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Guidance

The Prevent duty: practical guidance for designated safeguarding leads

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Applies to England

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This publication is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-susceptible-to-radicalisation/the-prevent-duty-practical-guidance-for-designated-safeguarding-leads

What every designated safeguarding lead (DSL) needs to know

What Prevent is

The Prevent duty (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance) requires specified authorities, including certain education settings, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Prevent is part of the UK's wider counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2023) and applies to:

- schools
- colleges
- further education providers
- higher education providers
- other specified education settings (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales-accessible#specified-authorities)

Prevent is delivered through safeguarding approaches. It focuses on early identification and support for individuals who may be susceptible to being

drawn into terrorism.

The aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Its purpose is to identify and support individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation before risks escalate.

Using safeguarding structures to deliver Prevent

Radicalisation is a safeguarding concern and, like other risks to a learner's welfare, should be addressed through established safeguarding processes. Prevent is an important part of these wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Learners who are susceptible to radicalisation may also be vulnerable to other forms of harm, including:

- exploitation
- abuse
- neglect
- serious violence
- online harms

Concerns relating to radicalisation should be managed as a safeguarding concern through existing safeguarding procedures. However, Prevent has a distinct referral process for individuals who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, enabling specialist assessment and consideration of support, where appropriate, through the Prevent and Channel frameworks (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance).

There is no single profile of a learner who may be susceptible to radicalisation and no single indicator that demonstrates radicalisation. Decisions should be based on:

- professional judgement
- the available evidence
- an understanding of the wider context

Roles and responsibilities

All staff should:

- be alert to concerning changes in behaviour
- understand their safeguarding responsibilities
- report concerns in line with safeguarding procedures
- complete appropriate Prevent training

Responding to a concern about a child or adult learner at risk of radicalisation

This section covers the operational safeguarding response, which is as follows:

1. Assess concerns and gather information.
2. Record and review concerns.
3. Speak with the learner, their parent or carer, or both, where appropriate.
4. Consider vulnerabilities, risk and protective factors.
5. Decide on support, monitoring, advice-seeking or referral.

DSL whole-setting Prevent responsibilities

The DSL should:

- receive advanced Prevent training, refreshed at least every 2 years, including in understanding:
  - extremist ideologies
  - Prevent referrals
  - Channel processes
- ensure safeguarding policies identify and support learners at risk of radicalisation, with Prevent considerations embedded within relevant policies – a standalone Prevent policy is not required
- ensure staff understand how to identify, respond to and report concerns about radicalisation
- be clear on the internal process for learners and staff to raise concerns relating to radicalisation
- understand local Prevent referral pathways and arrangements

- maintain effective links with relevant safeguarding, Prevent and local authority partners
- ensure appropriate oversight of Prevent-related concerns, referrals and outcomes
- ensure that event spaces, IT systems and organisational resources are not used to facilitate the spread of extremist narratives or material that encourages support for, or participation in, terrorism

3 important points about Prevent training

It is best practice for DSLs to receive updated training at least every 2 years.

Settings should not need to pay for this, as free training is available through Department for Education (DfE) regional CONTEST co-ordinators (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regional-contest-co-ordinators) and some local authorities.

However, if training is bought in, the setting should carry out due diligence to ensure it is sourced from a reputable provider.

Working with local partners

DSLs and safeguarding practitioners will often be the first to notice if someone displays behaviours that may indicate susceptibility to radicalisation. If you notice concerning behaviours, you should consider whether the person is at risk of becoming involved in or supporting terrorism. Effective safeguarding relies on partnership-working.

You should understand how to access advice and support from relevant partners, which may include:

- local authority Prevent teams
- children's services or adult services
- local safeguarding partnerships
- DfE regional CONTEST co-ordinators
- special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) professionals and specialist services
- counter-terrorism police Prevent officers

What education settings should have in place

Education settings should ensure they:

- understand local referral pathways
- have clear safeguarding and Prevent procedures
- maintain effective systems for recording concerns
- provide appropriate Prevent training for staff
- understand local risks and emerging threats
- know how to access support and advice from relevant partners
- promote critical thinking, inclusion and respectful discussion through the curriculum

Understanding susceptibility and identifying concerns

Understanding susceptibility

There is no single pathway into radicalisation. Susceptibility can vary between individuals and may change over time.

