Extremism and Radicalisation

Foster Carer Handbook · https://handbook.co.uk/docs/extremism-and-radicalisation/

1 | Our pledge and legal duty

Positive Aspirations Group is committed to offering every child a secure home where difficult ideas can be explored safely. Under the **Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015** (“Prevent Duty”) we must show *due regard* to stopping anyone—especially vulnerable children—being drawn into extremist ideology, hatred or terrorism. Freedom of speech is a cherished value, but it ends where speech incites violence or hatred. Safeguarding overrides all other considerations.

2 | Why looked-after children may be at higher risk

Risk factor	What it can look like
Unresolved trauma / anger	attraction to narratives that blame “the system” or certain groups for their pain
Need to belong	on-line grooming via gaming forums or encrypted apps that offer “family”
Identity confusion	extremist content that offers a single, rigid identity or cause
Isolation or school refusal	more unsupervised time online, echo-chamber communities

Extremists exploit these vulnerabilities to create division, fear and mistrust.

3 | Spotting early warning signs

- Sudden use of derogatory or hate language (“kuffar”, “groomers”, “infidels”).
- Glorifying extremist symbols, flags, slogans in artwork, notebooks or graffiti.
- Secrecy around devices; multiple accounts or encrypted apps (Telegram, Discord private servers).
- Rejecting old friends, hobbies or dress style in favour of new, rigid rules.
- Fixation on conspiracy theories; unwillingness to hear alternative views.

- Physical changes—black clothing, specific haircuts, “lone-wolf” paraphernalia—or repeated watching of extremist or violent videos.

Write down *exact* phrases or symbols; context is key when specialists assess risk.

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4 | Immediate steps if you’re worried

1. **Stay calm and curious.** Ask open questions: “Tell me more about that video.”
2. **Record objectively:** date, time, what was seen/heard, who else was present.
3. **Report within two hours** to the Registered Manager (or on-call lead) **and** inform your Supervising Social Worker.
4. **Do not confront or confiscate devices** unless there is imminent danger; an angry shutdown can push the young person further into secrecy.
5. **Preserve evidence** – screenshots, URLs, usernames.

The Registered Manager decides whether to:

- escalate to the placing Local Authority and request Channel Panel involvement;
- consult the police Counter-Terrorism Liaison Officer;
- update safer-caring plan and risk matrix.

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5 | Risk assessment & planning

- Each concern triggers a **Prevent Risk-Matrix** (low–moderate–high–imminent).
- Actions go into the Safer Caring Policy: extra supervision online, device-time limits, safe adults list, pro-social clubs or mentoring.
- Review fortnightly—or sooner if behaviour shifts.

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6 | Building protective factors every day

Protective theme	Practical carer actions

Democracy & voice	Family meetings where everyone votes on weekend activities; explaining why majority decisions still respect minority views.
Rule of law	Model fair consequences; link household rules to wider laws (“bike helmet keeps you safe *and* it’s the law”).
Individual liberty	Encourage choice in hobbies, dress, faith practice (or non-practice).
Mutual respect & tolerance	Celebrate all festivals represented in school; invite respectful questions about differences.
Critical-thinking skills	Teach “check the source” habits—compare three websites, look for .gov or .edu, discuss satire vs fact.

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7 | Training and support from the agency

- **Mandatory Prevent / Channel e-learning** for all carers and staff (renew every 2 years).
- Annual **e-safety workshop** covering encryption apps, livestream risks and emerging platforms.
- **Equality & diversity modules** that arm carers with language to challenge prejudice safely.
- Access to a **Safeguarding Advisor** for case-specific coaching and joint school meetings.

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8 | Roles & lines of accountability

- **Registered Manager** – strategic lead; liaises with police, Channel, Local Authorities; logs incidents centrally.
- **Supervising Social Worker (SSW)** – first line of support; completes risk matrix, updates Safer Caring Policy.
- **Foster carer** – daily observer and role-model; records, reports and implements risk-reduction actions.
- **Children & young people** – encouraged to discuss world events, ask questions and report hate content.

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9 | When extremist content appears in the home

- **Videos / literature:** store in a sealed envelope or password-protected file; hand to your SSW.
- **Graffiti or drawings:** photograph before removal; include in incident report.
- **Third-party influence (friend, relative, online contact):** gather identifiers (username, email, phone) and pass to the Registered Manager.

In essence: Extremism thrives on secrecy and division. By creating an open, respectful household and acting decisively on concerns, you form a frontline defence that keeps young people safe, curious and free to build their *own* positive aspirations.