Risk Identification and Risk Management: Lessons for Southport

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Key Principle from CT

- Right Information to Right People at the Right Time
- Example from MAPPA (see ‘Acronyms’ in final slide) review (Streatham/ Sudesh Amman)
- Caveat: where risk already identified

Identification

- Never going to discover VFIs in way discover terrorists
- CTP (inc NDES)/ MI5 not set up for this- resources/ permissions/ international cooperation
- Risk of false positives (knife on a bus/ Gore + True Crime Community: Smith et al/ Edison Research) if discovery programme, especially as problems with cohort definition (serial killers/ repeated domestic abusers)
- Similar risk false positives if mandatory tech platform reporting of potential VFIs (contrast attack planning – cf. Tumbler Ridge case; OSA arguably too focused on systems not outcomes)
- Government not scan internet for VFI (in any event, attribution problem) but possibly more could be done here (noting RIPA/ CMA barriers/ cost)

Identification

- Assume will rely on existing mechanisms for coming to attention e.g. CT investigation, Prevent, arrest, local police intelligence, parental signals, plus possibly some additional scanning capability
- Identification more through individual psychology than nature of material viewed online
    - Academic categorization of material
    - Such categorization = adult perspective/ ‘Key to all mythologies’ trap
    - Analysis of content quickly out of date (though persistence of Columbine)
    - Not just algorithmic radicalisation (my meetings with young prisoners)
    - Increasingly clear these ‘VFIs’ are recognizable group: internet-addled, isolated, often autistic (Children’s Commissioner/ Crest/ but courage needed, cf Guardian)
    - Answer is rarely ideological deprogramming ideology but to identify what need online interaction is fulfilling for individual
- Gap: ERG-R not recognise violence fixation directly

Management

- Need to own risk. Police best at holding risk but need basis to intervene: licence/ order/ legal obligation like Part 4
- Multi-Agency – use MAPPA model, responsive core groups/ liaison with CTP
- Intervention Providers: getting something from internet not getting elsewhere/ not able to discuss with any outside closed loop/ often not relate what seeing and doing online to real world people (grandma point)
- Whatever works: cf Cyber Prevent/ getting GP/ ASD/ PTSD treatment/ disruptive arrest/ civil orders e.g. YDOs/ CBOs/ online + device restrictions. But need expertise
- Sentence types if convicted – recognising danger/ training/ dedicated judges
- Government delay enacting mass casualty attack planning offence
- Don’t discount some tech solutions (AI: Dukic et al; healthier online communities)

Management (impediments)

- Geographically widespread issue, so not centralised unit like Fixated Threat Assessment Centre, so reliance on local partners
- New programmes risk defensive information gathering/ over-complexity
- ‘Whole of society’ without realism/ thought for competing priorities/ queue-jumping
- Online central – lack of guidance/ standards/ subject matter experts
- Youth management too focused on welfare not risk from child (need for precision of language: concern/ vulnerability meaning susceptibility/ risk from risk to); action on breach of non-custodial order
- Youth Offending Teams: lack of clearance, local processes/ lack of consistency
- Mental health detention handovers: MAPPA report not implemented (CCS useful if available)
- Information sharing – DPA (MAPPA lesson)

References

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Acronyms

- MAPPA: Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
- VFI: Violence Fixated Individuals
- CTP: Counter Terrorism Police
- NDES: National Digital Exploitation Service
- OSA: Online Safety Act 2023
- RIPA: Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- CMA: Computer Misuse Act 1990
- ERG-R: Extremism Risk Guidance – Revised
- Part 4: notification requirements under Part 4 Counter Terrorism Act 2008
- YDO: Youth Diversion Order
- CBO: Criminal Behaviour Order
- DPA: Data Protection Act 2018
- CCS: Clinical Consultancy Service