# Know about Online Radicalisation and Stay Safe

The Internet provides access to a world of information and connectivity, enabling us to carry out many of our everyday tasks, such as paying bills, shopping, banking, etc.

However, we are also at risk of engaging in illegal activity or abuse. We use the internet more often than ever before, learning to be safe online is as important as learning to safely cross the road or drive the car. It's important because at the click of the wrong button, which takes less than a second, one can end up viewing something illegal or being influenced and indoctrinated by extremist ideologies. Due to its easy reach and 24/7 accessibility, the internet is increasingly becoming a tool for recruitment and radicalisation of young people. Young girls and boys have been exploited and radicalised online and persuaded to leave the country in secret, against their parents' wishes.

## Why might your child engage in extremism?

There might be whole host of reasons that push a child towards extremism. Every child is different and will be persuaded by different factors and reasons. Here are some reasons that might push them towards extremism:

- Sense of injustice with world events and desire to 'put things right' using violence.
- Peer pressure, social network, having to fit in, and promote their 'street cred'
- Desire for adventures and excitement
- Socially excluded, struggles to make friends and fit in the community
- Emotionally unstable and looking for a way out.

## Is your child being radicalised?

Here are some of the possible 'signs' that your child may be being radicalised. Many of these signs are also a natural part of a teenager growing up and it may be nothing to do with radicalisation.  If you notice any sudden change in behaviour you should keep an open mind and inquire about the child's wellbeing.

- Sudden change in behaviour, cuts ties with friends, community and with family.
- Secretive behaviour- hides what he/she was browsing on internet by switching screen.
- Sympathises with violence and extremist viewpoints and talks positively about extremist groups.
- Intolerant and single-minded, refuses to talk to people of certain religions or backgrounds and demonises other people.
- Possessing extremist literature or information on banned groups, and may distribute them.
- Acceptance of conspiracy theories and suspicious of the mainstream media and government.

# Take Steps to Stay Safe!

**So what steps can you take to help keep your child safe and minimise risk whilst surfing the web? The reality is that with multiple devices, with different contracts and allowances, one would need to take a number of steps to minimise risk.**

## Practical steps you can take

Educate your child about the dangers and risks that exists whilst surfing the net. Raise awareness by explaining to them that there are radicalisers online targeting young people. Teach them to be cautious about who they speak to, what information they give and never meet an unknown online 'friend' alone.

'Pull the plug' by turning off Wi-Fi / internet access – but this might not always work as there may be other devices, such as tablets or phones with unlimited data. Therefore you might have to mutually agree to a time-table when you can take the devices off them.

Use parental controls & filter settings on your search engines and if possible, select 'UK only' search. There are many different types of filter and you will need to decide the best option to suit your needs. Remember that a software filter on a computer will only protect that individual PC and not others connecting via Wi-Fi. Speak to your internet service provider for more advice.

Check the internet 'history' of the sites they have been on. However, be aware that this can also be deleted by the child after each use.

Talk to your child about their online activity and be open and reassuring that they can discuss with you if they are worried or concerned about anything they view on the internet.

Discuss current situations in war-torn countries like Iraq, Syria and gauge their views. You can provide an alternative narrative to extremist propaganda that they may be exposed to. If you don't speak to your children, someone else might!

## Where can I get more help and support?

You can find out more information by visiting:

- Bradford Hate Crime Alliance, Bradford Community Support Team, our bilingual members of staff can help and support parents and vulnerable young people stay safe from extremism online - 07904 739614 / 07931 303336

- Muslim Youth Helpline (MYH) - is a national award winning charity that provides free and confidential faith and culturally sensitive support services targeted at vulnerable young people in the UK. 0808 808 2008. Visit www.myh.org.uk

- Childline - If your child wants to talk to someone in confidence they can call on 0800 1111 or Get Connected on 0808 808 4994 (text 80849)

- Parents can call the NSPCC's free 24/7 adult helpline on 0808 800 5000, email help@nspcc.org.uk or text 88858. You can also contact the Stop it Now! helpline on 0808 1000 900 where you can seek advice anonymously

- www.internetmatters.org. A not-for-profit organisation with lots of useful information on radicalisation.