Extremism & Radicalisation Practice Guidance and Procedure

All Services

All staff, foster parents, adopters and prospective adopters have a duty and a responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults. We care about all individuals and must take appropriate action if we become concerned that an individual may be displaying extremist views or behaviour, or may be at risk of radicalisation.

See also separate Prevent Duty Procedure (L&D only) and Safeguarding Policy & Procedure.

Polaris will ensure **engagement** and **promotion of** this policy through the induction process and thereafter via signposting as appropriate. It is available to all staff and apprentices online and searchable via our database of policies and procedures.
Support to implement this policy will be ensured via induction and **training** and via supervision.

This Policy is reflected within our recruiting process, training, and work with external employers and apprentices. All policies are routinely reviewed. **References to 'Staff' also includes apprentices and volunteers.**

This procedure sets out the responsibilities of all staff, including all those who provide work and services on behalf of the community of companies, to safeguard those at risk from extremism and/or radicalisation. It provides guidance about how anybody providing work and services for the community of companies can support parents, foster parents, adopters and prospective adopters in keeping people safe from extremism and radicalisation. It provides information about indicators of risk, and how to respond to concerns.

The term 'child' or 'children' is used to refer to all children under the age of 18 years. Where the context specifically relates only to older children, the term 'young person' is used.

The term 'adult' in Scotland legally refers to anyone aged 16 and over, however the [Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014](#) defines a "child" as someone who has not attained the age of 18, therefore both Child & Adult Protection Procedures apply to all 16-18 year olds in Scotland. Following consultation with local authorities, the Polaris Community should implement Child Protection Procedures for all young people aged 16-18 in Scotland unless instructed by the relevant Local Authority/Trust that Adult Protection Legislation is more appropriate in an individual case.

As part of Polaris community, the term foster parent is preferred but it is recognised that foster carer is also used in legislation and within the community.

This procedure forms part of the Polaris Quality Management System in line with ISO-9001:2015 standards and applies to all companies within the community unless stated otherwise.

Procedure Owner:	QA & Safeguarding Team
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Associated Policy and supporting documents:	Polaris Safeguarding Children Policy
	Suite of Group Safeguarding Procedures

All Polaris companies are detailed in the current legal structure.

Contents

Extremism and Radicalisation

Most people, even those who hold extreme views, do not become involved in violent extremism. However, the current threat to the United Kingdom from terrorism can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, including children, to involve them in terrorism or activity in support of terrorism. We take the issue of extremism and radicalisation very seriously and will always act to safeguard children and vulnerable adults placed with or in contact with the community of companies. This procedure is not written with the aim of 'spotting terrorists', but rather to help those carrying out work on behalf of the organisation to feel comfortable in discussing difficult issues, in knowing what to be concerned about, and knowing where to get advice and guidance. Staff need to support families, professionals, foster parents, adopters and prospective adopters in recognising concerns, seeking advice and promoting protective factors to prevent children and adults being radicalised.

Keeping children, young people and adults safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should be approached in the same way as safeguarding from other risks. Children and vulnerable adults should be protected from messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right, Neo Nazi or White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

Polaris can also monitor network level internet activity so that any risks are identified.

Identification

Anyone can be at risk. Age, social standing and education do not necessarily matter as much as previously thought. All kinds of people become radicalised, from young men and women with learning difficulties to adults in well-respected professions. What is clear is that, the more vulnerable the person, the easier it is to influence their way of thinking.

There is no such thing as a typical extremist, and people that become involved in extremism come from a variety of backgrounds. However, research can help us to identify factors that can contribute to people becoming involved in extremism and becoming radicalised. It also tells us what factors may help to prevent individuals being drawn into this way of thinking and acting, and what we can do to protect them.

Caution must be applied when considering these identifying factors, as it is important not to inappropriately label or stigmatise. Always seek advice from your manager or consult with a senior manager when you have concerns about any of the following factors, which *may* be indicators of someone becoming radicalised or extreme in their views:

- A conviction that their religion, culture or beliefs are under threat and treated unjustly
- A tendency to look for conspiracy theories and distrust of mainstream media
- The need for identity and belonging
- Being secretive about who they've been talking to online and what sites they visit Switching screens when you come near the phone, tablet or computer

- Possessing items – electronic devices or phones – you haven't given them
- Becoming emotionally volatile.

Other indicators of vulnerability can include:

Identity Crisis – Distance from cultural or 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, or 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, or 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, feelings of failure, or rejection of civic life

Criminality – Experiences of imprisonment, poor resettlement or reintegration, or previous involvement with criminal groups.

