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SAFEGUARDING FROM RADICALISATION and EXTREMISM		

1. Definition

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism 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 Strategy 2011).

2. Risks

Young people can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, 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 them suffering significant harm'.

It may take the form of a "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 young person's life. Identifying the risks require practitioners to exercise their professional judgement and to seek further advice as necessary. The risk may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified.

On-line content, in particular social media, may pose a specific risk in normalising radical views and promoting content that is shocking and extreme. Young people can be trusting and may not necessarily appreciate bias, which can lead to being drawn into such groups and to adopt their extremist views.

3. Indicators

Staff should be aware of issues that may make an individual vulnerable to radicalisation, these can include:

- Identity Crisis - Distance from cultural / religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them.
- Personal Crisis - Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends. Searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- Personal Circumstances - Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.
- Unmet aspirations - Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of community values.
- Criminality - Experiences of imprisonment; previous involvement with criminal groups.

There are a number of behaviours which may indicate a young person is at risk of being radicalised or exposed to extreme views: These may include:

- Spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists.
- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group.
- Day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred on an extremist ideology.
- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause.
- Possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause.
- Attempts to recruit others to the group / cause.
- Communications with others that suggest identification with a group, cause or ideology.
- Using insulting to derogatory names for another group.

There is an obvious difference between espousing radical and extreme views and acting on them and staff should ensure that assessments place behaviour in the family and social context of the young person and include information about the young person's peer group and conduct and behaviour at school. Holding radical or extreme views is not illegal but inciting a person to commit an act in the name of any belief is in itself an offence.

4. Protection and Action to be Taken

Protecting 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 young person in focus should be the main aim of any interventions and services.

Staff identifying concerns about a young person in the home should report them to the home manager who will discuss these concerns with the police. The Local Safeguarding Board Referrals Procedure should be followed. Consideration of referrals to the Channel programme may be appropriate in some cases. Response should be proportionate, with the emphasis on supporting vulnerable young people, unless there is evidence of more active involvement in extremist activities.

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. Responses could include curriculum provision, additional tutoring or mentoring, additional activities within and out of school and family support.

Where a higher level of targeted and multi-agency response is indicated a formal multi-agency assessment should be conducted. The assessment process may lead to a Strategy discussion, Section 47 Enquiry and an Initial Child Protection Conference, if there are concerns about the young person suffering Significant Harm.

Where concerns are identified in respect of potential signs of radicalisation which indicate the young person is vulnerable, the person raising the concerns should discuss their concerns with the Police lead who will decide if a referral to a higher level is required.

Where there is an identified risk/ potential risk that a young person may be involved/potentially involved in supporting or following extremism, further investigation by the police will be required, prior to other assessments and interventions.