

Who are we?

The **Devon and Torbay PREVENT Partnership** works to protect local people and communities from violent extremism. Violent extremism involves supporting or using violence to achieve a cause – this can include terrorist acts. People are groomed into supporting violent extremism through the process of **radicalisation**.

PREVENT is part of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) – it is ultimately about safeguarding people who may be vulnerable to being radicalised within our communities. These people can come from any faith, ethnicity or culture. PREVENT aims to stop them supporting violent extremism and terrorism using early intervention and diversion opportunities. **We all have a role to play in safeguarding people who are vulnerable to radicalisation and in taking action against those who seek to radicalise others. This includes reporting any concerns you have (see below).**

The current threat from violent extremism and terrorism

The local and national terrorist threat continues to be from:

- international terrorism and right wing, left wing, anarchist and single-issue terrorism;
- people acting alone;
- people returning from conflict zones.

Recent local trends in PREVENT referrals include **referrals** relating to **far-right extremist ideologies**, and cases with **unclear, mixed or unstable ideologies**.

Update: COVID-19

COVID-19 and subsequent government restrictions are having impacts at local and national levels.

Hate crime has increased. Racist hate crimes towards certain people and groups, including people of Asian ethnicity, have increased during the pandemic. This includes cases where people have been blamed for the virus or accused of carrying it. Cases of **far right stickering** linking COVID-19 to anti-immigration rhetoric have been found within Devon.

Extremist groups have capitalised on COVID-19. Some anti-lockdown views and conspiracy theories, including those circulating online, have been linked to extreme far right groups and used as a platform for advancing their ideologies.

Prevent referrals have reduced. COVID-19 restrictions have reduced or changed people's contact with services and organisations who may notice signs of grooming and radicalisation and take action to intervene – including educational institutions and healthcare services. At the same time **isolation** from friends, family and trusted others, and increased time spent **online**, may be **increasing vulnerability to grooming and radicalisation**.

Online platforms continue to be used by extremists. Extremists are continuing to target people through the **internet, social media and online gaming sites**. With people spending more time online and communicating with others virtually there is increased chance that they will encounter extremist content or be contacted by others intending to groom and radicalise them.

Impacts on individuals. The **stress** and **isolation** created by COVID-19, and longer term **economic and social impacts** such as **job losses** and **financial hardship**, may weaken protective factors and make people more vulnerable to grooming.

What to look out for

The following signs could indicate that someone is being radicalised online:

- becoming more secretive and isolated from family and friends;
- spending more time communicating with new friends met online;
- becoming fixated on a certain subject;
- expressing intolerance or hatred of other people or communities;
- changing appearance to reflect association with a group or cause;
- thoughts about harming or using violence towards others.

These possible indicators should not be viewed in isolation, and judgement should be used to determine the significance of any behaviour.

Radicalisation can happen to anyone, **although some people may be more vulnerable due to the impacts of COVID-19:**

- being isolated from family, friends and support networks – including school, college, university or the workplace;
- spending increased time online;
- experiencing racism, discrimination, bullying or harassment;
- having a grievance against a person, group or cause.

For information about other factors that can make someone vulnerable to radicalisation visit the [Safer Devon website](#) and our [Preventing Exploitation Toolkit](#).

Digital Safety and COVID-19

We all have a role to play in increasing public awareness around the risks and signs of online radicalisation during the current time and the steps people can take if they are concerned that someone they know is being radicalised.

Counter Terrorism Policing have developed a **Digital Safety resource** with messages and signposting information that you can use in your communications with the public. We encourage you to make use of this resource and to share it with colleagues and partners. This resource has been attached to this briefing.

Help promote our awareness campaign

Earlier this year the Safer Devon Partnership launched a public-facing [film](#) to raise awareness of vulnerability to radicalisation, with a focus on the risks of online radicalisation. The [campaign](#) has received local and national success and the accompanying video is currently being used by National Counter Terrorism Policing.

Online radicalisation remains a **key concern**. Help us raise awareness by sharing our [film](#) and following us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). You can also signpost people to our [website](#) for advice and guidance if they are concerned that someone they know is being radicalised.

Awareness and learning resources

E-learning is an easy and effective way to increase your awareness of radicalisation and violent extremism. **Given the likely impacts of COVID-19 in increasing vulnerability to radicalisation and reducing the potential for this to be identified, we encourage you to take ½ hr to refresh your knowledge.** Current e-learning includes:

- [Home Office Prevent e-learning](#) – to raise awareness about radicalisation and help you identify the signs to look out for.
- [Home Office ACT e-learning](#) – practical guidance on protecting your organisation from a terrorist incident.
- [Preventing Exploitation Toolkit](#) - online toolkit to assist your understanding of radicalisation and other forms of exploitation and help you report concerns.

Your organisation may also provide a PREVENT learning offer – please contact your workforce development lead for further details.

If you are responsible for workforce development in your organisation please consider including these resources in your training offers.

Extremist symbols and messages

We encourage you to look out for symbols and messages which promote hatred or intolerance of people or communities based on ethnicity or faith. This could include symbols and messages that are anti-Islam, anti-Semitic or anti-Immigration. These could appear as **graffiti, posters, stickers or flyers**.

Within some parts of Devon we have seen reports of extremist stickers linked to COVID-19. These include stickers linked to an Extremist Right Wing group with messages blaming COVID-19 on immigration, as in this example.



It's important that you report any sightings to the police. You can do this through the Police's online [Partner Agency Information Sharing Form](#) or by calling **101**. This will help build our intelligence and prevent further incidents, and help us take action against those responsible.

- **If there is an immediate risk to life contact 999**
- If you have concerns that someone is being radicalised you can contact the PREVENT team through their online [form](#), by emailing prevent@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk or telephoning **01392 225130**
- To report suspicious behaviour or activity call the Anti-terror Hotline on **0800 789 321**
- To report extremist online material, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism>
- To report a hate crime or incident contact the police on **101**
- If you have a safeguarding concern not relating to radicalisation contact your local Child or Adult Safeguarding Partnership - [Devon Children and Families Partnership](#); [Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership](#); [Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership](#); [Torbay Safeguarding Adults Board](#).
- To report information or intelligence (other than a crime or safeguarding concern) use the police's online [Partner Agency Information Sharing Form](#) or telephone **101**. Intelligence could relate to sightings of extremist symbology and messages, or information about hate incidents or community tensions.

**Report
your
concerns**