Several of these risk factors apply to many teenagers, especially those that are not living with their birth families or who live at a distance from their home and friends, and therefore caution must be applied when considering the risks of extremism. They may be indicators of other risks, such as sexual exploitation, gang violence or mental health concerns, for example, and should be considered alongside all the other issues and factors.

Some of the more critical indicators of extremism could be:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters
- Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations
- Significant changes to appearance, behaviour or both.

People can be drawn into extremism through their contact with family members. They could be influenced by friends or contact with extremist groups, sometimes via social media. This can put a children and vulnerable adults at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to lead to them suffering significant harm.

Extremist groups could use a process of 'grooming' a child to draw them away from people that may challenge extremist views, such as their parents, foster parents, adopters or friends. Children are sometimes targeted because they are vulnerable and as this is, in the main, the cohort of children with whom we work, extra vigilance is necessary. The risk of

radicalisation can develop over time and may relate to a number of factors in the child's life. Identifying the risks requires 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.

Online content, in particular social media, may pose a specific risk in normalising radical views and promoting content that is shocking and extreme; children and vulnerable adults can be trusting and naïve, 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.

What must you do?

Safeguarding from extremism is no different to how you would share a concern about drugs, physical and sexual abuse or any other form of criminality. You must remain aware of and have an understanding of the risk of radicalisation within the service you work in and the geographical area. You must also be aware of and adhere to the safeguarding partnership procedures on Extremism and Radicalisation for the area in which the child or adult you are working with lives. These will be available on the Local Authority or Trust website for the relevant area.

If you are concerned about anyone being involved in or at risk of being involved in extremism and radicalisation you must make a referral to the relevant children's or adult services, police and channel panel, as appropriate, by following the Local Authority or Trust multi-agency procedures and follow internal notifiable and critical incident procedures.

If you are concerned that anyone poses an immediate danger to themselves or any other person, you must call the police on the emergency number without delay.

Independent Fostering Agencies are a 'specified authority' as per the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Schedule 6). All staff and others working on behalf of our agencies, including foster parents, have a duty to work in ways that prevent people, including children, from being drawn into terrorism.

Not all companies within the community of companies are a 'specified authority' as per the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Schedule 6); however, all staff working on behalf of the community of companies still have a duty to work in ways that prevent people, including children, from being drawn into terrorism. There are three themes to the duty:

Leadership

Those in leadership positions must:

- establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of radicalisation
- ensure staff and foster/adoptive parents understand the risk and build the capabilities to deal with it

- communicate and promote the importance of the duty; and
- ensure staff and foster/adoptive parents implement the duty effectively.

Working in partnership

Prevent work depends on effective partnership working and productive co-operation, in particular with local Prevent co-ordinators, the police and local authorities, and co-ordination through existing multi-agency forums, such as Community Safety Partnerships.

Capabilities

Staff must understand what radicalisation means and why people may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism as a consequence of it. They need to be aware of what is meant by the term "extremism" and the relationship between extremism and terrorism.

Staff need to know what measures are available to prevent people from becoming drawn into terrorism and how to challenge the extremist ideology that can be associated with it. They need to understand how to obtain support for people who may be being exploited by radicalising influences.

All staff should complete the mandatory training on Extremism and Radicalisation.

All settings

You must:

- Know how to identify children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of extremism or radicalisation and how to intervene as appropriate
- Know and follow the Local Authority or Trust procedures about extremism and radicalisation, including referring child and adult safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure parents, families and foster/adoptive parents know the risks and warning signs, and their role in keeping the people safe from accessing or being exposed to terrorist and extremist materials, and know to discuss and share any concerns appropriately. The responsibility for supporting parents, families or foster/adoptive parents to do this should be shared between our staff and the Local Authority or Trust. These responsibilities should be clearly identified in the relevant Risk Assessments (including exploitation)
  / Safer Caring Plans as appropriate and taking care to explicitly agree and record whom is responsible for each action.
- Inform your manager of any concerns and refer to the Local Authority or Trust in the area where the person resides and make a referral without delay.
- Follow internal policies in relation to Notifiable Events and critical incidents.
- Be part of any subsequent risk assessment, working with partner agencies to identify risks and protective plans, e.g. if the child's Social Worker and Police decide to refer the child to Channel (see below definition), then you have a duty to support and contribute to that process.
- Anyone can refer to Channel, if there is a difference of opinion a manager could make the referral, even if the police and social care decided not to.