Factors that may increase a learner's susceptibility can include:

- social isolation
- unmet emotional or social needs
- bullying or discrimination
- trauma or adverse childhood experiences
- feelings of grievance or injustice
- significant life changes or personal difficulties
- online influences and exposure to harmful content
- vulnerability to other forms of exploitation
- emotional and mental wellbeing difficulties

The presence of one or more susceptibility factors does not mean a learner is being radicalised. These factors are common across many safeguarding contexts and should not be viewed as indicators of radicalisation in themselves. They should always be considered alongside:

- behaviour
- context
- protective factors

Understanding context

Concerns should always be considered within the wider safeguarding context. When assessing potential Prevent concerns, you should consider an individual's circumstances, relationships and environment, including:

- previous safeguarding concerns
- family influences and dynamics
- peer relationships and social networks
- environmental and community factors
- online activity and influences
- protective factors and sources of support
- any SEND or neurodiversity considerations

Contextual information should be considered alongside observed behaviours and indicators, rather than in isolation.

Some learners with SEND, or who are neurodivergent, may, depending on their individual circumstances, experience vulnerabilities that could be exploited by others. However, SEND and neurodiversity are not indicators of radicalisation and should not be treated as risk factors in themselves. Assessments should be based on an individual's circumstances, behaviours and needs. Further guidance on SEND considerations follows.

Concerning behaviours

No single behaviour demonstrates radicalisation.

Potential indicators may include:

- sudden or significant changes in behaviour, presentation or attitude
- social withdrawal, isolation or changes in friendship groups and social networks
- increasing use of divisive, intolerant, dehumanising or 'us and them' language
- expressions of grievance directed toward particular groups, communities or perceived injustices
- growing interest in extremist ideologies, groups, individuals or causes
- engagement with conspiracy theories that appear to reinforce or encourage extremist narratives
- glorifying, supporting or justifying the use of violence for political, religious, racial or ideological purposes
- repeated discussion of violence, conflict, mass casualty attacks or extremist narratives
- demonstrating a fixation with weaponry or explosives (this may include posing in concerning photographs or videos with weaponry) without an otherwise reasonable explanation
- use of symbols, imagery or terminology associated with extremist movements
- increased secrecy regarding online activity, including accessing, sharing or promoting extremist content
- accessing or distributing terrorism-related or violent extremist material
- fascination with extreme violence or acts of terrorism

Antisemitism, in and of itself, is not a Prevent concern. Prevent is concerned with the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism or supporting terrorism, rather than with prejudice or discrimination alone.

However, antisemitism is a feature of a range of extremist and terrorist ideologies, including some forms of Islamist terrorism, extreme right-wing terrorism and other radicalising narratives.

Where antisemitic beliefs, rhetoric or behaviours form part of a broader extremist worldview that may contribute to radicalisation or support for terrorism, a Prevent referral may be appropriate.

Remember

While ideology is an important consideration, an individual does not need to demonstrate a clear or identifiable ideology for a Prevent referral to be appropriate.

Rather than isolated incidents, you should focus on:

- patterns
- changes over time
- the wider context

Online influences

Radicalisation can occur both online and offline.

Learners may encounter harmful or extremist content through:

- websites
- forums
- messaging services
- gaming platforms
- social media

Online concerns should be assessed in the same way as offline concerns. Online environments can enable harmful content, narratives and communities to be accessed quickly, repeatedly and anonymously, potentially increasing exposure to radicalising influences.

You do not need specialist knowledge of online platforms to identify risk. Instead, while considering any online influences that may be relevant, you should focus on changes in:

- behaviour
- interests
- language
- relationships
- wellbeing

Education settings should take reasonable steps to reduce learners' exposure to harmful online content, including extremist and terrorism-related material, through appropriate filtering and monitoring systems.

Filtering and monitoring

Education settings have a statutory responsibility to keep children and young people safe online as well as offline. This includes ensuring that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place, as detailed in the statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2).

