Radicalisation and Preventing Extremism

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The terms radicalisation, extremism and terrorism can often be confused and used incorrectly. Whilst they can be linked to one another, they are separate concepts. People can hold radical or extreme views without becoming radicalised or committing acts of terrorism.

What is the Prevent strategy?

'Prevent' is a government strategy designed to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorist or extremist causes. Its aim is to raise awareness of the need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism.

What is extremism?

The government has defined extremism as the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that aims to:

1. Negate or destroy fundamental rights and freedoms

2. Undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of democracy and democratic rights

3. Create an environment allowing others to achieve points 1 and 3

Types of extremist groups include far-right organisations such as National Action, Islamist extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Daesh and extreme animal rights organisations such as the Animal Liberation Front.

Some of these groups have committed acts of terrorism, both nationally and internationally, in the name of their ideology. They include recent attacks such as:

- Charlie Hebdo shooting 2015

- The Manchester Arena attack 2017

- The London Bridge attack 2017

- The Finsbury Park mosque attack 2017

- The Westminster attack 2017

- Parson's Green train attack 2017

- Christchurch mosque shootings 2019

What is terrorism?

Terrorism is an action or threat designed to influence the government or intimidate the public. Its purpose is to advance a political, religious or ideological cause.

In the UK, we define terrorism as a violent action which:

- Endangers a person's life
- 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

What is radicalisation?

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. Radicalisation is usually a process rather than a single event, although certain life-changing events can contribute to an individual's vulnerability to becoming radicalised.

Who does it affect?

Those involved in extremist activity come from a range of backgrounds and experiences. There is no single profile of what an extremist looks like or what might drive a young person towards becoming radicalised; young women are just as likely to be radicalised as young men.

What factors might contribute towards radicalisation?

Some of the factors which might lead an individual to becoming radicalised are no different to those that might lead people towards involvement with, or being vulnerable to, other activities such as gangs, drugs and sexual exploitation. People with mental health conditions could also be at increased risk. The list below is not exhaustive and the presence of any of these factors does not necessarily mean that an individual will be involved in extremist activity. A combination of these factors, however, may increase the vulnerability to extremist activity:

- Struggling with a sense of identity

- Becoming distanced from their cultural or religious background

- Questioning their place in society

- Family issues

- Experiencing a traumatic event

- Experiencing racism or discrimination

- Difficulty in interacting socially and lacking empathy

- Difficulty in understanding the consequences of their actions

- Low self-esteem
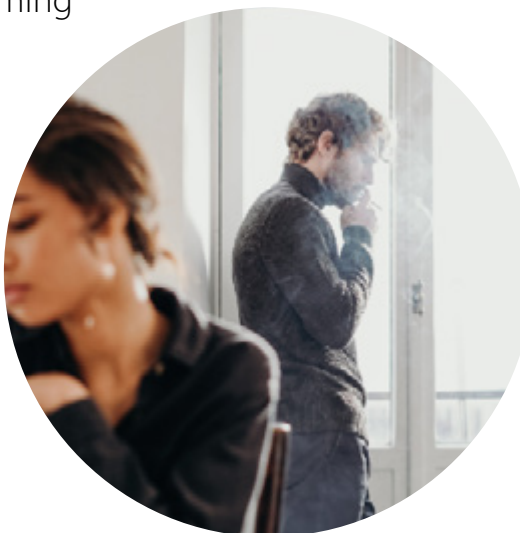
What are the potential signs of radicalisation?

There are many signs that a person may be being radicalised, but it is important to recognise that any of these behaviours alone may not be an indication that radicalisation is occurring:

- Becoming increasingly argumentative
- Refusing to listen to different points of view, being less tolerant
- Unwilling to engage with people who are different
- Becoming abusive to people who are different
- Embracing conspiracy theories
- Feeling persecuted
- Changing friends and appearance
- Distancing themselves from old friends
- No longer doing things they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts
- Becoming sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups

As well as changes to outward behaviours, you may also observe an individual's online activity changing in the following ways:

- Changing their online identity
- Having more than one online identity
- Spending a lot of time on the phone
- Accessing extremist content online
- Joining or trying to join extremist groups online

What does the law say about radicalisation and extremism?

The Prevent Strategy aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It tackles all forms of extremism including faith-based influenced extremism and far right extremism. From 1 July 2015, statutory guidance issued under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, requires a range of specified authorities to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. The specified authorities include those judged to have a role in protecting vulnerable children and young people and adults.

How do I report concerns about radicalisation and extremism?

If you have concerns that someone you know is being radicalised or is at risk of being drawn into violent extremism or terrorism you can contact t2's Safeguarding Team for advice and support.

Immediate threat

If you have seen a person acting suspiciously or if you see a vehicle, unattended package or bag which might be an immediate threat, move away and call 999.

No immediate threat

If you're concerned about possible terrorist activity or risk of radicalisation and there is no immediate threat, you can:

- call your local authority

- call the Police on 101

- complete an online report form at **https://www.met.police.uk/ tua/tell-us-about/ath/possible-terrorist-activity/**
  Please try to provide as much information as possible.

