



UNIVERSITY OF
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Practitioner Perspectives: Safeguarding children and young people from radicalisation

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About the research

'To reduce the risk from terrorism, we need not only to stop terrorist attacks but also to Prevent people becoming terrorists.....Supporting vulnerable individuals requires clear frameworks including guidance on how to identify vulnerability and assess risk.'

Channel Guidance (HM Government 2012: 3)

Channel is the UK Government's multi-agency approach to protecting vulnerable people, particularly young people, deemed to be 'at risk from radicalisation' (2012:4). It is part of the Prevent (Prevention of violent extremism and terrorism) work stream within the overall UK Government Counter Terrorism strategy called CONTEST (HM Government 2011, 2012).

The recently enacted Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a 'Prevent Duty' on agencies in education, local authorities, health and social care, and criminal justice to have 'due regard to the need to Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'¹.

This research focuses on understanding how organisations involved in safeguarding children and young people conceptualise risk, risk identification and radicalisation. Using Liverpool as a case study, a city identified as a Prevent priority area in 2012, the long term aim of the research is to explore how practitioners working with children and young people work with government policy and translate that policy into practice for identifying and assessing the risks of radicalisation. The research will provide greater insight into understanding how organisations and partnership decision making structures define and identify risk and vulnerability among children and young people in relation to radicalisation, as well as policy relevant findings on how the associated structures and processes can be improved.

¹S26 (1) Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 Chapter 6

Executive Summary

On the 31st March 2015, four practitioners from the local authority, social work, criminal justice and charity sectors attended a scoping meeting at the University of Liverpool. The purpose of the meeting was to gain practitioner insights into the key challenges and issues they face in making sense of government policy relating to the Prevention of radicalisation and the translation of that policy into everyday practice when working with children and young people.

In summary the key challenges and issues were:

- Differing definitions of risk and risk assessment frameworks used within and across organisations
- Practitioner subjectivity in identification and assessment of risk
- Practitioner capability, support and training
- Practitioner and organisational understanding of the impact of the 'Prevent Duty'
- 'Filter down' approach of policy to practice
- The conflict of risk versus need in allocation or provision of services/resources
- Inter-agency and multiagency challenges and opportunities in gaining information and supporting young people
- Practitioner concerns about perception of action or intervention, and consequences for children and young people

Overall, practitioners placed the risk of radicalisation firmly in the arena of safeguarding. However, while organisations and practitioners were felt to be strong on safeguarding policy and culture, there was a 'fear factor' when it came to discussing and addressing risk of radicalisation that could only be overcome by sharing information, practice and training.

Method

This report is based on reflections generated during a practitioner scoping meeting in relation to the topic of risk identification and radicalisation.

Thirty practitioners identified as experts in their field working with children and young people were invited to attend the meeting at the University of Liverpool on 31st March 2015. Invitations were sent to expert practitioners from a range of sectors including social work services, secondary schools, universities, voluntary, community and faith sectors, local authority, and a small number of criminal justice agency practitioners working with young people. Four practitioners attended the meeting, with representation from the local authority, social work, criminal justice and charity sectors.

The meeting format was a combination of open and structured discussion on questions focused around two vignettes that presented scenarios involving children and young people at risk of becoming radicalised (Appendix 1). These vignettes were developed based on the common 'drivers' and 'risk factors' to look for when identifying risks and Preventing radicalisation, as identified in central government documents, guidance and policies.

Practitioners engaged in detailed discussions on a number of issues relevant to identifying and managing risk in relation to the radicalisation of children which will be of vital importance for shaping the next stage of research activity. These discussions have been summarised in terms of the following themes:

- Challenging and identifying and assessing risk (capability; defining risk; risk assessment thresholds; gaining information; and leading on action and intervention)
- Organisational process challenges to identifying and assessing risk (policy; resources; and inter-agency and multi-agency working)
- Practitioner strengths in identifying and assessing risk (safeguarding culture and practice; child-centred practice; and objectivity)
- Organisational process strengths in identifying and assessing risk (safeguarding policies and culture; and established local infrastructure)

Practitioner Prior knowledge

The majority of practitioners had received some awareness training on Prevent from the Local Authority or Police, but had not received training since the Duty was enacted. The Social Work practitioner was from Liverpool but currently working outside of the city in a non-Prevent priority area. They were keen for further opportunity for discussion and additional information.

