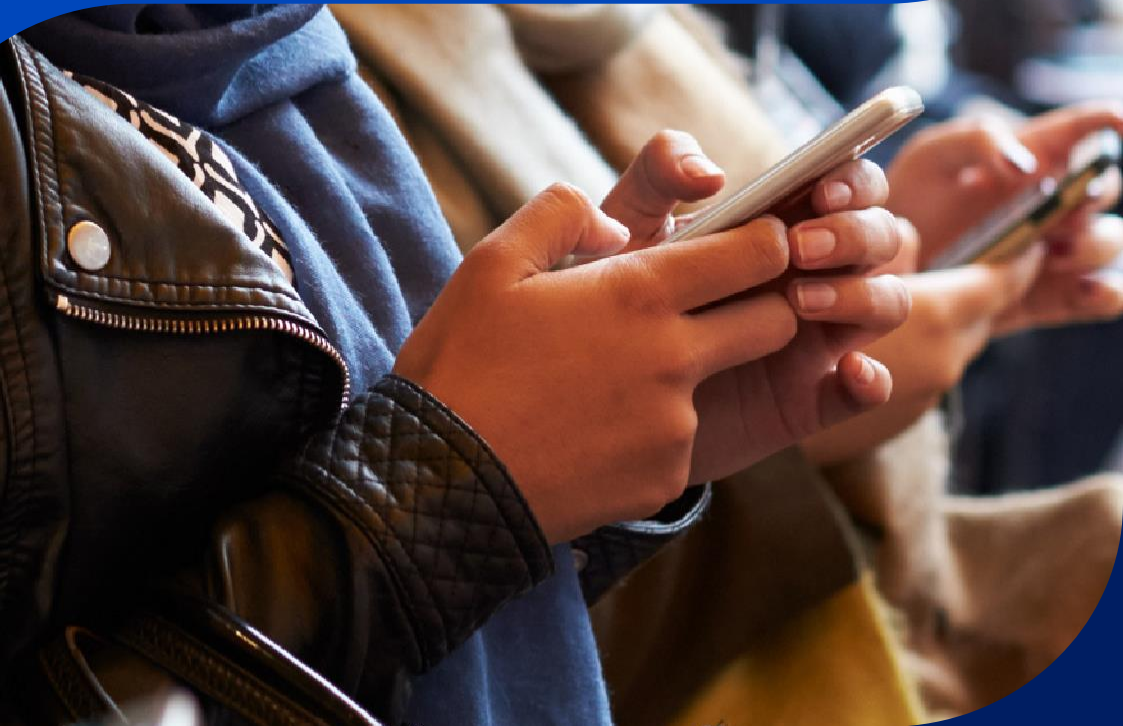


Keeping children and young people safe from radicalisation and extremism:

Advice for parents and carers



Introduction

The UK is currently experiencing a heightened risk from terrorism linked to extremist beliefs and ideologies, and groups who advocate violence to achieve their aims are active in Britain, and have an online presence.

Young people coming into contact with extremist views may be persuaded to act on these beliefs; they may become involved in criminal or violent actions and may therefore put themselves and others at risk of harm.

For young people, a key part of growing up is exploring new ideas and critically questioning the world around them, and this should be encouraged in order to help them develop their understanding of the world and learn the values of tolerance and acceptance. However, this needs to be balanced against the need to protect young people from radicalisation and extremism.

This leaflet aims to help parents and carers recognise when their child may be at risk from radicalisation and where to get help if they are worried.

What is radicalisation and extremism?

'Extremism' is where someone holds views that are intolerant of people who are of a different belief, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender or sexual identity and opposes the basic values and principles of democracy, personal freedom and the rule of law.

'Radicalisation' is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. Extremists will try to attract people to their cause by persuading them that their view of the world is the correct view and encouraging them to take action to change the world to fit these extremist views.

Why do young people become radicalised?

During adolescence, young people become more independent, exploring new ideas and developing their own views; this can make them more vulnerable to risks posed by extremism. The reasons for young people being drawn to extremist views are many and varied, but may include the following:

- they are trying to make sense of the world
- they feel that their culture, way of life or religious identity is under threat
- it makes them feel a sense of identity or belonging or being part of something
- they are looking for adventure or excitement
- they are under pressure from their peers who have links with these groups.

How are young people radicalised?

There is no single way a young person can become radicalised; they may be in contact with someone whose views they find appealing, and extremists may try to further influence their beliefs. These may be people they have recently met or people whom they already know through family and friendship groups.