Fostering Services

You must:

- Identify any concerns or risks during the matching and placement process, and ensure a clear plan is in place to manage and mitigate the risks. There should be reference to Extremism and Radicalisation in the Care Plan and Placement Agreement, if it has already been identified as an issue
- Ensure that foster parents knows of the risks, warning signs, their role in keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe and to discuss and share any concerns appropriately. The Safer Caring Plan and/or an Exploitation Risk Assessment should be used to record any known risks and the plan about how they will be managed or mitigated
- Support foster parents to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from accessing or being exposed to terrorist and extremist materials, including online materials
- Seek advice if there are concerns that anyone may be developing extremist views, or becoming radicalised. In the first instance this advice will be from your manager. Your relevant Registered Manager has ultimate responsibility for Child and Adult Protection, and can seek advice from the QA lead for the setting and the Head Safeguarding as appropriate, however, there should be no delay in a referral being made to the relevant Local Authority or Trust
- Discuss and refer any issues or concerns to the child's Social Worker

All other settings

You must:

- Identify any concerns or risks known about a child, young person or adult and ensure a clear Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan is in place to manage and mitigate the risks
- Reference this issue in any Action Plan, which must be shared with all appropriate individuals and agencies through a multi-agency meeting. The risks should be revisited and reassessed at each review meeting
- Seek advice if there are concerns that a child, young person or adult may be developing extremist views, or becoming radicalised. In the first instance, this advice will be from your manager. You will be instructed to follow the Critical Incident Procedure. Your line manager or a senior manager can seek advice from the QA lead in the first instance or the wider QA & Safeguarding Team at any time. However, there should be no delay in a referral being made to the relevant Local Authority or Trust
- Discuss and refer any issues or concerns with the child's, young person's Social Worker / Personal Advisor, who has specific responsibilities to safeguard the child, young person or adult

- Share the Critical Incident Report with the child's Social Worker or the young person's Personal Advisor, who also has specific responsibilities for safeguarding

Advice

The following advice is useful to follow when working with someone who you believe is at risk of radicalisation and is useful to share with parents, foster parents or adoptive parents:

- Be approachable
- Let them know you're there to help them if they get into trouble online – and if they're concerned about something, they can come to you
- Be calm and don't panic. They are far more likely to be open and honest with you if you remain calm about the situation
- Tell someone – seek immediate advice from your line manager, Supervising Social Worker or equivalent
- Make sure children are aware that if something has worried them or made them uncomfortable online, their best course of action is always to talk to an adult they trust
- Talk to them about their online friendships
- Find out what sites they go to, where they met their online friends, how they communicate and what information they share. Talk to them about being cautious about what they share with people online. Remind them that even though people they have met online might feel like friends, they may not be who they say they are, and that they may have ulterior motives for befriending them
- Children's beliefs are a sensitive subject and need handling carefully as you don't want to push them away or shut them out
- Make sure children and vulnerable adults are safe in real life (not just online)
- Remind them to never arrange to meet someone they only know online without a trusted adult present
- Encourage them to share their ideas and opinions
- Many people are often not aware of the realities and consequences of the radical ideas they have formed or the arguments against them.

Channel

Channel is about safeguarding children, young people and adults from being drawn into terrorism by offering support to those who are identified as being vulnerable at an early stage. Channel provides a multi-agency framework to assess the nature and extent of the risk and develops an appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.
Under provisions in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015), Local Authorities are required to establish Channel Panels to support vulnerable individuals from being radicalised and drawn into extremist activity.

All Prevent referrals are carefully assessed by the police and (in some areas) the local authority to see if they are suitable for Channel or may require another intervention such as mental health support.

If suitable, the case is discussed with all relevant partners at a Channel panel to decide what support, if any, is necessary. The Channel panel is chaired by the local authority and can include a variety of statutory partners such as the police, children's services, social care, education professionals and mental health professionals.

Referred individuals are informed and must give consent (or via a parent or guardian of they are children) before an intervention can take place.If a Channel intervention is required, the panel works with local partners to develop an appropriate tailored support package. The support package is monitored closely and reviewed regularly by the Channel panel.

What can you do to prevent someone from being radicalised?

People need to be equipped with the skills and confidence to engage with the world (including the digital world) safely, and to know where to go for help when things go wrong. This involves being willing to tackle and embrace difficult conversations appropriate to different age groups. We need to talk about diversity, sexuality, religion and politics. We need to empower people, so when someone challenges their way of thinking, they can fall back on their own knowledge, rather than being led down a path because they know no different.