Practitioners who had a specialist or lead role on radicalisation felt that they had a good level of understanding and knowledge about risk identification. However, the practitioners who also had front-line service delivery roles with children and young people, but no specific role on radicalisation, felt that not enough detail had filtered down from 'top-level policy' to give them guidance about their role and responsibilities:

"I don't know much. It's not really filtered down from top level policy; I've never had any training."

Social Work

"I probably don't know enough, we had some awareness training a while ago. We could do with a refresher".

Charity

"I know the city became a Prevent priority area after the police submitted a paper to the Home Office in 2012... But there is now a legal responsibility on all local authorities to engage in Prevent."

Criminal Justice

"Part of my role is working on Prevent in addition to my other work".

Local Authority

Key Issues

1. Practitioner challenges to identifying and assessing risk

a) Capability

On several occasions, practitioners raised the issue of staff capability for risk identification and assessment; the levels of understanding, the need to acknowledge personal prejudice and gain access to training:

“I have a real fear about labelling. And also I have a fear about the person who is making that judgement in terms of their background; what their ideas of what is radicalisation and radical thinking.”

Charity

“It depends on the value base doesn’t it of the person making the decisions about what is or isn’t radical. I’d like to think professionals wouldn’t agree with some of the views but it is possible”

Social work

Practitioners noted that many of their colleagues would not know where to go for advice on assessing or identifying risk. They felt that there was a lack of knowledge regarding how to discuss cases anonymously, and that this may inhibit practitioners from involving other agencies for fear of labelling a child. Similar concerns were raised in relation to gaining access to practitioner support and information on how to prevent risks of radicalisation.

b) Defining risk

All practitioners acknowledged that risk is a subjective notion, with the issues brought to the fore in the vignettes regularly interpreted in a number of different ways. For practitioners from the criminal justice and local authority sectors, assessments of risk were informed by the risk factors or drivers identified within the guidance provided in the Channel framework and Prevent strategy. In social work practitioner practice for assessing risk was informed by the concept of harm as

described within the Children's Act 1989². Within charities practitioner practice appeared to apply more holistic concepts of risks to questions of child safety, welfare and emotional well-being. However, when it came to identifying risks all of the practitioners talked about contextual factors, such as the individual young persons' vulnerability, their personal/family/social circumstances and their trajectory, acknowledging how far individuals lives may diverge from perceived norms:

"This is the stage of identity development for young people"

Local authority

"You need to find your place in life, but it can be a good and a bad thing to be so open to influence"

Charity

"I've come across situations where kids have travelled abroad to countries where hunting or having weapons is the norm, they pose for a photo, post it online when they come back here and then it raises alarm bells"

Criminal justice

"This could be an issue of their ethnicity – is this a Black child living in a predominantly white area, who feels that he does not fit in and may experience being targeted? I'd want to know more about the child's experiences and background."

Social Work

All practitioners agreed that within the vignettes, the risk was actually the young person's vulnerability to negative influence; they felt they could be at risk/vulnerable to many things and that it was ultimately the practitioner's role to address the young person's safety.

Adult roles in relation to presentation of risk were initially discussed in relation to influencing opinion or 'grooming' children for radicalisation. However, there was a wider discussion after a

² S31 (9) Children's Act 1989 (as amended by Adoption & Children Act 2002):

- Harm means ill-treatment or impairment of health or development including for example impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;*
- Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;
- Health means physical or mental health;
- Ill-treatment includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

practitioner asked about what to do when the parent or family member of the young person is deemed to be 'the risk':

"What happens if it is the parent who the radicalisation issue is with? See, I work with families.... So my safeguarding would be around the child. It's all quite complex isn't it?... I mean more than likely I would pick something up through working with the whole family. Or would I? That's a big question isn't it?"

Charity

"It depends really, about whether the ideology is being passed down...It depends how it comes to light really. If it comes to light by a child going to school, the teacher raises the issues – we start looking at it."

Criminal Justice

"How can you demonstrate safety outcomes for a child living with a parent with those views and that risk? How do you change that? It would have to be similar to what we do for domestic violence and substance misuse, wherein if there is no change we would have to enter into legal proceedings if you predict that the risk to that child would be too great."