In recent years social media has provided an increasingly popular platform for extremists and extremist views, allowing these views to be instantly and easily accessible. Some young people may come across extremist views while browsing online. Views may even be shared through humour or 'banter' which may seem harmless but may draw the young person in without them even realising.

Some young people may become radicalised by reading online extremist material whilst browsing the internet on their own without contact with extremists.

Extremists tend to use less well-known social media sites such as Ask FM, 4chan, 8chan and Telegram to post materials and conduct contacts as these sites are harder to monitor and enables them to hide their identity. Not all content on these apps is extreme and it is important to note that terrorist and extremist groups will often change their location, name and details to ensure they stay underground.

What are the signs to look out for?

There is no comprehensive list of signs of radicalisation but the following may be cause for concern:

- being secretive about online activities and social media use
- changes in views and expressing extremist views
- changes in dress and/or appearance or friendship group
- intolerance of other groups, religions or political views
- expressing views and using language that does not seem to be their own (scripted speech)
- belief that their culture or religion is under threat and only violence or war can solve issues
- embracing conspiracy theories related to extremism

How can parents keep young people safe?

- Keep a **trusting relationship** with your child so that they know they can come to you for help if they make a mistake or get into trouble.
- Have a **conversation** with you child if you are concerned. Ask them to tell you about their views, influences etc. Try to listen and not judge/panic.
- Make sure you know where your child is and who they are with; find out about your child's friends and their families.
- Help your child to be **critically aware** of what they see on the TV or the internet; encourage them to see different points of view and help them to develop tolerance for others.
- Be aware of your child's on-line activity and check which social media sites they are visiting. Report and block any sites that you have concerns about.
- Remind your child that people they contact over the internet may not be telling them the whole truth and may not inform them of any potential dangers. **If they are being asked to keep something secret then they may be at risk of harm.**
- Get help from other members of your family or community that your child looks up to.
- If you feel there is a risk that your child may leave the country, **take precautions** such as keeping their passport in a safe place and reducing their access to money.
- You can also talk to your **child's teachers**; the school will be looking out for any signs that pupils may be being targeted by extremists and may be able to help or refer your child on for help if there are signs they are being radicalised.

Where to get help

National Police Prevent Advice Line

Call in confidence, to share your concerns with a specially trained Prevent officers. **0800 011 3764**

Local Police Advice

Merseyside Police have a dedicated Prevent team who can be contacted for advice:

Telephone: 0151 777 8506 or email Prevent@merseyside.police.uk

Referral

To make a referral into the **Wirral Channel panel** professionals should use the Channel Panel Referral and Assessment form which can be accessed here:

Prevent Referral form

Please note that referral into the Channel Panel does not replace usual safeguarding reporting procedures which must always be used if you believe a child, young person or adult is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

Resources

List of [Extreme and far leaning political symbols and badges](#)

Illustrations of [Far Right Numbers and Symbols](#)

List of Extremist [Stickers signs and leaflets](#)

Digital Safety During Covid-19: [Grooming and Radicalising – Prevention](#)

[Awareness and Support](#)

Where to get help

All the professionals involved will work together with you and your child to see what support can be offered to protect your child from becoming radicalised.

If your child has a **special need, disability or mental health** condition they can still become radicalised and may need help.

Do not delay in raising your concerns and getting support.

Useful websites

For information and advice on radicalisation and what to do:

■ **Act Early**
www.actearly.uk

■ **Educate Against Hate**
<https://educateagainsthate.com/parents/>

■ **Lets Talk About It**
<https://www.ltai.info/>

Helps parents to understand more about Prevent and how to stop people from being drawn into terrorism

■ **Families Against Stress and Trauma**
<https://www.familiesmatteruk.org/familiesmatter.org.uk/index.html>

For advice about tackling radicalisation within the family

■ **Small Steps/Exit UK**
<https://smallstepsconsultants.com/leaving-the-far-right/>
Experts on Far Right extremism who can offer advice and support if someone has got in too deep.

For information and advice on online safety/digital resilience:

■ **NSPCC**
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

■ **Safer Internet**
<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

■ **Net-Aware**
www.net-aware.org.uk

■ **Internet Matters**
<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/radicalisation/dealing-with-radicalisation/#deal-with-radicalisation>

■ **Think U Know -The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)**
www.ThinkUKnow.co.uk

■ **Report Suspected Online Terrorism -for reporting terrorist and extremist content online**
<https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism>