[Press release: Commission for Countering Extremism publishes plans for wide-ranging study into extremism](#)

The independent Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE) today (Thursday 20 September) confirms it will launch a public consultation, seek evidence from government and commission research into the Far Right and Islamist extremism as part of plans for a wide-ranging study into all forms of extremism.

The study, due to be released in spring 2019, aims to improve understanding of extremism and its deep impact on individuals, communities and wider society.

It is the latest milestone in the CCE's mission to helping everyone do more to challenge extremism.

The terms of reference document, published today, explains that the study will be based on 5 themes:

- public's understanding of extremism
- the scale of extremism
- extremist objectives and tactics
- harms caused by extremism
- the current response to extremism

Alongside these 5 themes are two broader issues: the drivers of extremism and how extremism online interacts with the offline world. Under these themes are a series of 10 critical questions.

To answer the 10 questions the CCE confirms in the terms of reference that it will:

- launch a public consultation later in the year and continue to visit towns and cities across the country
- request evidence from government and regulators
- commission new research — including into the Far Right and Islamist extremism and a nationally representative survey
- seek testimony from victims of extremism and those countering extremism

The CCE has already visited a dozen towns and cities across England and Wales, met more than 300 experts and activists and held workshops with civil society groups, human rights and free speech defenders, academics and practioners. The document includes a breakdown of the lead commissioner's engagement.

Communities have shared their concerns about extremism in person, and through a YouGov poll, which found: 73% of people were worried about "rising levels of extremism in the UK" and 78% felt more needed to be done.

However, the document highlights the challenges faced by those challenging extremism.

It sets out some of the numerous definitions of extremism in use across public bodies and academia.

The document explains that the study will start to address the debate by asking the public what they understand by extremism. It will then identify consistent themes and areas of contention before looking to propose a consensus over the boundaries of extremist attitudes and behaviour.

Lead Commissioner Sara Khan also hopes the work will shine a light on the harms of extremism; whether to individuals, to our society or to our wider democracy. In the terms of reference document, the commission outlines some examples including:

- the role of extremist propaganda in acts of terror
- individuals from faith communities who are targeted and intimidated by religious extremists
- communities feeling the effects of anti-minority hate crime.
- local councils sharing how extremists' demonstrations lead to economic harm
- academics raising harms including social exclusion, isolation and a reduction in trust in institutions such as police and councils

Sara Khan, Lead Commission for countering Extremism, said:

> Whether in England and Wales or across the world, there are worrying signs of the growing impact of extremism.
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> But a lack of understanding about extremism, and its harms, and an absence of consensus is holding back efforts to counter extremism.
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> Extremism is widely discussed but remains a misunderstood and contested issue. It is often raised in the context of violence and terrorism. This is critical, but we cannot ignore the wider impact extremism is having in our society.
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> We have to analyse extremism through a wider lens. Otherwise we risk missing the deep harm that extremism causes to individuals, communities and our wider society.
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> I've spoken to experts and activists across the country. I've heard how religious and ideological extremists are intimidating and abusing those who don't conform to their intolerant and dogmatic worldview. I've heard concerns about the changing face and increasing prominence of both the Far Right and Islamist extremism. I've heard concerns about rising hate crime on our streets, disinformation on social media and the impact of the online space on the reach of extremism.
>
> This should concern all those that cherish our rich diversity, our

fundamental freedoms and liberal democracy.

Our mission is to help everyone do more to challenge extremism.

The first step is building understanding and consensus. That is why my commission will publish a wide-ranging study on all forms of extremism in Spring 2019. These terms of reference are our road map to producing that study.

My approach to this study will be the same approach I have taken throughout my career: a robust defence of pluralism and human rights, gender equality, and our fundamental freedoms including freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief.

Our study is the first stop on an important journey to build understanding of extremism in our country, and encourage everyone – families, civil society, schools, government, statutory agencies, private companies and the public as a whole – to do more to challenge extremism.

The CCE, which is headed up by Sara Khan, was launched as an independent body in March, and kicked off its evidence drive in the summer.

These TOR is the first milestone in the work. Later in the year the commission will launch a public consultation, before publishing its wide-ranging study in Spring 2019.

The 10 questions in the study are:

1) What do people understand by 'extremism' and 'extremist'?

- To what extent is there a shared public understanding of what extremism is?
- What agreement is there on the boundaries of extremism?

2) What do the following indicators tell us about the scale of extremism?

- extremism-related criminal offending e.g. hate crime
- extremist events
- segregation in local areas
- incidents in regulated spaces, e.g. schools, universities, charities
- size and influence of extremist groups
- extremist propaganda on social media and traditional media
- link between extremism and terrorism
- attitudes indicating sympathy to extremist ideas or behaviour

3) What are the objectives of different extremist ideologies?

4) What evolving tactics do extremists and their leaders use to achieve their objectives, including:

- to mainstream their views?
- to recruit people to their cause?
- to respond to those opposing them?

5) What are the harms caused by extremist incidents (such as those mentioned in question 2)?

6) What are the harms of extremism to women, young people, minorities and people countering extremism?

7) What are the wider harms and impact on our democracy and its institutions?

8) What is the government and civil society's current response to extremism, how effective is it and what are the gaps?

9) How can we better support those countering extremism?

10) What could a positive, inclusive vision for our country look like?

Extremism and terrorism

The TOR recognise that there are areas of overlap between extremism and terrorism, such as where extremist propaganda influences terrorism. This is also the case for extremism and integration. The document confirms the CCE will seek to better understand these grey areas.

The CCE's remit covers the government's Counter Extremism Strategy, not the government's Counter Terrorism Strategy (including Prevent) or integration policy. The CCE is not reviewing Prevent. But the document recognises there is an opportunity to learn lessons relevant to extremism from the literature and evidence on integration and counter terrorism programmes.

Polling

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1486 in England and Wales from an overall sample of 1638 GB Adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 20th — 21st June 2018. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).