Social Work

The vignettes were based on a scenario outlining the case of two young people: one male and one female. When it came to identification of risk, practitioners stated that they felt more comfortable working on the vignette involving the female as they understood it to be a clear case of sexual exploitation and felt able to deal with this. Radicalisation was not seen as a priority issue in her case. Considerations of gender thus played an important role in the way in which practitioners made sense of degrees and forms of risk and how risks should be differentiated, assessed and acted on. This suggests practitioners rely on their background knowledge of risk more generally to steer their judgements on what risk of radicalisation looks like for males and for females, something perhaps related to how risk is construed through policy, training, media and communications as well as working practice and experience

"It may just be girls speaking 'there is no point to my life'...in terms of extremism there is probably nothing there except that little bit about that political group."

c) Risk assessment thresholds

For practitioners who worked in an environment where a 'risk threshold' or 'risk level' determined whether or not they would be involved in service delivery, they felt that this circumscribed their singular ability to respond to the needs of the child but that they could 'refer down' to others or recommend a 'team around the family':

"If that came to us, we wouldn't take it. We wouldn't say this child is at risk of harm. It's definitely not a Level Four³...We would be saying, back to you school you have concerns, deal with these. We would not respond as an organisation. Sadly."

Social work

"We would go out and have a chat with the school...probably the teachers have a better relationship with the child to address some of the issues."

Criminal Justice

For practitioners who did not operate in this type of organisation, they felt that they would want to work to reduce vulnerability and risk no matter the level but that resources or waiting lists might get in the way. All practitioners acknowledged that there was potential for children's needs to be missed in either organisational environment.

d) Gaining information

Practitioners were very open to collaborative inter or multi-agency working – they identified in both vignettes the need to gain more information before acting. Practitioners felt these were important issues to take back to schools, but also observed, conversely, that practitioners in this sector were least likely to get the opportunity to be trained on the subject:

³ Acute and Specialist Needs: Safeguarding/Statutory Social Care Services – "Children and young people who are 'in need' and require a statutory service to promote their welfare (section 17), and children and young people whose needs demonstrate significant harm or risk of significant harm (section 47)." (LSCB 2014:7)

“Teachers getting time or access to training is an issue. It’s good if we can integrate it into School Improvement programmes – we did that and reached 100+ schools”

Criminal Justice

The vignettes purposefully omitted details on race, religion and the type of ‘radicalisation’ the individuals were at-risk of. This sparked an interesting discussion about the practitioner ‘fear factor’ on asking questions about race or religion – even as preliminary monitoring information for referrals. It was widely felt that practitioners were in general (?) concerned with labelling children on the basis of the stereotypes widely associated with their religion, racial group or political beliefs, thereby contributing to societal racism and prejudice:

“Professionals need to own this and take responsibility for their worries and fears of being branded racist – we learned this from Rotherham’s serious case review⁴.”

Social Work

“You don’t want to be making links between ethnicity and radicalisation. And neither do you not want to be making those links if they are there. Either way you can get stuck.”

Charity

“It’s like political correctness gone mad isn’t it? Your race and your religion is such a big part of your identity, you can’t just turn a blind eye to it. If you want to understand the problems – and it could be isolation or bullying, you can’t turn a blind eye to that”

Local Authority

“You need to understand the child’s racial and religious background – that’s a big part of a child’s makeup, so you need to understand that before you can make a judgement on this”

Social Work

⁴ Jay Alexis (2014) Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997 - 2013

e) Leading on action or intervention

In responses to the vignettes, the main emphasis was on talking to other agencies and talking to the child to find out further information. Practitioners felt that there needed to be timely and proportionate responses to the risks or perceived risks identified. There was some apprehension about taking action or making 'interventions' – the term 'interventions' itself was perceived as some form of legal action to be taken by police, social services, mental health or school:

“Passports are taken quite frequently in court proceedings, predominantly with Black and Asian families. This could happen in these cases. The Court often state that families have to present birth certificates and passports to them - I had a case just last week.”

Social Work

“In all the institutions and in all the sectors, there is a real fear of people that if I say I think Mr A is involved in something that may mean he is on that pathway to extremism – then what is the response to that going to be?...There is this myth that the police will get involved, flashing blue lights, arrested etc.”

