

Radicalisation and Preventing Extremism

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 not an event. During this process, there will inevitably be opportunities to intervene in order to reduce the risk of the individual being attracted to extremist ideology and causes and safeguard him/her from the risk of radicalisation. It is important to be able to recognise the factors that might contribute towards the radicalisation of an individual. Indeed, some of the factors that lead an individual to becoming radicalised are no different to those that might lead individuals towards involvement with or being vulnerable to other activity such as gangs, drugs and sexual exploitation for example.

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. It can affect impressionable young boys and men and also impressionable young girls and women.

What factors might contribute towards radicalisation?

Below are some of the factors that might contribute towards an individual becoming radicalised. These are included in the Channel Vulnerability Assessment Framework. This is not an exhaustive list and the presence of any of these factors does not necessarily mean that he/she will be involved in extremist activity. However, a combination of many of these factors may increase the vulnerability to extremist activity:

- Feelings of grievance and injustice
- A need for identity, meaning and belonging
- A desire for excitement and adventure
- Susceptibility to indoctrination
- A need to dominate and control others
- A desire for political or moral change
- Family or friends' involvement in extremism
- Being at a transitional time of life
- Being influenced and controlled by a group
- Relevant mental health issues
- Over-identification with a group or ideology
- Dehumanisation of the enemy

- Feeling under threat
- A desire for status
- Opportunistic involvement
- Attitudes that justify offending
- Harmful means to an end
- Harmful objectives
- "Them and Us" thinking

What does the law say about radicalisation and extremism?

The Prevent Strategy 2011 aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It tackles all forms of extremism including Al Qaida influenced extremism and far right extremism. From 1 July 2015, statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 requires a range of specified authorities to have 'due regards 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.

What should practitioners do?

Notice – practitioners should make themselves aware of the factors that might drive somebody towards extremism so they are able to notice them should they present themselves. However, staff using their skill, expertise, and professional judgement is crucial in not stigmatising individuals that may display some of the vulnerability factors highlighted.

Check – if a practitioner is concerned about an individual (child or adult) who is being drawn towards extremist activity, they should check their concerns with their organisation's Prevent lead and/or safeguarding lead officer (if available) to ensure their concerns are valid and well informed.

Share – where it is recognised that an individual (child or adult) is indeed at risk of radicalisation and involvement in extremist activity, a referral should be made to the local authority's Channel programme. If as part of this identification a child or young person is put at risk (either through their own direct involvement or that of someone else e.g. parent/carer), practitioners should share their concerns with the Duty and Advice team at the Front Door to discuss further.

Channel is a multi-agency partnership that develops a proportionate package of support and interventions to draw a vulnerable individual away from becoming radicalised and involved in extremist activity. Channel in Wakefield can be contacted by emailing:

communitysafety@wakefield.gov.uk

Key contact and further information

For further advice, information or training:

Email: communitysafety@wakefield.gov.uk

Tel: 01924 306645 or 01924 306776

National guidance:
The Prevent Strategy
The Prevent Duty
Channel Programme