

YOUTH JUSTICE, PARTICIPATION AND RADICAL MORAL COMMUNITARIANISM

Sean Creaney, Senior Lecturer in Applied Social Sciences, Stockport College & Roger Hopkins Burke, Principal Lecturer in Criminology, Nottingham Trent University

Abstract

It is disconcerting that practice in youth justice tends to be coercive and disengaging. The progressive shift has been largely confined to increases in diversion; for those children who are subject to formal youth justice sanctions the dominant approach continues to be punitive. The voices of children and young people who offend are often marginalised. In the context of a proposed radical moral communitarianism we critically discuss how such issues could be addressed. Specifically we argue that young people must be dealt with in a holistic way, in the context of an intervention strategy which fully addresses the social context of their behaviour. In this reformulated positive participatory environment, all young people should be given legitimate opportunities which will enable positive engagement, involvement and participation in a society where they have appropriate rights and responsibilities based on their aptitude and potential. Crucially these improvements should be applied to all young people under the age of 21 in an extended youth justice system.

Keywords

Youth justice; radical moral communitarianism; participation; engagement; extended youth justice system; voice and influence; child/practitioner relations.