Filtering and monitoring arrangements should form part of the setting's wider safeguarding approach and be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and proportionate, meeting the expectations set out in the filtering and monitoring core standard (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-core-standard).

You should understand how:

- filtering and monitoring systems support safeguarding
- concerns are identified
- alerts are managed and escalated, where necessary

Protective factors

Protective factors may help reduce susceptibility and increase resilience.

These can include:

- positive relationships with trusted adults (or peers, in the case of an adult learner)
- supportive family and peer networks
- strong engagement with education
- positive activities and interests
- a sense of belonging and inclusion
- access to appropriate support services

When assessing concerns, you should consider both risk factors and protective factors.

Assessing concerns and making decisions

Gathering information

When concerns arise, you should gather sufficient information to build an understanding of the situation.

Before considering a Prevent referral, concerns should be explored appropriately and proportionately. Staff who identify a potential radicalisation concern should discuss it with the DSL or Prevent lead at the earliest opportunity.

DSLs and staff should use relevant Prevent guidance, training and professional judgement to assess whether the concern may be relevant to radicalisation or terrorism-related risk, taking account of the wider context and available information.

This may include:

- clarifying what has been seen, heard or reported
- establishing whether concerns relate to an isolated incident or a pattern of behaviour over time
- reviewing relevant safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, wellbeing and other available records
- gathering information from colleagues who regularly engage with the learner and can provide additional context
- considering any online and offline influences that may be affecting the learner
- referring to Prevent guidance, training and organisational procedures to help determine whether the concern may be associated with radicalisation or terrorism-related risk
- using professional judgement to assess whether the concern is relevant to Prevent, recognising that not all concerning behaviours or views indicate susceptibility to radicalisation
- speaking with the learner (or an appropriate adult, where relevant and appropriate) to better understand their experiences, views, behaviour and circumstances – these conversations should focus on understanding the

context of concerns rather than directly questioning whether the individual is being radicalised or informing them that a Prevent referral may be made

- consulting with other safeguarding professionals, where appropriate, to support decision-making and risk assessment

Recording concerns

Accurate recording is essential, regardless of whether the outcome is a Prevent referral, an alternative safeguarding response or a decision that no further action is required.

Records should include:

- the concern identified
- relevant information gathered
- discussions that have taken place
- advice sought
- actions taken
- the rationale for decisions made, including decisions not to make a Prevent referral

Making a decision

Following assessment, you should determine an appropriate safeguarding response.

This may include:

- no further action
- monitoring and review
- additional support within the setting where concerns do not indicate susceptibility to radicalisation or a risk of involvement in, support for or facilitation of terrorism
- early help or multi-agency support
- a Prevent referral
- immediate safeguarding or police intervention, where necessary

The response should be based on the nature of the concern and the information available at the time. Support within the setting, monitoring, early help or other safeguarding interventions may be appropriate where concerns do not indicate susceptibility to radicalisation or a risk of an individual becoming involved in, supporting or facilitating terrorism.

Where you have concerns that an individual may be susceptible to radicalisation or at risk of becoming involved in terrorism, a Prevent referral should be made. You should not delay a referral in order to gather additional evidence or attempt to manage Prevent-related concerns solely through internal support arrangements.

When Prevent may not be the appropriate route

Not all concerning, harmful or violent behaviour falls within Prevent's remit.

Concerns that do not relate to radicalisation, susceptibility to radicalisation or involvement in terrorism should be managed through the most appropriate safeguarding, welfare, behavioural, criminal justice or multi-agency pathways.

Examples may include:

- violence that is not linked to extremist ideologies or terrorism
- general criminality or anti-social behaviour
- mental health concerns requiring specialist support
- other forms of exploitation, abuse or neglect

Where there is uncertainty, you should seek advice from your setting's safeguarding partners or local Prevent contacts.

If, following assessment, there is no concern that an individual is susceptible to radicalisation or at risk of becoming involved in, supporting or facilitating terrorism, Prevent support is unlikely to be appropriate.

Where concerns remain, you should consider referral or support through relevant safeguarding, public protection, violence reduction, criminal justice or other local multi-agency pathways. This may include concerns relating to violence, exploitation, domestic abuse, gang involvement, wellbeing, or other safeguarding issues that require intervention through alternative services and support arrangements.

