



Case Study – Sean Creaney



Job Title: Youth Offending Team Support Officer

Employer: Halton and Warrington Youth Offending Team

Please can you briefly describe what is involved in your work?

At Halton and Warrington YOT I project manager the Community Space Challenge and work with young people who are deemed to be 'at risk' of offending. The aim of the project is to address offending behaviour through targeted youth support and environmental work, undertaken in the local community, with young people undertaking community-based intervention in un-loved areas. In addition to this, I case manage a group of young people who are subject to Referral Orders – issued by the Youth Court – and carry out a risk assessments, undertake interventions and consequently addresses the risk factors identified at the assessment stage, with the

view to preventing further offending.

Did you need any specific work experience or qualifications to get this job?

I completed a Higher National Diploma (HND) prior to employment with the YOT and was a YOT volunteer for a year. I feel the experience was vital for my role, as prior to employment I also worked for Halton Youth Service, whether I undertook group work with young people and provided a programme of activities to promote social inclusion.

What qualifications do you have?

Alongside working part-time for the YOT I undertook the BA (Hons) Youth Justice at Nottingham Trent University.

What has been your career path so far?

I undertook the National Diploma at college and when I began to study the Criminal Justice System, Criminology and Sociology as part of the course, this inspired me to begin work within young offenders. Throughout the Higher National Diploma I volunteered at Halton and Warrington Youth Offending Team undertaking various tasks, including mentoring, supervising young offenders undertaking reparation as part of their court order and being a panel advisor for young people subject to the Referral Order. Since then, I have progressed to YOT Support officer – undertaking assessments and interventions with young people entering

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the youth justice system. For my final year of study I applied to Nottingham Trent University and undertook the BA (Hons) Youth Justice. The course has been excellent, as I have developed my understanding of the application of theory and practice, the implications and often complications of providing effective interventions. My career path has somewhat changed from wanting to develop professionally within the YOT to now wanting to develop academically in the teaching profession. I have been accepted at the University of Liverpool and am due to undertake the MA Criminology and Criminal Justice in Sept on a part-time route. My career aim is to publish widely on matters affecting young people and crime, commenting on policies with a view to teaching on youth justice related courses.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I enjoy group work and one-to-one based sessions with young people. I enjoy undertaking assessments and highlighting factors that are directly relevant to the young persons offending, subsequently implementing an intervention plan. I am particularly pleased with the support I receive from practitioners and the management team, as they continually encourage my development in academia.

What skills and personal qualities are important in your work?

I believe that Social Work Values are essential when working with young people in general. Commitment and an awareness of vulnerable groups within society, such as Travellers and Black Minority Ethnic groups is essential to ensure discrimination does not occur. Excellent listening skills and the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately to the young persons needs is essential in the search for positive outcomes. Lastly, reviewing your practice, reading the latest research, and knowing how to apply that research is extremely important.

What career development or training can you benefit from in your work?

Safeguarding young people's welfare is massively important when working with young offenders. Thus, any training programmes focusing on child development, safeguarding or child protection will be an advantage to develop practice. I believe the MA Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Liverpool will help develop my understanding of social exclusion and the importance of adhering to Childrens Rights. I plan to carry out research within Halton and Warrington Youth Offending Team as part of the MA, with a view to developing new methods of early intervention. I aim to compare and contrast the research findings with other Youth Offending Teams' and promote a progressive ethos. Halton and Warrington have been extremely supportive in relation to the possibilities of conducting research.

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What advice would you give someone thinking about getting into this type of work?

I would advise that experience is essential. I cannot stress enough the benefits of volunteering. Working in any capacity with young people is highly valued right across the Children's services. I believe that you can relate to and understand the study of youth crime more easily if you are working within the field.

Is there anything else you would like to say about your work?

I am extremely grateful of the opportunity of studying at Nottingham Trent University. The BA (Hons) Youth Justice is the perfect course if you are interested in working within the Youth Justice System. In addition, I am extremely grateful of Halton and Warrington Youth Offending Team and the support they have given me to progress professionally and academically. They are an excellent service, and this was shown by the core case inspection carried out by the independent inspection of Youth Offending Work.

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