Online Safety – Protecting our children from Radicalisation and Extremism

The UK Safer Internet Centre is taking the unusual step of publishing this special bulletin to all Local Safeguarding Children Boards due to the unprecedented online threats posed to children across the UK from radicalisation and extremism. This action follows discussions with colleagues at Home Office and DfE and in the same way that the Government have raised the threat level, this bulletin aims to mirror this heightening of concern particularly with regards to children.

The threats we are seeing take many forms, not only the high profile incidents of those travelling to countries such as Syria and Iraq to fight, but on a much broader perspective also. The internet, in particular social media, is being used as a channel, not only to promote and engage, but also as Robert Hannigan (Director of GCHQ) recently suggested, as a command structure. Often this promotion glorifies violence, attracting and influencing many people including children and in the extreme cases, radicalising them. Research concludes that children can be trusting and not necessarily appreciate bias that can lead to them being drawn into these groups and adopt these extremist views, and in viewing this shocking and extreme content may become normalised to it

This threat is not just from groups, such as Islamic State, but from 'far right' groups also.

We are perhaps more familiar with this 'grooming' process and the risks posed to children by older young people and adults who form relationships with children to ultimately abuse them – the process is similar and exploits the same vulnerabilities.

It is for this reason that we are calling on all LSCBs to:

- Consider and discuss the threats from radicalisation and extremism for their children
- Include the conclusions in your Strategies and Action Plans, ensuring that addressing Radicalisation is effectively embedded in safeguarding practice and that PREVENT coordinators are engaged and signposted
- Consider how the threat of Radicalisation through the Internet and Social Media is being addressed
- Review how the above points are being addressed within your member agencies and their success/effectiveness
- Review esafety education in the light of these widening and extreme risks

The Government's Prevent Strategy and resources are well established and in many places well-coordinated, however this is not necessarily the case everywhere. It is the intention of the UK Safer Internet Centre to ensure that these risks and threats are considered for every child, right across the country, including places that have traditionally seen themselves as not being at risk – the Internet does not recognise these places and neither should we.

- For more information on PREVENT please follow this https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-the-uk-against-terrorism/supporting-pages/prevent
- For more information about the Home Office's radicalisation awareness training product Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) email WRAP@homeoffice.x.gsi.gov.uk
- If you have a concern about a child in respect of extremism and the support options are not available locally, talk to your LSCB police representative who will be able to discuss support options.
- To report suspected online terrorist content please follow this https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- You can also refer content of concern directly to social media platforms - find out how http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/teachers-and-professionals/safety-features