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## **Section 6L (Staffordshire)**

## **Section D19 (Stoke-on-Trent)**

# **Safeguarding People who are vulnerable to being drawn into Violent Extremism and / or Terrorism in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent**

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## 1. Introduction

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The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, including children of all ages, young people and adults to involve them in terrorism or activity in support of terrorism.

This guidance is intended to provide a clear framework for all professionals working with people (or those around them) for whom there are concerns that they are at risk of becoming involved in violent extremist activity.

It includes the link between safeguarding procedures and the Channel programme, and provides a mechanism for supporting those who may be vulnerable to violent extremism by assessing the nature and the extent of the potential risk and, where necessary, providing an appropriate support package.

## 2. Definitions

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Violent Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as:

*"The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views, which:*

- *Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;*
- *Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;*
- *Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts;*
- *Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK."*

There are a number of offences that can be considered when dealing with violent extremism. They include offences arising through spoken words, creation of tapes and videos of speeches, internet entries, chanting, banners and written notes and publications.

The main offences employed to date have been soliciting murder and inciting racial hatred.

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board recognise the need to protect people against the messages of all violent extremism including that linked to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist, Al Qaeda ideologies, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and that linked to Animal Rights movements.

### 3. Legislative and Policy Framework

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The following legislation and policies have provided the framework for this safeguarding protocol:

- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015;
- The Children Act 1989; as revised by the Children Act 2004;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015;
- Care Act 2014; Care Act Guidance October 2014;
- Mental Capacity Act 2005;
- Channel: Supporting individuals vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists: A Guide for Local Partnerships, HM Government with Association of Chief Police Officers, 2010;
- The revised national CONTEST (Counter-Terrorism) Strategy 2011;
- Recognising and responding to radicalisation. Considerations for policy and practice through the eyes of street level workers. (Recora Institute)

### 4. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

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There is a statutory duty for workers to share information where there are concerns about the safety or wellbeing of an adult at risk of abuse or neglect or a child. Numerous pieces of legislation place a duty on local authorities to share information safely and actively in specific circumstances including:

- The Data Protection Act 1998;
- The Human Rights Act 1998;
- The Common Law Duty of Confidence;
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Children Act 2004 Sections 10 and 11;
- The [Caldicott Principles](#).

All information sharing must be conducted in accordance with a relevant legal power of duty, and be proportionate and relevant to the circumstances presented.

## 5. Identification

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

Numerous factors can contribute to and influence the range of behaviours that are defined as violent extremism. It is important to consider these factors in order to develop an understanding of the issue. It is also necessary to understand those factors that build resilience and protect individuals from engaging in violent extremist activity.

It is important to be cautious in assessing these factors to avoid inappropriately labelling or stigmatising individuals because they possess a characteristic or fit a specific profile. It is vital that all professionals who have contact with vulnerable individuals are able to recognise those vulnerabilities and help to increase safe choices. Research shows that indicators of vulnerability can include:

- Identity Crisis - Distance from cultural / religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them;
- Personal Crisis - Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- Personal Circumstances - Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from freedom, tolerance of others, and accepting personal and social responsibilities; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy; being easily led and desperate to please or impress others;
- Unmet Aspirations - Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;
- Criminality - Experiences of imprisonment; poor resettlement/reintegration; previous involvement with criminal groups.

However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that everyone who is experiencing the above are at risk of exploitation for the purposes of violent extremism.

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters;

- Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders;
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations;
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour.

Practitioners who work with young children may also see behaviours which could be linked to extremist influences and give them cause for concern. These behaviours might include, for example:

- Refusal to co-operate with other children / staff and indicating that this refusal is based on a dislike of the person's ethnicity or religion;
- Acting out violent role play (e.g. beheadings);
- Use of racist language;
- Use of extremist rhetoric.

Parents can also be vulnerable to extremism, and as such practitioners need to be aware of parental behaviour in relation to the indicators of vulnerability.

See **Appendix 1**: For more information about Vulnerability Factors.

## **6. Referral**

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### **What support is available for people at risk of becoming involved in extremism?**

Channel is a joint initiative between Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police and their partners that offers help and guidance to people who may be at risk of becoming involved in extremism.

Concerns that an individual may be vulnerable to radicalisation does not mean that you think the person is a terrorist; it means that you are concerned that they are prone to being exploited by others. Radicalisation of vulnerable children (including young children) and adults is a safeguarding issue.

It is important to use your professional judgement - **if you are concerned that someone is at risk of getting involved in extremism, contact the Staffordshire Prevent Team.**

The Staffordshire Police Prevent Team can be contacted via:

Tel: 01785 232054

Email: [prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)

See **Appendix 2**: For the Prevent Referral Process

The Prevent Team will, in partnership with other professionals including those involved in Safeguarding, investigate further to assess the nature and extent of the risk and the Channel Panel will develop the most appropriate support package for the individual concerned. See **Appendix 3**: For information about the Channel process.

In organisations where a Prevent lead has been identified, practitioners may wish to discuss the person with the Prevent lead prior to making a referral.

If at any stage, it is felt that the individual poses an immediate danger to themselves or any other person, the police should be called immediately (via 999).

## **7. Assessment**

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Staffordshire Police Prevent Team will complete an initial risk assessment for the individual. The risk assessment will be used to inform a decision about how to ensure the most suitable outcomes for the individual, including whether the person needs to be referred to Channel. If the person is referred to Channel a vulnerability assessment will be completed prior to the Channel Panel.

If the person is not accepted into the Channel process at this stage, it will be referred to an appropriate worker or organisation where alternative support and engagement for the individual will be identified. Where required, the case will be referred into a statutory process.

The person making the referral will be kept informed and, in many cases, would be involved in decision-making going forward.