Information found online

If you've found illegal or harmful information, pictures or videos online, you can report your concerns anonymously at **https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism**
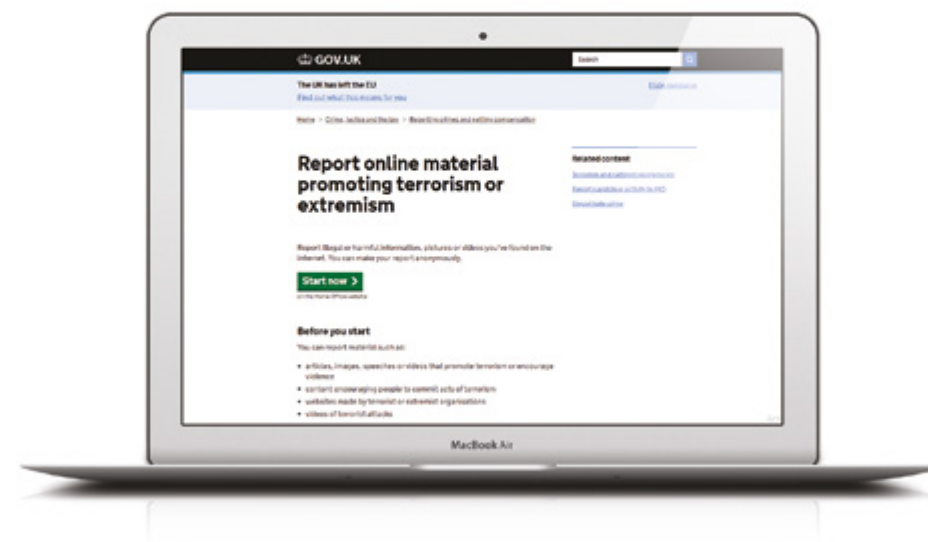
The Channel Programme

In order to tackle the radicalisation of children, young people and adults at risk of harm, early intervention is essential. When intelligence is received about individuals who are at risk of being drawn into violent extremism and terrorism, a referral may be made into the Channel programme.

What is the Channel programme?

Channel is a confidential, voluntary multi-agency safeguarding programme that supports people who are vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual is referred to the Channel panel after giving their consent to the referral. The Channel panel consists of representatives from various agencies that may include education, health and social services and Police. This programme runs in every Local Authority across England and Wales, with the intention of intervening early enough to protect vulnerable individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation before they become involved in terrorism-related activities.

After careful assessment, the Channel panel may put in place a support package in an effort to divert the referred individual away from extremist activity. Support could consist of solutions such as help with employment or education, and even individual mentoring on ideologies so that individuals can build resilience and gain the skills to think critically.

Real-life case studies

1 Yusuf was seen handing out leaflets promoting a website containing extremist, homophobic and violent material

Yusuf, aged 24, was at university when a staff member saw him handing out leaflets. It so happened that the leaflets were promoting a website containing extremist, homophobic and violent material. She got in touch with the university Prevent coordinator who contacted the police. Yusuf was spoken to by student services and police, who felt that he was at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Yusuf had been befriended by older, radicalised men through late night discussions and weekend meetings. He had started to identify with extremist ideology, but he was confused. Yusuf began to move away from extremism after receiving chaplaincy and psychological support through Channel. He has now successfully completed his studies.
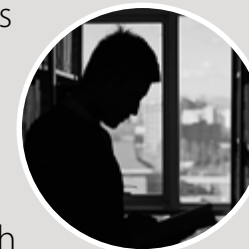
2 Amina was reported to police about her intention to travel to Syria

Amina was in her late teens when a report was made to the police about her intention to travel to Syria. Amina had a deeply troubled life with her parents having been engaged in domestic violence. Her parents broke up and she lived with her father. She didn't have any friends and was lonely. She was also subjected to a serious assault. All these issues made her turn to religion for answers, however the religious guidance she sought online was uncontrolled. Her social media indicated that she had voiced support for Daesh and hatred for non-Muslims. Support through Channel enabled Amina to rebuild her relationship with her mother. A female counsellor addressed issues around religion, politics and self-esteem. Amina is now enjoying her new-found life.
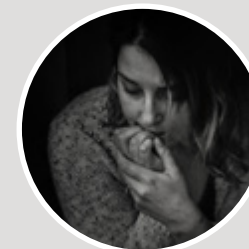
3 Callum's teacher became aware of his involvement in promoting the far-right on Facebook

Callum was a teenager whose teacher became aware of his involvement in promoting a far-right Facebook page which had upset another student. He had been invited to "secret" group meetings connected to football games. Without any family influence in his life, he was getting attention and social support through his involvement in this group. He said he didn't have a problem with most people - just Muslims: Muslims were not like "us". He said he'd watch them all "doing their Sharia law." Through the Channel process the school worked with the police, social care and a local youth group to support him through challenging the ideology he had developed. They provided him with careers advice and connected him to an ethnically diverse local youth group. His confidence grew, as did the bond with his family. He dismissed the ideology that he had connected himself to and realised he had been heading down the wrong path.

Case studies paraphrased from Home Office, Dec 2017 via www.gov.uk

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If you would prefer to speak to a male member of staff Anthony David is our designated senior person for safeguarding across t2 group. You can contact Anthony at any time on 02920 799 133

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