Criminal Justice

“In something like this (child sexual exploitation) I know what I’m doing, but when it comes to Zayn and it’s all a bit grey, I’m not quite sure. I’d bat it back on to others. I don’t really know what my role is or if I have one, in terms of child protection.”

Social Work

2. Organisational process challenges to identifying and assessing risk

a) Policy

Practitioners identified different challenges for organisations that operate a) on the basis of assessing risk/harm at the point of referral – wherein the threshold is set high or b) on the basis of need rather than risk/harm – wherein there is no threshold that referrals have to meet but the wait to access services is long.

“It shows how if you are more risk focussed or less risk focussed as an organisation, then this will determine how you see things differently or do other things”

“What is worrying for me is that our Section 47 investigations outcomes box I’ve noticed has just had a box added for risk of radicalisation, with no explanation whatsoever, no policy, no indication of where that goes. What does that lead to? Does that lead to Child protection conference? Are we instigating legal proceedings? What are the further steps?”

Social Work

Practitioners were concerned that organisations can often respond to changes in law or policy by changing systems or adding new sections to, e.g., forms without explanation or training for practitioners. This was felt to potentially contribute to a lack of confidence or fear. There were also anxieties that the political agenda or climate in relation to counter terrorism would determine the responses of organisations to radicalisation:

“That’s the political climate that we are living in now, it would be expected that children’s services would step in and those children would not go home...this may not be logical because then it would apply to parents of children who get involved in guns and gangs, but this is what’s high on the political agenda and the government driving forces, and unfortunately that will be the knee jerk reaction, I think.”

Social Work

In relation to the recent case of the three girls travelling to Syria, practitioners discussed the issue of treating the children as victims or criminals with the overall feeling that they were victims unless they had become involved in criminal activity. However, if this then leads to actions against the

parents – being found to have 'failed to protect' the children with the children subsequently taken into care - this was felt to be contentious and open to allegations of victim, parent and community blaming;

“It would be a shame if this is what will happen, it will make Prevent implode. Never mind communities.”

Criminal Justice

b) Resources

Linked to the political environment, the issue of austerity arose on a number of occasions. Practitioners felt that the impact of budget cuts could be such that only severe risks are being addressed by services, meaning that there is the potential to miss any escalation in risk or need:

“Some practitioners are saying that situations they believe to be higher risk that are being pushed down to Level 1 or Level 2 – personally I wouldn’t go near the house in that situation”

Criminal Justice

“That wouldn’t get through the door of children’s services, unfortunately. It is all about commissioning now...it may all change when there is a child death and a serious case review and the Government may realise they have pulled everything, we are now running a skeleton service and this is the outcome.”

Social Work

“By the time it comes to us as practitioners, this whole situation could have escalated in that time. It comes down to resources. We aren’t the only agency where there are huge waiting lists; this is down to resources, staff and demand. The person who is taking the referral, which would be our administrator, would have to think about this going somewhere else as well.”

Charity

This raised the need for training to be multi-level (including policy makers, practitioners and support staff) in order to ensure knowledge and understanding of risk identification and the child’s

needs from the first point of contact. However, again the issue of funding and resources were raised as a barrier.

c) Inter-agency and multi-agency working

Practitioners raised the issue of prioritising or separating out elements of a case when multiple issues or vulnerabilities exist. They pointed out that this can be problematic for organisations in terms of knowing who to involve or refer to.

Practitioners referred regularly to the different processes or multi-agency frameworks for identifying and assessing risk such as the Safeguarding Children's Board, the Channel Panel and MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) in addition to child protection proceedings. Practitioners were unsure about how these processes or frameworks currently address risk of radicalisation, with some concerns that processes had the potential to not 'speak to each other':

"The local Channel Panel can 'piggyback' existing processes if there are multiple issues involved in any case. We are looking to have a regular panel soon, there wasn't the need before."

Criminal Justice

"In multi-agency meetings, everyone will have their own views about what they want to do, and actually it may be providing too much too soon for that child. Focussing on one thing really is better."

Local Authority

"We would focus on the predominant risk. When it comes to child protection though, sometimes the police action will directly conflict with for example social services... there was one case where the police threatened a family whose child was at risk of CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) with a PPO(Police Protection Order)⁵ and actually the child had been stable for the last 6 months, there was no CSE issues - it could have destabilised the whole situation"

Social Work

⁵ s46 Children's Act 1989; a child can be taken into police protection without a court order for up to 72 hours

3. Practitioner strengths in identifying and assessing risk

a) Safeguarding culture and practice

All practitioners talked about risk of radicalisation in a safeguarding context. The discussion was focussed on reducing vulnerabilities: the nature or form of the radicalisation was not actually the primary concern – it was child safety. Taking such a holistic view of safety is a practitioner strength in identifying other types of harm that the child may be at risk of:

“If you reduce a child’s vulnerabilities, whether it be CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) or something else, then you reduce the risk of other vulnerabilities such as being radicalised as well”

Local Authority

“We actually need to get involved much earlier and this isn’t necessarily about terrorism, it’s about vulnerability, behaviours, attitudes.”

Charity

b) Child centred practice

Practitioners discussed the vignettes from a welfare or ‘victim perspective’, with heavy emphasis on child well-being through raising issues such as vulnerability, stability, identity, safety and improving emotional or mental health. Practitioners expressed the need to involve the young person in planning and decisions, with the young persons' views and capacity to protect themselves (this is increasingly referred to as 'resilience' in policy discourse) central to any actions.

“It’s actually about working with her to increase her capacity to protect herself from others. It’s down to the police to disrupt the relationships, but it should be at her pace.”

Social Work

c) Objectivity

Practitioners did not interpret the vignettes as predetermined cases of radicalisation, often seeing behaviours as a possible response to bullying, experiences of discrimination or feelings of alienation. Practitioners suggested that the same factors or concerns posed by the vignettes could

signify gang related crime, drugs, sexual exploitation, self-harming, low self-esteem, poverty, bullying or identity crises:

“A lot of these things you see in young people, in fact all the young people that I see display some or all of these behaviours”

Criminal Justice

“This could be bravado – his parents are out of work so he can’t get involved in the trips because they can’t afford it.”

Social Work

“These behaviours could be that he could be struggling with his sexuality”

Charity

4. Organisational process strengths in identifying and assessing risk

a) Safeguarding policies and culture

Practitioners felt that there is an established safeguarding culture in their organisations and this is reflected in their policies:

"This is just an add-on to your normal safeguarding procedures, the same as if concerns were raised about drink, drugs, sexual exploitation. It's no different"

Local Authority

"There is no need for any special processes for identifying risk of radicalisation, if agencies just focus on keeping children safe."

Charity

For Looked After Children especially, practitioners felt that these children would be less likely to be over-looked and more likely to get support or extra involvement because of the services already involved in their lives:

"It's a bit easier with this one as she is a foster child. There should be loads of agencies already involved and in contact with her."

Charity

"When the local authority is a corporate parent, you should see there is more of likelihood to get involved"

Social Work

b) Established local infrastructure

Practitioners referred frequently to the local multi-agency processes and frameworks that centre on the risks facing children and young people. The Channel panel, the local authority process to respond to identified risks of radicalisation, was initially unknown by the practitioners who did not

have a specialist role, but, through the discussion, this Panel was increasingly seen as a way to ratify what was or was not a real risk of radicalisation:

“All Liverpool Channel referrals go through CARELINE anyway, as a way to reinforce that this is a safeguarding issue.”

Local Authority

“Because there were so few referrals, we decided to have a lead in Children’s and a lead in Adults (services) and if we needed to call a Channel panel we could do it on an as and when basis. Now as awareness and referrals are increasing and after the Act, we are thinking of setting up a proper panel with regular members but also able to call on other expertise when it is required.”

Criminal Justice

Summary

Way Forward – Building capability and practitioner confidence

Central to the ability of organisations to fulfil the Prevent Duty is the issue of practitioner understanding of risk identification and assessment for children and young people, and the efficacy of organisational policy and processes related to this. The practitioners who took part in this meeting felt that, fundamentally, risk of radicalisation was an issue of safeguarding but believed that many practitioners will see the management of risk of radicalisation as intimidating because it is presented as something separate and ‘special’.

However, in response to the Prevent Duty, guidance is needed for practitioners to understand and know what their role is, when to step in and what their personal and organisational duties and responsibilities are. Without this guidance, the potential is for practitioners to feel radicalisation falls outside their area of statutory competence and the resulting danger would be that they only address the issues that feel ‘safe’ and not the issues that are ‘risky’ such as those related to race, religion and culture.

Practitioners felt that much more training will be required in relation to the Prevent duty to develop knowledge, skills and ability for identifying risk and knowing what to do next. Concerns were raised that resources were too limited to facilitate this. Practitioners need to know who can support/advise them - for those frontline practitioners involved in identifying potential risks for young people it was felt that more training was needed in asking ‘skilled questions’.

Practitioners would feel more assured about the process of risk identification and referral if information was shared about current practice in these cases including how many children are identified, how many are referred to the Channel panel and what actions have been taken as a result. This could be on a national and local basis – for example, the case of the teenage girls who travelled to Syria was one which practitioners found of interest, especially when it came to working through the appropriate action to take on their return in terms of them and their families.

Clarity of policy and procedure

Differing definitions of radicalisation, risk and harm in organisations and in Government documents and guidelines have the potential to create confusion in policy and practice. Policies were thought

to be open to conflicting interpretations among practitioners, and the concern was that in some circumstances this could be problematic or controversial. For example, when considering the issue of parents who have been identified as radicalised and managing the risk presented to the child, practitioners seemed uneasy about potential actions and consequences. The process for assessing risk depends on practitioner instinct, discretion and prediction; all highly subjective. Continuous training and opportunities to discuss cases may provide a safeguard from bias here.

Assessing risk in situations of multiple, diverse and complex needs, requires a process that can be flexible and responsive. Organisations need to be able to have a fluid, intersecting way for identifying and responding to the multiple needs of young people, including clear referral processes to other agencies and processes for reassessing risk or risk reduction.

Thresholds of risk that determined organisational interventions or provision of service were a major point for discussion. In developing policy and procedures from here, there is a need to ensure that there is clarity about what is defined as risk and what the thresholds are for services to be involved.

On the basis of the discussions, evidencing risk alleviation will be a future challenge for organisations in relation to reassessing risk and proving the risk (even if it is low or medium) has been reduced or removed.

Strengthening multi-agency/inter agency working

It was acknowledged that practitioners in welfare-oriented organisations who are much less risk focussed may have more options for supporting the child than those who operate in a rigid risk assessment framework that does not really include wellbeing. Recognition of this provides an opportunity to think more broadly about risk identification and Prevention as practitioners in a multi-agency framework.

Practitioners identified a potential conflict in risk based assessments depending on the field worked in and the legal framework followed. For example, a (statutory) social work needs assessment is focussed on potential for harm as defined by the Children's Act, which differs from the Channel risk assessment and potentially a third sector assessment of need.

Schools were identified as key partners to involve and work with as they were felt to have a significant influence in the life of a child or young person and should have the rapport to facilitate

the skilled conversations needed. Practitioners felt that it was necessary to involve educational practitioners in any multi-agency work and training.

It seems that reliance on the local Channel Panel will likely increase as a result of awareness of the Prevent duty. Practitioners were keen for the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to be an active part of this. If so, it seems likely that consideration will have to be given to whether a single referral process will assist practitioners; how to safeguard against 'bottle necking' in the system; and how to ensure the Panel can manage the increased demand for advice, assessment and training. Any developments in this area will have to strike a balance between the Panel providing a primary source of expertise while also developing capacity within organisations to make confident risk assessments.

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Appendix

Scenario A

Background

Zane is a 13 year old male.

Recently diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), but still in mainstream education.

He is underachieving in school but interested in computing.

He constantly uses social media but does not appear to have a physical friendship group.

He gets involved in sports and recreational activities but comes across as quiet and shy.

Zane noticeably has been losing weight for the past year.

Zane has recently started dressing in a militaristic style, with certain emblems that although you don't know what they signify, you have noticed some of the older youths wearing them.

Incident

There is a fight with another young person. Zane states it started because the other young person was verbally abusing him for not having the latest trainers.

