
Safeguarding children from radicalisation and extremism guidance

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Definitions
3. Legislative and policy context
4. Process and consequences of radicalization for children
5. Vulnerability factors
6. Identification
7. Relevant safeguarding procedures
8. References
9. Appendix

Reviewed: 26 November 2018
Effective date: 28 February 2019

1. Introduction

This guidance is aimed at providing all staff and volunteers (including trustees and interns), secondees, agency staff and students with information about radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism. It provides information about what can make individuals susceptible to radicalisation and extremism, the legal context, risk factors and warning signs, and guidance to support the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk of or engaged with this form of harm or those affected by it. Harmful radicalisation and violent extremism is a child protection matter.

The current focus of the UK Government's *Prevent* counter terrorism strategy is overwhelmingly on countering Islamist fundamentalism advocated by groups including ISIS/ISIL/ Al-Qaeda/ Al-Nusra Front/Daesh. However, violent extremism (often referred to as 'terrorism') may be linked to other extreme ideologies or belief systems including those of the: Far Right/Neo Nazi/White Supremacist ideology of extreme right-wing groups, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist Paramilitary groups (where it is often referred to as 'sectarianism') and that linked to Animal Rights activists. Radicalisation and violent extremism is **not** something that relates to only those who are of the Muslim faith or self-identify as Muslim although sometimes this is the impression conveyed through the media.

Preventing a child, young person or a vulnerable adult from being engaged in violent extremism is no different in terms of our response as for any other safeguarding concern that NSPCC staff or volunteers may identify. The same reporting and referral processes apply as for all other safeguarding/child protection concerns where a child may be at risk of, or suffering significant harm. In these circumstances, a referral to the local authority using our safeguarding and child protection procedures must be used if anyone becomes aware of extremist, radicalised behaviour in children or adults.

This document provides practice guidance and should be read in conjunction with the NSPCC

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **What to do if you have concern about a child**
- **Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and procedure**

2. Definitions

Ideology refers to a specific set of beliefs.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism¹. Both adults and children can be radicalised and this can have implications both for children and/or adults at risk. Radicalisation may co-exist with other forms of child abuse and neglect.

Extremism is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "*The holding of extreme political or religious views; fanaticism*" and an *extremist* is "*a person who holds extreme religious (or political) views, especially one who advocates illegal, violent, or other extreme actions.*"

According to Government Guidance, extremism is "*Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It also includes calls for death of members of the armed forces, whether in this country or overseas*"².

¹ HM Government Prevent Strategy

² HM Government (2015) The Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales

Whilst the Crown Prosecution Service defines it as: *“The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:*

- *encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;*
- *seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;*
- *encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts;*
- *or, foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK”.*

Whilst what is meant by radicalisation and extremism in a child protection context can sometimes be less clear, a recent definition from case law has defined it as: *“Negatively influencing [a child] with radicalist fundamentalist thought, which is associated with terrorism³”.*

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made with the intention of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause⁴.

3. Legislative and policy context

England, Scotland and Wales

The legal context for safeguarding and protecting children at risk of radicalisation and violent extremism is the same as for all other safeguarding and child protection concerns across the four nations and Jersey. ⁵ Specific legislation and guidance also apply to this form of harm, namely:

- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015⁶
- HM Government (2010) Channel: supporting individuals vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists⁷
- The revised national CONTEST (Counter-Terrorism) strategy 2011
- HM Government (2015) Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015
- HM Government & the Scottish Government (2015) Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for Scotland

Holding extremist views is not, in and of itself, a crime nor is it a safeguarding/child protection concern. Discovering and forming opinions about the world and society is a key part of normal development for children and young people. Concerns for the safeguarding of children and young people arise when the means to engage children and young people with an extremist agenda use abusive approaches, or when extremist views are used as justification for violent acts – which cause

³ M (Children) [2014] cited in Cafcass paper ‘Study of data held by Cafcass in cases featuring radicalisation concerns’, June 2016.

⁴ Prevent Strategy 2011/Terrorism Act 2000

⁵The NSPCC works across four nations and Jersey and therefore adheres to the relevant legislation and statutory guidance in the countries in which it operates: The Children Act 1989 and 2004; The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995; The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; Children’s (Jersey) Law 2005. The Scottish Government (2014) National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland; Welsh Assembly Government (2006) Safeguarding Children – Working Together Under the Children Act 2004; DHSSPS (2010) Co-operating to Safeguard Children Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People Department of Health NI (2016) -The Safeguarding Board Policies and Procedures and the Children (NI) Order 1995⁵

⁶ This and the accompanying guidance applies in England, Wales, and Scotland

⁷ HM Government (2010) Channel: supporting individuals vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists. A guide for local partnerships

harm to the child or young person.

Whilst holding extreme views is not illegal, inciting a person to commit an **illegal** act in the name of any belief is in itself an offence. Various offences may be committed as part of extremism arising through spoken words, internet entries and publications. The main offences to date have been soliciting murder and inciting racial hatred. Supporting terrorism e.g. through fundraising or recruitment of people into terrorist activity are also criminal offences.

The UK Government's *Prevent* strategy, applicable in England, Wales and Scotland only, is part of its overall counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST. The aim of the *Prevent* strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It sets out the following responsibilities for staff who engage with the public, who should:

- Understand what radicalisation means and why people may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism because of it
- Be aware of what the government means by the term 'extremism' and the relationship between extremism and terrorism
- Know what measures are available to prevent people from becoming drawn into terrorism and how to challenge the extremist ideology that can be associated with it
- Understand how to obtain support for people who may be being exploited by radicalising influences
- Work to safeguard children and adults, including the provision of early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity.

Public bodies⁸ have a duty to have due regard to the need to prevent children and young people from being drawn into terrorism (under the Prevent Duty of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015). As part of this duty, local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland are required to undertake assessments of the risk to children of being drawn into terrorism and to establish Channel panels. This is a multi-agency process which provides support for those who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

The Prevent duty applies to specified bodies identified in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 [schedule 6]. Although NSPCC is not a specified body, the NSPCC will act in accordance with the requirements of the duty to its own practice [also see 'Safeguarding children from radicalisation and extremism' policy paper, NSPCC Nov 2015]. This policy paper was updated on 16th August 2018.

Each Channel panel is chaired by the local authority and includes the police⁹ for the relevant local authority area. Other panel partner's, include those within the criminal justice system, schools and colleges, childcare, health care and the police who are required to co-operate with the panels in the discharge of its function. On receipt of a referral about a child or adult, the panel¹⁰ will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and, where

⁸ This includes: local government, police, NHS, schools, further/higher education providers, probation, prisons and young offender institutions.

⁹ The Channel Police practitioner (CCP) is responsible for co-ordinating Channel in their area. Some areas have a dedicated police Channel Co-ordinator. In other areas this role is carried out by a Prevent Officer (PO) or Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

¹⁰ A preliminary assessment undertaken by the police will include a vulnerability assessment. This considers how engaged the person is in potential terrorist activity, what their intentions are and how capable they are of carrying out acts of terrorism

considered appropriate, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals in order to deter them. This will normally be with the consent of the person, parents or carers.

The number of referrals to Channel panels in England and Wales has been rising from five in the period 2006/7 to 2,811 during January to August 2015¹¹.

Northern Ireland

The Prevent Duty (i.e. s26 of the CTSA 2015) does not apply in Northern Ireland. There are complex reasons for this not least Northern Ireland's recent history. Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People (Department of Health 2016) contains general guidance on the issue.

Staff in Northern Ireland should apply the principles of this guidance and professional judgement to any case which involves elements of radicalisation, extremism or sectarianism. The Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) have the operational lead and should be consulted for further advice and/or along with a referral to Gateway using normal processes.

