

The 'new youth justice' in the UK

How not to promote the wellbeing of children



**Wendy Stainton Rogers
Lesley-Anne Cull**

**Faculty of Health & Social Care,
The Open University**



Children and young people in England & Wales

Two competing legal agendas

- 'Every Child Matters'
- Youth Justice

Priorities are different

Every Child Matters Youth Justice

Child's welfare is paramount

Reducing youth crime

The 'Every Child Matters' agenda

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Economic wellbeing



Child's welfare is paramount

Services to

- Foster children's healthy development
- Meet children's needs
- Protect them from harm and neglect
- Promote their quality of life



Strategies

Surestart

Extended schools

Children's commissioner

Children's workforce strategy

The youth justice agenda

Reduce re-offending and offending



Reducing youth crime

Services to

- Divert children away from crime
- Control (including custody)
- Reparation – make amends
- Rehabilitate young offenders

Strategies

Youth Offending Services

Increasing custodial sentencing

Anti-social Behaviour Orders

Youth Inclusion Programmes

Restorative justice

Consequences

- enforced intervention, even when no crime committed
- intervention 'to prevent offending or re-offending' not to promote welfare or rights

Effects

Problematism of 'at risk' young people

Criminalisation of youth

Dehumanisation of young offenders

Every Child Matters?

Exposure to the youth justice system increases the risk of:

- Social Exclusion
- Poor educational attainment
- Likelihood of substance abuse
- Poor housing or homelessness
- Reduced life opportunities

**‘locking up young people is
itself criminogenic’**

**Rod Morgan,
Ex-Director Youth Justice Board**