

Prevent Duty Policy (Anti – Radicalisation) Updated September 2022

24-hour Anti-Radicalisation Helpline
For staff, host families, students and schools
0203 397 7744

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. UK Study Centre Guardianship acknowledges the duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism under section 26 of the *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015* (the Prevent duty)* as part of the Prevent strategy to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism and to provide support for children, vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. We commit to ensure that children 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.

Risks

Children 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. 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 that raises concerns should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Person and / or schools, Children's Services and the police as soon as possible.

Indicators

The issues that may make a child vulnerable to radicalisation 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 - 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;
- Unmet aspirations - Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of community values;

The staff, homestays, schools and parents should be looking for the behaviour changes, that may include:

- 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 is an obvious difference between espousing radical and extreme views and acting on them. 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.

Protection and Action to be Taken

Host families, staff, schools and parents identifying concerns about the child should report them to the Designated Safeguarding Person, who will discuss these concerns with the police and Social Services as necessary. Response should be proportionate, with the emphasis on supporting vulnerable children, unless there is evidence of more active involvement in extremist activities. Responses could include curriculum provision, additional tutoring or mentoring, additional activities within and out of school and family support.

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.

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

Issues

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

References

* Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents/enacted>