

Safeguarding Children and Young People from Radicalisation

1 Context

Working Together to Safeguard Children specifies that Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships, local authorities and their partners should commission and provide services for children who are likely to suffer, or may have suffered significant harm, due to radicalisation that increases the risk of them being drawn into terrorism and other forms of violent extremism. ([Chapter 1, Section 17](#)).

1.2 Counter Terrorism

The government's Counter Terrorism strategy, [CONTEST](#) aims to reduce the risks from terrorism and sets out 4 strands of activity which include:

Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism

Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks.

Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack.

Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.

[The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#) (CTSA) provides an important statutory framework to support this strategy and , places a specific duty on 'specified organisations' to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

1.3 Prevent

The Prevent duty seeks to proactively reduce the threat of terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Following an independent review of Prevent, new guidance came into force December 31 2023. The current guidance and further details of these wider arrangements within England and Wales are set out in [Prevent Duty Guidance](#) and are supported by local arrangements within each of the local authorities operating across Berkshire.

1.4 Channel

The CTSA 2015 sets out the duty placed on each local authority and specified organisations to establish multi-agency 'Channel panels' drawn from public sector bodies that provide expertise in their field such as mental health and social care, to assess vulnerabilities and develop a tailored support plan for people (children and adults) who are susceptible to being drawn into terrorism and have been referred to the panel.

Information triggering a referral to the Channel Panel can come from a wide range of people and organisations. Detail of concerns should be set out in the national 'Prevent Referral Form' which will be assessed by the local Counter Terrorism Police team who are specialists to establish the nature and extent of individuals' risk and susceptibility to radicalisation and whether the criteria for referring to a Channel panel set out in s36 of the CTSA 2015 are met.

As a result, the work of the Channel Panel is jointly coordinated by the police and Prevent officers within the responsible local authority who present cases to the multi-disciplinary Channel panel where a case is deemed suitable by the Counter Terrorism police to help mitigate identified risk and vulnerabilities.

Members of the panel must firstly agree to adopt the case based on the recommendation from the Counter Terrorism police case officer. If a case is adopted, panel members will discuss and agree a bespoke support plan tailored to the needs of the individual. The panel is subject to an Information Sharing Agreement to share (necessary and proportionate) information to ensure the work of the panel is effective This is underpinned by General Data Protection Regulation 2018 which provides the lawful basis for sharing and processing data.

While panel members do not act as experts in counter-terrorism, they should bring individual expertise in relation to their respective professions and the services and support available locally to develop an appropriate support plan.

Detailed guidance on Channel is set out in the government guidance [Channel Duty Guidance - Protecting People from Susceptibility to Radicalisation](#)

2. Understanding and Recognising Risk

People can become susceptible to being drawn into terrorism for a wide range of reasons and while the information set out below is intended to promote understanding it will be important for professionals to supplement this reading with more specific detailed literature or seek specialist advice from a trusted source.

People can become susceptible to what has been described as 'radicalisation' through their exposure to, or involvement with, groups or individuals who advocate terrorism/extremism as a means to promulgate their social, religious or political ideologies.

Examples of extremist causes where individuals or groups have used violence or non-violent means to achieve their ends include Islamist Extremism, Extreme and Far Right extremism, Far Left Extremism, Animal Rights ,single issue activists and international terrorist organisations. These can occur due to the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, through individual online activities such as on social media and gaming platforms such as Discord which are now seen as a major threat.

This can result in some individuals becoming at risk of being drawn into extremist thought and action which could lead to criminal activity and has the potential to cause them and others harm. An increasing threat is from self-initiated terrorists who act alone to take action often using low sophistication acts which require little planning such as use of a knife or vehicle.

Most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in extremism. Numerous factors can contribute to and influence the range of behaviours that can be associated with forms of extremism. It is important to carefully consider these factors in order to develop an objective understanding.

It is also necessary to understand those factors that build resilience and protect individuals from engaging in extremist activity.

