

Diversity Initiative Programme

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Race Initiatives Programme Co-ordinator.

Valrec / Rhondda Cynon Taff Youth Offending Service

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.