Gweithdrefnau Diogelu Cymru
Wales Safeguarding Procedures

ALL WALES PRACTICE GUIDE

Last updated: February 2022

Safeguarding children from radicalisation

To be used in conjunction with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures

Who is this practice guide for?

This guide is primarily for practitioners working with children (up to the age of 18). This includes those working in early years, social care, education, health, the police, youth offending and youth, community and family support services (including the third sector) and foster care and residential care.

What is this guide for?

Safeguarding children is a responsibility shared by everyone in contact with children. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures support individuals and agencies across Wales to understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children and adults safe. They support a consistent approach to safeguarding practice and procedures.

This practice guide provides additional information about safeguarding responses where a child is at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into terrorism. It should be used in conjunction with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

Effective safeguarding arrangements in every local authority area should be underpinned by two key principles:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each practitioner and organisation must play their full part both individually and in collaboration; **and**

- a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the personal outcomes for the child and what matters to them. The rights of the child should be central to the approach and their best interests should always be paramount.

There are some issues, which are common across safeguarding practice guides and some, which are specific to the safeguarding issue being considered:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) guarantees every child the right to grow up healthy, happy and safe. This includes to be protected from harm and be appropriately supported to recover from abuse. Practitioners and professionals should adopt A Children's Rights Approach in line with the duty of due regard to the (UNCRC) and follow National Participation Standards.

- Agencies must work together to provide a joined-up response to safeguarding issues as set out in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

- There is a statutory Duty to Report Children at Risk on relevant partners under Section 130 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Safeguarding Summary

- Information sharing is central to good safeguarding practice. Practitioners must share information in accordance with data protection legislation. Data protection legislation allows for the sharing of information and should not be automatically used as a reason for not doing so. One of the specific circumstances which provides for information sharing is in order to prevent abuse or serious harm to others. When information is not shared in a timely and effective way, decisions about how to respond may be ill informed and this can lead to poor safeguarding practice and leave children at risk of harm. https://gov.wales/sharing-information-safeguard-children

- Our response to safeguarding issues should be proportionate, child centred and based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child. Children need to be meaningfully involved in the planning of their care and support.

- We know that sensory-impaired and disabled children are at an increased risk of being abused compared with their non-disabled peers. They are also less likely to receive the protection and support they need when they have been abused. Practitioners should explicitly recognise the increased vulnerability of sensory-impaired and disabled children to abuse and neglect and the barriers they may face, especially around communication and provide for any additional safeguards needed to protect sensory-impaired and disabled children.

- Practitioners should familiarise themselves with the culture and beliefs of those families they work with. Practitioners should not be afraid to ask about particular behaviours and the reasons for them in a sensitive manner and should never overlook potential harmful practices on the basis of cultural sensitivity.

- There are central and obvious concerns to be addressed in planning for the care and support needs of children with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) status. Welsh Government Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Guidance for Professionals is available. However it is important to remember that practitioners must still consider specific safeguarding measures as part of their planning with and for the child.

- All practitioners must be alert to the possibility of the child being at risk of harm regardless of the setting they are living in, in foster care, adoptive placements or a children's home. Children in placements or those who are adopted will have relationships that may include foster carers, adoptive parents, birth parents, siblings or other birth relatives. These relationships and any contact may be positive and welcomed or undesired and deemed a risk. Children's past experience of abuse and neglect may leave them at risk of having emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties which may continue to make them vulnerable.

- **Children should be seen and heard**. Evidence from Child Practice Reviews has highlighted the need for children to meet on their own with practitioners, away from parents and carers in an environment where they feel safe, so that the child can speak about the impact that the circumstances which have prompted safeguarding concerns are having on them. There are too many cases where the child was not seen or asked their views or feelings or where this did not happen enough. Providing time and space to listen directly to children supports a system which is child-centred and promotes good safeguarding practice.

- Radicalisation is a safeguarding issue. Where there are concerns about the radicalisation of a child, children should be considered as children first and their care and support needs should be considered in the same way as for any child. Radicalisation can and does cause significant harm to children.

- By effectively identifying signs and sharing concerns about children who may be at risk of radicalisation, we can all safeguard our young children and communities and prevent this harm.

Definitions

- **Radicalisation** is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies, and in some cases can then come to participate in extremist or terrorist groups.

- **Extremism** is defined 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. The UK Government Prevent Strategy also includes in its definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

- **Violent extremism** is a real threat to all communities - violent extremists actively aim to damage community relations and create division. That is why it is vital that we all work together to support those who are vulnerable in this way.

  Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme.

- **Terrorism** can be defined as a violent action that:

  - Endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action
  - Involves serious violence against a person
  - Causes serious damage to property
  - Creates a serious risk to the public's health and safety
  - Interferes with or seriously disrupts an electronic system

Evidence base

- There is no obvious profile of a child likely to become involved in extremism or a single indicator of when a person might move to adopt violence in support of extremist ideas. The process of radicalisation is different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or within a very short time frame. While there is no typical profile of children at risk radicalisation. However, vulnerability factors have been identified which include:

  - Criminality; troubled family background;

  - Experiences and influences (e.g. from friends and family;
  - Unmet psychological needs (e.g. for belonging and status).
- As with other forms of abuse, low self-esteem, a lack of positive social peer relationships and feelings of isolation, strained family relationships and/or issues with parenting capacity can make children vulnerable to being groomed for radicalisation. Children who don't feel included, feel their place in society is under threat and who are struggling with a sense of belonging or identity are vulnerable as these are feelings that can be exploited to groom a child.
- There is some evidence that mental health disorders may make some people more susceptible to extremist ideology. There is no substantial link between Neurodivergent conditions and terrorism, however there are some factors that are common for children with these conditions that may make them vulnerable to radicalisation.
- Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. This can include children who have parents or other family members who have radical or extreme beliefs. Everyone who works with children has a responsibility to safeguard children from harm. This includes becoming radicalised and/or being exposed to extreme views.
- As with every form of abuse, children who have identified vulnerabilities will not necessarily be radicalised and children with no identified vulnerabilities may be at risk of radicalisation.
- Estyn's 'Prevent – how well maintained schools implement their duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015' report includes Home Office data, setting out that a total of 258 individuals in Wales were referred because of concerns that they were vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The figures for children under 18 are not available, but in Wales, just under half of the referrals are for people aged 20 and under.
- Across Wales from 2018-2019, Islamist radicalisation concerns accounted for 15% of all referrals, while right wing radicalisation concerns accounted for 24%, and Mixed, unstable or unclear extremism concerns accounted for 49% of these referrals. This shows that any child can be radicalised, regardless of ethnicity or religion. As with any form of abuse, it is important to avoid stereotypes and making assumptions in considering whether a child is at risk of harm.

Understanding the signs of radicalisation or extremism

The Wales' Counter Terrorism Police, 'Understanding the signs of Extremism' provides some of the signs of possible radicalisation or extremism include:

Verbal and offensive

- A person could be hostile towards people from a certain country, religious group, gender, sexual orientation, cultural background or beliefs
- Use simplistic and prejudiced arguments - demonising other groups, seeing them as a threat to 'our way of life' or blaming them for global or local issues
- Argumentative and domineering in their views - be quick to condemn those who disagree and ignoring views that contradict their own
- Use extremist narratives - read, view extremist propaganda or violent material
- Justify the use of violence
- Become abusive to others
- Have a need to dominate and control others
- Display offensive signs, symbols, flags and tattoos

Grievance and Beliefs

- Refer to a 'liberal, elite, establishment agenda' or 'Jewish conspiracy'
- See white Britons as under threat of racial and cultural extinction and say that they have to 'take action'
- Have a desire for political and social or religious change, justifying the use of violence to achieve such change
- Feel under threat or persecution and have an "us and them" mentality
- Be sympathetic to extremist ideologies and extremist groups
- Identify with a proscribed /extremist group

Change in behaviour

- A person could question their faith or identity in society
- Be secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts or associates
- Be unwilling to engage with people who are different
- Have a desire for excitement and adventure – individuals can be influenced by online propaganda and will associate opportunity for adventure.
- Have a desire for status –some people may desire increased standing with their community and greater power
- Change their friends, significantly changing their appearance and disengaged in activities they used to enjoy
- Adopt the use of certain symbols associated with extremist organisations, distribute extremist literature, such as literature, videos and messages.

Understand the following changes in behaviour, which may be a cause for concern

- victim of bullying or hate crime
- isolated and lonely
- angry at the world
- confused about the reasons for their misfortunes or situation
- purposeless, without direction or hope
- unprotected, lacking adult guidance

Online activity

Social media and online apps, gaming sites, websites, podcasts, radio, TV stations, forums and private chat rooms – provide a unique opportunity for people to express their views but they might become an echo chamber and individuals might find themselves drawn into the same beliefs of others.