What happens when you make a Prevent referral

A Prevent referral should be made using the national Prevent referral form (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-if-youre-worried-about-someone-being-radicalised) and submitted in line with local referral arrangements.

Once they receive a referral, Counter Terrorism Policing will assess the information provided and determine the most appropriate response. This may include:

- no further Prevent action
- signposting to alternative safeguarding or support services
- ongoing information-sharing
- consideration for Channel support
- law enforcement action, where necessary

Cases assessed as suitable may be considered for Channel, which is a voluntary multi-agency programme designed to support individuals vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Making a referral does not end the referrer's safeguarding responsibilities. The referrer should continue to monitor and support the learner in line with existing safeguarding procedures and maintain appropriate records.

Where new information or concerns arise after a referral has been made, these should be shared promptly through the appropriate Prevent or policing channels. Effective safeguarding relies on ongoing communication and information-sharing between education settings, Counter Terrorism Policing and other relevant agencies, particularly where an individual's circumstances, behaviours or levels of vulnerability change over time.

The response to a referral may include:

- no further Prevent action
- signposting to alternative safeguarding or support services
- ongoing monitoring and information-sharing
- consideration by a Channel panel
- immediate safeguarding or law enforcement action, where required

A Prevent referral should be made where concerns suggest an individual may be susceptible to radicalisation or vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. You do not need proof that radicalisation has occurred before

making a referral and should not delay a referral while attempting to establish this.

Responding to different levels of concern

The categories that follow are illustrative only, and intended to support professional judgement. They do not replace safeguarding procedures or the assessment of each case on its individual facts.

Emerging concerns

An emerging concern may involve changes in behaviour, interests or relationships that warrant further exploration.

At this stage, you should:

- gather additional information
- consider the wider context
- speak with the learner
- record concerns and actions
- monitor for any changes or escalation

Increasing concerns

An increasing concern may involve repeated behaviours, a developing pattern or multiple indicators of vulnerability.

You should:

- continue gathering information
- review the wider context, including the learner's:
  - history
  - available records
  - behaviours

    - indicators of concern
    - vulnerabilities
    - protective factors
- seek advice from relevant professionals
- consider what support may be required
- review whether safeguarding referral pathways, Prevent referral pathways or both should be considered

Significant concerns

Significant concerns may arise where there is evidence that a learner is becoming increasingly susceptible to radicalisation or where multiple indicators of concern are present.

You should:

- follow safeguarding procedures
- seek advice from relevant Prevent partners, such as the:
    - local authority Prevent lead
    - Prevent education officer, where available
    - local Prevent team
    - Prevent policing team
- consider making a Prevent referral and any safeguarding referral that may be required
- consider whether additional safeguarding interventions are needed

Immediate risk

Where there is a concern that a learner may pose an immediate risk to themselves or others, or there is evidence of criminal activity, you should take immediate action.

This may include:

- contacting the police
- following emergency safeguarding procedures

- taking steps to protect those at risk
- recording all actions taken

Speaking with learners

Creating a safe space

Conversations should take place in a supportive, non-judgemental environment in a safe, private space.

The purpose of the conversation should be to understand the learner's experiences, views and circumstances, rather than to challenge or debate beliefs.

Asking effective questions

You should use open questions to explore concerns and understand context.

Examples include:

- 'Can you tell me more about that?'
- 'What do you mean by that?'
- 'Where did you hear that?'
- 'Can you explain that further?'
- 'How do you feel about that?'
- 'Who do you talk to online or offline?'

Avoiding assumptions

You should avoid:

- making assumptions about motivation

- asking leading questions
- challenging beliefs directly
- reaching conclusions before gathering sufficient information
- making assumptions based on:
  - protected characteristics
  - faith
  - ethnicity
  - identity
  - background

Phrases such as 'You're not in any trouble – I want to understand' are useful.

Recording conversations

You should record key information accurately and, where possible, use the learner's own words.

Working with parents and carers

Engaging parents and carers

In many cases, working with parents and carers can help you better understand concerns and identify the best support.