Zane says his parents have been out of work for a long period of time. Zane blames the 'people like' the other young person for taking all the work. He feels that this young person and others like him have 'got it in for him'.

Incident

Zane has been withdrawing from activities he previously enjoyed.

Zane refuses to go on a residential weekend.

He is asked why, and says that he isn't allowed to stay with the group, there are too many who are not his 'own kind'. If he went he would have to 'protect himself'.

Incident

In class, Zane has his phone confiscated by the teacher as he is not paying attention.

The teacher sees his Facebook status open and reads posts from Zane which are accompanied by pictures of him posing with what appears to be knives and guns.

Scenario B

Background

Sami is a 15 year old female.

She is a high achiever in school but wants to be famous for singing.

She is outgoing and has a large circle of friends.

Sami is in foster care and has been with her current family for 2 years - longest placement in 10 years. She has no contact with her birth family.

Incident

Sami has set up a Youtube Channel to share her music.

Her foster parents come across the Channel by accident; they are concerned by the lyrics and Sami's outfits in the videos. They are also worried about the comments others are posting, particularly males.

They speak to her school and youth group - they raise concerns about her friendship groups and what they see as 'sexualised' behaviour. They think she is being led astray.

The school see her as a leader in her social group, and say that they are concerned about her influence over others. The school particularly doesn't like the 'radical' nature of Sami's song lyrics that she regularly performs at break times. The school stop Sami from performing on the school grounds.

Incident

Sami is caught truanting from school to attend a political rally in a city 150 miles away from her home. This is the first time Sami has done this.

Incident

Sami has not been seen at her youth group for a couple of months.

When she returns to the group she is visibly different in her appearance - with no makeup and wearing baggy sportswear. She is unusually quiet.

Sami tells her friend that she has spent every evening and weekend in bed crying. Her friend notices marks on Sami's wrists.

Sami says that her foster parents are stopping her from living her life and they don't understand her because 'they haven't come from where I've come from'. She says she feels like there is no point to her life and she can't wait for them to 'kick her out' on her next birthday, as her friends have a plan to take care of her.

Scenario Questions

1. From your perspective and experience, what factors, if any, indicate that the young people in these scenarios are 'at risk'? Why?
2. What do you think these young people may be at risk of and why?
3. At what point, if any, might you make an intervention? Why?
4. What actions might you take and why?
5. What other agencies or people might you involve? How and why?
6. What factors would facilitate your ability to make an intervention and why?
7. What factors would create barriers for your ability to make an intervention and why?

Website links for further information

UK Government PREVENT strategy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-the-uk-against-terrorism/supporting-pages/Prevent>

CHANNEL assessment Framework for partnerships delivering CHANNEL

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/Channel-vulnerability-assessment>

UK 'Prevent Duty' Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/Prevent-duty-guidance>

Department for Education (DfE) Guidance – keeping children safe

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>

DfE Guidance: teaching resilience to extremism

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-approaches-that-help-to-build-resilience-to-extremism-among-young-people>

Safeguarding Children and Young People: The RCGP/NSPCC Safeguarding Children Toolkit for General Practice

http://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/clinical-resources/~/_media/Files/CIRC/Safeguarding-Children-Toolkit-2014/RCGP-NSPCC-Safeguarding-Children-Toolkit.ashx

Guidance for identifying vulnerability to violent extremism

<https://www.counterextremism.org/resources/details/id/224/guidance-for-identifying-people-vulnerable-to-recruitment-into-violent-extremism>

STRESAVIORA European Commission Project tools for strengthening resilience to violent extremism

<http://www.bounce-resilience-tools.eu/en/project>

Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures: Supporting Individuals Vulnerable to Violent Extremism

http://liverpoolscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_violent_ex.html

About the Researcher

Leona Vaughn

Equality and human rights practitioner and former chief executive of a Liverpool based national charity working with and for children and young people in the field of hate crime.

Currently a first year PhD Sociology researcher at the University of Liverpool supported by the John Lennon Memorial Scholarship for students demonstrating an active interest in global, community and environmental issues, and the University of Liverpool Institute for Risk and Uncertainty.

Specific research interests are the concepts of risk, risk identification and assessment, and how they relate to safeguarding children and young people in the context of the Government counter-terrorism strategies for preventing radicalisation.