

The Interpretation of Behaviours that *might* imply the Risk of Radicalisation



Additional Guidance for Schools

Purpose of additional guidance

In the context of the duty placed on schools by the Prevent strategy, some schools have expressed the need for further guidance on how they should respond to certain behaviours of young people and, in particular, of those with special educational needs.

Schools have cited examples of children who might use threatening language just for effect or do not understand the meanings or possible intentions that their words are conveying to others. The same children may also have made concerning comments that do not relate to radicalisation and so the problem may be viewed as a general behavioural issue rather than one of radicalisation.

Schools are obliged to follow their duty to refer where certain words or behaviours are included on the listed indicators for radicalisation. However, there has been some discomfort for schools in referring such children into the Prevent or Channel process when the behaviour is viewed as part of a pre-existing or wider behavioural issue.

Points to consider

A) The behaviour of a child is best understood in the context of the wider knowledge of that child and his or her environment:

- Of all the agencies, the school is usually best placed to understand the child's behaviour in the context of their general development, their usual behaviour and communication skills; as well as any known vulnerabilities. This is all crucial information in identifying changes in behaviour or areas of increasing vulnerability for the child.
- Unless directly active on Prevent or Channel Panels in their area (and most schools would not be, nor expected to be), they may not be so aware of emerging areas of concern or intelligence within the local, national or international community. Some of this intelligence might be restricted and highly sensitive.

In order that decisions are based on all available information, some level of information sharing and consultation between schools and the local MASH is essential.

B) Schools recognise that all children have some degree of vulnerability to exploitation (of any kind) and consequently significant activity takes place in schools with regard to prevention.

- Children whose usual behaviour includes some level of risky behaviour may make them easier targets for deliberate manipulation by others.
- Children will often have a desire for identity, belonging or excitement, but a range of different vulnerabilities may distort their ability to carefully discriminate between routes to achieving these.

Factors normally associated with a particular child's vulnerabilities and/or existing risky behaviours should not be permitted to mask any underlying or additional risk of radicalisation

Consultation as a minimum

Unless a referral to MASH is required without question, prior consultation with the **Education Lead based in the MASH** should take place so that any decision regarding a referral under the Prevent duty or the Channel Panel is informed by **all** available information. The Education Lead will consult the Prevent Lead where required.

Note: The consultation may not result in a referral, but could help signpost the school to other more relevant support.