Where appropriate, you should:

- explain concerns clearly and sensitively
- explain that Prevent is a safeguarding intervention
- encourage open discussion and co-operation
- record relevant information shared

Managing resistance

Some parents or carers may disagree with concerns being raised or may be unfamiliar with Prevent processes.

Where resistance is encountered, you should:

- continue to focus on the welfare of the learner
- clearly explain the safeguarding rationale for any action taken
- seek advice where necessary
- follow safeguarding procedures

Parental or carer consent is not required to make a Prevent referral. Where appropriate and safe to do so, you should be open and transparent about concerns and the actions being taken. However, you should manage concerns in line with safeguarding procedures, and not withhold information from a referral where this may place a learner or others at increased risk.

When additional caution may be required

In some cases, involving parents or carers may not be appropriate at the initial stage.

You should consider whether doing so could:

- place the learner at increased risk
- compromise a safeguarding process
- stop concerns from being explored appropriately

Where uncertainty exists, seek advise from relevant safeguarding or Prevent partners.

SEND considerations

You should consider how SEND may influence the way concerns present. It is important to be clear that SEND does not cause radicalisation.

The concern for staff is whether a child's or young person's needs are being missed or misunderstood, or they are being left unsupported. When that happens, vulnerability can increase through:

- reduced critical understanding
- greater susceptibility to influence
- more exposure to harmful ideologies

This is why good safeguarding and appropriate support are central to Prevent practice.

Communication and understanding

Consider the learner's:

- communication needs and preferences – adapt safeguarding messages to align with their communication level, not their chronological age
- literal interpretation of language – they may repeat language, copy others or seek approval without grasping the meaning or the risk involved, so judge both their vulnerability and their comprehension carefully before assuming intent
- understanding of social situations

Understanding context

You should consider whether behaviours are:

- new or longstanding
- escalating or stable
- consistent with previous presentations
- influenced by changes in circumstances such as:
  - routine
  - environment
  - support arrangements
- communicating an unmet need – behaviours that appear concerning may be serving communication, sensory or developmental needs, rather than indicating extremist intent

Review relevant assessments, plans and support information, where available.

Susceptibility considerations

You should consider whether factors such as the following may be relevant:

- social isolation
- difficulties forming or maintaining relationships
- online activity and potential online influences
- desire for belonging or acceptance
- susceptibility to influence
- highly focused interests

Professional consultation

Where appropriate, you should consult:

- special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinators
- educational psychologists
- specialist practitioners
- safeguarding partners
- Prevent professionals

Assessing the full safeguarding picture

SEND needs may influence how concerns present, but they should never be used to minimise or dismiss potential safeguarding concerns.

Assess concerns holistically, taking account of:

- SEND needs
- strengths
- context

- risk factors
- protective factors

Case studies

The following case studies are designed to support you in understanding how Prevent concerns may present in learners, and how decisions are made about appropriate safeguarding responses.

They are intended to illustrate:

- the factors that may indicate an individual is susceptible to radicalisation and at risk of being drawn into terrorism
- situations where concerns are more appropriately managed through alternative safeguarding pathways

Each case study outlines:

- what happened
- key considerations when assessing the concern
- the outcome, and whether a Prevent referral was considered appropriate

These examples should not be viewed as a checklist. They do not establish referral thresholds and should not be used as a substitute for professional judgement. You should consider every concern on its own merits, taking into account:

- the individual's:
  - circumstances
  - vulnerabilities
  - behaviours
- the wider context

Remember

A Prevent referral should be considered where there are concerns that a person may be:

- susceptible to radicalisation
- at risk of being drawn into terrorism

Not all concerning behaviour, prejudice, fixation on violence or safeguarding concerns will meet the Prevent threshold.

Case study	Learner	Primary concern	Referral made?	Prevent threshold met?	Outcome
1	TJ (16)	Fascination with weapons, extreme violence and mass casualty attackers	Yes	Yes	Assessed through Prevent and supported to address vulnerabilities and attraction to violence
2	TW (14)	Desire to commit a mass casualty attack; mental health vulnerabilities; harmful online influences	Yes	Yes	Multi-agency support provided alongside mental health services
3	TR (17)	Justification of terrorism; concerning online contacts; vulnerability to influence	Yes	Yes	Accepted onto Channel and successfully completed support
4	JH (15)	Threats of serious violence towards family members	No	No	Managed through safeguarding, social care and mental health pathways
5	AB (12)	Support for Daesh (also known as Islamic State, ISIS or ISIL); viewing	Yes	Yes	Accepted onto Channel and successfully completed support

Case study	Learner	Primary concern	Referral made?	Prevent threshold met?	Outcome
		extremist content online			
6	JF (10)	Prejudiced comments influenced by online content	No	No	Addressed through school-based safeguarding and education support. While some concerns may meet the Prevent threshold and require support through Prevent or Channel, others may be more appropriately addressed through existing safeguarding, education, social care, early help or mental health processes.

Remember

When reviewing a concern, you should consider if:

- there is evidence of extremist or terrorist narratives
- the individual is showing support for, justification of or curiosity about terrorism
- there are vulnerabilities that may increase susceptibility to radicalisation

- there is evidence of concerning online activity or contact with individuals promoting extremist views

Case study 1

Name and age
TJ, 16.

Primary concerns
Fascination with weapons, extreme violence and mass casualty attackers.

What happened
TJ came to the attention of staff after repeatedly showing fellow learners videos depicting extreme violence, including people being killed using explosives, knives and firearms.

TJ demonstrated an ongoing fascination with weapons and reportedly showed other learners photographs of knives they owned, claiming they sometimes carried them in public. Other learners reported that TJ frequently spoke about Hitler and other violent historical figures.

Although TJ did not appear to hold a clear ideological belief, they expressed a strong interest in the Columbine perpetrators and similar attacks, appearing particularly drawn to the notoriety associated with mass-casualty incidents.

Considerations
TJ's persistent interest in extreme violence, weapons and mass-casualty attacks, combined with an apparent fascination with perpetrators of targeted violence, raised concerns that they might be susceptible to radicalisation and at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

The frequency and persistence of these behaviours suggested that a Prevent referral was appropriate to better understand the nature of the risk and any associated vulnerabilities.

Outcome
The referral met the Prevent threshold and progressed to a multi-agency Prevent assessment. Information was gathered to better understand TJ's interests, online activity and wider vulnerabilities.

Support focused on building critical-thinking skills, reducing the appeal of violence and strengthening protective factors, including positive relationships and constructive activities.

Over time, TJ's engagement with violent content reduced, and they showed greater awareness of the potential harm caused by glorifying violence and mass casualty attacks. Following intervention and review, concerns reduced and the case was closed, with ongoing support available through mainstream safeguarding arrangements.

Case study 2

Name and age
TW, 14.

Primary concerns
Desire to commit a mass casualty attack, mental health vulnerabilities and harmful online influences.

What happened
TW was receiving support from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) for depression, including experiences of suicidal thoughts.

Professionals identified growing concerns regarding TW's interest in carrying out a mass-casualty attack at their school. This interest appeared to increase following a suspension for violent behaviour.

TW disclosed that they had been participating in online chat rooms where individuals encouraged and reinforced violent thoughts and behaviours.

Considerations
TW's desire to cause harm to themselves and others, fixation on a mass-casualty attack and exposure to potentially harmful online influences created concerns about susceptibility to radicalisation and the risk of being drawn into terrorism.

The combination of vulnerabilities, intent and external influences indicated that a Prevent referral was appropriate.

Outcome
The referral met the Prevent threshold and progressed to a multi-agency assessment. It was identified that TW would benefit from additional support to address vulnerabilities relating to isolation, harmful online influences and violent ideation.

A mentor was identified to work regularly with TW, providing a trusted-adult relationship and opportunities to explore concerns, build resilience and develop a stronger sense of belonging. Through this support, TW was encouraged to engage in positive activities and local community groups, helping to reduce isolation and increase positive social connections.

The mentor worked with TW to challenge harmful narratives, discuss online influences and support the development of healthier coping strategies. Over time, TW became more open about the content they had been accessing online and the encouragement they had received from others to engage in violence.

