EXTREMISM / RADICALISATION

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & ADULTS

What is extremism/radicalisation?

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm.

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. This can include harmful minority religions ("cults").

(House of Bishop's Safeguarding Guidance)

Radicalisation is when individuals are exploited by extremists to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups and actions. This is not an aspect of safeguarding of which we have much experience in the Church of England. It is however important that there is an awareness of what it is; who is at risk and the relevant indicators.

There is no clear profile of a person likely to become involved in extremism or a single indicator of when a person might move to adopt violence in support of extremist ideas. The process will be different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or within a very short time frame. Given this, it is important that awareness, sensitivity and expertise are developed to recognise signs that an individual is being exploited and put at risk of significant harm.

Children and adults at risk can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include family members or friends, direct contact with members, groups and organisations or through the Internet and social media. This may lead them to the risk of being drawn into criminal activity, which has the potential to cause significant harm.

Factors associated with extremism / radicalisation:

- **Identity crisis** when an individual is distanced from their cultural/religious heritage, which leaves them uncomfortable with their place in the society around them.

- **Personal crisis** through family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.

- **Personal circumstances** such as migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of government policy.

- **Unmet aspirations** with perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of civic life.

- **Criminality** through experiences of imprisonment; poor resettlement/reintegration; previous involvement with criminal groups.

Other critical risk factors:

- being in contact with extremist recruiters
- articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders
- accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element
- possessing or viewing violent extremist literature
- using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage
- justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
- joining extremist organisations
- significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour

Other potential indicators:

- use of inappropriate language
- possession of violent extremist literature
- behavioural changes
- the expression of extremist views
- advocating violent actions and means
- association with known extremists
- seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

Your Parish Safeguarding Officer is: