

Prevent and Safeguarding Procedure

Supporting individuals vulnerable to violent extremism

Extremism' The government has defined extremism as: Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

Radicalisation is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that (1) reject or undermine the status quo or (2) reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.

If a school (Schools and Early Years Providers see 'Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (July 2015) and, or any professional has a concern about radicalisation or extremism, this by definition has to be treated as a safeguarding concern and needs to be referred to Surrey Children's Services. **If no immediate risks identified, (i.e. flight risk, parental or family coercion/ support of views), school should inform parent/s/carer of the referral and manage this as with any other concern.** Examples of specific risks relating to radicalisation that on their own would require a referral to children's social care include: A young person has a close friend or family member who has gone to a conflict zone with the intention of supporting or becoming involved in the conflict. A young person who is reported to hold extreme views and promote the use of violence has repeat missing episodes or a one off episode which cause a high level of concern. ***If there are immediate concerns for a child's safety then dial 999 in the first instance.***

Safeguarding is the lens through which local partners should view Prevent. Prevent activity should be based on an awareness and understanding of the risk in the geographical area. The risk will vary in different localities and can change rapidly and therefore the type and scale of activity will vary from area to area. In all cases, however, it should be proportionate, considered and responsive to change. Agencies responsible for safeguarding children should work together and use the most appropriate tools available to them to keep children safe. See Appendix 1: **Assessing and Safeguarding children at risk and exposed to extremist ideology.**

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views. Even very young children may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in the family or outside, and display concerning behaviour. Staff who work with children should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately, but as with any other safeguarding risk, they must take action when they observe behaviour of concern.

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Appendix 1

Assessing and Safeguarding children at risk and exposed to extremism and radicalisation

1. Introduction:

The following is based on guidance from The Prevent duty: departmental advice for Local Authorities (February 2016), Home Office Prevent duty guidance for Scotland and England and Wales March 2015 and updated September 2015 and Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework – October 2012.

Children and young people can be radicalised in different ways:

They can be 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;

They can be 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;

They can be 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.

The grooming of children for the purposes of involvement in violent extremist activity is child abuse and professionals and volunteers working with children and young people should follow their agency, and local area policies and procedure for the safeguarding of children when they have concerns that a child or young person is at risk of, or is being, exploited in this way.

A common feature of radicalisation is that the child or young person does not recognise the exploitative nature of what is happening and does not see themselves as a victim of grooming or exploitation.

The harm children and young people can experience ranges 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 being groomed for involvement in violence.

2. Factors that may lead to extremism:

(The Channel guidance reference> identifies the following as factors that may influence the decision of an individual to become involved in extremism)

- Exposure to an ideology that seems to sanction, legitimise or require violence, often by providing a compelling but fabricated narrative of contemporary politics and recent history.
- Exposure to people or groups who can directly and persuasively articulate that ideology and then relate it to aspects of a person's own background and life history.

- A crisis of identity and, often, uncertainty about belonging which might be triggered by a range of further personal issues, including experiences of racism, discrimination, deprivation and other criminality (as victim or perpetrator); family breakdown or separation
- A range of perceived grievances, some real and some imagined, to which there may seem to be no credible and effective non-violent response
- However, there is no single route to violent extremism nor is there a simple profile of those who become involved. For this reason, any attempt to derive a 'profile' can be misleading. It must not be assumed that these characteristics and experiences will necessarily lead to individuals becoming violent extremists, or that these indicators are the only source of information required to make an appropriate assessment about vulnerability.
- 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 can be a part of growing up – testing what it 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.

3. 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 links these with a religion or ideology.
- The child expresses / becomes increasingly intolerant of more moderate views and intolerant towards peers which lead to them being socially isolated.
- They are observed downloading, viewing or sharing extreme propaganda from the web.
- They become withdrawn and focused on one ideology – (an ideology is a set of beliefs).
- The individual may change their appearance, their health may suffer (including mental health) and they may become isolated from family, friends, peers or social groups.
- The individual expresses a desire / intent to take part in or support extremist activity.

4. 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.

5. 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, such as Syria, 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.
- The child talks with fixed, scripted ideas that are un-swayed and won't accept alternative views.
- The child uses phrases or soundbites 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.

Guiding Principles:

Assessment of, and planning for young people at risk of, or being exploited for the purposes of involvement in extremist activity, needs to be flexible and take account of each child's individuality, the uniqueness of his / her circumstances and the changes that may occur for him / her over time.

This kind of exploitation is dynamic; the young person's circumstances can change and on occasions deteriorate very rapidly. All professionals should be aware that assessments need to be continual and display vigilance.

Keep an open mind – there may be a number of different reasons for these changes in behaviours.

It is important to be non-judgemental and not make assumptions about what is happening.

It is important to share concerns with parents and carers whilst also being mindful of the potential impact on the young person and their relationship with their parents/carers.

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