



Safeguarding Children and Young people against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

1. INTRODUCTION

Children and young people have a natural curiosity which we want to encourage. However, as 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. They may also be receiving violent images and messages which in itself is abusive. This is a type of grooming that is dangerous to the individual child and society.

Prevent is one of four strategies of the main CONTEST Strategy. The Prevent Strategy seeks to tackle all forms of terrorist and violent extremist ideology including, but not limited to, International Terrorism (IT – including but not limited to Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab, Boko Haram, ISIS and ISIL), Northern Irish Related Terrorism (NIRT) and Domestic Extremism (including Extreme Right and Left Wing, Anti-Semitism, and some other forms like extreme animal rights groups). What these ideologies can have in common is a belief in the use of extreme violence and terror to achieve their aims, which are often political.

This is guidance to designed for all Fortitude Fostering staff (both internal & external) and foster carers to help them keep children safe by explaining how they should respond if they have a concern.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Fortitude's Fostering Safeguarding Strategy, due to the links between Radicalisation, Extremism, with other forms of exploitation that can affect Looked After Children.

2. LEGAL BACKGROUND

From July 2015 all schools, registered early years' childcare providers and registered later years' childcare providers (referred to in this advice as 'childcare providers') were made subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies.

In order fulfil the Prevent duty, it is essential to be able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.

Detailed guidance is set out in the relevant statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. In addition, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CT and S Act) sections 36 to 41 set out the duty on local authorities and partners to establish and cooperate with a local Channel programme of 'Channel panels' to provide support for people, children and adults, vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It is essential that Channel panel members, partners to local panels and other professionals ensure that children, young people and adults are protected from harm. Channel is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity.



3. DEFINITION

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups. “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” (HM Government Prevent Risks Strategy 2011)

4. RISKS

Children and young people can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by

- The influence of family members or friends
- Direct contact with extremist groups and organisations
- Through the internet via social media or other websites. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to lead to the child or young person suffering significant harm’
- Extremist literature
- “grooming” process where the vulnerabilities of a young person are exploited to form an exclusive friendship which draws the young person away from other influences that might challenge the radical ideology

The risk of radicalisation can develop over time and may relate to a number of factors in the child’s life. Such as identity crisis, a desire for adventure and excitement, or peer group pressure. The risk may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified. Different reasons exist for different children and young people. On-line content in particular social media may pose a specific risk in normalising radical views and promoting content that is shocking and extreme; children can be trusting and may not necessarily appreciate bias, which can lead to being drawn into such groups and to adopt their extremist views.

Recent case evidence indicates that specific groups such as young Muslim women have been targeted for radicalisation and grooming, which has led to attempts to travel to the Middle East placing them at risk.

4.1 Indicators

It is not easy to identify if a young person is being radicalised or involved in extremism. Often there behaviour can become secretive and the indicators listed, taken in isolation maybe related to a number of issues. That is why it is important to build a picture of a child’s experience that includes listening to them and observing their behaviour in away that allows you to identify changes and assess their significance. However the following indicators of worth considering:

- Out of character changes in dress, 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
- What to do if you are concerned

5. WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 specifies that Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships, local authorities and their partners should be commissioning and providing services for children who are likely to suffer, or may have suffered significant harm, due to radicalisation and extremism. (Chapter 1, Section 17).

- Any practitioner identifying concerns about the child or young person should report them to Fortitude Fostering’s Designated safeguarding lead in their organisation, who will discuss these concerns with the police.
- The respective safeguarding board Referrals Procedure should be followed. A multi-agency assessment meeting (MASH) will determine the appropriate response and level of support to the family.
- Consideration of referrals to the Channel programme may be appropriate in some cases. Response should be proportionate, with the emphasis on supporting vulnerable children and young people, unless there is evidence of more active involvement in extremist activities.
- If foster carers have information about a young person or child that raises concerns these should be discussed with their supervising social worker and Designated Manager, and shared with the respective allocated local authority Social Worker
- Ultimately parents, schools, Children’s Services and significantly the police may be involved as part of the risk assessment and action plan to protect the respective child or young person.
- If the concern is immediate – e.g. the child or young person is in immediate danger – contact the police as in child protection where the child or young person is deemed to be in immediate danger.
- Foster carers should record the factual detail of their concerns. For example, changes in behaviour and they should share their concerns with their SSW and the child or young person’s social worker. If you are concerned a child/young person may leave the country you may want to lock away their passport but let the social worker know if you are thinking of, or have taken this action. You may want to consider what access they have to funds and discuss this with the respective SW and your supervising social worker.
- Supervising Social Workers must listen to a foster carer expressing concerns and share these concerns with respective allocated local authority social worker and with Fortitude Fostering’s Designated manager.
- If concerns are identified these will be reported Ofsted by Fortitude Fostering’s Designated Manager as appropriate.
- Fortitude Fostering’s Designated Manager will ensure that the child or young person is adequately protected and that the foster carer and supervising social worker are supported and supervised. They will also ensure that Notifications to Ofsted are completed and updated as appropriate and that action plans are acted upon.
- Protecting children and young people from radicalisation and extremism requires careful assessment and working collaboratively across agencies as initially concerns may be inconclusive and protecting child or young person against a potential risk can



be dependent on a wider range of factors. Sharing information effectively and keeping the child and young person in focus should be the main aim of any interventions and services.

6. TRAINING

A full days training will be available to Fortitude Fostering employees and further online training available to staff and foster carers. Training is essential way of exploring the many issues involved and the complexities of the roles when dealing with radicalisation and violent extremism

7. FURTHER HELP

- The Active Change Foundation (ACF) provides a confidential helpline to prevent British nationals from travelling to conflict zones. ACF Confidential helpline telephone number is 020 8539 2770
- Immediate threat of harm to child or others Police 999
- Or Anti-Terrorist Hotline 0800 789 321
- You can call Crime Stoppers anonymously on 0800 555111