

Dear Parent/Carer,

As the summer holidays approach, there is a good chance that your child will be spending more time online during their free time. One of the risks to young people online is from those looking to radicalise and draw them into extremism.

I am therefore reaching out to parents and carers across the North East region to share information about spotting the signs of radicalisation in young people. This shouldn't be a cause for alarm, and I want to reassure you that the risk of radicalisation is still relatively low.

However, we are seeing an increasing number of young people being drawn into various forms of extremism, so it is important we are doing everything to safeguard and protect young people from these risks.

When a young person is being drawn down a path towards radicalisation, there are often signs in their behaviour that can indicate this is happening. This could be something like becoming more secretive about who they are speaking to, or becoming less tolerant of other people's views.

The **ACT Early** website - www.actearly.uk - has information and advice about the signs to look out for and how you can approach and have conversations with your children about this subject.

If you are worried about your own child, or anyone else, then there is help available through the *Prevent* programme. *Prevent* is the Government's programme aimed at safeguarding and supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation and police work closely with other partners to help steer people away from radicalisation and extremism.

If you do have concerns – however big or small, then you can also call the **ACT Early Support Line** on **0800 011 3764**, in confidence, to share your concerns and speak with our specially trained officers. By reaching out early for support and advice, you can help protect your child before their extreme views become more of a danger to themselves or others.

So please be vigilant, particularly over the coming weeks when schools and colleges are closed, and if you have any concerns at all, then please ACT Early and get in touch with us.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Davison".

Matthew Davison,

Detective Superintendent, Regional Prevent Lead for Counter Terrorism Policing North East.

Is someone close becoming a stranger?



If you're worried that
someone you know
is being radicalised,
visit actearly.uk

ACT | ACTION
COUNTERS
TERRORISM

It can be hard to know what to do if you are worried someone close is expressing extreme views or hatred which could lead to them harming themselves or others. Working alongside other organisations, the police protect vulnerable people from being exploited by extremists through a voluntary Home Office programme called Prevent.

Who we are

Police forces across the country have specially trained Prevent officers who work with professionals in health, education, local authorities and charities, as well as faith and community groups to help vulnerable people move away from extremism.

Because all of the organisations are involved from the start, we can get them the help they need quickly. Working together we have helped many people find a path away from extremism.



Extremists try to get inside the minds of vulnerable people

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I knew something was wrong. I felt frightened, nervous like the sand was shifting under my feet. I embraced it when my son was referred to the Prevent programme. It was good to get support.

”

Mother of son who was supported through Prevent

How we can help the person you care about

Every case is assessed by our Prevent officers who work with other organisations to put the best plan in place to support the person. This can mean the right support is provided by a charity, your local authority or someone who works in health or education. In most cases there isn't any need for ongoing police involvement.

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Don't ignore the small changes, because by the time you realise the danger it will be a bigger problem to deal with. Just start the conversation. Trust your instincts.

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Family member of someone supported through Prevent



Many people are drawn into radicalisation by online content and social media

Why it's important to act early and share your concerns

It could be nothing, but what if it isn't? It can feel very scary to think someone close could be heading down a path towards extremism. But friends and family are better placed than anyone to know when something doesn't feel right. We're here to help. You can better protect someone you love from harming themselves or others if you seek advice at an early stage. Together we can help prevent them from becoming drawn into harmful activities or groups.

Who can you talk to?

If you are worried about someone visit our website actearly.uk to find out more about how we can support the person you are concerned about. Our website will help explain more about our role, how you can contact us in confidence and details of the other organisations who can help if you would prefer to speak with someone else.

The most important thing to remember is to share your concerns early, whichever organisation you decide to contact for support and advice.

Remember, in an emergency, please make sure you are safe and dial 999.



It can be scary when someone close expresses extreme views

Receiving support is voluntary

Contact us in confidence and we'll listen carefully to your concerns. The earlier you tell us your worries, the quicker we can get the person you care about the help they need. Receiving support is voluntary. We'll need the person's permission to help them. Depending on the situation, we might reach out to other organisations we work with to put the right support in place. That could be support from a doctor, through a school, or with a local community group or mentor for example.

If you are concerned, tell us. You won't be wasting our time and you won't ruin lives, but you might save them. Visit actearly.uk for more information.
