

Parents/Carers Keeping Children and Young People Safe from Extremism and Radicalisation



Working together to safeguard
all Islington's children



This booklet has been produced by Islington Safeguarding Children Board, adapted from guidance produced by LB Tower Hamlets Parent Engagement Team and other guidance.

Keeping Children and Young People Safe from extremism and radicalisation

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

Parenting can sometimes be very challenging and maintaining a positive relationship can sometimes be difficult as children grow and develop to find their own identity which 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 steps to keep them safe and protect them.

In the last year a number of young girls and boys have been exposed to both far-right and Islamist extremism, especially online where extremist organisations are especially active. Some have been persuaded to leave the country against the wishes of their families, or in secret, putting themselves in extreme danger.

This leaflet sets out information to help parents keep their children safe and explains how they should respond if they have a concern.

What is extremism and radicalisation?

Extremism

Extremist views can be thought of as those views that are rigid, narrow and intolerant of people of different ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual identity. Extremists want to impose their views on others, sometimes by force. These views can be used to justify political, religious, sexist, homophobic or racist violence.

Extremism is defined by the government as: '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'. They also include in their definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

There is no such thing as a typical extremist: those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism or forms of extremism that lead to terrorism.

Violent extremists, including white extremists from the far-right or Islamist extremists, usually attract people to their cause through a persuasive narrative. This will attempt to explain why a person may feel certain grievances, explain why their school, family or opportunities in a democracy will not provide any answers, and then go on to justify violent or criminal actions so as to force through the changes needed and to avenge any perceived wrongs suffered.

Why would a young person be drawn towards extremist ideologies?

Young people, including those who are otherwise well-behaved and achieving well at school, can be drawn towards extremism in similar ways as those who are persuaded to expose themselves to other risks, such as joining gangs.

- They may be searching for answers to questions about their identity, wanting to belong or to deepen their faith
- They may be driven by the desire for 'adventure' and excitement
- They may be driven by a need to feel better in themselves and promote their 'street cred'
- They may be drawn to a group or an individual who can offer them a sense of identity, a social network and who seem to offer them support. Young people who already have contacts, such as friends or family who are already involved in extremism may be especially vulnerable.
- They may also have personal experiences of racism or discrimination that fuel a sense of grievance, or they may be influenced by world events which result in them needing to feel they want to change things in the world or make a difference.

How can a young person be drawn towards extremist ideologies?



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 use other social media and messaging sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Vine or

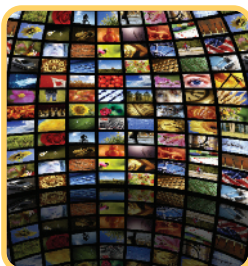
WhatsApp. These can be useful tools but they need to be aware there are powerful programmes and networks that use these media to reach out to young people to communicate extremist messages.



Peer Interaction

Young people at risk may display extrovert behaviour, start getting into trouble at school or on the streets and mixing with other children who behave badly; but this is not always the case. Sometimes those at risk may be encouraged, by the people they

are in contact with, not to draw attention to themselves. They may become quieter and seemingly better-behaved, dressing more modestly and mixing with a group of people that seem more studious than previous friends.



TV and media

The media provide a view on world affairs. However, this is often a very simple version of events which are in reality very complex. Therefore children may not understand the situation fully or appreciate how extreme and dangerous are the views of some groups.

Recognising the signs of extremism and radicalisation

1. Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships
2. Spending increasing amounts of time online
3. Secretive behaviour
4. Becoming quick to condemn others who do not share their beliefs without interest in their point of view
5. Losing interest in friends and activities
6. Becoming isolated or withdrawn, and struggling with what might seem a personal or identity crisis of some kind, perhaps becoming more argumentative and domineering
7. Showing sympathy for extremist causes
8. Justifying or even glorifying violence
9. Possessing illegal or extremist literature
10. Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations such as “Muslims Against Crusades” or other non-proscribed extremist groups such as Britain First or the English Defence League.



