



Counter Terrorism Policing Launch New Act Early Safeguarding Website and Advice Line

The impact of Covid-19, social isolation and a rise in hateful extremism online is creating a 'perfect storm' which is making more young people vulnerable to radicalisation and other forms of grooming. But parents, friends and families can now get specialist support to stop their loved ones being drawn into harmful activities or groups, with the launch of ACT Early - a new dedicated safeguarding website and advice line from the specialists at Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP).

This new resource will provide advice, guidance and support for anyone who is concerned that someone they know may be at risk from being radicalised by terrorists or extremist content online. Between 1 January 2019 and 30 June 2020, 17 children in England and Wales have been arrested in relation to terrorism offences. Some were as young as 14 years old, while nearly all will have been radicalised entirely online. In the same time period, more than 1,500 children under the age of 15 were helped by the Prevent programme to choose a different path, away from hatred and violence. Family and friends are best placed to spot the worrying behaviour changes, which can indicate that a loved one is heading down a path towards terrorism, but currently just 2 per cent of referrals nationally into the Government's anti-radicalisation programme Prevent come from that group of people although the figure is slightly higher in the South West at 3.5 per cent.

Prevent is just that – a preventative programme, delivered locally by teachers, healthcare practitioners, social workers, the police, charities, and religious leaders. It places protection around people vulnerable to radicalisation, stopping them from being drawn into terrorism – regardless of the ideology.

It works in a similar way to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gangs, drug abuse, and sexual exploitation.

And with Covid-19 preventing regular access to schools, social workers and mental health support, specialists at CTP are concerned that people who need help are not getting it - which makes it more important for friends and family to use the new ACT Early resources to understand what might be happening to their loved one and what support Prevent can provide.

For help and advice visit www.actearly.uk or call the national Police Prevent Advice Line on 0800 011 3764, in confidence, and our specially trained Prevent officers will listen carefully to your concerns.

To view the full article please go to the Devon and Cornwall police website: <https://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/News/NewsArticle.aspx?id=cb910024-817e-4140-92f7-6504290c1d27>