also here and we are really grateful for their input.

Regardless of the constitutional future for Scotland and what comes next, we need to be more careful to ensure that young people can have an active role in shaping their own lives and the society in which they live

The young people who shared their, often very personal and moving stories, did so because they want things to change and improve. They clearly articulate practice and policy changes that could have improved their lives. Most of those sharing their experiences as young people are now quite far along the road of dealing with the issues associated with their contact with the justice system, and we wish them all the very best. It's not always been easy for them to share their stories, and it's noticeable that they have done so primarily for the good of the young people that follow them. We strongly believe that we have a responsibility to listen carefully to their voices and all of us need to reflect on what we can do, whatever your role or position in society, to make a difference to children and young people who may be experiencing similar things.

The lived-experience contributions include: Amie Robertson who tells us about having a brother in prison, Kate reflects on her offending journey, Brian Rogers tells us about his attempts to secure employment, two 16 year old boys from Glasgow give us an insight into bullying and the online gaming community and Becca shares her views about being in secure care. There is also a contribution compiled by Charlotte Bozic which documents young people's stories about those who have made a difference to them.

We also have contributions about issues that young people identified as being of particular importance, this include the impact of trauma and loss (Nina Vaswani), mental health supports (Sophie Pilgrim), supports for those leaving custody (Jane Kelly), the evidence about cyber-bullying (Helen Cowie, Brian Donnelly), employment (Josh Littlejohn and Richard Thompson), school exclusion (Karen Pryde) and a piece about Youth Advantage Outreach as an example of alternative supports for young people (Susie Cameron).

The final piece is a review of the Edinburgh Study of Youth transitions and offending, a major research study which follows young people's journeys from secondary school into adulthood, which provides a useful context to the issues explored (Lesley McAra and Susan McVie).

The referendum campaign has been in the background throughout our editorial journey and as we start to look back we think it has highlighted our key point: that young people have something of value to say and to contribute. Regardless of the constitutional future for Scotland and what comes next, we need to be more careful to ensure that young people can have an active role in shaping their own lives and the society in which they live. We need both to listen to young people's views and experiences, respond to these experiences, ensure they have an opportunity to actively contribute and support them more effectively to make such a contribution. This is of even greater importance when we are living and working amongst young people who are experiencing significant challenges and who may particularly struggle to contribute or articulate their experiences and views if we don't change how we do things.

Society, practice and policy needs to improve to prevent a similar publication appearing in the future which documents almost identical stories. For us, the key thread running through this issue is a call for change which involves children and young people as partners in it.

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UK Justice Policy Review:

Volume 2

6 May 2011 to 5 May 2012

UK Justice Policy Review:

Volume 3

6 May 2012 to 5 May 2013

By Richard Garside, Arianna Silvestri
and Helen Mills

UK Justice Policy Review:

Volume 1

6 May 2010 to 5 May 2011

By Richard Garside and Helen Mills

CENTRE FOR CRIME AND JUSTICE STUDIES

The *UK Justice Policy Review* is an annual series of publications tracking year-on-year criminal justice policy developments in the UK since the formation of the coalition government in May 2010.

Each review focuses on the key criminal justice institutions of policing, the courts and access to justice, and prison and probation, as well as changes to the welfare system. The publications are free to download and the online versions include links to all the original data and the references used in the review.

UK Justice Policy Review: Volume 1 (May 2010 to May 2011), *UK Justice Policy Review: Volume 2* (May 2011 to May 2012) and *UK Justice Policy Review: Volume 3* (May 2012 to 5 May 2013) are now online and available to download from: www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/project/uk-justice-policy-review