

Local and National Government

Dealing with Radicalisation: Aims

These recommendations are intended for local government workers and national policy makers.

After the course, you should:

- Be aware of radicalisation, its origins and impacts at local level;
- Be aware that a preventative approach to radicalisation can enhance security within your council area, and help support the citizens within your care;
- Understand the community approach to tackling radicalisation, which professionals could be included in your network, and how to sustain such an approach;
- Understand how national policy can support this.

Local Government

Why you?

TERRA proposes a community based approach in which professionals from different disciplines meet on a regular basis to discuss radicalisation in their area.

Your support is vital to achieving and maintaining contact between these professional groups.

Your Potential Role

Assembling a network which can share its concerns about a vulnerable or radicalising individual will help to address radicalisation in your community.

We advise that local governments take the following steps:

- Investigate whether or not such a network already exists in your area. If so, check that the suggested professionals (see below) are represented within it. If not, initiate one.
- Identify any 'hotspots' for radicalisation in your area.
- Identify any key figures well-placed to identify vulnerable individuals.
- Act as facilitator: initiate contact between the key figures/professionals and ensure the group continues to communicate any concerns and meets regularly.

Professionals in your network could include: Police Officers, Prison Wardens, Parole Officers, Teachers, Youth Workers, Social Workers or Religious Leaders.

Subjects Which Could be Discussed in Your Meetings:

- Any reports of discrimination, racism, or obstacles to integration.
- Trends in radicalisation within your area can usefully be communicated between these groups.
- Individual cases and causes for concern can be shared, and an approach to them agreed upon.
- The support of family members in cases where there is cause for concern can be discussed.

National Government

Why you?

In order to improve both social cohesion and basic security, it is vital that governments are aware of the causes and processes of radicalisation, and take a far reaching, holistic approach towards tackling it.

Your Potential Role

- Support for the community based approach at national level is crucial.
- Implementation of networks at national level could result in a significant improvement to national security.
- General support from national governments and recognition of the role that local governments play is crucial to the success of a community based network approach.
- National government must coordinate counter-extremism policy across government departments to improve effectiveness of policy delivery.

Constructing Counter-Narrative

Recent literature suggests that radicalisation can also take place at state actor level:

- Acting outside the law can fan the flames that set terrorism alight.
- E.g. colluding in the use of torture as part of counter terrorism: increase in torture by regimes can be concurrent with increase in terrorist attacks in the region (Bellamy 2013).
- Counter terrorism strategies which single out specific ethnic groups can make that group feel discriminated against and criminalise them in the minds of others.

Radical groups use narratives to recruit; in supporting morally dubious counterterrorism practices, governments both contribute to extreme narratives and undermine the credibility of their own (de Graaf NCTB 2010).

Countering these narratives can be achieved by publicly rejecting the practices of torture or rendition and not implementing counterterrorism measures which discriminate against elements of your own communities.

Deradicalisation and Community Cohesion

Literature shows that many factors can influence an individual's decision to distance themselves from an extreme group.

Of these, the most common are beyond the control of policymakers: a change in personal circumstances or disillusionment with the leadership of the radical group (Alonso 2011, Nawaz 2012).

However, personal support is of crucial importance for successful reintegration, ensuring that each individual has the opportunity to begin a new life free from violence.

These opportunities can include: reintegration activities, change in identity, witness protection schemes (if they choose to inform on previous 'colleagues') and personal gains, such as reduced jail sentences (found to be very effective).