



**Leeds Safeguarding  
Adults Board**

# **Safeguarding Adults from the Threat of Violent Extremism**



**Prevention:  
'Support me to be safe  
now, and in the future'**

## 1. Introduction

The UK faces a very real and ongoing threat from violent extremism. A small minority of individuals and groups continue to present false arguments and reasoning that seek to justify attacks on innocent civilians and the Government is taking tough measures to prevent extremist voices and messages reaching those who are most vulnerable to these radical views.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, including children and vulnerable adults to terrorism or activity in support of terrorism. This exploitation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

There is no obvious profile of a person likely to become involved in extremism or a single indicator of when a person might move to adopt violence in support of extremist ideas. The process of radicalisation is different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or within a very short time frame.

There are a range of extremist groups and narratives that promote the use of violence which affect individuals and communities across the country. These include the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS); Al Qaida influenced groups, extreme Right Wing, and Left Wing groups. There are also other groups that promote the use of violence to achieve their aims. We need to address the underlying issues that can attract adults to all of these causes.

Global events and conflicts are also playing an ever increasing role within local communities. These can sometimes lead to community tensions, fuel suspicion and create divisions between people from different cultures and backgrounds. Early intervention to prevent individuals being drawn into extremist activity is crucial in order to safeguard them from the risks of being involved in such activity.

## 2. National Policy and Strategies

In response to this considerable challenge the Government has developed a counter-terrorism strategy known as CONTEST. The aim of CONTEST (an abbreviation of **COUNTER TERRORIST STRATEGY**) is to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from international terrorism to that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence. The current threat from International Terrorism to the UK is 'severe' which means an attack is highly likely.

The CONTEST strategy has 4 key strands of work that have a different role to play in tackling the threat from extremism:

- Pursue** – to stop terrorist attacks.
- Prepare** – where an attack cannot be stopped to mitigate its impact.
- Protect** – to strengthen the overall protection against terrorist attacks.
- Prevent** – to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Further information about the CONTEST strategy can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest>

The Care Act 2014 and associated Guidance put Adult Safeguarding on a statutory footing from April 2015 and replaced the DoH "No Secrets" Guidance. The Act sets out a clear legal framework for how Local Authorities and other statutory partners should protect "adults at risk" of abuse or neglect. The Care Act defines an "adult at risk" as someone who:

- Has care and support needs (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting those needs) and
- Is experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect and
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

This may be a person who is / has:

- Elderly and frail due to ill health
- Learning disabilities
- Physical disabilities and / or a sensory impairment
- A mental health condition (including dementia or personality disorder)
- Long term illnesses / conditions
- Misuses substances or alcohol
- Unable to make their own decisions and is in need of care and support
- A carer (looking after another person with care and support needs)
- An adult over the age of 18 who has care and support needs and is "in transition" from Children's to Adult's Services"

The list is not exhaustive – other people not on this list might also be considered to be "adults at risk".

Adults can also be radicalised in different ways:

- They are groomed either online or in person by people seeking to draw them into extremist activity.
- They might be radicalised over the internet or through the influence of their peer network – in this instance the person's friends, family or carers might not know about this and feel powerless to stop their radicalisation.
- They can be groomed by their family members who hold harmful, extreme beliefs including parents / carers and siblings who live with the adult and / or person(s) who live outside the family home but have an influence over the person's life.
- They can be exposed to violent, anti-social, extremist imagery, rhetoric and writings which can lead to the development of a distorted world view in which extremist ideologies seem reasonable. In this scenario they are not being individually targeted but are the victims of propaganda which seeks to radicalise.

A common feature of radicalisation is that the adult does not recognise the exploitative nature of what is happening and does not see themselves as a victim of grooming or exploitation. The harm that people can experience ranges from someone adopting or complying with extreme views which limits their social interaction and full engagement with society, to adults being taken into

war zones or being groomed for their involvement in extremist activity and / or violence.

The Prevent Guidance Note summarises the responsibility of professionals and volunteers to intervene effectively to prevent the grooming of adults for involvement in extremist activity:

- **For many:** this will mean being alert to the ways in which adults can become vulnerable to radicalisation, the indicators that they are being radicalised and knowing how to report these concerns.
- **For those who have more specific safeguarding responsibilities:** it will involve complex work to support victims and disrupt and prosecute perpetrators
- **For everyone:** it involves questioning attitudes and beliefs that get in the way of recognising that adults are being radicalised and providing the consistent, determined and non-judgemental support that both they and their families need.

