

Countering violent extremism in education: a human rights analysis

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Countering violent extremism, education and human rights standards

Since the mid-2000s, there has been a proliferation of legislation and policy, on a global scale, which seeks to counter violent extremism (CVE). While such approaches often incorporate aspects of surveillance and intervention, they increasingly focus on preventative pastoral or curriculum work through education (see Ragazzi, 2017). In the UK, such CVE approaches have their roots in the CONTEST (counter-terrorism) strategy, which includes four elements: to prevent vulnerable people from becoming terrorists; to pursue terrorists to reduce their capability; to protect the population; and to prepare for attacks to mitigate harm (Her Majesty's Government [HMG], 2018). The strand of work relating to prevention was strengthened in 2015 through the introduction of the Prevent duty-which places a legal duty on teachers (and other public sector workers) to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (HMG, 2015). As outlined by Thomas in his authoritative summary, the Prevent work promoted by government originally focused on community-based work with young Muslims, but later moved away from this to 'focus on individuals "at risk" of, or vulnerable to, "radicalisation"' (Thomas, 2020, p. 12). The Prevent duty also defined extremism as 'vocal or active opposition to the fundamental British values' (FBVs), which are defined as democracy, the rule of law,

liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs (HMG, 2015). The government's Department for Education (DfE) requires schools to promote the FBVs to children (DfE, 2014).

The need to conduct CVE policy within a human rights framework is clearly established in The Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on the prevention of terrorism, which states its purpose is 'to enhance the efforts of Parties in preventing terrorism and its negative effects on the full enjoyment of human rights' (CoE, 2005, Article 2). This commitment is echoed in the United Nations (UN) global counter-terrorism strategy, which states that the UN's efforts should be directed to 'the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism' (UN, 2006, Annex, parag.2(b)). A survey of CVE policies across CoE member states noted concerns that CVE policies may not always regard the best interests of the child as a primary consideration. It additionally noted that a range of other rights might be affected or unduly restricted: freedom of expression; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and freedom from discrimination (Ragazzi, 2017). These concerns are borne out in empirical research about the impact of CVE policies in education, which indicates that in practice educators are positioned in an ethically ambiguous situation. Whilst some respond in ways that promote the principles of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE), others feel inhibited and so may undermine students' fundamental rights (Ragazzi & Walmsley, forthcoming; Busher & Jerome, 2020). Typically, this research indicates that minoritised students, especially Muslims, frequently feel as though they are singled out by such policies; they sense that their freedom of speech is curtailed, and their religious beliefs scrutinised. The UN Special Rapporteur on counterterrorism and human rights has routinely highlighted concerns about the securitisation of education, threats to the autonomy of education, and risks to the rights of students (2019; 2020).

This article focuses on a set of educational resources produced to help implement the Prevent duty in schools and considers to what extent they balance CVE with human rights. Focusing on the UK's approach to CVE in education has wider implications, given the nature of 'policy epidemics' (Levin 1998) that characterise the 'borrowing' of policy from one jurisdiction to another, and the fact that the UK is often regarded as particularly influential in this area (Kundnani and Hayes 2018).

An example of policy enactment: the *Educate Against Hate* website

The evidence (Ragazzi & Walmsley, forthcoming; Busher & Jerome, 2020) suggests that the risks outlined above can be exacerbated or ameliorated at different stages in the policy implementation process. Between government and international policy frameworks and teachers' practice there is a rich policyscape (Carney, 2009) in which further guidance and exemplars of practice are developed to interpret and elaborate policy (Lundie, 2017). McCowan's (2008) model of curricular transposition describes policy as leaping from statements of ideal ends (e.g. the Prevent duty) to ideal means (e.g. publication of a curriculum or resources for teaching) and then to the actual experiences of teachers and students. In these leaps policy is translated from one sphere of activity to another, for example from Home Office legislation to guidance for school inspectors, and then to a pastoral curriculum. Through these translations, different points are emphasised, and new terms (such as radicalisation and extremism) become attached to more familiar and established concepts (such as safeguarding). As ideas are detached and reattached to other agendas, the policy

subtly shifts meaning as it moves through the policyscape (Bajaj, 2012). A variety of different policy actors also work on the policy, for example, sometimes people from a police background find themselves offering educational advice to schools and a new group of Prevent Education Officers and advisors has been recruited in England to offer expertise around CVE (Lundie, 2017). The fact that these people now owe their careers and professional identities to the policy positions them in a rather different relationship to it than those who see it as a distracting addition to their work, or even those who feel antagonistic towards it (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2013). This means it is difficult to talk about CVE policy in broad, singular terms. It can be more insightful to focus on specific aspects of policy enactment, or specific locations within the policyscape. This is especially so if we want to evaluate the extent to which the policy is aligned with a human rights approach, because so much is determined by the nuanced decisions that are made in defining and implementing the policy.

