



Parent Information – Advice & Support on Radicalisation

This information aims to provide you with advice and support regarding radicalisation and extremism and to keep your child safe.

Recognising the importance of linking your child's learning at school and between peers to their life at home, speaking to your son or daughter about the topic of radicalisation and extremism will encourage them to understand and give them reassurance that they can speak to you if they are ever worried or affected.

Concerns as a Parent

Your concerns about radicalisation and extremism may result from reports in the media or TV news highlighting young people that may have been radicalised or drawn into extreme or terrorist groups; the reality is the odds may be extremely low as most young people will disagree with terrorist behaviour and would not want to be involved or join groups.

Although it may be rare, with the current age of digital technology and social media, you need to recognise that exposure to reports and information about extremism, terrorism or prejudiced views is much more accessible and therefore can influence young people's understanding of the world around them.

This may not be the easiest of issues to discuss with your child, the following information aims to assist you with talking to your child openly about this topic.

Understanding meanings

There are many terms and expressions used by the media and by professionals when talking about the threat of terrorism, radicalisation and extremism so it is important to understand what they mean; below is a brief introduction to a few common words and terms to assist you with any conversations you may have with your child.

Ideology: A set of beliefs.

Narrative: A narrated account; a story. The art, technique or process of telling a story around views/beliefs.

Propaganda: Information, ideas or rumours that are deliberately spread widely to help harm a person, a group, movement, institution, nation etc.

Extremism: The use of extreme behaviour to support a belief or ideology. Any idea that can be taken to the extreme where it leads to violence and harm to others.

Terrorism: The unlawful use of violence, or a threat of violence, to support a belief or ideology. Not all extremism is harmful or criminal, but some people will behave in an extreme way going on to become terrorists.

Radicalisation: The process of someone developing extremist views which could lead them to join extreme or terrorist groups. There is no 'one-way' process of radicalisation there are many factors or experiences which may lead a person to become radicalised to participate in extremist or terrorist behaviour.

Radicaliser: Someone who encourages others to develop or adopt beliefs and views which support terrorism, and or forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

What is the threat?

Although rare in the UK, acts of terrorism are a reality. Currently the threat is mainly from Al-Qaida and ISIS influenced terrorists returning from international war zones such as Syria and Iraq.

However, other extremist groups also pose a very real threat to public safety and the British multi-cultural way of life; these can include Far Right Extremists, Racists, Animal Rights Organisations and Eco Terrorists.

What makes a child at risk?

There is no handbook to determine if a child is likely to become involved in extremism; advice from professionals is to be aware of change in your child's behaviour, values, views and attitudes just as you would monitor any other issue or concern.

It's not easy to gage why a child may change as this is a normal part of growing up; changing moods, views, pushing boundaries and rebelling against authority does not necessarily mean they are being radicalised.

It has been recognised that young people with low self-esteem, experienced bullying or isolation from other scan be vulnerable to being radicalised.

These factors can contribute to why a young person may be at risk of being radicalised or choose to join extreme groups

- Change in attitudes and values
- Rejection by peers of family
- Extremist influence or pressure
- Feelings of injustice or inequality

- Identity confusion
- Needing to feel part of something
- Exposure to extreme material
- Grievance with society
- Social exclusion or bullying

What can I do to protect my child?

Radicalisation isn't easy to spot, in addition to the factors already mentioned, common signs that parents and professionals are advised by the NSPCC to look out for include:

- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- Unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use

Talk

Talking is an essential for young people to explore and understand alternative points of view to help them develop informed, balanced healthy views, values and attitudes.

They may naturally be curious and opinionated, not allowing them to talk openly with you about topics like this can increase curiosity and maybe draw them towards other means of information such as the internet which is not always the most accurate, balanced or safest way to find out more.

Keep it simple, avoid complicated and worrying explanations which may just increase their fear and anxiety.

Reassure

Let your child know they can speak to you and be there to listen to their fears and worries; let them know you are willing to have an open and honest discussion with them about any thoughts or feelings they may have about extremism, radicalisation or terrorism.

Talking to your child gives you an opportunity to assess their thinking and the development of their views and values; this enables you to shape a healthy attitude allowing you to clarify facts and intervene if their views appear to be unhealthy, distorted or extreme.

There are short film clips from the NSPCC to help parents talk to their child:

- **Worried about radicalisation**
- **Talking about terrorism**

Monitor internet access

Advances in digital technology and social media are being exploited by terrorists and extreme groups as a means to radicalise people, display propaganda and spread narratives.

It is a fact that by having a smartphone, iPad or games console, your child could have access to extreme content, websites and people who will want to influence them towards extreme views, increasing the risk of them becoming radicalised.

Curiosity can lead young people to search for material or be befriended by a 'radicaliser' posing to be a 'regular person' but with the intention of influencing their beliefs to persuade them to join their cause. This emphasises the need to be open with your child about online risks.

- Explain the intentions some people may have online to radicalise or groom people
- Reassure them to tell you if they're worried about contact from someone or if they find something upsetting online
- Explain what they should do if they suspect someone is trying to radicalise or groom them

To monitor your child's online activity, learn how to check the browsing history on their device to see what sites they have accessed this is usually located in the menu options, but if unsure contact the service provider for more advice.

Positive Influences

Encourage positive ways for your child to channel their energy, focus their thinking and feel a sense of belonging to a group/team, for example sports, clubs, hobbies etc. Confidence with their identity and inclusion with other positive people can reduce the risk of developing vulnerabilities linked to radicalisation and extremism.

Responding to a terror attack: Run, Hide, Tell

As important as it is for you as parents to take a role in educating your child about the risk of being involved in extremism and terrorism, it is equally important you take a role in teaching them about their safety in the event of an attack.

The Home Office has created a film specifically for young people as part of the national campaign Run, Hide, Tell which aims to raise public awareness about what to do in the event of an attack.

Parents are encouraged to share the film with their child, at an age you feel it is appropriate, to help them understand what to do in the unlikely event they were caught up in an attack.

What can you do if you have concerns about your child?

Often you may need advice from expert services to keep your child safe; they may find it necessary to involve the school, college, club/youth group or the police to help address their concerns.

If you have concerns that your child or a child you know may be involved in extremism or being radicalised, don't wait until you're certain, seek support and advice from professional services who can help to assess any risk and make any necessary referrals to safeguard your child.

School Staff/Youth Worker

Professionals working with children and young people would have received training to help them identify signs that children may be targeted by extremists, or even be just at risk and they will be aware of the relevant services to signpost you to or to refer your child onto for further support.

Police:

For non-emergency assistance dial 101

NSPCC

Report concerns anonymously and get access to advice and support.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation/>

Tel: 0808 800 50000 (24 hours) 24/7

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Education Against Hate

Website developed by the Department for Education and the Home Office to support parents and professionals providing practical advice, support and resources to protect children from extremism and radicalisation.

<https://educateagainsthate.com/parents/>

Internet Matters

Provides advice and information for parents to talk and deal with online radicalisation.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/radicalisation/>

Government Online Reporting

Anonymously report suspicious activity or illegal online terrorist information, pictures or videos.

<https://www.gov.uk/terrorism-national-emergency/reporting-suspected-terrorism/>