This duty is known as the **Prevent duty**. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies which are listed in schedule 6 of the Act as specified authorities in England, Wales and Scotland. The specified authorities are those judged to have a role in protecting vulnerable children, young people and adults and/or the national security.

### 3.0 Prevent

The Prevent agenda is regarded as the most challenging strand of the CONTEST strategy as all the work undertaken within this area of work sits within the non-criminal space i.e. before any criminal activity has taken place. It is crucial to recognise that our work in Leeds is to protect vulnerable individuals from violent extremism and the threat of radicalisation falls within the safeguarding arena and is no different to safeguarding individuals from a range of other forms harm and abuse.

The Prevent strategy has 3 key objectives (also known as the 3 i's). These are:

- **Ideology** – Challenging the ideology that supports terrorism and those who promote it.
- **Individuals** – Protect vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support and
- **Institutions** – Supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.

The first objective is challenging the **ideology** that supports terrorism and those who promote it. This includes:

- Being proactive in promoting values such as: democracy, the rule of law, equality of opportunity, freedom of speech, and the universal right to freedom from persecution.
- The need to focus on the few people who are most susceptible to terrorist propaganda. It should not be assumed that people of any one particular

faith are any more vulnerable to radicalisation than other faith or ethnic groups.

- The need to involve credible voices, local communities and organisations in challenging extremist narratives and ideologies that seek to divide communities.

The second objective is concerned with protecting vulnerable **individuals**. Local safeguarding procedures are a central part of this. Some key points to note are:

- Radicalisation is a process and not an event and it is possible to intervene in this to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised.
- There is a need to ensure that activities are proportionate and focused upon people at risk.
- Activity needs to address all forms of extremism. The **Channel** programme aims to support people who are at risk of being drawn into extremist activity. This involves several agencies working together to give individuals access to services such as health and education, specialist mentoring and diversionary activities - more information on Channel can be found in section 4 of this policy.

The third objective is supporting sectors and **institutions** where there are risks of radicalisation. The strategy highlights that:

- A wide range of sectors can provide routes through which people are radicalised to become terrorists or support terrorism. Priority areas for intervention include: education, faith, health, criminal justice, charities and the internet (which is identified as a key risk which cuts across all sectors)
- Prevent work in schools is key but needs to be proportionate. Priorities are to ensure that all school staff know what to do if they see signs of radicalisation, reducing risks of exposure to extremist views in out of school hours provision and collaboration between agencies to identify individuals at risk of radicalisation and protect them from harm.
- In universities and colleagues freedom of speech and academic freedom are key principles but they also have a legal and moral duty of care for staff and students.
- People with mental health conditions or learning disabilities may be vulnerable to radicalisation and it is important that all staff working in health and social care are aware of possible signs of radicalisation and how to refer people for further support.
- Work with young offenders and people vulnerable to offending has a particularly critical role in ensuring the future success of Prevent.

Further information on the Prevent strategy can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011>

## 4.0 Definitions and vulnerability factors

The Prevent Strategy defines extremism as follows:

**"Extremism** is 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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas."

The Prevent Strategy defines radicalisation as follows:

**"Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism."

Radicalisation is usually a process not an event. During this process there will inevitably be opportunities to intervene in order to reduce the risk of the individual being attracted to extremist ideology and causes and safeguard him/her from the risk of radicalisation. It is important to be able to recognise the factors that might contribute towards the radicalisation of an individual. Indeed some of the factors that lead an individual to becoming radicalised are no different to those that might lead individuals towards involvement with other activity such as gangs, drugs, sexual exploitation etc.

Those involved in extremist activity come from a range of backgrounds and experiences. There is no single profile of what an extremist looks like or a 10 point plan of what might drive an individual towards becoming radicalised. Therefore the importance of staff using their skill, expertise and professional judgement is crucial in not stigmatising individuals that may display some of these factors.

## 5.0 Vulnerability factors

Below are some of the factors that might contribute towards an individual becoming radicalised. This is not an exhaustive list and the presence of any of these factors does not necessarily mean that he/she will be involved in extremist activity. However, a combination of many of these factors may increase the vulnerability to extremist activity.