Previous relevant studies have described the variety of CVE resources available without analysing them (Davies, 2018), or have analysed individual CVE documents (Nolan, 2016), or a selection of documents pulled together within a specific CVE network (Mattsson, Hammarén, & Odenbring, 2016). We are not aware of any studies that analyse a body of education resources curated by a government department to enact CVE policy. In this article, we focus on the *Educate Against Hate (EAH)* website developed by the UK government, which provides ‘practical advice, support and resources to protect children from extremism and radicalisation’ (‘About’ in EAH, 2020). The website was launched in 2016 (DfE, 2016) and was updated and redesigned in 2020, prior to our analysis. It includes classroom resources, training for staff, government guidance, posters and leaflets, information about reporting a concern, and a section of common questions. As such, the site represents the first stage of policy enactment, as the general Prevent requirements are translated into government endorsed lessons and activities. There are four tabs, which divide up the content in different ways: one for teachers; another one for school leaders; a third for parents; and a fourth tab that leads to a blog. Even allowing for the fact that some of the resources appear in several categories, this represents a substantial sample of material which translates the Prevent duty into practice.

Method

Our methodology borrows from a number of studies which have analysed resources aimed at teachers. Brown and her colleagues examined German and English textbooks about Europe to explore how they reflected the political discourses in each country (Brown, Szczepek Reed, Ross, Davies, & Bengsch, 2019). Ford (2019) also examined textbooks to consider how they framed and presented terrorism and extremism in British schools. Ford situates his work in the broad field of discourse analysis, but essentially read the textbooks in search of key themes and recurrent ideas, as well as considering which perspectives were represented, and how narratives were constructed. An and Suh (2013) studied the representation of US history in South Korean textbooks. These three examples effectively bring a range of questions to frame the analysis of the resources being reviewed, and these questions reflect key issues emerging from the literature and the researchers’ own interest. This typically includes asking who is represented and how they are represented, which narratives are offered to frame people and events, and how the resources establish relationships between the elements presented.

We adopt a similar approach, although the EAH website includes teaching resources (similar to textbooks) and other types of documents, such as posters, information, training sessions and blog entries. In developing the specific framework to use for our analysis we have drawn on the global review of CVE policies by Kundnani and Hayes (2018, p. 40) who have argued that:

The rule of law requires that legal processes, institutions and substantive norms are consistent with human rights, including the core principles of equality under the law, accountability before the law and fairness in the protection and vindication of rights.

In working through what this means in practice, Kundnani and Hayes offer a checklist to evaluate the extent to which CVE policies are aligned with these principles. We have adapted their checklist for this review, identifying three key questions:

1. To what extent are the resources on the website aligned with a human rights approach? Here we are interested in whether and how they discuss human rights, and particularly children's rights. More specifically, we are concerned with children's rights to hold and express opinions and to participate in decisions as well as being protected from risks. Here we are alert to the possibility that the emphasis on safeguarding may lead adults to sideline participation rights, or to treat children as objects of surveillance and intervention, rather than focus on young people's agency (Livingstone, 2017).
2. To what extent are the resources explicit in discussing equalities? Specifically, we are concerned to explore the extent to which restrictions on rights and freedoms are considered in relation to the Equalities Act (HMG, 2010). Here we note that, in addition to the Prevent duty, schools already had a legal Equality duty requiring them to consider how their policies and practices promoted equality, particularly with reference to a series of protected characteristics. In relation to the Prevent duty we are interested in exploring the treatment of specific protected characteristics such as political and religious beliefs, sex and ethnicity.
3. To what extent do the resources respect the autonomy of the education sector? This question relates to concerns about the 'securitization' of education policy (Busher & Jerome, 2020), where the language and values of the security services and police are imposed on education. This reflects a debate in the literature about the extent to which teachers are being co-opted into a security role, or can establish a distinctive educational interpretation of the Prevent agenda (Panjwani, 2016). As Kundnani and Hayes argue, this is about protecting established professional norms, values and practices as having a distinct value in their own right, rather than assuming all public services should be re-shaped to the security agenda.

