

Canterbury Christ Church University

Government Definitions of extremism, radicalisation and terrorism

The following is a guide to the **Government** view of extremism, radicalisation and terrorism, which is subject to rigorous academic and political debate.

The UK Government defines **extremism** as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Extremism also includes calls for death of members of the armed forces. (Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (originally issued on 12th March 2015 and revised on 16th July 2015, paragraph 7)

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. (Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales, issued on 12th March 2015 and revised on 16th July 2015, definition)

Connection with the Prevent strategy

During the process of radicalisation, the Government view is that it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into terrorist-related activity. Raising a concern is seen as a vital aspect of the process because careful and sensitive information gathering enables a judgment to be made as to whether an individual is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism as a consequence of radicalisation. If that assessment shows an individual may be vulnerable, a referral can be made to ensure they receive further assessment and support where appropriate.

'Prevention' in this context means reducing or eliminating the risk of individuals becoming involved in terrorism. Prevent includes the identification and referral of those at risk of being drawn into terrorism for appropriate interventions. These interventions aim to divert vulnerable people from radicalisation. (Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales, issued on 12th March 2015 and revised on 16th July 2015, definition)

The Prevent programme does not involve any covert activity against people or communities. Specified authorities may need to share personal information to ensure, for example, that a person at risk of radicalisation is given appropriate support (for example on the Channel programme). Wherever possible the consent of the person concerned should be obtained before sharing any information about them

Terrorism is defined as an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes with or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing political, religious or ideological cause (Section 1 of the Terrorism Act 2000).

Connection with the Prevent strategy

Where actual terrorism or threat of terrorism is evident, the Prevent concern procedure is not used. The police would be informed, as terrorism is a criminal offence.

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