Most people do not become involved in violent extremism. Numerous factors can contribute to and influence the range of behaviours that are defined as violent extremism. Therefore, in many cases interventions identified through the Channel process may not appear to be specific to the threat of radicalisation. For example, they might relate to other needs of the individual such as in respect of mental health support, housing, relationships, offending

behaviour or drug and alcohol issues. There may however sometimes be a need for specialist interventions in relation to de-radicalisation and disengagement. These will be commissioned by the Channel Panel as required. There are a range of activities which can be included in a Channel intervention e.g. support with life skills, mentoring, family support etc.

If the individual who has been referred to Channel is, or should be, the subject of a statutory process the person will be managed and the individual supported via that statutory process (with appropriate Prevent Team representation, where necessary). Progress will be reported back to the Channel Panel.

See **Appendix 3**: For information about the Channel process.



## Appendix 1: Vulnerability Factors

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(To be considered against unique personal circumstances of individual.)

**The list is not exhaustive and all or none may be present in individual cases of concern. Nor does it mean that vulnerable people experiencing these factors are automatically at risk of exploitation for the purposes of violent extremism.**

### Section 1 - Access to Extremism / Extremist Influences

- Is there reason to believe that the subject associates with those known to be involved in extremism - either because they associate directly with known individuals or because they frequent key locations where these individuals are known to operate? (E.g. the subject is the partner, spouse, friend or family member of someone believed to be linked with extremist activity);
- Does the subject frequent internet access locations for the purpose of extremist activity? (E.g. Use of closed network groups, access to or distribution of extremist material, contact associates covertly e.g. Skype/email);
- Is there reason to believe that the subject has been or is likely to be involved with extremist/ military training camps/ locations?
- Is the subject known to have possessed or is actively seeking to possess and/ or distribute extremist literature / other media material likely to incite racial/religious hatred or acts of violence?
- Does the subject sympathise with or support proscribed groups e.g. propaganda distribution, fundraising and attendance at meetings?
- Does the subject support groups with links to extremist activity but not proscribed e.g. propaganda distribution, fundraising and attendance at meetings?

### Section 2 - Experiences, Behaviours and Influences

- Has the subject encountered peer, social, family or faith group rejection?
- Is there evidence of ideological, political or religious influence on the subject from within or outside UK?
- Have international events in areas of conflict and civil unrest had a personal impact on the subject resulting in a noticeable change in behaviour? Note it is important to recognise that many people may be emotionally affected by the plight of what is

happening in areas of conflict (i.e. images of children dying) it is important to differentiate them from subjects that sympathise with or support extremist activity;

- Has there been a significant shift in the subject's behaviour or outward appearance that suggests a new social / political or religious influence?
- Has the subject come into conflict with family over religious beliefs/lifestyle choices?
- Does the subject vocally support terrorist attacks?
- Has the subject witnessed or been the perpetrator/victim of racial or religious hate crime or sectarianism?

### **Section 3 - Travel**

- Has the subject travelled for extended periods of time to international locations known to be associated with extremism?
- Is there a pattern of regular or extended travel within the UK, with other evidence to suggest this is for purposes of extremist training or activity?
- Has the subject employed any methods to disguise their true identity? Has the subject used documents or cover to support this?

### **Section 4 - Social Factors**

- Does the subject display a lack of affinity or understanding for others, or social isolation from peer groups?
- Does the subject demonstrate identity conflict and confusion normally associated with youth development?
- Does the subject have any learning difficulties/ mental health support needs?
- Does the subject demonstrate a simplistic or erroneous understanding of religion or politics?
- Is the subject a foreign national, refugee or awaiting a decision on their immigration/national status?
- Does the subject have insecure, conflicted or absent family relationships?
- Has the subject experienced any trauma in their lives, particularly any trauma associated with war or sectarian conflict?

## Appendix 2: Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Prevent Referral Route

The Staffordshire Police Prevent Team can be contacted via:

**Tel:** 01785 232054

**Email:**  
[prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)

Referral

Discussion with your Prevent lead (if applicable) \*

When an individual is identified as a potential cause for concern in relation to Prevent, a referral will be made to the Prevent Team.

\*In organisations where a Prevent lead has been identified, practitioners may wish to discuss the person with the Prevent lead prior to making a referral.

Police Prevent Team Assessment

Channel threshold not met

Channel threshold met

not met

Alternative Response

Channel Panel

Alternative support / engagement

Child or Adult Safeguarding Enquiry

Known to Adult or Children's Social Care

MAPPA Process

The Channel Panel will agree how the person will be supported i.e. through existing statutory processes or through a Channel intervention.

Even if the threshold for Channel is not initially met, if the subsequent response (either statutory or non-statutory) discovers additional information which raises further concerns regarding radicalisation or extremism, the case should be referred back to the Prevent Team for reassessment.

The Channel Panel is responsible for monitoring the Channel intervention and regularly reviewing progress.

Channel Intervention

No further action

Support

Exit

Continue

Escalation

## **Appendix 3: Channel**

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Channel is a multi-agency approach, led by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, with support provided by Staffordshire Police, to provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist related activity.

Channel seeks to:

- Establish an effective multi-agency referral and intervention process to identify vulnerable individuals;
- Safeguard individuals who might be vulnerable to being radicalised, so that they are not at risk of being drawn into terrorist related activity;
- Provide early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risks they face and reduce vulnerability.

It is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them, their families and their communities.

As a minimum there must be information evidencing a concern that the individual is either moving towards support for terrorism, or an attraction to terrorism or a vulnerability to radicalisation.

**Learn more about Channel via this online learning resource -**

[http://course.ncalt.com/Channel\\_General\\_Awareness](http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness)