



## What is Extremism and Radicalisation?

### Extremism

Extremism is defined by the government as: 'Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'. They also include in their definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. These views can be used to justify political, religious, sexist, homophobic or racist violence. There is **no such thing as a typical extremist**: those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

### Radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism or forms of extremism that lead to terrorism. Violent extremists, including white extremists from the far-right or Islamist extremists, usually attract people to their cause through a persuasive narrative. This will attempt to explain why a person may feel certain grievances, explain why their school, family or opportunities in a democracy will not provide any answers, and then go on to justify violent or criminal actions so as to force through the changes needed and to avenge any perceived wrongs suffered.

### Why would a young person be drawn towards extremist ideologies?

Young people, including those who are otherwise well-behaved and achieving well at school, can be drawn towards extremism in similar ways as those who are persuaded to expose themselves to other risks, such as joining gangs.

They may be searching for answers to questions about their identity, wanting to belong or to deepen their faith

- They may be driven by the desire for 'adventure' and excitement
- They may be driven by a need to feel better in themselves and promote their 'street cred'
- They may be drawn to a group or an individual who can offer them a sense of identity, a social network and who seem to offer them support. Young people who already have contacts, such as friends or family who are already involved in extremism may be especially vulnerable.
- They may also have personal experiences of racism or discrimination that fuel a sense of grievance, or they may be influenced by world events which result in them needing to feel they want to change things in the world or make a difference.

## How can a young person be drawn towards extremist ideologies?

**On-line** The internet provides entertainment, connectivity and interaction. Children may need to spend a lot of time on the internet while studying and they use other social media and messaging sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Vine or WhatsApp. These can be useful tools but they need to be aware there are powerful programmes and networks that use these media to reach out to young people to communicate extremist messages.

**Peer Interaction** Young people at risk may display extrovert behaviour, start getting into trouble at school or on the streets and mixing with other children who behave badly; but this is not always the case. Sometimes those at risk may be encouraged, by the people they are in contact with, not to draw attention to themselves. They may become quieter and seemingly better-behaved, dressing more modestly and mixing with a group of people that seem more studious than previous friends.

**TV and media** The media provide a view on world affairs. However, this is often a very simple version of events which are in reality very complex. Therefore children may not understand the situation fully or appreciate how extreme and dangerous are the views of some group.

## Recognising the signs of extremism and radicalisation

1. Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships
2. Spending increasing amounts of time online
3. Secretive behaviour
4. Becoming quick to condemn others who do not share their beliefs without interest in their point of view
5. Losing interest in friends and activities
6. Becoming isolated or withdrawn, and struggling with what might seem a personal or identity crisis of some kind, perhaps becoming more argumentative and domineering
7. Showing sympathy for extremist causes
8. Justifying or even glorifying violence
9. Possessing illegal or extremist literature
10. Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations such as “Muslims Against Crusades” or other non-proscribed extremist groups such as Britain First or the English Defence League.

## What to do if you have a concern about a child

1. **Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead using the initial concern form.**
2. **The DSL will refer decide if to refer to social care or the local Prevent lead.**
3. **Non urgent concerns can be referred to Police 101.**
4. **There is a dedicated DfE helpline for extremism 020 7340 7264 and e mail [counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk) , this is for staff and governors to raise concerns about extremism directly but is not intended to be used in emergencies.**

### Relevant guidance

- *The Prevent duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers (June 2015)*
- *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)*
- *Channel Duty Guidance Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism Statutory guidance for Channel panel members and partners of local panels (2015)*