Schools' responsibilities

Given the high level of engagement that NSPCC has with the education sector, it is helpful for relevant staff and volunteers working in this sector to understand the responsibilities of education providers in respect of the prevention and identification of radicalisation and violent extremism. From 1st July 2015 all schools and registered childcare providers in England, Wales and Scotland became subject to a duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015) to have "*due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*". Government guidance¹² explains what this means in practice for schools and colleges and this includes:

- Risk assessment – schools need to understand the risk to pupils of being drawn into extremist ideas. They need to be aware of the local context and of the increased risk of online radicalisation. They need to work with local services to understand the local risk
- They do not need a separate policy but their procedures for protecting those at risk of radicalisation should be set out in existing safeguarding policies and procedures
- They should know when to refer pupils for additional support. Channel is a programme which provides support to those identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. General awareness online training is available
- Schools are expected to work in partnership – the local safeguarding children board (LSCB) or equivalent in other nations is responsible for co-ordinating local responses and should publish threshold guidance for referrals
- Core training has been developed by the Home Office – Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP). It is recommended that the schools designated safeguarding lead undertakes this training
- Teachers should be aware of online risks in relation to extremist and terrorist groups. Online safety policies should be updated to reflect this.

Both independent and state maintained schools in England, Wales and Scotland have a legal duty to actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Guidance is also in place for higher education institutions and further education colleges in England, Wales and Scotland¹³.

¹¹ National Police Chiefs Council National Channel referral figures (accessed Oct 2015) FOI request

¹² Department for Education (2015) The Prevent Duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers

¹³ HM Government (2015) Revised Prevent duty guidance for higher education institutions in England and Wales

4. Process and consequences of radicalisation for children

Research in this area has found that it is not possible to create a profile of children at risk of radicalisation as there is a high degree of complexity involving a broad range of factors, within a small number of cases¹⁴. Anyone can be radicalised regardless of their race, culture, faith, nationality, gender, age, and sexuality. It can happen in a number of ways including:

- Being groomed either online or in person by people seeking to draw them into extremist activity. Older children or young people might be radicalised over the internet or through the influence of their peer network – in this instance their parents might not know about this or feel powerless to stop their child's radicalisation;
- Being groomed by family members who hold harmful, extreme beliefs, including parents/carers and siblings who live with the child and/or person(s) who live outside the family home but have an influence over the child's life;
- Being exposed to violent, anti-social, extremist imagery, rhetoric and writings which can lead to the development of a distorted world view in which extremist ideology seems reasonable. In this way, they are not being individually targeted but are the victims of propaganda which seeks to radicalise.
- A common feature of radicalisation is that often the child or adult does not recognise the exploitative nature of what is happening and does not see themselves as a victim of grooming or exploitation.

The process of radicalisation poses a clear threat to the safety and well-being of children and adults. The purpose of radicalisation is to engage children and young people to serve the extreme goals and agendas of those recruiting, therefore exploiting the vulnerability of young people and placing expectations which may be well beyond their developmental capacity.

The process of radicalisation has been described as similar to the online grooming process for sexual abuse and exploitation¹⁵. The following approaches may be used online to build an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust:

- Pretending to be someone they are not
- Offering advice or understanding
- Buying gifts
- Taking them on trips, outings or holidays
- Giving the child attention
- Using their professional position, reputation or standing to influence.
- Exposing them people to inappropriate and disturbing images and material, including violence, torture and murder
- Isolating them from friends and family
- Psychological manipulation
- Sexual exploitation including forced or under age marriage.

HM Government and the Scottish Assembly (2015) Revised Prevent duty guidance for further education in Scotland

¹⁴ Two reports from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue: *becoming Mulan? Female Western Migrants to ISIS* (2015) and *'Til Martyrdom Do Us Part' gender and the ISIS Phenomenon* (2015)

¹⁵ See Online Safety-Protecting our Children from Radicalisation and Extremism, Bulletin by the Safer Internet centre, November 2014

The consequences of radicalisation can range from a child adopting or complying with extreme views which limits their social interaction and full engagement with their education, to young children being taken to war zones and older children or adults being groomed for involvement in criminal behaviour including violent acts or combat. Committing murder or suicide may be the ultimate result.