It is also important to keep up to date with technology and understand how it changes so that you are educated about the online world and the issues that children, young people and vulnerable adults may be faced with online. Foster parents, adopters, and other family members could spend time playing and using some of the games and social media platforms that are being used. This can help to engage with them, help to develop an understanding of what they are doing (and the potential dangers), as well as start to build their trust.

Positive messages

You can build resilience to radicalisation and extremism by:

- Helping improve their self-esteem and self-confidence
- Promoting inclusivity and community cohesion
- Providing a safe environment for debating a range of issues such as British values, recognising and managing risk, making safer choices and the impact of pressure from others
- Ensuring children, young people and vulnerable adults understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making.

Hotline/Helpline Numbers:

- Police anti-terrorism hotline on 0800 789 321
- NSPCC Radicalisation helpline 0808 800 5000

Additional Guidance

If you are concerned about extremism in a school or organisation that works with children, or if you think a child might be at risk of extremism, you can contact 'Government Helpline: Preventing extremism in schools and children's services' for advice. Email counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 0207 340 7264.
Educate Against Hate: Government advice and trusted resources for schools to safeguard students from radicalisation, build resilience to all types of extremism and promote shared values. Also has information for parents.

Let's Talk About It: An informative website designed to provide practical help and guidance to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism

UK - Safer Internet Centre – advice about online extremism and all aspects of online safety

Common Sense Media's website reviews games, books, films, music, and all sorts of digital content. Games and social media platforms are changing regularly; this resource is a fantastic way to keep up to date

Department for Education. The prevent duty: for schools and childcare providers

HM Government. Channel Duty Guidance: *Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism:* Statutory guidance for Channel panel members and partners of local panels

Summary of all recent UK Government guidance and legislation about terrorism and extremism: 2010 to 2015 government policy: counter-terrorism - GOV.UK

Guidance for Ofsted inspectors when inspecting independent fostering agencies – Annex F sets out expectations in relation to extremism: Inspecting independent fostering agencies: guidance for inspectors - Publications - GOV.UK

England, Scotland and Wales

Prevent Duty Guidance for England, Scotland and Wales: Prevent duty guidance - Publications - GOV.UK

Northern Ireland

There is no specific Prevent guidance for Northern Ireland, as explained in sections 11.59-11.6 of the Prevent strategy (HM Government, 2011)

Definitions

CONTEST is the United Kingdom's counter-terrorism strategy. The aim of CONTEST is to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.

Contest has four main work streams:

Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks;

Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism;

Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack; and

Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.

The UK Government **Prevent** Strategy nationally:

- responds to the ideological challenge we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views
- provides practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support
- works with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, online and health) where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to deal with.

Prevent is a strand of the Government's counter terrorism strategy CONTEST that aims to stop people from being drawn into terrorism by:

- Challenging the spread of terrorist ideology
- Supporting vulnerable people from being radicalised and drawn into terrorism
- Working with key institutions where there are risks of radicalisation

All agencies have an important role to play in preventing terrorism. The Prevent Duty requires responsible authorities to have '*due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism in the exercise of their duties'.* This duty includes requiring those working with children, young people and adults are trained to understand the risk of terrorism in the local area; are able to identify when an individual is at risk of radicalisation; and knows how to respond when a risk is identified by making a PREVENT referral.

Channel is a key element of the Prevent Strategy. It is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation using collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners, the police and local community to:

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

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).*

Violent Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as:

"The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views, which:

- Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
- Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
- Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts;
- Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK."

Grooming – when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation (such as radicalisation). Children can be groomed online or in the 'real world', by strangers or people they know. Read more about grooming – [What is grooming (NSPCC)](#)

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 *(HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011).*

Online Radicalisation – a process whereby individuals through their online interactions and exposures to various types of internet content, come to view violence as a legitimate method of solving social and political conflicts.[1]

Terrorism – an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people, causes serious damage to property, or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system (UK Terrorism Act 2000: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/contents

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[1] (HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011)

[1] (Bermingham, Adam, Maura Conway, Lisa McInerney, Neil O'Hare and Alan F. Smeaton, 'Combining Social Network Analysis and Sentiment Analysis to Explore the Potential for Online Radicalisation'. Paper presented at the Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining Conference, Athens, Greece, 20–22 July, 2009.)