

Advice to Parents and Carers

Keeping Children and Young People Safe from Radicalisation and Extremism



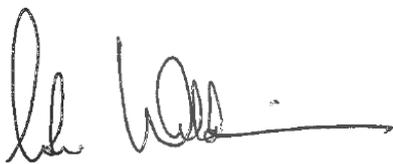
Keeping our children safe is a vital role of every Parent and Carer. Recently there has been an increase nationally in the rise of extremism across a number of communities. Extremism and radicalisation can come in many different forms and is not limited to one community.

The definition of Extremism is a “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”

Radicalisation is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.

This document has been put together to support and assist you in ensuring you play a key role in keeping your child safe from radicalisation and extremism.

Should you have any concerns or questions you will find at the back of this short document a number of contacts and resources that are available to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Wilderspin', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Colin Wilderspin
Head of Community Safety

Parents have the most important role in keeping their children safe

The parent/child relationship is the foundation to keeping children safe and supporting their social development and educational attainment.

Parenting can be a challenging task. Maintaining a positive relationship can sometimes be difficult as children grow and develop and seek an identity that may be different from their own family.

Children and young people have a natural curiosity, which as parents we want to encourage. However, as our children grow up we have to take different steps to ensure their safety.

Currently a number of young girls and boys have been persuaded to leave the country against the wishes of their families, or in secret, putting themselves in extreme danger.

You may not agree with the Government, the Council or the media

In a democracy, people often disagree. We need to encourage our young people to speak out, to find appropriate channels to encourage change and work with them to have their voices heard even when we disagree.

We also need to be committed to building an integrated, cohesive community with equal opportunities for everyone.

Why might a young person be drawn towards extremist ideologies?

- They may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging
- They may be driven by the desire for 'adventure' and excitement
- They may be driven by a need to raise their self-esteem and promote their 'street credibility'
- They may be drawn to a group or individual who can offer identity, a social network or support
- They may be influenced by world events and a sense of grievance resulting in a need to make a difference

How might this happen?

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 may use other social media and messaging sites such as Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Instagram, Vine or Whatsapp.

These can be useful tools, but we need to be aware there are powerful programmes and networks that use these media to reach out to young people and can communicate extremist messages.

Peer Interaction

Young people at risk may display extrovert behaviour, start getting into trouble at school or on the streets and may mix with other children who behave badly, but this is not always the case.

TV and media

The media provide a view on world affairs. However, this is often a very simple version of events, which in reality are very complex. Children may not understand the situation fully or appreciate the dangers involved in the views of some groups. They may see things in simple terms and not have the whole picture.

What are the signs that a child is at risk?

There are no typical characteristics of a person at risk. However, a sudden change in behaviour could be a potential indicator. Sometimes those at risk may be encouraged, by the people they are in contact with, not to draw attention to themselves. If you feel there is a change in your child's behaviour, parents are encouraged to inquire about their children's wellbeing. In particular, when you observe:

- Out of character changes in behaviour and peer relationships
- Secretive behaviour
- Losing interest in friends and activities
- Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- Glorifying violence
- Possessing illegal or extremist literature
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations such as "Muslims Against Crusades" or other non-proscribed extremist groups such as the English Defence League

How best can parents help?

Children need their parents to be open and communicate with them. This involves listening to their children's views and concerns. You may not always agree with your child, but you should convey to them that you have understood his or her point of view and you want the best for them in life.

If you have any concerns that your child may be being influenced by others, please talk to your child's class teacher or another person in the school that you trust, as they will be able to help and can access support for you and your child. Alternatively, there are many others who can offer support and guidance such as a faith or community leader, person of influence or outside help.

If you feel there is a risk of a child leaving the country, consider what safeguards you could take to avert travel. You might want to consider securing their passport in a safe place. Some young people do not need a passport for confirming their age; they can apply for an identification card as an alternative.

Do you have concerns?

If you have any concerns that your child may be being influenced by others get help – talk to someone you can trust, this could be your faith leader, family members who are peers of your children, or outside help.

If you feel there is a risk of a child 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. Some young people do not need a passport for confirming their age; they can apply for an identification card as an alternative (details below).

Ways a parent can support children and young people to stay safe

Know they are safe

- Know where your child is, who they are with and check this for yourself
- Know your child's friends and their families
- Keep lines of communication open, listen to your child and talk to them about their interests
- Encourage them to take up positive activities with local groups that you can trust

Know their interests

- Talk to your child 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 child to show an interest in the local community and show respect for people from all faiths and backgrounds
- Help your child to understand the dangers of becoming involved in situations about which they may not have the full information
- 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

Know what influences them

- Be aware of your child's on-line activity and update your own knowledge
- Know what social media and messaging sites your child uses
- Remind your child that people they contact over the internet may be 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

Contact details and confidential help lines

Alongside those previously mentioned, there are several dedicated teams who support vulnerable individuals and their families;

Your local Prevent team can be contacted on the Police non-emergency number 101 or email PreventReferrals@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Anonymous Anti-Terrorist Hotline 0800 789 321
For imminent threats contact the Police on 999

Children's Social Care Services 01908 253169/253170 or the Emergency out of office hours 01908 265545

You can also contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111

The Active Change Foundation (ACF) provide a confidential helpline to prevent British nationals from travelling to conflict zones.
ACF Confidential helpline telephone number is 020 8539 2770

Further Sources of Support and Information School

www.ltai.info

Let's Talk About It has been created to provide a greater understanding of the support Prevent can offer and to challenge division and negativity in our communities through positive and effective attitude changes. By highlighting the issues and initiating discussions around the potential threats we face as a community, we can create greater understanding and wider awareness.

www.preventtragedies.co.uk

This website was created due to the increasing concern about the worrying numbers of young people who are putting themselves at risk by travelling to Syria and other conflict zones and to help the numbers of families that have been torn apart by fear when their loved ones travel.

How can we make the web safer?

www.direct.gov.uk/reportingonlineterrorism

This is a dedicated webpage where you can report online content you think might be illegal, or which you find offensive.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise>

Information and support for safe use of the internet

www.ceop.gov.uk

CEOP works with child protection partners across the UK and overseas to identify the main threats to children and coordinates activity against these threats to bring offenders to account, protecting children from harm online and offline

www.internetmatters.org

Website dedicated to ideas to make the internet safe

<http://www.safermk.com/safer-themes/prevent/>

SaferMK page on Prevent in Milton Keynes



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www.safermk.com



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