Increasingly children and young people who are not subject to radicalisation and extremism are nevertheless being affected by what they are seeing and hearing through the media daily. This is borne out by some of the contacts that Childline has received. In these instances, there is clear evidence of young people feeling very anxious and unsafe, questioning friendships with others of different faiths, questioning the values held by family members, and feeling justice is not being done. They may well need the opportunity to discuss these feelings and worries in a safe space given that such feelings can impact on their mental health and wider relationships. Childline can offer this safe space and has also developed information for children and young people on its website (Tel: 0800 111 or website: www.childline.org.uk).

5. Vulnerability factors

Children and young people may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists may exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. In some instances, children may be at risk from their own families. Children within the care system or secure estate may also be exposed to radicalisation. Research shows that indicators that may make an individual vulnerable to or young person more susceptible to radicalisation can include:

- *Identity crisis* – the young person is distanced from their cultural/religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society
- *Personal crisis* – the young person may be experiencing family tensions, a sense of isolation, and low self-esteem, they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends. They may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging
- *Personal circumstances* – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the young person's country of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination in the UK and/or grievances about UK foreign policy decisions
- *Unmet aspirations* – the young person may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life
- *Criminality* – experiences of imprisonment, previous involvement with criminal groups, and poor resettlement/reintegration
- *Special educational needs* – young people who experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism. More critical risk factors¹⁶ could include:

- Being in contact with known extremists or extremist recruiters
- Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders

¹⁶ Greater Manchester LSCB Child Protection Procedures, chp 4 [accessed online on 8/6/16]

- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations, and
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour
- Changes in friends and mode of dress.

6. Identification

There is no such thing as a “*typical extremist*” - those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

Indicators or warning signs of radicalisation or extremism can include the following:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- Advocating and/or glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- Making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships
- Secretive behaviour
- Online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- Intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- Graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- Verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views and/or voicing opinions drawn from terrorist related ideologies and narratives.

7. Relevant safeguarding procedures

Local authority children’s social care departments¹⁷ hold the lead responsibility for safeguarding children at risk because of extremist activity. The police hold the lead responsibility for the disruption and prosecution of perpetrators. Both strands of the work are required to support children and young people at risk of, or being exploited for the purpose of involvement in extremist activity.

As with any other safeguarding issue, where staff or volunteers have any concern that an individual or family may be at risk of radicalisation or about their involvement in violent extremism, they must follow the NSPCC’s safeguarding procedures for children **What to do if you have concerns about a child.**

Where the concern is about an adult, including a colleague, follow the **Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure**. Staff or volunteers may be well placed to identify patterns of behaviour which might suggest a person is engaged in extremism, is intent on causing harm or capable of committing violent acts. Assessments should consider if the child is at risk of harm and/or their

¹⁷ Or the equivalent bodies in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales

health and development is likely to, or is being, impaired. The additional considerations to these procedures are:

- Whether the child or adult should be referred to the local Channel Panel – in which case this should be raised and discussed at the point of referral out but is to be determined by the local authority or police. It is **not** the role of the NSPCC to make any referrals directly to a Channel Panel and we are not under a duty to do so.
- Whether to consult with the local Prevent co-coordinator (these posts exist in high risk local authority areas only) or another relevant person in the local police force as part of multi-agency working to inform any NSPCC assessment
- The need to consider additional elements in undertaking an assessment in order determine the level of risk and potential harm from radicalisation and violent extremism (see Appendices 1 and 2)
- The need to make an immediate referral to the police and/or children’s social care if, at any time, there are concerns that a child or young person may be about to leave the UK in pursuit of causing harm to themselves or others or if a child is about to be removed from the UK by parents/carers to travel to conflict zones.

Each Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements will have devised procedures for managing concerns about radicalisation and violent extremism and therefore NSPCC staff in Children’s Services providing direct services to children and families should make themselves familiar with these procedures and the associated threshold document for intervention and support.