It is important that all professionals who have contact with vulnerable individuals are able to recognise vulnerabilities and ensure their analysis is objective. Where necessary such concerns should be discussed with a safeguarding lead and the local authority lead for Prevent and then shared with the Counter Terrorism Police via the national referral form. The Counter Terrorism police can also be contacted for advice.

You should not check the concern with the person themselves, but you may have a conversation in general about the behaviours you have noticed.

2.1 Vulnerability factors that can help inform professional analysis

There are many factors that can make someone susceptible to radicalisation. They can apply to any age social class, religion, ethnic or educational background. There is no single route to radicalisation however research shows that indicators of an individual's potential vulnerability can include:

- Need for Identity Meaning and Belonging – can present as a distancing from family and friends and their community or in some cases, their cultural / religious heritage and feeling uncomfortable with their place in the society surrounding them
- Personal Crisis – may include a significant trauma such as a major transition in life, family tensions; sense of isolation; experiences of bullying; the triggering of earlier traumas; 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
- Grievance which may be due to personal events for example life hasn't turned out as they would like it to be, leading to a sense of injustice. This could be issues like forced migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from British values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism, discrimination and experience of hate crime. It can also include strong feelings elicited by aspects of Government policy.
- Unmet Aspirations – in the context of perceived injustices; feeling of failure or inadequacy; rejection of civic life.
- Mental Health Issues – the vast majority of people suffering from depression, anxiety or other mental health issues are not drawn into extremism. However for some people it can increase their susceptibility to being influenced by extremists.
- Criminality – that may include experiences of imprisonment; poor resettlement / reintegration; previous involvement with criminal groups

The above list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that everyone experiencing the above are at risk of exploitation for the purposes of extremism – individuals may show some, all or none of the vulnerabilities and the process of radicalisation is different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or within a very short time frame. As a result, it is important that awareness, sensitivity and expertise are developed within all contexts to recognise signs and indications of radicalisation.

As the risk of radicalisation is the product of a number of factors, identifying this risk requires that staff exercise their professional judgement, seeking further advice as necessary. It may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified. This can place people at risk of being drawn into extremism and ultimately criminal activity and has the potential to cause harm.

The Prevent and Channel Process is aimed at stopping people being drawn into terrorism at an early stage, safeguarding them through recognising the signs and intervening early to divert them away from this dangerous path.

2.2 Potential indicators of radicalisation may include:

- Use of inappropriate language;
- Possession or accessing violent extremist literature;
- Behavioural changes such as becoming secretive;
- The expression of extremist views;
- Advocating violent actions and means;
- Association with known extremists;
- Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders;
- Using extremist views to explain personal disadvantage;
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations;
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

Annex B of the Channel Duty Guidance 2023 provides details of the [Vulnerability Assessment Framework](#) used to help inform the assessment of individual susceptibility and helps guide Channel Panels' decision making following the assessment by the Counter Terrorist Police and referral to the panel. Further sources of information can be accessed via:

- [Action Counters Terrorism \(ACT\) act early website](#)
- [Get help if you're worried about someone being radicalised \(GOV.UK\)](#)
- [Let's talk about it \(LTAI\) website](#)

4. Protection and Action to be Taken

In taking in to account the above guidance it is important that responses to any concerns are dealt with as a matter of urgency and any required actions are not delayed. In summary professionals should:

- **Notice**
Changes in the way someone is behaving.
- **Check**
Clarify what you are thinking with a colleague
- **Share**
If you have a concern, make a referral

If a practitioner is concerned that a child or young person is being radicalised, exploited, moving towards or holding extreme ideologies, they should discuss their concerns with the named or designated safeguarding lead in their organisation who can if appropriate raise concerns for consideration by the Channel Panel via the national referral form. Your local area Prevent National Referral form can be located by visiting your local Safeguarding Children Partnership website. If it is not available, see section 4.1 below for more details.

4.1 Local Support

Before sending the Prevent National Referral form template, the appropriate Prevent email address needs to be added for your local area.

