

## Wolverhampton Adult Education Service Safeguarding Students who are Vulnerable to Extremism

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## **General Statement**

In 2010 the Government published the Prevent Strategy, a national programme to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. In 2012 Channel, a key element of Prevent, produced a guide for Local Partnerships protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. In recent years there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been several occasions both locally and nationally in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

### **1. Our aim**

Wolverhampton Adult Education Service values freedom of speech and the expansion of beliefs / ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both students and staff have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

### **2. Risk**

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. Wolverhampton Adult Education Service is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

### **3. Definitions**

Wolverhampton Adult Education Service seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

### **4. Risk reduction**

The Senior Management Team and the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer will assess the level of risk within the Service and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include, consideration of the use of our premises by external agencies, curriculum offer, provision specifically targeting vulnerable groups, disclosed safeguarding cases, anti-bullying policy, equal society statement and other issues specific to the Service's profile, community and philosophy.

### **5. Designated lead and contacts**

When a member of staff has any concerns that a student may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the Designated Safeguarding Officer. The lead within the organisation for

safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism is the Designated Safeguarding Officer. **The Single Point of Contact is: Suzie Lowe**

Additional contacts include the following:

- To report illegal information, pictures or videos found on the internet log on to [www.gov.uk/report-terrorism](http://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism).
- To report concerns call the West Midlands Police Anti-Terrorist Hotline number: 0800789321
- If a crime is being committed or there is a threat to someone's life call 999 immediately.

## 6. Interventions

Numerous factors can contribute to and influence the range of behaviours that are defined as violent extremism, but most young people do not become involved in extremist action. For this reason the appropriate interventions in any particular case may not have any specific connection to the threat of radicalisation, for example they may address mental health, relationship or drug/alcohol issues.

## 7. Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation

- a. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.
  - b. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:
    - i. 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.
    - ii. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.
  - c. Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:

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

    - i. Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
    - ii. Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
    - iii. Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal
    - iv. acts; or
    - v. Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.
8. There is no such thing as a "typical extremist": those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.
  9. Students may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

**10. Indicators of vulnerability include:**

- a. Identity Crisis – the student is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;
- b. Personal Crisis – the student may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- c. Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
- d. Unmet Aspirations – the student / pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;
- e. Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement / reintegration;
- f. Learning Support Needs – students may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

This list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

**11. More critical risk factors could include:**

- a. Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
- b. Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
- c. Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
- d. Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- e. Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- f. Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- g. Significant changes to appearance and / or behaviour;
- h. Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and / or personal crisis.