How can parents help children and young people to stay safe?

- Regularly talk to your child to find out how they are and whether they have any worries and what their interests are
- As best you can, know where your child is, who they are with and check this for yourself
- Know your child's friends and their families
- Encourage them to take up positive activities with local groups that you know are trustworthy
- Talk to your child about what they see on the TV or the internet and discuss their views and explain how the media works and 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 share how you both might have different points of view
- Encourage your child to show an interest in the local community and to promote a sense of tolerance and show respect for people from all faiths and backgrounds
- As much as possible, 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
- Help your child to understand the dangers of becoming involved in situations and groups where they may not have the full information

- Teach them that expressing strong views and trying to change things for the better is a good thing to do in life; it is part of being a good citizen. But taking violent action against others, or supporting those that do, is not acceptable. Offer them peaceful means to express themselves, such as petitions, campaigns and engagement with politics in our democracy.
- **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**

Get help

If you have any concerns that your child may be being influenced by others – talk to someone you can trust, extended family members such as cousins who may be peers of your children, your child’s teacher, a trusted community faith leader, the local health service or your local authority’s parent support services.

If you are worried and feel there is a risk of your child leaving the country, consider what precautions you might take to prevent them travelling.

You might want to consider taking the precaution of locking their passport in a safe place. Some young people think they need to use a passport for confirming their age – they do not – they can apply for an identification card. To obtain an official photo ID for the UK visit: www.validateuk.co.uk For more information telephone: **01434 634996**

You should also consider what access your child has to savings accounts or gifts of money from family and friends.

Where to go for support and information

Confidential helpline

If you are worried about your child or a young person, or if it would just be helpful to talk to someone about your concerns, contact the NSPCC's free helpline service to speak to a counsellor 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Tel: **0808 800 5000**

Web: www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/

If you have serious concerns about your child you can call your local police on 101. They can refer you to a trained expert who can help you gain access to support and advice.

Concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person can contact:

Children's Services Contact Team

Tel: **020 7527 7400**

(Monday to Friday 9am–5pm)

Emergency Duty Team

Tel: **020 7226 0992**

(5pm–9am, plus weekends and bank holidays)

Imminent threat of harm to others contact:

Police

Tel: **999**

Anti Terrorist Hotline

Tel: **0800 789 321**

Further Sources of Support and Information

School

If you have a concern please talk to your child's class teacher or another person in the school that you trust as soon as possible. They will be able to help and can access support for you and your child.

Parent support services

For families with children under 5 contact your local Children's Centre: www.islington.gov.uk/childrenscentres

For families with children over 5 contact Families First,
Tel: **020 7527 4343** Email: familiesfirst@islington.gov.uk

- Parenting Programmes are available to parents in Islington. Parent programmes help parents build and maintain positive relationships and manage children's behaviour. Information about parenting programmes is available on the Family Information Service (FIS)
Web: www.islington.gov.uk/fis
Email Janet Tisson: janet.tisson@islington.gov.uk
or Tel: **020 7527 5898**
- For further up-to-date information on a range of services for children, young people and families in Islington contact: Islington Family Information Service
Tel: helpline: **020 7527 5959** Email: fis@islington.gov.uk
Website: www.islington.gov.uk/fis
- For information about local community organisations, see: <https://directory.vai.org.uk/db/> or www.islington.gov.uk/familydirectory

Useful websites

www.familiesmatter.org.uk 'Families Matter' website guidance. It advises parents and those adults working with young people who may be drawn to Islamist extremism about how to spot the signs, how to act and where to turn.

www.internetmatters.org website has lots of information, advice and resources which can be used to help children stay safe online

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.bbc.co.uk/webwise/0/ Information and support for safe use of the internet

For more advice on cyber safety visit:

www.childline.org.uk

www.cybersmile.org

www.childnet.com/

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