



Youth Justice – An International Journal in 2025

Youth Justice

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On the Journal

With this first Editorial of 2026, we continue our established tradition to look back on the previous year and to reflect on trends, performance and processes. We discuss the influx, processing and publishing of manuscripts, the diversity of submissions and the impact of the journal. To do so, we base ourselves on Sage's most recent Publisher's Report for *Youth Justice*.

Manuscripts and articles

In our Editorial this time last year, we mentioned how the number of new submissions in 2024 (61) was in line with that in 2023 (63) (Pleysier et al., 2025). In 2025, the number of new submissions increased to 84. The total number of submissions (including revised manuscripts) we have received and processed increased from 91 in 2023 to 104 in 2024 to 113 in 2025. There was a decrease in the number of accepted articles (16 in 2025, compared to 24 in 2024 and 20 in 2023) and an increase in the number of rejections (47 in 2025, compared to 36 in 2024 and 31 in 2023). Hence, the accept ratio declined from 39% in 2023 and 40% in 2024 to 25% last year.

The number of (online first) published articles grew from 15 in 2023 over 18 in 2024 to 23 in 2025. *Youth Justice* publishes three issues per year, and Sage's flexible page budget will continue to allow us to publish a higher number of articles and pages per volume if the increased influx would also result in a higher number of accepted articles.

Processing manuscripts

Like last year, the increased volume of submitted manuscripts created increased pressure on the system. Despite the increased volume, our average time to a first decision has dropped from 149 days in 2023 and 166 days in 2024 to 114 days in 2025. The time to the

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final decision taking has continuously decreased from 280 days in 2023 over 246 days in 2024 to 183 days in 2025, which is a substantial improvement. We have also seen a decrease in the ‘time in production’, that is the number of days between an accepted manuscript being exported to production and published online. Both in 2023 and 2024, this was constant at 29 days and dropped to 25 days in 2025. Despite a fast OnlineFirst publication after acceptance, and overall, a positive evolution in processing manuscripts through the procedure, we remain committed to reducing processing times as we are aware this remains a source of frustration for authors.

Like all scholarly journals, we are facing significant challenges in sourcing suitable reviewers. On average, we are going out to 10–12 people before finding two available reviewers. There are many contributing factors to this, including the volume of new research and publications, competing demands for reviewers and the pressures of work in the university sector.

However, the availability of qualified and expert reviewers is increasingly important, particularly in the rise of submissions generated in whole or in part by artificial intelligence. Such submissions may be superficially of quality, but the expertise of the reviewer is vital in identifying mistakes, AI ‘hallucinations’ and potential plagiarism. As mentioned, the increasing geographical and disciplinary diversity of submissions (which is welcome) means that we need access to a broader pool of reviewers who have expertise in regional systems.

If we value the journal and the need for quality research in our field, we must all contribute to the important work of reviewing. In 2025, a total of 42 reviewers did 52 reviews. We wish to thank and express our gratitude to all reviewers for accepting the job and returning the reviews in a timely manner.

Diversity in authorship

Along with Sage, we as journal editors are committed to increasing diversity in the manuscripts that we attract and articles we publish. As the editorial team, we believe this ambition closely aligns with *Youth Justice*’s subtitle as ‘An International Journal’.

Here as well, we seem to see a positive evolution. In 2023, we reported that 7 out of 10 manuscripts (32% from the UK, 19% from the US, 11% from Australia and 10% from Canada) came from Anglophone countries (Kilkelly and Pleysier, 2024: 3). In 2024, Anglophone submissions were still in the majority, but the percentage decreased to 53% (25% from the US, 23% from the UK and 5% from Australia). We are pleased to see that in 2025, for the first time, a majority of submitted manuscripts came from non-Anglophone countries: the percentages from Anglophone countries dropped to 47% (20% from the UK, 15% from the US, 7% from Canada and 5% from Australia).

In line with last year, we see an increasing number of submissions from other regions including Global Majority countries, for example, 7% of manuscripts submitted came from China, 5% from India, 4% from the Republic of Korea, 4% from Vietnam and another 4% from the United Arab Emirates (each three manuscripts). Furthermore, we received papers from a number of other countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Tanzania and Argentina.

As for manuscripts accepted for publication in 2025, we still see a majority from Anglophone countries: 31% of accepted manuscripts came from the UK, 12% from Canada and another 12% from the United States. Although *Youth Justice* keeps growing in diversity and geographical reach, submissions from other parts of the world are somewhat underrepresented in reaching the publishable standard of the journal. As part of its ‘Diversity, Equity and Inclusion’ mission, Sage will continue to offer Language Editing Services waivers for select manuscripts on a first come, first serve basis. As editors, we are pleased to see a growing diversity in manuscripts submitted to *Youth Justice*, and we hope for a further growth in the number of papers from non-English-speaking countries, especially from the Global Majority, that reach publication.

Impact

A final point to mention, based on the Publisher’s Report, is ‘impact’. We would again like to state that we are aware that impact factors and metrics are not straightforward indicators of outcome value nor of the quality of articles and journals. Having said that, we are pleased to report the most recent impact factor (2024) for *Youth Justice*, based on Clarivate’s Journal Citation Reports, is 1.9, similar to 2023, and an increase compared to the 1.4 in 2022 and 2021. Our ranking in ‘Criminology & Penology’ in 2024 is 25/111, compared to 29/113 in 2023 and 46/69 in 2022.

The Journal Citation Indicator slightly decreased from 1.08 in 2023 to 0.97 in 2024. Our journal’s CiteScore (calculated as the total citations made in that year and prior 3 years, to content published in that year and prior 3 years, divided by the total number of items published in the journal in that year and prior 3 years), however, continues to increase, from 1.5 in 2020, 2.2 in 2021, 2.4 in 2022, 3.9 in 2023 to 4.3 in 2024. This CiteScore ranks the journal in the field of ‘Developmental and Educational Psychology’ as 124/367 in 2024 (compared to 143/360 in 2023 and 191/343 in 2022), and in the field of ‘Law’ as 96/1105 in 2024 (compared to 84/1025 in 2023, up from 157/885 in 2022).

Google’s Scholar h5-index (a metric representing that the journal has published at least h articles that have been cited at least h times over the past 5 years) in 2024 is 20, compared to 19 in 2023 and 2022. The median number of citations of those h articles with h citation went up from 27 in 2022 and 30 in 2023 to 36 in 2024.

On the Editorial Board

In our editorial last year, we announced a couple of changes in our Editorial Team, which offered a momentum to review and rethink the journal’s aims, strategy and processes (Pleysier et al., 2025). Last year, we also reflected on the Editorial Board and consulted with all members of the Board about their future capacity and participation, the aims and composition of the Board and strategies for refresh and succession where needed. We offer sincere thanks to those Editorial Board members who are retiring, and we will be welcoming new members gradually over the next while.

In line with Sage’s abovementioned ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ mission and our ambition as editors to reach a more diverse authorship in our journal, we will be aiming

to increase the diversity of the Editorial Board, in terms of including mid-career and early-career scholars, by including more geographic diversity and disciplinary diversity.

This first Editorial of the new volume gave us again the opportunity to look back on *Youth Justice* in the past year 2025. Now we are looking ahead again, to a new volume with three new issues coming in 2026, in which a number of relevant articles in the field of youth justice will be published again. We wish to thank all past and future contributors, authors, reviewers and Editorial Board members and look forward to what comes our way in 2026.

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