

# Expression of interest

## Title: Safeguarding and Radicalisation in Children’s Social Care Services

## Project reference: DFERPPU 20-21/018

**Deadline for expressions of interest:** 9am, Tuesday 18th August 2020

## Summary

1. Expressions of interest are sought to investigate and review our understanding of how Children’s Social Care (CSC) services are managing cases of radicalisation or extremism amongst young people aged under 18. We wish to better understand the challenges that social workers and others in the CSC sector face, and the practice they have developed in their approach to such cases. Importantly, the project will explore what local authorities are doing when cases of radicalisation and extremism amongst young people do arise, and which systems and practices seem to be the most effective in mitigating the risks. This includes best approaches on reducing a child’s engagement with negative influencers online and effective methods to diverting a child away from further engaging in terrorist activity. This will be used to inform learning across the sector and support cross-government work to improve the consistency of social work responses to radicalisation cases. This includes supporting the enhancement of existing training packages, as well as the development of new CPD.
2. Radicalisation and extremism may take many forms, including that based on religious, political and mixed/unclear and complex ideologies, and we are keen to explore approaches and challenges involved in the range of types. To do this, the department seeks to commission a skilled and experienced research team with a strong understanding of the CSC sector, and ideally a track record in undertaking research on radicalisation, extremism, matters of security or similar. Only those expressions of interest which are most convincing in term of bringing the skills and capabilities in dealing with matters of a highly sensitive and/or confidential nature will be invited to bid.
3. The research is expected to consist of depth interviews with a range of key staff in ten case study local authorities and a selection of pertinent regional and national partners and stakeholders. Given the current restrictions connected to Coronavirus (Covid 19) we anticipate that all of the interviews and discussions will be held remotely. We are open to alternative methods and approaches where convincingly rationalised.

## Background

1. In 2016, DfE commissioned a study[[1]](#footnote-2) on [‘Safeguarding and Radicalisation’](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/635262/Safeguarding_and_Radicalisation.pdf) about the challenges that radicalisation cases pose for children’s social care and local authorities (LAs). Since that research took place, we know that the landscape has developed in important ways The Independent Reviewer of Counter-Terrorism Legislation, Jonathan Hall, recently noted that “increasing number of quite young people are being caught up in terrorism, including new forms of terrorism— not just conventional Islamist, extremist or right-wing terrorism, but other new emerging forms, such as the incel movement or even things at the very boundaries of what you might consider terrorism that are very violent”.[[2]](#footnote-3) There is a lack of current research evidence to understand how children’s social care engage with these increasingly varied cases, the consistency of approaches adopted and an understanding of the unique challenges different types of extremism may pose.
2. This research will review our understanding to build on the previous research, providing insight on specifically how social workers are managing these cases, the challenges they experience and the best practice they have developed. Importantly the project will fill an evidence gap around what local authorities are doing when cases of radicalisation and extremism amongst young people do arise, and which systems and practices seem to be the most effective in mitigating the risks. This includes best approaches on reducing a child’s engagement with negative influencers online and effective methods to diverting a child away from further engaging in terrorist activity.

## Research aims

1. To get a clear and current understanding of:
   1. **Views amongst children’s social care (CSC) professionals** **on how processes and practices have recently developed** with regard to managing cases of radicalisation and extremism in and the types of cases emerging.
   2. **how CSC staff are currently tackling issues** with reference to real-life cases wherever possible (including interventions used, challenges faced and lessons learnt).
   3. **the different challenges posed by various types of radicalisation cases** (Islamist, right-wing, mixed/unclear/unstable ideologies), as well as from different harmful influencers (familial, extra-familial or primarily online).
   4. **what sources of information, advice and support social care staff use** (or would use) when radicalisation cases emerge, and how can social care staff best (reactively) obtain advice and guidance (on cases likely to be rare) as and when they have them.
   5. **good and promising practice** which can be shared across the sector.

