

6.20 Safeguarding Children and Young People from Radicalisation

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 specifies that Local Safeguarding Children Boards, local authorities and their partners should be commissioning and providing services for children who are likely to suffer, or may have suffered significant harm, due to radicalisation and extremism. (Chapter 1, Section 17).

From 1 July 2015 all schools and child care providers must have regard to the statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Paragraphs 57-76 of the guidance are concerned specifically with schools and childcare providers¹, registered early years childcare providers and registered later years childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

This duty is known as the **Prevent duty**. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies which are listed in schedule 6 of the Act as specified authorities in England and Wales, and Scotland. The specified authorities are those judged to have a role in protecting vulnerable children, young people and adults and/or the national security.

The Prevent strategy, published by the Government in 2011, is part of an overall counter-terrorism strategy called 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.

In addition, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CT and S Act) sections 36 to 41 set out the duty on local authorities and partners to establish and cooperate with a local Channel programme of ‘Channel panels’ to provide support for people, children and adults, vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It is essential that Channel panel members, partners to local panels and other professionals ensure that children, young people and adults are protected from harm.

Channel is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity.

This chapter was added in December 2015.

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1. Definition

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.

“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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas” (HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011).

Since the publication of the **Prevent Strategy**, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been attempts to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to develop extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

Keeping children safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should be approached in the same way as safeguarding children from other risks. Children should be protected from messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

Including early years and later years childcare provision in schools that is exempt from registration under the Childcare Act 2006 and those registered under Chapter 2 or 2A of Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006, including childminders. Also those registered under Chapter 3 or 3A of Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006, including childminders.

2. Risks

Children and young people can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include through the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, through the internet via Social media or other websites. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to lead to the child or young person suffering significant harm’.

This may take the form of a “grooming” process where the vulnerabilities of a young person are exploited to form an exclusive friendship which draws the young person away from other influences that might challenge the radical ideology. The risk of radicalisation can develop over time and may relate to a number of factors in the child’s life. Identifying the risks require practitioners to exercise their professional judgement and to seek further advice as necessary. The risk may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified.

On-line content in particular social media may pose a specific risk in normalising radical views and promoting content that is shocking and extreme; children can be trusting and may not necessarily appreciate bias, which can lead to being drawn into such groups and to adopt their extremist views.

Recent case evidence indicates that specific groups such as young Muslim women have been targeted for radicalisation and grooming, which has led to attempts to travel to the Middle East placing them at risk. Any information about a young person or child that raises concerns should be discussed with their parents, schools, Children’s Services and the police as part of the risk assessment.

3. Indicators

With regard to issues that may make an individual vulnerable to radicalisation, these can include:

- **Identity Crisis** - Distance from cultural / religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them;
- **Personal Crisis** - Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- **Personal Circumstances** - Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
- **Unmet aspirations** - Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of community values;
- **Criminality** - Experiences of imprisonment; previous involvement with criminal groups.

However those closest to the individual may first notice the following changes of behaviour:

- General changes of mood ,patterns of behaviour, secrecy;
- Changes of friends and mode of dress;
- Use of inappropriate language;
- Possession of violent extremist literature;
- The expression of extremist views;
- Advocating violent actions and means;
- Association with known extremists;
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

There an obvious difference between espousing radical and extreme views and acting on them and practitioners should ensure that assessments place behaviour in the family and social context of the young person and include information about the young person's peer group and conduct and behaviour at school. Holding radical or extreme views is not illegal, but inciting a person to commit an act in the name of any belief is in itself an offence.

4. Protection and Action to be Taken

Any practitioner identifying concerns about the child or young person should report them to the designated safeguarding lead in their organisation, who will discuss these concerns with the police. The LSCB Referrals Procedure should be followed. A multi-agency assessment meeting (MASH) or local authority will determine the appropriate response and level of support to the family. Consideration of referrals to the Channel programme may be appropriate in some cases. Response should be proportionate, with the emphasis on supporting vulnerable children and young people, unless there is evidence of more active involvement in extremist activities.

Consideration should be given to the possibility that sharing information with parents may increase the risk to the child and therefore may not be appropriate. However, experience has shown that parents are key in challenging radical views and extremist behaviour and should be included in interventions unless there are clear reasons why not.

Wherever possible the response should be appropriately and proportionately provided from within the normal range of universal provision of the organisation working with other local agencies and partners. Responses could include curriculum provision, additional tutoring or mentoring, additional activities within and out of school and family support.

Where a higher level of targeted and multi-agency response is indicated a formal multi-agency assessment should be conducted. The assessment process may lead to a Strategy discussion, Section 47 Enquiry and an Initial Child Protection Conference, if there are concerns about the child or young person suffering significant harm.

Where concerns are identified in respect of potential signs of radicalisation which indicate the child young person is vulnerable, the person raising the concerns should discuss their concerns with the Channel police lead who will decide if a referral to channel is required or if services at tier 2 are sufficient to manage concerns

Where there is an identified risk/ potential risk that a child young person may be involved/ potentially involved in supporting or following extremism, further investigation by the police will be required, prior to other assessments and interventions.

5. Issues

Protecting children and young people from radicalisation and extremism requires careful assessment and working collaboratively across agencies as initially concerns may be inconclusive and protecting child or young person against a potential risk can be dependent on a wider range of factors. Sharing information effectively and keeping the child and young person in focus should be the main aim of any interventions and services.

6. Further Information

[Prevent Strategy](#)

[Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales](#)

[Channel Duty Guidance: Protection vulnerable people from being draw into terrorism](#)

[ADCS resources Radicalisation and Extremism](#)