- Feelings of grievance and injustice
- Feeling under threat
- A need for identity, meaning and belonging
- A desire for status
- A desire for excitement and adventure
- A need to dominate and control others
- Susceptibility to indoctrination
- A desire for political or moral change
- Opportunistic involvement
- Family or friends involvement in extremism

- Being at a transitional time of life
- Being influenced or controlled by a group
- Relevant mental health issues
- Over-identification with a group or ideology
- 'Them and Us' thinking
- Dehumanisation of the enemy
- Attitudes that justify offending
- Harmful means to an end
- Harmful objectives

Where there are signs of significant harm to a vulnerable adult in relation to violent extremism, such as the potential of travel to a conflict zone, access to known extremists, extremist networks and funding and equipment and intent to cause harm to self and others then a referral should be made to the Contact Centre on 0113 222 4401.

## **6.0 Local Support and Protocols**

As with other safeguarding issues, where a worker has any concerns that a person or their family may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism they should speak with the organisation's safeguarding lead and the Prevent SPOC if this is not the same person. If the concerns about an individual are not serious enough to be escalated or where there is no evidence that the individual is vulnerable to radicalisation the safeguarding lead / Prevent SPOC may decide that they can be addressed by action within the organisation. In this case the organisation should take the appropriate action to address any concerns and review whether the concerns remain after this.

However where it is deemed that there is a risk to an individual in the context of radicalisation to extremist ideology and causes the individual should be referred to the **Channel** programme.

### **Channel Programme**

Channel is a key element of the Prevent strategy. It is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation. Channel uses existing collaboration between Local Authorities, statutory partners (such as the education and health sectors, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, youth services and offender management services) the police and the local community to:

- Identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
- Assess the nature and extent of that risk and to
- Develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

Channel is about safeguarding individuals from being drawn into extremist activity leading to violence against others. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risk they face before they are involved in any type of illegal activity.

The Channel process identifies those most at risk of radicalisation and refers them via the Local Authority or police for assessment by a multi-agency panel. The panel, chaired by the Local Authority considers how best to safeguard them

and support their vulnerability through a support package tailored to individual needs. This is similar to the way in which individuals at risk from involvement in crime, drugs and other social issues are supported.

Partnership involvement ensures that those at risk have access to a wide range of support ranging from mainstream services such as health and education through to specialist mentoring or faith guidance and wider diversionary activities. Each support package is monitored closely and reviewed regularly by the multi-agency panel.

Further information about the Channel programme can be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/118194/channel-guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118194/channel-guidance.pdf)

The link to an e-learning module below provides further information on the Channel process and its purpose and will assist in identifying factors that might make individuals vulnerable to radicalisation. The module takes 25 minutes to complete and describes your responsibilities and role in relation to the Channel process. A certificate of achievement can be printed once the module has been completed.

[http://course.ncalt.com/Channel\\_General\\_Awareness/01/index.html](http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness/01/index.html)

## **Referrals**

Referrals to the Channel process are coordinated by the police but come from a wide range of sources including members of the public, social care services, youth offending teams and health and education practitioners. If you work for a partner organisation and want to know more about Channel or have a concern about an individual and want to make a referral contact your organisation's safeguarding lead or Prevent SPOC. Where your organisation requires further support or guidance you can contact the Local Authority's Prevent Coordinator, Nadeem Siddique on 07891 275424 or at [nadeem.siddique@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:nadeem.siddique@leeds.gov.uk).

When a referral is received, a risk assessment of the individual being referred will be undertaken. If there is evidence of potential vulnerability to radicalisation then a multi-agency panel will meet to consider the risks identified and develop a programme of support and intervention to mitigate those risks. Consent is required from the individual being referred to share their information with the panel. Members of the panel are from a range of statutory partners such as Adult Social Care, Children's Social Work Services, Education & Early Years Child Protection Team, Safer Leeds, the NHS, youth offending service and others as appropriate.

The plan will be shared with the adult. All partners are responsible for contributing to progressing the plan and this is reviewed by the panel on a regular basis. The plan can be amended to meet any need, identified through a review of the assessment until such time when the panel agrees to end the plan. At this time the referral's notes and plan are prepared for final sign off by the Chair of the panel.



Wherever possible the response should be appropriately and proportionately provided from within the normal range of universal provision of the organisation working with other local agencies and partners.

Where a protection plan is already in place for the individual the Channel Coordinator will link into these processes to ensure there is no duplication of activity and that Prevent concerns are also considered and addressed within those existing plans.

## **7.0 Further information**

If you are interested in finding out more about Prevent and to discuss any training needs for your organisation please contact Nadeem Siddique, Prevent Coordinator, Leeds City Council at [nadeem.siddique@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:nadeem.siddique@leeds.gov.uk).