- A person could use coded-language and 'codes' to communicate with Extremist communities
- Download or view extremist content online, including books, magazines, radio and videos
- Be secretive online, having multiple online profiles and spending excessive periods of time online, using encryption software and/or VPN's (Virtual Private Networks) to mask their online identity
- Share extremist or divisive views on their social media
- Be in contact with extremist recruiters
- Use encrypted chat forums APPS, WEBSITES, Private Chatrooms and platforms to communicate in secret – also known as 'The Dark Web'.

How does radicalisation happen?

- Radicalisation can be seen as a two-stage process. The first stage is an attitudinal change where a vulnerable child begins to hold and express increasingly extremist views.

- The second stage is a behavioural change, where extremist views and statements turn into violent actions influenced by social, emotional or experiential factors. **At all stages there are signs and opportunities to intervene to reduce the risk of further radicalisation**.

▶ The NSPCC's Radicalisation guidance sets out that the process of radicalisation may involve:

– Being groomed online in person.

– Exploitation, including child sexual exploitation.

– Psychological manipulation.

– Exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information.

– The risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts.

Online radicalisation

- Evidence from Wales suggests that online radicalisation is a growing theme and radicalising influences have changed so that online factors play an increasingly significant role.

- The All Wales Practice guide should be read in conjunction with the **All Wales Practice Guide- Safeguarding children from online abuse**, which includes information on online radicalisation.

The Prevent Duty

- The UK Government has given some types of organisations in Wales, England, and Scotland a duty to identify vulnerable children and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism.

- Known as 'The Prevent Duty', this is the duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 on specified authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Specified authorities include Schools, Colleges, Childcare providers, Local Authorities, the Police, Prisons, Probation Systems, Higher Education Institutions.

- Prevent is the first strand of the UK Government's Counter-Terrorism (CONTEST) strategy which aims 'to reduce the risk to the UK and its citizens and interests overseas from terrorism, so that our people can go about their lives freely and with confidence'. The strategy sets out four 'strands' of activity to achieve this, Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare, with implications for a very wide range of public services across the UK, including the role of local authority education services, and schools.

Respect and Resilience – guidance for schools and education providers

- Guidance from the Home Office and from Welsh Government sets out in detail the crucial role schools play in keeping children safe from exploitation through radical and extremist ideologies.

- The Welsh Government has set out specific guidance for schools and education providers on safeguarding children from radicalisation in Respect and Resilience- developing community cohesion.

- A Respect and Resilience self-assessment tool for schools is also available.

All Wales Prevent team

You may also directly refer to the All Wales Prevent team via this online form or by emailing **WECTU@south-wales.pnn.police.uk**.

This does not replace safeguarding procedures but may be an outcome of a multi-agency strategy discussion or part of work to meet the care, support and protection needs of a child.

The All Wales Prevent Team considers referrals via a Multi-Agency Channel Panel and will decide on the most appropriate response for each referral.

What is Channel?

Channel is part of the Prevent strategy. Channel focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Channel uses a multi-agency approach to:

- identify individuals at risk

- assess the nature and extent of that risk

- develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned

Channel is a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism. The process is led by a multi-agency panel, chaired by the local authority. It also includes the Channel Police Practitioner (CPP) who is the co-ordinator. The CPP is the initial point of contact and their role is to assess whether or not the case shows a genuine vulnerability to extremism and to agree with the Local Authority Prevent Lead, whether the referral should be considered at a Channel Panel.

A Proportionate Response

- If the child is at immediate risk of significant harm contact the Police on 999.
- Relevant partners have a Duty to Report Children at Risk (Section 130) under Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. Section 130(4) defines a "child at risk" as a child who: a) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local authority is meeting any of those needs).

When a child has been reported under section 130, the local authority must consider whether there are grounds for carrying out an investigation under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

- If Social Services make a decision that the report/referral received does not relate to a child at risk they will make a record of this and the rationale for their decision.
- Social Services of the local authority in which the child is located should make a decision on the evidence on whether to convene a multi-agency strategy discussion, to inform a decision on a response for the child, including whether to hold a multi-agency Strategy Meeting. Representatives of each local authority relevant to the child and any Youth Offending Service relevant to the child should be involved in the multi-agency strategy discussion. There should be no delay in responding to information about a child at risk because the child is not ordinarily resident in the local authority where the safeguarding issue is identified.
- If the initial assessment or multi-agency strategy discussion indicate that there are no grounds to proceed to a Strategy Meeting or to a Section 47 Inquiry, consideration should be given to a referral for preventative work to reduce the likelihood of future risk of harm.
- Where there is already a care and support plan, child protection plan or they are a looked after child or they are in the secure estate, there should be a multi-agency strategy discussion to decide whether a Strategy Meeting is necessary to inform the development or review of a plan for the child.
- The arrangements for carrying out a Strategy Meeting are set out in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and in Welsh Government Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 5- Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. Wherever possible, the practitioners attending the Strategy Meeting should have direct knowledge of the child. It is, however,

recognised that some agencies may come into contact with a child for the first time as a result of the issues being considered at the Strategy Meeting.

