

Prevent and Countering Extremism in Young People

**Advice and Guidance for Parents
and Carers**



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Who is this guidance for?

This guidance explains the importance and relevance of Prevent, Channel and Counter-Extremism efforts to parents and carers of young people. This guidance is for:

- parents, carers and guardians of children and young people

This guidance will help them:

- understand what Prevent is
- understand what Channel is and the support available for young people who may be susceptible to radicalisation and extremism
- understand key terminology and definitions relating to extremism and radicalisation
- understand how to initiate and engage in difficult conversations with young people
- identify potential indicators of radicalisation in young people
- identify potential factors that may make some young people more susceptible to radicalisation
- understand where to go for support if they feel a young person may be at risk of being drawn into radicalisation

Why is this relevant to you?

Any child could be susceptible to extremist narratives.

There are some factors that may make some children more susceptible than others.

Extremist groups tap into young people's insecurities and claim to offer answers and promise a sense of identity that young people often seek.

As part of their recruitment strategy, extremist groups also work to undermine the authority of parents and guardians.



Scan here for more information on Prevent and its relevance to you as a parent or carer

Definitions and key terms

Extremism is...

"the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs."

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."

Radicalisation is...

"the term commonly used to describe the processes by which a person adopts extremist views or practices to the point of legitimising the use of violence. "

Fundamental British Values include...

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Respect and Tolerance for Different Faiths and Beliefs



Talking about and promoting these values is encouraged in education settings as this helps to build resilience to radicalisation in young people.

Forms of extremism

Form of Extremism	Definition	Examples of Attacks
Extreme Right-Wing	Covers sub-ideologies, including Cultural Nationalism, White Nationalism and White Supremacism. These themselves span a range of extreme beliefs such as antisemitism, anti-Islam, neo-Nazi, ethno nationalism or anti-establishment.	2017 Finsbury Park Attack 2016 Murder of Jo Cox MP 2011 Norway Attacks in Oslo 2019 Christchurch Mosque Shooting in New Zealand
Islamist Extremism	Islamist extremist inspired acts of terrorism are perpetrated or inspired by politico-religiously motivated groups or individuals who support and use violence as a means to establish their interpretation of an Islamic society.	2001 9/11 Plane Attacks 2005 London Transport Bombings 2017 Manchester Arena Attack 2019 Sri Lanka Easter Bombing
Left-Wing, Anarchist and Single Issue (LASI) Extremism	Extreme Left-Wing: extremists who believe in using violence and serious criminality to abolish existing systems of government and replacing them with anarchist, socialist or communist systems.	
	Anarchist Extremism: extremists who believe in using violence to replace current systems of Government and law enforcement with a system that prioritises complete liberty and individual freedom.	
	Single-Issue Extremism: extremists who endorse violence and serious criminality focused on a specific topic, such as animal rights.	
Mixed, Unstable, and Unclear (MUU) Ideologies	Mixed: ideology presented involves a combination of elements from multiple forms of extremist ideologies.	
	Unstable: shifts between different ideologies.	
	Unclear: individual does not present a coherent ideology yet may still be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.	
Incel and Extreme Misogyny	Incel is the term adopted by a world-wide online community to describe a group of involuntarily celibate men. It is a form of extreme misogyny but followers of this ideology also target attractive or sexually active men as well as women.	

Prevent

Scan here for more
information on
CONTEST and
Prevent



Prevent is part of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

The purpose of Prevent is at its heart to safeguard and support vulnerable people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Prevent has three specific objectives:

- 1 Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism.
- 2 Safeguard and support those most at risk from radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support.
- 3 Enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

Channel

Scan here for more
information about
Channel



Channel is a voluntary, confidential programme which safeguards people identified as susceptible to being drawn into terrorism.

It is a multi-agency process involving partners from the local authority, the police, education, health providers, and others.

Channel is a support programme - **not a criminal sanction**.

A Channel referral can come from anyone who is concerned about a person they know who might be at risk of radicalisation, including family members, friends, school leaders, or colleagues.

Channel can offer a number of different types of support, such as:

- help with education and career advice
- dealing with mental or emotional health issues
- dealing with drug or alcohol abuse
- theological or ideological mentoring from a Channel intervention provider (a specialist mentor)

The Channel Process

Scan here for more
information about
Channel



When someone makes a referral, lots of agencies work together to offer support where they consider it necessary and proportionate to do so. The Channel process is as follows:

- 1** Referrals are assessed to see if they are suitable for Channel or if alternative support would be more appropriate.
- 2** If suitable for Channel, all relevant partners attend a Channel panel meeting to decide if intervention is necessary.

Please note: the individual who has been referred to Prevent is informed and must give their consent (or via a parent or guardian if they are children) before an intervention can take place.
- 3** If intervention is required, an appropriate tailored support package is developed.
- 4** The support package is closely monitored and reviewed regularly by the Channel panel.

Did you know?

Between April 2021 and March 2022...

The most common Prevent referrals are for Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism. Of those discussed at a Channel panel, 57% go on to be adopted as a Channel case.