As engagement with the mentor and community-based activities increased, professionals observed a reduction in TW's fixation on carrying out a mass-casualty attack. Protective factors were strengthened through positive relationships, increased participation in constructive activities, and ongoing support from education and mental health services.

Following regular review, the identified Prevent concerns reduced and ongoing support continued through existing safeguarding, educational and mental health pathways.

Case study 3

Name and age
TR, 17.

Primary concerns
Justification of terrorism, concerning online contacts and vulnerability to influence.

What happened
TR was referred to Prevent following a significant change in behaviour. They had withdrawn from family and friendship groups, their academic performance had declined, and they had converted to Islam without informing their family. Multiple sources described TR as easily influenced and vulnerable to manipulation.

Converting to Islam was not a concern and is not an indicator of radicalisation. However, family members became concerned about TR's increasing secrecy around their online activity. Rather than engaging with local Muslim communities, TR chose to interact with unknown individuals online and to travel around the UK to meet people connected to these networks.

TR also began expressing views that appeared to justify the Manchester Arena bombing and was overheard asking an online contact whether they belonged to Daesh (also known as Islamic State, ISIS or ISIL).

Considerations
Concerns centred on the apparent justification of a terrorist attack, engagement with extremist narratives, vulnerability to influence, and contact

with unknown individuals linked to a terrorist organisation.

Taken together, these factors indicated that TR might be susceptible to radicalisation and at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

Outcome
The referral progressed and TR was accepted onto the Channel programme.

An intervention provider worked with TR to explore their understanding of Islam, challenge extremist interpretations and strengthen resilience to radicalisation. Support was also provided to family members to improve their understanding of Islam and build stronger family relationships.

Through engagement with Channel, TR developed a more balanced understanding of their faith, became more willing to engage with credible sources of religious guidance and reduced their engagement with concerning online influences. Their relationships with their family members improved, and they became less isolated and more open about discussing their views and experiences.

Over time, TR no longer expressed views that justified terrorism and demonstrated an increased ability to challenge extremist narratives. Following regular reviews, the Channel panel agreed that the identified risks had reduced sufficiently for the case to be closed.

Case study 4

Name and age
JH, 15.

Primary concern
Threats of serious violence towards family members.

What happened
JH was known to social care due to a history of parental substance misuse and neglect. JH appeared to have limited empathy and reported feeling little emotional connection to their family members or peers.

Police became involved following an incident in which JH attempted to harm animals in public using a knife. A knife was later discovered hidden in their bedroom.

Further concerns were raised when JH expressed a desire and intention to kill their family members and described having considered how they might

carry this out. These thoughts appeared persistent, and JH showed excitement when discussing them.

Considerations
JH presented significant safeguarding concerns and a risk of serious violence. However, the available information suggested that the risk was directed towards specific individuals rather than being linked to an extremist ideology, terrorist cause or grievance.

There was no evidence that JH was accessing extremist material, engaging with terrorist content or demonstrating indicators associated with being drawn into terrorism.

Outcome
The concerns did not meet the Prevent threshold and were considered more appropriately addressed through existing safeguarding, social care, mental health and police processes.

A Prevent referral was not progressed. Instead, professionals worked together to assess and manage the risks through appropriate safeguarding pathways, focusing on JH's emotional wellbeing, history of neglect, concerning behaviours and risk of violence towards specific individuals.

A co-ordinated support plan was put in place, with regular reviews involving relevant agencies. Over time, JH engaged with support services, and professionals were better able to understand the underlying factors contributing to their behaviour and to assess the ongoing levels of risk.

Professionals continued to monitor concerns and review any emerging evidence of extremist influences or indicators that JH might be susceptible to radicalisation. However, at the time of assessment, the concerns remained more appropriately addressed through mainstream safeguarding and risk-management processes.

Case study 5

Name and age
AB, 12.

Primary concern
Support for Daesh (also known as Islamic State, ISIS or ISIL) and viewing extremist content online.

What happened
AB had previously experienced bullying and was struggling with family relationships following the loss of their grandmother. They spent significant

amounts of time online without supervision and had limited opportunities to socialise with others.

