

Communication – Context - Curiosity

Prevent - Understanding the Risks and How We Can Help: Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is a core part of our safeguarding responsibilities under the **Prevent duty**. While cases remain rare, we know that young people can be particularly vulnerable to extremist narratives—both online and in the community. Part of prevention is supporting families, schools, and practitioners to recognise early signs and respond effectively.

Why children may be at risk: Children and young people can become vulnerable to radicalisation for a range of reasons. These may include:

- Increased online activity, especially in unmoderated spaces or encrypted platforms
- Social isolation, bullying, or seeking a sense of belonging or identity
- Exposure to extremist content, misinformation, or conspiracy theories
- Influence from peers, older individuals, or online contacts
- A desire to make a difference, explore new ideas, or respond to global events

Radicalisers often target children by offering friendship, status, identity, or simple explanations for complex issues. This grooming process can happen quickly and may be difficult to spot.

Signs to be aware of: No single indicator means a child is at risk, but warning signs can include:

- Sudden changes in views or behaviour
- Fixation on particular issues, grievances, or conspiracy theories
- Becoming withdrawn from friends or family
- Using extremist language or repeating messaging they may not fully understand
- Increased secrecy around online activity
- Support for violence as a way to achieve social or political change

Professionals are encouraged to use their professional curiosity and seek advice early if something does not feel right.

What to do if you are concerned: If you are worried that a child in Newcastle may be vulnerable to radicalisation:

- Speak with your **Designated Safeguarding Lead** (if in a school or organisation)
- Contact **Newcastle's Early Help and Children's Social Care**
- Seek advice from the **local Prevent team**, who can offer guidance and support
- Concerns can be shared as part of ordinary safeguarding procedures. Families are supported—not criminalised—and help is offered proportionately and sensitively.

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Helpful resources

These resources provide guidance for parents, carers, and professionals:

National Resources

- ❑ **ACT Early** (Home Office): Practical advice for recognising early concerns
<https://actearly.uk>
- ❑ **Educate Against Hate**: Support for schools, parents and carers
<https://educateagainsthate.com>
- ❑ **NSPCC – Protecting children from radicalisation**
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe>
- ❑ **Newcastle City Council**
<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/communities-and-neighbourhoods/prevent-newcastle>

Local support (Newcastle)

- ❑ **Newcastle Prevent Team** – advice and professional support prevent@newcastle.gov.uk

Our shared responsibility

Safeguarding children from radicalisation is a collective duty. By staying informed, working in partnership, and acting early when we have concerns, we can make sure children in Newcastle are supported to grow up safe, confident, and free from harm.