Helpline response

When in receipt of any contacts about radicalisation, the Helpline will use its risk assessment framework to consider any appropriate or necessary action. As with all contacts, should a risk or unmet need be identified, and should the Helpline not be able to appropriately address that risk or meet that need through its contact with a caller or emailer, a referral will be made to the relevant Children’s Services and/or Police team for further consideration. This would apply regardless of whether that risk is to a child, adult or the wider community. The Helpline will also contact local authorities to follow up on referrals about radicalisation, to ensure that appropriate action is being taken and to offer to connect the local authority to further sources of support if required.

The Helpline forms an integral part of the NSPCC’s safeguarding policy, and as such is available to all staff and volunteers should they need to seek advice or report a concern in line with the provisions within the policy.

Childline response

When Childline is aware or in receipt of any contacts about radicalisation, the Childline risk assessment framework will be used to consider any appropriate or necessary action. As with all contacts, should risk or vulnerability be identified, which Childline counsellors are unable to appropriately address through contact with a young person by telephone, chat or email, a referral will be made to the relevant Children’s Services and/or Police team for further consideration. This would apply in all cases where the risk was to the young person or others. Childline also has a follow up process for all referrals, to ensure that appropriate action is being taken and to offer ongoing support, where accepted by the young person. Childline is integral to NSPCC’s safeguarding policy and seeks to offer young people advice support and information 24hours a day 365 days a year whenever they need us.

8. References

Department for Employment (2015) *The Prevent Duty – Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers*

HM Government (2015) Revised *Prevent Duty Guidance*: for England and Wales

HM Government & the Scottish Government (2015) Revised *Prevent Duty Guidance* for Scotland

WRAP3 Home Office Training on radicalisation

A free e-learning on Channel produced by the NCTPHQ and the College of Policing is available at: http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness

HM Government (2012) *Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework*

NSPCC Policy Position (2015): *Safeguarding children from radicalisation and extremism*, Lisa McCrindle, Policy Manager

Tony Stanley and Surinder Guru (2015), '*Childhood radicalisation: an emerging practice issue*', 27 Practice: Social Work in Action

Susan Edwards (2015) '*Protecting school girls from terrorism grooming*', International Family Law Journal 236

Martin Downs and Susan Edwards, '*Brides and martyrs: protecting children from violent extremism*', in September 2015 Family Law

Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization leading to Violence. Behaviour Barometer: How to recognize radicalization behaviours leading to violence [accessed on 2/8/16] at: https://info-radical.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/BAROMETRE_EN_CPRMV_2016.pdf

NSPCC website explains the role of the Helpline and Childline in supporting adults and children respectively who are concerned about possible radicalisation. There is a link to a free e-learning programme as well as advice for parents and teachers. For more information see: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/fighting-for-childhood/news-opinion/why-doing-more-protect-children-radicalisation/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/>

Additional assessment considerations¹⁸

The list is not exhaustive and all or none may be present in individual cases of concern. Nor does it mean that vulnerable people experiencing these factors are automatically at risk of exploitation for the purposes of violent extremism.

Section 1 - Access to Extremism / Extremist Influences

- Is there reason to believe that the person associates with those known to be involved in extremism - either because they associate directly with known individuals or because they frequent key locations where these individuals are known to operate? (e.g. the person is the partner, spouse, friend or family member of someone believed to be linked with extremist activity).
- Does the person frequent internet access locations for the purpose of extremist activity? (e.g. use of closed network groups, access to or distribution of extremist material, contact associates covertly e.g. Skype/email).
- Is there reason to believe that the person has been or is likely to be involved with extremist/military training camps/ locations?
- Is the person known to have possessed or is actively seeking to possess and/or distribute extremist literature/other media material likely to incite hatred or acts of violence?
- Does the person sympathise with or support prescribed groups e.g. propaganda distribution, fundraising and attendance at meetings?
- Does the person support groups with links to extremist activity but not prescribed e.g. propaganda distribution, fundraising and attendance at meetings?