The Prevent National Referral form can be found in Safeguarding Children and Young People from Radicalisation in the Main Contents of your manual

Local contacts and links are below:

Bracknell:

- Call the Team on: 01344 352000
- Email the Team at: community.safety@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
- Email Prevent National Referral Forms to preventreferralsbracknell@thamesvalley.police.uk

Reading:

- Call the Team on: 0118 937 3641
- Email the Team at: CSPOA@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
- Email Prevent National Referral Forms to:
- preventreferralsreading@thamesvalley.police.uk

West Berkshire:

- Call the team on: 01635 503090
- Email the team at: child@westberks.gov.uk
- Email Prevent National Referral Forms to: preventreferralswestberkshire@thamesvalley.police.uk

Windsor and Maidenhead:

- Call the team on: 01865555618 or 01865 3675618
- Emailing the team at: PreventGateway@thamesvalley.police.uk
- Email Prevent National Referral Forms to: preventreferralsmaidenhead@thamesvalley.police.uk

Wokingham:

- Call the team on: 0118 908 8002
- Email the team at triage@wokingham.gov.uk
- Email Prevent National Referral Forms to:
preventreferralswokingham@thamesvalley.police.uk

Slough:

- Call the team on: 01753 875201
- Email the team at: Prevent@slough.gov.uk
- Email Prevent National Referral Forms to:
preventreferralslough@thamesvalley.police.uk

4.2 Referrals

Referrals are first screened for suitability through a preliminary assessment by the Counter Terrorism Police South East Team. If appropriate, an assessment of the individual's vulnerabilities is made through a Vulnerability Assessment Framework which is based around three criteria: engagement with a cause, group or ideology; intent to cause harm; and capability to cause harm.

If suitable, the case is then referred to and discussed at a multi-agency [Channel Panel](#) comprised of relevant partners to decide whether to adopt into Channel and if so, what support package is necessary.

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.

It should be noted that Channel is a non-criminal voluntary process for which the individual and in the case of a child or young person their parent or carer must give consent.

5. Information Sharing

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 therefore sharing information effectively and keeping the child and young person in focus should be the main aim of any interventions and services.

Effective information sharing is key to the delivery of Prevent*, so that partners can take appropriately informed action. This will sometimes require the sharing of personal information between partners to improve the collective understanding of those at risk of involvement in terrorism and enable earlier intervention. Sharing of information will be central to providing the best support to vulnerable individuals.

The overriding principles for sharing information are necessity and proportionality. It should be confirmed by those holding information that to conduct the work in question it is necessary to share the information they hold.

Only the information required to have the desired outcome should be shared, and only to those partners with whom it is necessary to share it to achieve the objective. Key to determining the necessity and proportionality of sharing information will be the professional judgement of the risks to an individual or the public.

The work of the Channel Panel is underpinned by an Information Sharing Agreement.

*[*See section 8 & Annex A of the government's Channel Duty Guidance on Information Sharing: Channel Duty Guidance 2023](#)*

Definitions

- **Terrorism**

The current UK definition is set out in the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT 2000). In summary this defines terrorism as 'The use or threat of serious violence against a person or serious damage to property where that action is:

- designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public; and
- for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.'

Not all extremist groups, whether Islamist, extreme right-wing or other, will commit terrorist or violent acts.

However, some groups pose particular threats, both online and offline. In the UK, we define terrorism as a violent action that:

- endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action
- involves serious violence against a person
- causes serious damage to property
- creates a serious risk to the public's health and safety
- interferes with or seriously disrupts an electronic system (for example, erasing computer data or preventing a programme from running)

- **Extremism**

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that aims to:

1. negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
2. undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights or

intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2). See more detail here about types of behaviour which might indicate extremism:

[New definition of extremism \(2024\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- **Radicalisation**

Radicalisation is defined as the process of a person legitimising support for or use of terrorist violence. It is where terrorism begins as someone is drawn towards this dangerous path.

There is no specific profile of people likely to become involved in extremism or a single indicator of when a person might move to adopt violence in support of extremist ideas.

The process of radicalisation is considered to be different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or within a very short time frame; Safeguarding in this context is the process of protecting people at an early stage who may be susceptible to involvement in potentially harmful activities whether this takes the form of crime, forms of abuse or being drawn into terrorism or extremism.