## Methodology

1. To reduce burdens in light of Covid-19 the fieldwork will be conducted remotely using phone or web-based technology. We seek assurances from bidders of their experience, skills and response rates in conducting interviews through such media along with a full rationale and success they have had using their preferred approach. Given the sensitive nature of the research we also seek skill and experience in undertaking research of a highly sensitive or confidential nature. Alternatives to this methodology will be considered where a convincing rationale is provided.

**Approximately 20 remote sessions with CSC staff in 10 local authorities in England**:

* + Interviews will be conducted in small or paired groups to cover around 20 remote sessions of up to an hour each in total across the ten case study areas.
  + Participants are likely to include social workers and other key staff appropriate to the LA (e.g. Designated Officers, Family Support Officers, Prevent Education Officers or similar).
  + Flexibility should be built in so that depth discussions can be held with any other key professionals advised by the LA or the interviewees (a ‘snowball’ approach). We would also expect some flexibility for 1-2-1 discussions as necessary.
  + Topics will cover each of the five research aims set out above. The focus will be on staff with experience of cases, but we also seek insights from a few without direct experience to understand current sources of support and guidance they would seek should a case emerge.

**Approximately 2 or 3 small group discussions / workshops with national and regional stakeholders**

* + Small group discussions are likely to be held via two or three collective workshops or facilitated online forums – again flexibility should allow for a few further 1-2-1 discussions where it is more practicable to do so.
  + Overall, participants are likely to include around 15 representatives from agencies such as the police, ADCS, Social Work England and other regional or community leaders, who may be linked to the ten case study LAs (but not necessarily).
  + The purpose will be to gather their perspectives on how the landscape of radicalisation and extremism has changed amongst young people (aged under 18) in past 3 or 4 years; the challenges and lessons learnt; and the identification of good and promising practice tackle the issues posed.
  + The timing of these workshops may be spaced out so as to obtain iterative feedback and insights between these and the interviews with CSC staff in the ten local authorities.

1. There may be also an opportunity to receive early findings from the Home Office Prevent Duty Survey amongst local authorities, in order to help refine the lines of enquiry and final sample for the qualitative interviews. Evidence of experience of drawing on multi-method approaches would also be useful.

## Timing

* Deadline for submission of EOIs – **9am Tuesday 18th August 2020**
* ITT issued – by Monday 24st August 2020
* Deadline for tenders – 9am Tuesday 8th September 2020
* Anticipated start of project will be end of September 2020 with the potential for fieldwork to begin end-October. The exact fieldwork period to be agreed around the time of, or following, the award of the contract as appropriate to Coronavirus (Covid-19) related restrictions and pressures on children’s care professionals. We will keep the project timescales under constant review to be sensitive to such pressures.
* Draft final report early 2021.

## Assessment criteria

Your expression of interest should be **no more than 1,000 words** and there is no need to provide references at this stage.

EOIs will be assessed by the following criteria:

* Evidence of relevant methodological experience (remote in-depth interviews with individuals and groups)
* Evidence of understanding of Prevent and safeguarding matters, and the requirements of the research.
* Skills and experience in interviews dealing with matters of a highly sensitive and/or confidential nature surrounding children and young people.

| **Closing date for EOIs:** 9am, Tuesday 18th August 2020  **Send your EOI form to:** [janette.king@education.gov.uk](mailto:janette.king@education.gov.uk) |
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## How to submit an expressions of interest

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the NEW EOI Form which can be found under attachments. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

All contracts are let on the basis of the Department’s Terms & Conditions, a copy is available attached to the ContractsFinder listing. You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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1. Chisholm T and Coulter A, Kantar Public (August 2017) [‘Safeguarding and Radicalisation’](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/635262/Safeguarding_and_Radicalisation.pdf) London, DfE [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Public Bill Committee, ‘Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill’, (25/06/2020) <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmpublic/CounterTerrorism/PBC129_Counter-Terrorism_1st-4th_Combined_30_06_2020.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)