Section 2 - Experiences, Behaviours and Influences

- Has the person encountered peer, social, family or faith group rejection?
- Is there evidence of ideological, political or religious influence on the person from within or outside UK?
- Have international events in areas of conflict and civil unrest had a personal impact on the person resulting in a noticeable change in behaviour? (Note: it is important to recognise that many people may be emotionally affected by the plight of what is happening in areas of conflict (i.e. images of children dying) it is important to differentiate them from subjects that sympathise with or support extremist activity).
- Has there been a significant shift in the person's behaviour or outward appearance that suggests a new social/political or religious influence?
- Has the person come into conflict with family over religious beliefs/lifestyle choices?
- Does the person vocally support terrorist attacks?
- Has the person witnessed or been the perpetrator/victim of racial or religious hate crime or sectarianism?

¹⁸ Source: Greater Manchester LSCB procedures [accessed on 14/6/16]

Section 3 - Travel

- Has the person travelled for extended periods of time to international locations known to be associated with extremism?
- Is there a pattern of regular or extended travel within the UK, with other evidence to suggest this is for purposes of extremist training or activity?
- Has the person employed any methods to disguise their true identity? Has the subject used documents or cover to support this?

Section 4 - Social Factors

- Does the person have experience of poverty, disadvantage, discrimination or social exclusion?
- Does the person suffer a lack of meaningful employment appropriate to their skills?
- Does the person display a lack of affinity or understanding for others, or social isolation from peer groups?
- Does the person demonstrate identity conflict and confusion normally associated with youth development?
- Does the person have any learning difficulties/mental health support needs?
- Does the person demonstrate a simplistic or erroneous understanding of religion or politics?
- Does the person have a history of crime, including episodes in prison?
- Is the person a foreign national, refugee or awaiting a decision on their immigration/national status?
- Does the person have insecure, conflicted or absent family relationships?
- Has the person experienced any trauma in their lives, particularly any trauma associated with war or sectarian conflict?

Assessing Risk to Children and Young People¹⁹

Children and young people may express support for extremist and/or terrorist organisations but it should be born in mind that, as with adults, they may express strong opinions without understanding those opinions and may also express entirely contradictory views at different times. The expression of strong and even offensive views on a range of issues is a normal part of growing up – testing what is ok to say/testing out ideas/provoking reactions/seeking to create a distinctive identity and rebelling against adults. For these reasons, it is important that professionals consider a range of factors when assessing the risk in relation to a child who expresses or is reported to have expressed extremist views.

Concerns regarding a child may arise as a result of the following:

- The child expresses strongly held and intolerant views towards people who do not share his/her religious or political views
- The child expresses verbal support for extreme views some of which may be in contradiction to British law. For example, they may, from time to time, espouse racist, sexist, homophobic or other prejudiced views and link these with a religion or ideology
- The child expresses intolerant views towards peers which lead to their being socially isolated.

Concerns may *lessen* where:

- The child is open to other views
- The child loses interest quickly
- They appear to have superficial knowledge of the issues
- Their behaviour has not changed
- The child has a range of friends who do not appear to share their views
- Their family challenge their views and/or behaviour
- The family holds sexist, homophobic or otherwise prejudiced views derived from an interpretation of their religion but they are not hate filled.

Concerns may *increase* where:

- The child has an association through family, friends and/or fellow students with members of extremist organisations
- Friends or family have travelled to conflict zones, and:
 - they went to support, or otherwise be involved in, extremist activity
 - there is no information as to why they went, or
 - although the reasons given for travelling do not involve support of extremist activity, they lack credibility
- The child appears to have an in-depth knowledge of extremist ideology for example from known extremist texts/websites
- The child has age inappropriate knowledge
- The child has seen violent videos
- The child refuses to engage or responds negatively when their views are questioned or challenged.

¹⁹ Source: London LSCB child protection procedures [accessed 14/6/16]

- The child talks with fixed, scripted ideas that are un-swayed and will not accept alternative views
- The child uses phrases or sound bites from extremist websites/groups which appear to have been learnt by rote and are not necessarily understood
- The child's behaviour has changed in accordance with the extremist views they espouse, for example, their dress has changed and/or they object to associating with people who don't share their views
- The child tries to enforce their views on others – for example advocating separate spaces on the basis of gender or prioritising space on the basis of ethnicity
- The child's friendship group shares their views
- The child's family seem unconcerned and/or supportive of their child's views and behaviour.