

Safeguarding Bulletin – Extremism

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Terrorism and Extremism

Terrorism and extremism are sometimes used interchangeably. Both pose a threat to students but they have very distinct definitions.

Terrorism is an action or threat designed to influence the government or intimidate the public. Its purpose is to advance a political, religious or ideological cause. The current UK definition of terrorism is given in the Terrorism Act 2006.

In the UK we define terrorism as a violent action that:

- Endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action
- Involves serious violence against a person
- Causes serious damage to property
- Creates a serious risk to the public's health and safety
- Interferes with or seriously disrupts an electronic system

But how does terrorism differ from extremism? The Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 says: "Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist."

It's important to remember that not all extremist groups, whether Islamist, far-right or other, will commit terrorist or violent acts. However, some groups pose particular threats, both online and offline.

How do people become radicalised?

Underpinning the radicalisation process is an extremist ideology that seems appealing and credible, often because it appears to make sense of the young person's feelings of grievance or injustice.

Personal vulnerabilities or local factors can make a young person more susceptible to extremist messages. These may include:

- Sense of not belonging
- Behavioural problems
- Issues at home
- Lack of self-esteem
- Criminal activity
- Being involved with gangs

Children don't need to meet people to fall for their extremist beliefs. The internet is increasingly being used by extremist groups to radicalise young people. These groups will often offer solutions to feelings of being misunderstood, not listened to, or being treated unfairly.

Signs of radicalisation

There is no single route to radicalisation. However, there are some behavioural traits that could indicate that your child has been exposed to radicalising influences.

Radicalisation in children can happen over a long period of time. In some cases it is triggered by a specific incident or news item and can happen much quicker. Sometimes there are clear warning signs of radicalisation, in other cases the changes are less obvious. The teenage years are a time of great change and young people often want to be on their own, easily become angry and often mistrust authority. This makes it hard to differentiate between normal teenage behaviour and attitude that indicates your child may have been exposed to radicalising influences.

The following behaviours listed here are intended as a guide to help you identify possible radicalisation:

Outward appearance

- Becoming increasingly argumentative
- Refusing to listen to different points of view
- Unwilling to engage with children who are different
- Becoming abusive to children who are different
- Embracing conspiracy theories
- Feeling persecuted
- Changing friends and appearance
- Distancing themselves from old friends
- No longer doing things they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts
- Sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups

Online behaviour

- Changing online identity
- Having more than one online identity
- Spending a lot of time online or on the phone
- Accessing extremist online content
- Joining or trying to join an extremist organisation

You know your child better than anyone, so trust your instincts if something feels wrong. You are in the best position to notice if they're acting out of character.

The process of radicalisation is different for each child, but there are some factors which can lead to young people becoming radicalised.

Prevent Duty

The Prevent duty aims to safeguard people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential programme which safeguards people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It is a multi-agency process, involving partners from the local authority, the police, education, health providers and others.



Referring possible cases of early-stage radicalisation is similar to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gang activity, drugs, and physical or sexual abuse. Many types of support are available as part of the Channel programme, addressing educational, vocational, mental health and other vulnerabilities.

The Channel programme is:

- Voluntary
- Confidential
- A support programme – not a criminal sanction

A referral can come from anyone who is concerned about a person they know who may be at risk of radicalisation, whether a family member, friend, school leader, colleague or from a

wide range of partners. Channel addresses all forms of terrorism, including Islamist, far-right and others.

When someone makes a referral, lots of agencies work together to offer support where they consider it necessary and proportionate to do so. This involves a number of steps:

1. The local authority and the police carefully assess all referrals to see if they are suitable for Channel or whether a different type of support is more appropriate, such as mental health support.
2. If suitable, the referral is discussed with all relevant partners at a meeting called a Channel panel to decide if an intervention is necessary. The individual who has been referred to Prevent is informed and must give their consent (or via a parent or guardian if they are children) before an intervention can take place.
3. If Channel intervention is required, the panel works with local partners to develop an appropriate tailored support package.
4. The support package is monitored closely and reviewed regularly by the Channel panel. The type of support available is wide-ranging, and can include help with education or career advice, dealing with mental or emotional health issues, drug or alcohol abuse, and theological or ideological mentoring from a Channel intervention provider (a specialist mentor).

Useful Links

- More information about the [Channel Programme](#)
- Official statistics on the number of individuals referred to and supported through the [Prevent Programme](#)
- [ACT Early](#)

The Government have a website called educate.against.hate. There is another leaflet attached to this bulletin for your information, but please access further information and support below.

<https://educateagainsthate.com/category/parents/safeguarding-advice-and-support/>

The NSPCC have videos for parents, support advice and access to reporting any concerns:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation/>

Useful places to go for information for your son/daughter:

Samaritans: 116 123

Childline 0800 1111 Specifically online safety 0808 800 5002

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/> 0808 802 5544

<https://www.kooth.com/>