



Extremism and Radicalisation

As a parent, you need to be aware that individuals and groups with extremist views use the internet and social media to spread their ideologies. Children spend a lot of time online, and this has made them more susceptible to extremism, whether from Islamists or the far right. Extremist groups tap into young people's insecurities. They often claim to offer answers and promise a sense of identity that vulnerable young people often seek.

These feelings of insecurity can become more heightened when a child is feeling:

- Marginalised from society
- Trapped between two cultures
- Excluded from the mainstream

As part of their recruitment strategy, extremist groups also work to undermine the authority of parents. This can be particularly attractive to vulnerable children who don't have parental guidance, or who come from unstable homes.

Extremist groups also use very sophisticated methods to trigger feelings of anger, injustice and shame that a child might feel towards a parent.

It is important to remember that any child can be affected by extremism. You can play a vital role by providing emotional support that acts as an alternative to the extremist narratives that your child might feel comfortable believing.

It is not easy to talk to your child about the dangers of extremism, but as with issues such as sex and drugs, it is necessary. Give your child a safe space where they can talk about difficult subjects. The more you talk, the more confident your child will become in challenging extremist narratives.

Signs of Radicalisation & Extremism

Anybody can be radicalised, but being more impressionable makes children and young people more vulnerable.

Children and young people at risk of radicalisation may:

- Have low self-esteem;
- Be confused about their faith, sense of belonging, or identity;



- Be victims of bullying or discrimination;
- Feel isolated or lonely;
- Be experiencing stress or depression;
- Be going through a transitional period in their life;
- Be angry at other people or the government;
- Feel angry about how they are treated or seen by society.

It is very difficult to know at what stage certain views can become dangerous, or if a child or young person is being exploited and manipulated into becoming a part of an extremist group.

Signs aren't always obvious, but indicators that a child or young person is being radicalised may include:

- Withdrawal from family and friends, or changing circle of friends;
- Hostility towards others;
- Talking as if from a script;
- Being unwilling to discuss their views;
- Increased levels of anger;
- Being secretive, particularly around what they are doing on the internet;
- Using extremist terms to exclude people or incite violence;
- Expressing the values of extremist or terrorist organisations (including political or religious based grievances);
- Supporting violence and terrorism towards other cultures, nationalities, or religions;
- Writing or creating artwork that promotes extremist values;
- Talking about being a 'martyr';
- Possession of extremist literature or other material, or trying to access extremist websites;
- Possession of any material about weapons, explosives, or military training.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a child is being radicalised. Sometimes this can be normal teenage behaviour, or an indicator that something else is going on.

Prevent Duty

The purpose of Prevent is to safeguard vulnerable people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, by engaging with people who are vulnerable to radicalisation and protecting those who are being targeted by terrorist recruiters. As one part of the Government's Counter terrorism CONTEST strategy, Prevent sits alongside other work that



includes Pursue (stopping terrorist attacks happening in the UK and overseas), Protect (strengthen protection against a terrorist attack in the UK or overseas) and Prepare (mitigate the impact of a terrorist incident if it occurs).

The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent strategy addresses all forms of terrorism by responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism, supporting vulnerable people, and enabling those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

Prevent addresses all forms of terrorism (extreme right wing, Al-Qaida or Daesh inspired and associated terrorisms, single issues etc.).

Further information can be found in the government guidance.

How parents/carers can support young people to stay safe

- Know where your son/daughter is, who they are with and check this for yourself;
- Know your son/daughter's friends and their families;
- Keep lines of communication open, listen to your son/daughter and talk to them about their interests;
- Encourage them to take up positive activities with local groups that you can trust;
- Talk to your son/daughter about what they see on the TV or the internet and explain that what they see or read may not be the whole picture;
- Allow and encourage debate and questioning on local and world events and help them see different points of view;
- Encourage your son/daughter to show an interest in the local community and show respect for people from all faiths and backgrounds;
- Teach them that expressing strong views and trying to change things for the better is fine but they should not take violent action against others or support those that do;
- Be aware of your son/daughter's on-line activity and update your own knowledge;
- Know what social media and messaging sites your son/daughter uses;
- Remind your son/daughter that people they contact over the internet maybe pretending to be someone else or telling them things that are not true;
- Explain that anyone who tells them to keep secrets from their family or teachers is likely to be trying to do them harm or put them in danger;
- If you have any concerns that your son/daughter may be being influenced by others get help – talk to someone you can trust, this could be your family members, family friends who are peers of your children, or outside help;

- If you feel there is a risk of a son/daughter leaving the country, consider what safeguards you could take to avert travel. You might want to consider taking the precaution of securing their passport in a safe place. It may be advisable to keep all of your son/daughter's passports hidden and safe in order that the passports of siblings cannot be used;
- You should also consider what access your son/daughter has to savings accounts or gifts of money from family and friends. You may wish to suggest that gifts are made in kind and not in cash.

What should I do if I think my child has been exposed to extremism or radicalisation?

If you believe your child is at risk you should talk to them. There is advice on educateagainsthate.com about how to have that conversation and the NSPCC can also provide free, confidential advice if you would like to talk it through with someone.

How to Report Concerns

- Report possible terrorist activity:
<https://www.met.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/ath/possible-terrorist-activity/>
- Anti- Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321
- Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism

Useful Links

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

<https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation/>

https://www.internetmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/EAH_Parents_Top_Tips_English_AW_Interactive.pdf

<https://actearly.uk/>

<https://www.familiesmatteruk.org/familiesmatter.org.uk/index.html>

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

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.concept-training.co.uk/p25630/>