

Diversity Initiative (Caerphilly)
Youth Offending Service
Sam Nawaz

The Diversity Initiatives Officer for VALREC but seconded to Youth Offending Service. The primary task of her job is to work with young offenders who have committed discriminatory offences towards another member of society and help them learn why their actions are wrong.

Samar also has the responsibility to raise awareness of race issues within local communities. This involves working with all individuals but especially those from a minority ethnic background, who may have experienced some form of discrimination or harassment or may be in need of any other form of help or advice.

Aims:

To look at different processes that enable young people to become less vulnerable to prejudiced ways of thinking and acting. Also looking at ways that would help them avoid being overwhelmed by complex and often conflicting data and claims.

Racial and ethnic slurs are heard among young children and their use must be dealt with quickly and directly. This can be by e.g providing education around the use of terminology when referring to people from different ethnic backgrounds.

To encourage young people's self esteem with respect to their own ethnic group and foster intercultural understanding and co-operation.

Race and Prejudice – discussing attitudes and values will attempt to raise young peoples awareness of the important issue of colour prejudice and discrimination.

Looking at cultural diversity and religious groups within society that differ from their own, and understanding the need to respect these differences.

Legislation – Focus on the various acts that relate to racially aggravated offences.

Looking at the impact that racial harassment and discrimination has on the individual and the far reaching effects it has on the community.

Race Initiatives Programme
Criminal Justice Service Diversity Officer.
Valrec / Rhondda Cynon Taff Youth Offending Service
Laura Richards
Laura.D.Richards@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk

The post of Criminal Justice Service Diversity Officer is seconded to the Youth Offending Service in Rhondda Cynon Taff. The Criminal Justice Service Diversity Officer co-ordinates The Race Initiatives Programme.

The Race Initiatives Programme is a specialist programme that works with young people who not only commit racially aggravated offences, but also display discriminatory attitudes and beliefs. The principle aim is to prevent young people from offending and re-offending and repair the damage caused by crime as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Laura's approach as Criminal Justice Service Diversity Officer is to assess each young person's readiness to change (Prochaska and DiClemente) and then to use Motivational Interviewing (Miller and Rollnick) and direct work to assist in addressing offending behaviour and discriminatory attitudes.

Key elements of the programme of intervention include:

Identity – who and what informs it.

Peer influences – How can young person manage pressure.

Developing victim empathy – how and when?

Challenging distorted thinking.

Issue of anger management – the trigger is the target

Alcohol as a disinhibitor.

Addressing feelings of alienation and disaffection.

The project is funded by Cymorth, with funding confirmed until 2012 at present. Laura hopes to develop the programme to incorporate preventative work with young people who are at risk of committing hate crimes in the future. Also, in a more universal approach, Laura hopes to roll out diversity awareness programmes to other organisations such as schools. Laura has been working to establish links with colleagues in other areas, including Redbridge Youth Offending Service, Essex in order to share best practice in working with racially motivated young offenders.