Our first two questions reflect the norms and principles associated with a human rights approach to education, where children have the right to education and rights within education. They have the right to be taught about their rights, through a rights-respecting process, and in a way that encourages support for human rights

(UN, 2011). The third question arises for Kundnani and Hayes as a way to ensure that education is not distorted by non-educational aims. The relative autonomy of education is important because as well as being a right in its own terms, education also acts as an enabling right, allowing children to understand and access their other rights (Lundy & Martinez Sainz, 2018). In addition to the right to access education, international standards specify that such education should promote equality, respect children's cultural identity and promote freedom and tolerance. To this end, teachers and school leaders require a degree of autonomy to adapt their provision to the needs of local communities (Tomaševski, 2006).

Our methodological approach is rooted in critical discourse analysis and as such it is important to note that it examines the ways in which the policy is translated into documents by a variety of intermediate policy actors. These actors exercise a degree of 'writerly' engagement, interpreting key concepts, translating them into different contexts, and employing their own authorial imagination and creativity to some extent. Of course, such engagement is also 'readerly' in that these actors are not entirely free to devise their own interpretations, they are also constrained by some legal requirements and definitions (see Ball et al., 2013). As an example, policy actors must engage with the definition of the FBVs but they can exercise some discretion, indeed they must exercise some agency as to how this is interpreted and enacted (Vincent, 2019). Our focus only captures some of these interpretations written into policy advice and suggested learning resources. Those persons reading them to inform their own actions similarly have the capacity to engage in a readerly and writerly role, and therefore such an analysis cannot yield insights into how children actually experience the policy. Our previous work, reporting on young people's views, emphasised that students want an educational opportunity to learn about and improve their understanding of terrorism and violent extremism, as media coverage sometimes leaves them feeling overwhelmed and confused (Elwick, Jerome & Svennevig, 2020). This analysis aims to provide some indication about the extent to which this is achieved in the resources on offer.

The practical research itself was carried out by all three authors of this paper. The EAH website is divided into sections directed at intended audiences (e.g. teachers, parents, school leaders and the blog), and these sections were allocated roughly equally to individual researchers. There are 86 separate resources on the website, each of which links to a project, document or set of documents, plus 22 additional blog entries offering case studies, reviews of resources and discussions of relevant concepts. Some of these 108 primary sources link to large files of additional resources (sometimes up to 30 documents for each project), which meant there were 375 individual documents or websites referred to in total. Whilst we reviewed each of the 106 key resources, we only sampled a handful of the documents where there were many additional resources. For example, a link to resources from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets included 29 lessons or assemblies. Here we looked at a sample of six of the resources which seemed from the titles to engage most explicitly with CVE and / or rights. Analysis of the resources was based upon the three review questions adapted from Kundnani and Hayes (2018), as described above. A key focus in this process was the employment of a form of critical discourse analysis (e.g. Fairclough, 2001) as a tool in both a deductive and iterative approach—bringing questions from our reading to these texts, coming together as a research team to compare findings, and then repeating the process. Discussions as a research team involved extensive joint review of materials in order to ensure our findings were

anchored in the resources and to allow us to agree on a consistent set of themes, as detailed below. The website and its accompanying resources were all reviewed in July and August 2020.

Analysis

A review of counter-radicalisation educational projects for the CoE notes a variety of approaches, falling largely into two broad categories (Ragazzi & Walmsley, forthcoming). First, there are 'casework' programmes, focused on identifying at-risk individuals with a view to referring them to specialist agencies or intervening in some way. The Prevent duty in the UK includes a casework element, and the EAH website includes guidance on how to identify and report individuals. Second, there is a range of 'awareness raising' approaches, which aim to prevent radicalisation through citizenship education, social cohesion activities and anti-discrimination teaching. Our analysis indicates that there are two quite different approaches in this category. On the one hand, some resources adopt the rather general idea that promoting an alternative narrative to young people (often driven by the FBVs, but also including human rights or activism) will provide a generalised form of inoculation against radicalisation and extremism. These resources may not mention terrorism or extremism at all, and instead focus simply on the promotion of democratic principles. On the other hand, some resources take a more focused approach and explore in depth the phenomenon of terrorism and violent extremism. These may focus on case studies, including personal testimony from former violent extremists, to provide insights into the processes through which individuals are radicalised. They may focus on the broader issues of how terrorism affects others in society, how the media reports it, and how governments respond. Broadly speaking we may characterise these awareness-raising approaches as taking either an individual / psychologised approach, or a more systemic / political one.

1. A human rights approach?

Among the numerous resources on the EAH website there are very few that discuss human rights explicitly. Those that do consider human rights are often problematic, for example, they may be simplistic or include restricted definitions. *Miriam's vision* (a resource produced by the family of Miriam Hyman, a London bombing victim) starts by considering tensions between the right to privacy and surveillance but it does not help young people to consider how to debate and balance these issues. *He named me Malala* briefly mentions rights, but the focus of the resource is neither on CVE nor Rights but on peace and unity as part of active citizenship. Similarly, *Democracy challenge* fails to connect democracy to human rights at all.

