

# *The [Safer Communities](#) journal is seeking submissions for its special issue “Theory and practice of co-production and co-creation in Youth Justice”*

## **Overview of special issue**

This special issue focuses on the theory and practice of co-production and co-creation in youth justice settings. This is timely, given the noticeable shift towards a participation culture as part of the Youth Justice Board’s Child First agenda in England and Wales (YJB, 2021) and recommendations for pursuing increased participatory rights-based practices to facilitate children’s meaningful involvement in the design, delivery, and evaluation of youth justice services (Peer Power/YJB 2021). Children’s ‘participatory rights’ are universal and unconditional under international children’s rights legislation (Brown, 2020; Creaney and Case, 2021).

To what extent the Child First agenda is compatible or not with other approaches and paradigms, such as trauma-informed practice, restorative justice, and the desistance model, has been under-researched and under-theorized. This special issue seeks to contribute to this (limited) knowledge base. Crucially, we are seeking manuscripts that provide rich and insightful accounts of the steps required to co-create transformative participation with children to foreground their voices in decision making.

Co-production involves prioritising children’s concerns and needs, while acknowledging their knowledge and capability to participate in shared decision-making processes as equal partners with professionals. Children, as ‘experts by experience’, do hold expertise on their own lives, often accrued through navigating adverse circumstances. However, the extent to which children’s perspectives are valued in the field of youth justice and whether they are considered worthy of being ‘experts by experience’ has been under explored. Thus, this special issue is seeking manuscripts (theoretical, conceptual and/or empirical contributions, including case study, literature review or viewpoint papers) that connect with these themes, which offers insight into the purpose and key features of co-production initiatives.

Co-production can be a conceptual gateway to transformation, as these relationships between children and professionals become a democratic process of co-learning and co-creation (Percy-Smith 2012). It has been argued that co-production is fundamental to the transformative potential of Child First principles in practice, but unequal power (Burns and Creaney, in press) and inspection frameworks that prioritise risk assessment, risk management and the completion of offence focused work (Day, 2022) are distinct barriers to overcome. Hence, relationships between children and professionals are worthy of exploring, amidst the backdrop of youth justice culture and structures.

We anticipate the articles in this special issue will present evidence and research both nationally and internationally, on how to reverse unequal power dynamics by utilising children's knowledge and expertise, while also gaining trust and empathy through the sharing of lived experiences. More specifically, this involves discussion on how principles of co-production can be utilised in the field of youth justice with those under supervision.

Essentially, the purpose of this special issue is to offer a critical perspective on the facilitators and barriers to the theory and practice of co-production and co-creation in youth justice.

## **Potential areas of interest include (but are not limited to):**

- How Child First, restorative, trauma informed, and desistance-based models can be co-produced/co-created.
- Typologies, theories and models of participation and co-production.
- Arts-based programmes and interventions.
- Experiential peer support and mentorship.
- Co-producing resources to address access problems and to enhance engagement.
- Perspectives from practitioners and those with lived experience.
- Educational development projects and collaborative approaches to curriculum design and delivery.

## **Guest editors**

Dr Sean Creaney. Senior Lecturer in Criminology. Edge Hill University.

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Dr Anne-Marie Day. Lecturer in Criminology. Keele University.

## **Submission details**

Submission opening date: 10th March 2022

Submission closing date: 29th August 2022

To submit your manuscript, please go to the Safer Communities ScholarOne [page](#).

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