36% of all Prevent referrals were made by the education sector and 3% were made by friends and family of individuals.

76% (4,848) of referrals were deemed not suitable for Channel consideration and exited the process prior to a Channel panel discussion; of which the majority were signposted to other support services (3,754; 77%)

Individuals aged 15 and under made up **37%** of all Prevent referrals that went on to receive channel support

Indicators

There is no single route to radicalisation. However, there are some behavioural traits that could indicate a child has been exposed to radicalising influences. For example:

- Beginning to isolate themselves from family and friends
- Becoming increasingly argumentative
- Legitimising the use of violence to defend ideology or cause
- Unwilling to engage with and becoming abusive towards individuals who are different
- Embracing conspiracy theories
- Feeling persecuted
- Changing friends and appearance and distancing themselves from old friends
- Producing or sharing terrorist material offline or online
- Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts
- Being sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups
- Drawing and graffitiing extremist symbols and imagery




The Online Space

With the growth of the internet, social media, gaming platforms, and chat platforms, extremist individuals and groups have taken up this opportunity to radicalise and recruit others in the online space.

It's important that you're aware of your child's online activity and digital footprint, and that you can support them in developing critical thinking skills that will allow them to build up their resilience to radicalisation and extremist content.

Some possible indicators that a young person has been or is being radicalised online include:

- Accessing extremist content online
- Joining or trying to join an extremist group or organisation
- Changing their online identity
- Being sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups

 It is important to remember that the above is not an exhaustive list of indicators of radicalisation and evidence of these behaviours may not necessarily indicate that a young person is being or has been radicalised. If your child is displaying any of these behaviours and you believe it is a cause for concern you should try to discuss this with your child, or seek support from one of the avenues detailed at the end of this resource.

Going Too Far?

Going Too Far? is an interactive classroom resource developed by the Department for Education and London Grid for Learning.

The resource aims to help young people understand their online behaviour and the risks this may bring.



You may find it useful to access the resource to help you promote critical thinking skills to your child so that they are able to challenge extremist narratives and consider the consequences of their online actions.

Scan the QR code to the right to be taken to the Going Too Far? resource.



Susceptibility

Children from all kinds of backgrounds can be radicalised. Below are some factors that may make some young people more susceptible to radicalisation and extremist narratives than others.

- Feeling socially isolated
- Struggling with a sense of identity and belonging
- Questioning their place in society
- Issues within the family and at home
- 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
- Becoming distanced from their cultural or religious background



It is important to remember that the above is not an exhaustive list of vulnerabilities that can make young people more susceptible to radicalisation and presence of these vulnerabilities in a young person may not necessarily indicate that they are likely to be radicalised.



What can you do?

Talking to your child about extremism and giving them the facts will help them to challenge extremist arguments.

Be honest with them and talk to them about extremism and radicalisation on a regular basis.

Teach your children to understand that just because something appears on a website, it doesn't mean it's factually correct.

Talk to your child about online safety.

Starting Conversations

It can sometimes be difficult conversations with young people. Here are some tips on how to get started, but remember - **you know your child best and what works for you.**

- Choose somewhere your child feels at ease and make it a time when you're unlikely to be interrupted
- Perhaps start the conversation when something relevant to extremism comes up on TV
- Ask them what they know about the subject and their opinion on it
- Ask questions that don't result in a yes or no answer
- Take care to listen to them and let them answer without interrupting
- Encourage them to ask you any questions
- Talk about your own views on extremism
- Try not to react if they say something you don't expect. Ensure that they know that they're not being told off

Scan the QR code to watch a video of how three parents answered their children's questions about terrorism.



Let's Discuss

Let's Discuss is a series of resources produced by the Department for Education.

They are designed to support teachers in facilitating difficult classroom conversations on the Extreme Right-Wing, Islamist Extremism, LASI Extremism, and Fundamental British Values.

You may find it useful to access the resource to determine how you can open up a conversation about extremism with your child at home.

Scan the QR codes to access each Let's Discuss resource.



**Let's Discuss:
Extreme Right-Wing**



**Let's Discuss:
Islamist Extremism**



**Let's Discuss:
LASI Extremism**



**Let's Discuss:
Fundamental British Values**

Further Available Support



If you are worried that your child is being radicalised, you have a number of options. Talking to your child is a good way to gauge if your instincts are correct, but you might prefer to share your concerns with someone else first. For example, you could...

- Raise the issue with your child's teacher, a friend, or a close family member
- Organise a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead at your child's school
- Contact your local police or local authority for advice and support
- You can report concerns to the Government Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321
- If you think someone is about to carry out an act of terrorism, dial 999
- If you have concerns, but there is no immediate danger, dial 101
- You can also share your concerns and seek support and guidance by visiting the ACT Early website, or contacting their support line on 0800 011 3764

If you have concerns regarding extremism within an education setting, including allegations against institutions and staff, you can anonymously report these to us at the Department for Education by searching 'Report Extremism in Education' on Google.