In earlier work examining a small selection of classroom resources (Elwick et al., 2020) we concluded that they often fell short of providing young people with developed, critical and nuanced knowledge to help them counter extremism. We found the resources often over-simplified these complex subjects and reproduced stereotypes. An example of this is provided by *Fat face*, a programme about extremism and prejudice. There is only a brief mention of the right to be heard and extremism is defined as 'very strong' views. It states that 'not all extremists become terrorists, some remain peaceful but there is a real risk' and that radicalisations usually only happen to vulnerable lonely people.

Only four resources stood out as providing clear opportunities for the discussion of human rights. *Reclaim radical* is a student-led resource, which will be

discussed in more detail in the final part of this analysis. It is distinctive in providing resources that respond to young people's interests. The others make extensive use of debate and discussion to encourage engagement with, and reflection on, human rights (*Mike Haines: Global acts of unity; The deliberative classroom**; *Generation global*). *Generation global*, for example, moves away from debate (which can be polarising) to dialogue and explicitly models deliberation, inter-faith dialogue and self-review, considering different examples of extremism for a range of religious identities. This resource encourages students to think about how extremism can be confused with other belief systems and how governments deal with free speech and hate speech. Considering the volume of educational resources on the website, it is troubling that so few express a human rights-based approach.

As previously noted, the website does not only offer resources for classroom teaching; it also directly addresses school leaders and parents. One aspect of the government guidance that specifically speaks to the role of senior leaders concerns decisions about hosting speakers on school or college premises. There are some significant inconsistencies in the way these documents discuss this issue in relation to children's rights to free speech and to access information. One document, *Hosting speakers on school premises*, is only two pages in length but includes links to six additional documents, including guidance on teacher misconduct, which warns that staff are 'likely to face prohibition if they deliberately allow exposure of pupils to such actions that undermine fundamental British values... by inviting individuals to speak in schools' (p. 1). Having established the prospects of being disciplined for getting this wrong, the guidance goes on to suggest that school leaders should undertake internet searches on prospective speakers, possibly make enquiries with local police to check out any concerns, and that these precautions should apply whether the speaker will be on school premises during school hours or afterwards (even where classrooms are being hired by community groups). Whilst staff are reminded that their decisions should not discriminate against speakers on the grounds of any protected characteristics (in the Equalities Act 2010), there is no mention of any other rights that might be balanced against the risk. This creates the impression that it would be sensible to err on the side of caution, and be sceptical about controversial speakers. This interpretation seems evident in the exemplar resource published by Westminster City Council in their *Premises protocol*, which only mentions rights when it reminds leaders 'it is important that *reasons for refusal* very clearly do not breach the individual's rights' (p. 5, our emphasis). This seems at odds with the EAH's own publication *Prevent mythbuster* (EAH, undated), which states that guidance 'specifically reminds providers of their duty to ensure freedom of speech' (p. 4). Another document, *Advice for independent schools*, acknowledges that it is entirely reasonable for schools to redact sections of textbooks or past exam papers which do not reflect the ethos of the school (p. 15). Taken together, these guidance documents seem to ignore arguments about freedom of speech; none of them mention children's rights to access information.

By contrast, another document, *Prevent duty in further education: Guidance*, foregrounds consideration of rights:

Every institution clearly needs to balance its legal duties in terms of both ensuring freedom of speech and also protecting student and staff welfare. (parag. 6)

This guidance makes it clear that school / college leaders should only be concerned about speakers who actively support terrorism or who risk drawing young people into terrorism. But even in such cases, the guidance notes that they may mitigate risks by organising an appropriate challenge to these opinions. The other documents tackling this issue seem to ignore the rights dimension and in doing so position adults as decision-makers and actors, and children as the objects of their safeguarding decisions.

This contradictory position seems even more remarkable given that decisions about safeguarding are taken in the context of the overarching general guidance document *Working together to safeguard children*. This document explicitly foregrounds the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the requirement to 'give due regard to a child's wishes' in the Children Act (HMG, 1989) as two core principles for safeguarding policy. It also notes that children want to be helped to understand safeguarding issues and be treated as competent to participate in decisions that affect them (p. 10). However, in most of the Prevent guidance reviewed here there is clear evidence that in secondary schools protection rights have been used to trump participation rights although, fundamentally, these other documents do not seriously engage with rights at all.