- The Strategy Meeting should consider if there is any information or evidence relating to the child which suggests that there are other specific safeguarding issues that need to be considered in addition to the primary presenting safeguarding issue. **The Strategy Meeting should be child centred rather than issue based**.

- Social Services should also refer to All Wales Practice Guides issued with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures on any relevant related issues such as, Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE); Online Abuse; Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

- **The Strategy Meeting must result in a set of agreed actions to inform the development or review of a child protection and/or care and support plan for the child**. This plan must consider the holistic needs of the child in order to promote well-being and prevent future harm and must not be focussed exclusively on the management of risk.

- Where the Strategy Meeting results in an agreement that a plan is not required the rationale for this decision should be recorded and consideration should be given to making a referral to preventative services.

- Children and young people are entitled to an active offer of advocacy from a statutory Independent Professional Advocate (IPA) when they become looked after or become subject of child protection enquiries leading to an Initial Child Protection Conference. The '**active offer**' is made directly to the child by the Advocacy Service. An 'active offer' is a sharing of information about the statutory right and entitlement of a child in particular circumstances to access support from an Independent Professional Advocacy Service. Information should be shared with them that includes an explanation about the role of Independent Professional Advocacy. This includes what it can and cannot do, how it operates based on their wishes and feelings, its independence and how it works solely for the child/young person, its policy on confidentiality and significant harm – it explains the statutory right of children and young people to be supported to express their views, wishes and feelings as well as their right to make a representation or complaint.

Resources

These organisations are there for all children and young people in Wales. Professionals and practitioners should let children know about these organisations and how to contact them.

Meic is the helpline service for children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales. From finding out what's going on in your local area to help dealing with a tricky situation, Meic will listen even when no-one else will. They won't judge you and will help by giving you information, useful advice and the support you need to make a change. You can:

- Chat to someone from Meic on-line: https://www.meiccymru.org/
- Call Meic for free and talk to someone DPA
- Text Meic for free on: DPA

You can contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales Investigation and Advice service which is free and confidential. It's there as a source of help and support if children and young people or those who care for them feel that a child's been treated unfairly. You or you parent/carer can:

- Call the service for free DPA
- Email the service: advice@childcomwales.org.uk

Childline is a free, private and confidential service where anyone under 19 can access support and advice. The Childline website www.childline.org.uk has information and advice pages as well as tools to help you work through problems yourself. If you want to talk or chat to Childline you can:

- Call Childline for free: DPA
- Register on-line to email Childline or chat on-line to a counsellor: www.childline.org.uk/get-support/

If you want to talk to Childline in Welsh see www.childline.org.uk/get-support/

NPSCC provides a free helpline for any adult or professional with concerns about children's safeguarding including radicalisation **NSPCC Helpline** DPA or email help@nspcc.org.uk

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation/

EYST Wales is an all Wales charity providing support for BME children and young people including children at risk of radicalisation www.eyst.org.uk

Hope Not Hate is an advocacy group based in the United Kingdom. It campaigns against racism and fascism, and seeks to combine research with community organising and grassroots actions to defeat hate groups at elections and to build community resilience against extremism www.hopenothate.org.uk

A Family guide to talking about radicalisation and extremism -

https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/resources/a-family-guide-to-talking-about-radicalisation-and-extremism

Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP)

https://www.jisc.ac.uk/training/workshop-to-raise-awareness-of-prevent-wrap

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Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification National/Foundation Global citizenship challenge. Inequality – Extremism www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/qualification-resources.html?subject=welshbaccalaureate&level=ks4NationalFoundation

The GOT (Getting on Together) Project www.got.uk.net/

Welsh Government, (2020) Keeping learners safe: the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002

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[i] www.gov.uk/government/statistics/individuals-referred-to-and-supported-through-the-prevent-programme-april-2019-to-march-2020