

Safeguarding Children from Radicalisation and Extremism

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

The guidance provides advice on how the home should manage and respond to concerns when children and young people are identified as being vulnerable to violent extremism and / or affected by the radicalisation of others. It should read in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures.

RELATED LEGISLATION

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(the Act\)](#)

RELATED GUIDANCE

[Protecting Children from Radicalisation: the Prevent Duty \(2015\)](#)

[Safeguarding Advice for Schools and Childcare Providers – Radicalisation](#)

[Radicalisation Key Resources \(Association of Directors of Children's Services\)](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2015\)](#)

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1. Introduction / Definitions

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

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. The government definition of extremism also includes the call for the death of members of the armed forces, whether in the UK or overseas.

There is no obvious profile of a person likely to become involved in extremism, or a single indicator of when a person might move to adopt violence in support of extremist ideas. 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. The process of radicalisation is different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or occur within a very short time frame.

In order to be able to recognise and respond to concerns that children/young people are being radicalised, staff working in residential units should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of radicalisation and the various forms it might take, thereby enhancing their ability to recognise signs and indicators amongst the children and young people in our care;
- Identify a range of interventions - universal, targeted and specialist - and have the expertise to apply these proportionately and appropriately;
- Take appropriate measures to safeguard the wellbeing of children living with or in direct contact with known extremists.

All terrorist groups seek to radicalise and recruit people to their cause, including children and young people. The Government Prevent Strategy focuses on three key objectives to reduce the likelihood of terrorist incidents.

These are:

- Challenging the spread of terrorist ideology;
- Identifying and supporting vulnerable individuals; and
- Working with key sectors and institutions.

Early intervention work is at the heart of the Prevent Strategy and aims to protect and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity. **Channel** is also a key element of the [Prevent](#) strategy. It is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation and uses existing collaboration between local authorities and statutory agencies as well as the Police and local community.

2. Understanding and Recognising Risks and Vulnerabilities of Extremism and Radicalisation

Since the publication of the Prevent Strategy, there has been an increased awareness of the specific need to safeguard children and young people from violent extremism. Keeping children safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should, in the first instance, be approached in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.

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Often this exposure takes 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 Government Channel Guidance assesses vulnerability using a framework built around three dimensions:

- Engagement with a group, cause or ideology;
- Intent to cause harm; and
- Capability to cause harm.

The risk of radicalisation is the product of a number of factors and identifying this risk requires that staff exercise their professional judgement, seeking further advice as necessary. Radicalisation may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified. Potential indicators of the risk of radicalisation include:

- Use of inappropriate language;
- Possession of violent extremist literature;
- Behavioural changes; increasingly centred around an extremist ideology;
- The expression of extremist views;
- Advocating violent actions and means;
- Association with known extremists;
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology;
- A change of style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group;
- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology.

The above list is not exhaustive and there may be other indicators that the child or young person is at risk of violent extremism and radicalisation.

There a clear difference between espousing radical and extreme views and acting on them, and staff should ensure that any assessments of risk 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.

3. Referral and Intervention Processes

If staff have any concerns, for example as a result of observed behaviour, incidents or reports of conversations to suggest the child supports terrorism and/or violent extremism, they must report these concerns to the registered manager immediately. The social worker for the child must also be informed of the concern as soon as possible. It will be their responsibility to respond to the concerns, including by referral to the local Channel Panel if appropriate.

Consideration should also be given to the need for an emergency response - however this will be extremely rare but could include where there is information that a violent act is imminent or where weapons or other materials may be in the possession of a young person or member of his or her family. In this situation a 999 call must be made. In addition to contacting the Emergency Services, the placing authority for the child must be advised of the concern immediately.

4. Online Safety

Social media can be used to promote extremist ideas and radicalise young people. Often social media glorifies violence. Staff should be vigilant and seek advice from a manager if they are concerned about material a young person has accessed online. [Click here to report suspected online terrorist content.](#)

You can also refer content of concern directly to social media platforms – see [UK Safer Internet Centre.](#)