Online radicalisation - Parent/guardian information and support

We recognise that this is a difficult time for parents and guardians and that the **Coronavirus** is having a significant impact on young people and families across the world.
The closure of schools means that opportunities for children to talk to and play with friends will be limited to online interaction. This will almost certainly lead to children spending more time online.
Parents working from home may not be able to monitor their children's use of devices as they usually would

Unfortunately, whilst rare, there are negative influencers and online groomers who use the internet, social media and online gaming to spread their extreme ideas, which children can be exposed to. Some of these ideas may be considered radical or extreme and when a person starts to support or be involved in them, this is called radicalisation.

Our experience of radicalisers is that they may link their extreme views to the global, national or individual response to Coronavirus which could be shown through films, images and discussions as;

- **Conspiracy theories**
- **Blaming other people for the virus and its impact on life.**
- **Hate against groups because of race, religion, sexuality and gender.**

Radicalisers will want as many people as possible to believe their ideas and sometimes encourage them to take action, which might break the law. This can be how people are drawn into terrorism.

What are the possible signs of online radicalisation?

Boredom could cause children to engage with new groups or individuals and this could make them vulnerable to those looking to influence young people.

Online radicalisation may be hard for parents to notice because it is a complex issue. There are a possible signs that someone may need some help (although a lot of them are quite common among teenagers), but look out for increased instances of:

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- **Exploring new and unusual websites, chat forums and platforms due to boredom or frustration.**
- **Joining new or secret groups since isolation.**
- **Speaking with new friends or being secretive about chats during online gaming or in forums.**
- **A strong desire to seek new meaning, identity and purpose.**
- **Using language you wouldn't expect them to know.**
- **Watching, sharing or creating films online linked to religious, political or racial hate.**

Radicalisers can target young people by sending friend requests on popular sites and platforms to see who responds. They may strike up a conversation to build a relationship with a child and ask them to chat privately.

These chats can then happen on forums such as 2chan, 4chan and 8chan which are anonymous posting and discussion forums for over 18s. The content is often unsuitable for children and not a safe place to have discussions and learn about issues.

What can you do…

These are indicators that they might need help, but you know your child best and we advise that you speak with them first. Check in with them and ask them about what they are viewing, who they are speaking to and how they are feeling. This might feel difficult, but here are some tips to help you:

- **Listen carefully to their fears and worries. There are some helpful tips here.**
- **Avoid complicated and worrying explanations that could be frightening and confusing.**
- **There is advice and support to help them understand Coronavirus**
- **If they are finding it hard to cope with bereavement and grief - advice can be found here.**

You can get more information from the following websites, these will help you understand why people sometimes need more support if they have been radicalised, what is available and how to access it.

NSPCC

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

internet matters.org

COUNTER TERRORISM POLICING

THINK U KNOW .co.uk

parentINFO FROM CEOP AND PARENT ZONE

childline
ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME
childline.org.uk | 0800 1111

If you have any worries or concerns…

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Firstly, we advise that you speak with the **Dedicated Safeguarding Lead** at your **child's school or college**. They will know your child and have had extra training to know how pick up on concerning behaviour. They can talk through your concerns, give advice and get extra support should you need it.

If you'd rather speak online, these websites can help you share your different concerns:

- **If you live in Wales, share your concerns about radicalisation here**
- **You want to report any suspicious terrorism concerns**
- **If you need to report a hate crime**
- **You've seen something online that supports, directs or glorifies terrorism including websites, films or images report them here.**
- **The NSPCC have a helpline 0808 800 5000 to talk to someone or an online form to share your concerns about your child**

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