

Keeping Children and Young People Safe from Radicalisation and Extremism:

Advice for Parents and Carers

Introduction

There have been many reports in the media recently of young people being targeted by adults and peers who hold extreme views that advocate violence. Some young people have been persuaded to leave the country in secret and against the wishes of their family, putting themselves in extreme danger as a result.

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.

If you need a copy of this booklet in another language please contact the Camden Safeguarding Children Board on **020 7974 8716**

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. The government also includes calls for the death of members of the armed forces, both in this country and abroad as part of this definition. Extremists may try to force their views on others and in some cases, may believe that these views can justify the use of violence in order to achieve certain aims.

'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.

Britain is a democratic country where the principles of tolerance and mutual respect for people of all faiths and beliefs, including non-belief, are upheld by the law. Those who hold extremist views and advocate violence go against these fundamental principles.

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.

Why do young people become radicalised?

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 world events
- They feel that their culture or religion 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 have a personal grievance or experience of racism or discrimination and feel they want to change things
- They are under pressure from their peers who have links with these groups.

How are young people radicalised?

Young people may come into contact with adults and peers with extremist views both online and in everyday life. The person may be a friend or relative or may be a stranger they meet online.

Contact online may be through social media such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube but young people may be invited to join discussions on less well-known sites such as Kik, Whisper, Messenger, Yik Yak or Omegle. Extremists often use these sites because they are harder to monitor and they can hide their identity.

Extremists often manipulate young people by using emotional triggers to engage with them, and may target them when they are experiencing difficulties such as bereavement, emotional trauma, mental health issues or social isolation.

What are the signs to look out for?

Individually these signs may not show evidence of radicalisation but in combination may mean the young person is subject to radicalising or extremist influences:

- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and beliefs
- Changes in their friendship group or associating with people who hold extremist beliefs
- Losing interest in previous activities
- Changes in use of social media with increased secrecy
- Owning additional mobile phones or devices
- Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- Advocating extremist messages
- Glorifying violence
- Accessing extremist literature and imagery.

How can parents keep young people safe?

- Make sure you know where your child is and who they are with; find out about your child's friends and their families.
- Be aware of your child's **online activity** and check which social media sites they are visiting; report any sites that you have concerns about.
- Talk to your child about their lives and their interests; encourage them to take up **positive activities** with local groups that you trust.
- 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.
- 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.

Where to get help?

If you are worried that your child may be in contact with people who are trying to radicalise them, you can call the following people for information and advice:

Police Prevent Engagement Officer 07818 587396

Camden's Prevent Co-ordinator 020 7974 1475

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 refer your child on for help if there are signs they are being radicalised.

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.

Useful websites

The following websites offer information and advice:

For advice about tackling radicalisation within the family go to Families Against Stress and Trauma at:
www.familiesmatter.org.uk

To report suspected online terrorist content please follow: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism

Report extremist content to social media providers. Find out more at: www.seeitreportit.org/

www.saferinternet.org.uk/news/online-radicalisation-and-extremism

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