Staff became concerned when AB began making comments that indicated support for Daesh and expressed agreement with its views, including the use of violence. They also demonstrated hostility towards Christians.

Further enquiries identified that AB had been viewing extremist content online, including beheading videos. Their parents were supportive, but reported difficulty in diverting them from a subject that had become a significant focus of their attention.

Considerations
The combination of support for a proscribed terrorist organisation, exposure to violent extremist content and concerns regarding potential online grooming indicated that AB was susceptible to radicalisation and at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

A Prevent referral was therefore considered appropriate.

Outcome
The case was adopted by the Channel panel. An Intervention Provider worked with AB through a series of one-to-one sessions, helping them explore and challenge extremist beliefs and discuss questions relating to ideology.

Additional support was provided through youth activities and community engagement opportunities, helping to reduce isolation, improve confidence and strengthen positive peer relationships.

AB engaged positively with the intervention and developed a more balanced understanding of the issues. Over time, they became less supportive of Daesh and were better able to critically evaluate extremist content and narratives encountered online. Increased participation in positive social activities helped reduce isolation and provided opportunities to develop healthy relationships with peers.

AB reported feeling well supported by their family, school and the professionals involved in the intervention. Following regular reviews, the Channel panel was satisfied that the identified risks had significantly reduced and that AB had developed greater resilience to radicalisation. The case was subsequently closed, with appropriate support available through mainstream services if required.

Case study 6

Name and age
JF, 10.

Primary concern
Prejudiced comments influenced by online content.

What happened
JF refused to work with a group of classmates, stating that it was because they were immigrants and therefore "nasty and not British". When challenged by other learners, JF became angry and defended their views.

During discussions with staff, JF explained that their opinions had been influenced by online videos shown to them by an older cousin that depicted immigrants committing criminal acts.

This behaviour was out of character and there had been no previous incidents of concern.

Considerations
The teacher challenged the comments appropriately and explored JF's understanding of the issues. The incident was shared with the DSL, who spoke with JF and their parents.

While the comments reflected prejudiced views influenced by online content, there were no wider indicators suggesting susceptibility to radicalisation or a risk of being drawn into terrorism. JF's parents were supportive, willing to address the concerns and able to provide appropriate guidance at home.

A Prevent referral was therefore not considered necessary at this stage.

Outcome
The school addressed the incident through education and safeguarding processes. JF demonstrated remorse following discussions with their parents and staff, and showed a greater understanding of why their comments were inappropriate and harmful.

The school strengthened curriculum content relating to prejudice, stereotypes, inclusion and digital literacy to support wider learner understanding and resilience to harmful online content. JF engaged positively in these discussions and became more willing to consider different perspectives.

The DSL recorded the incident and continued to monitor for any escalation of concerns. No further incidents occurred, and no additional indicators suggesting susceptibility to radicalisation or a risk of being drawn into terrorism emerged.

As a result, JF was not considered susceptible to radicalisation and a Prevent referral was not required. The concerns were successfully addressed through existing educational and safeguarding processes.

Statutory duties, training, resources and support

Statutory duties

DSLs and other practitioners should keep their knowledge of the following up to date by reading:

- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance)
- Work-based learners and the Prevent statutory duty (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/work-based-learners-and-the-prevent-statutory-duty)
- Keeping children safe in education (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2)
- Working together to safeguard children (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)

Training

DSLs and other practitioners should engage in appropriate training, which includes:

- Prevent awareness training (https://www.support-people-susceptible-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/portal#awareness-course)
- Prevent referrals training (https://www.support-people-susceptible-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/portal#referrals-course)
- Channel or Prevent multi-agency panel (PMAP) training (https://www.support-people-susceptible-to-

radicalisation.service.gov.uk/portal#channel-or-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-course)

Resources

Additional resources are available from:

- Educate Against Hate (https://www.educateagainsthate.com/)
- ACT Early (https://actearly.uk/)
- Education Training Foundation (https://etfoundation.co.uk/professional-development/etf-offer-by-topics/safeguarding-and-prevent/)

Support

For further support and advice, contact your:

- local Prevent team
- safeguarding partners
- DfE regional CONTEST co-ordinator

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