When we turn to consider the blogs, the very first post, *Teaching approaches for building pupils' resilience to extremist narratives* (2017), illustrates this lack of rights focus. It uses *Teachers' Q&As* to determine how young people can be vulnerable to extremism (promoting simplistic diagnostic checklists, discussed in more detail below) and discusses how teachers can develop pupils' personal resilience and positive identity. From a rights perspective this could be seen as trying to improve their agency, but this is not mentioned. The blog post links to resources from the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Association, Tony Blair's Institute for Global Change and the Association for Citizenship Teachers (ACT), which are said to help empower students and encourage them to develop a positive sense of personal identity. The resources are described as enabling students to develop a strong sense of 'what it means to be British and what makes diversity valuable and what it might feel like to be stereotyped'. In fact, although the blog describes the ACT resources as being focused on equality, citizenship and British values, it makes no reference to the fact that they actually focus explicitly on human rights. This would suggest that the blog author has either ignored the rights focus, or not understood it as relevant. This reflects a problem with the language of the FBVs, which are explicit about teaching about freedom, equality and democracy, but do not frame these within the context of human rights.

The only explicit mention of rights in the blogs is to the *UNICEF Rights respecting schools award (RRSA)*. In the blog *How extra-curricular activities can help schools fulfil the Prevent duty* (2018), rights are framed very positively and the programme is said to 'transform schools into places where children feel in control of their futures' and also give 'children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens... based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation'. However, the RRSA programme provides general advice about human rights education, rather than relating a human rights approach explicitly to CVE practices.

2. An equalities dimension?

Respectful school communities is a document offering advice to school leaders on creating and sustaining a respectful school culture. The first page urges schools to involve children and parents in creating a school vision and to ground their work in the Equalities Act. The first case study of good practice describes how a school used the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as the basis for their vision and values statement. The second example directly confronts sexual violence and urges schools to clarify that ‘banter’ or ‘boys being boys’ can never justify harassment or violence, and that schools must directly challenge such behaviours and discourses. The principle of equality is not directly linked to CVE policy and the only place where the two policies are connected is in the *Prevent duty: Statutory guidance*, which simply notes that fulfilling the requirements of the Prevent duty is ‘likely to be relevant to fulfilling other responsibilities such as the duty arising from section 149 of the Equality Act 2010’ (parag. 12). No further explanation is given.

The main ways in which equality is explicitly addressed in relation to CVE are in the *Prevent referrals e-learning* packages and in some of the resources for teachers. Firstly, the online training resources explicitly address the risk that teachers will refer young people for a security assessment based on misinformation, caused by their own lack of understanding of someone’s religious or cultural background. For example, in one video clip an experienced Channel Panel participant discusses a case study where a teacher raises concerns about a Pakistani student going on an extended holiday to Pakistan. The case study points out that without further information this is simply an issue of taking an unauthorised holiday and does not, in itself, raise concerns relating to Prevent. This addresses some of the issues emerging from empirical studies of how Prevent referrals may reflect unconscious bias or prejudice (Busher & Jerome, 2020). These resources represent a significant improvement on earlier online training courses, which reinforced some of these stereotypical assumptions (Jerome, Elwick & Kazim 2019).

By contrast, *Talking to your teenager about radicalisation* aims to support the parents of children with autism to promote the FBVs. It repeats some of the tropes identified elsewhere around identifying radicalisation through ‘personality changes’ etc. It also includes an exercise where participants are presented with four photographs of people (one wearing a hijab, one with tattoos, etc.) and asked to choose which is the extremist. All the choices result in the same message: ‘You cannot decide if a person is an extremist just by how they look.’ This simplistic approach to thinking about prejudice and stereotyping is also evident in other material, such as the *Walls* resources where students are advised ‘Don’t be racist’. The EAH website does include a range of resources that promote the principle of equality but these are generally silent on CVE. In turn, the resources that promote CVE are generally silent on equalities. For example, *Interfaith explorers*, which works to build interfaith community cohesion, includes a *Hate crime primary lesson plan* exploring the Equality Act and the protected characteristics of LGBT, disabilities and ethnicity, but this is entirely unconnected to extremism or terrorism. These resources are often explicit about the Equalities Act, but tend to be less obviously connected to terrorism or violent extremism and instead focus on promoting aspects of the FBVs, for example by tackling homophobia, Islamophobia or prejudice more generally.

A series of resources suggested for assemblies, which includes a number of ready to use PowerPoints, provides a contrast to this general trend (*Tower Hamlets secondary resources*). Some of these, for example a document called *Faith and hate*

crime, explicitly situate the discussion within the Human Rights Act and the right to religious freedom. The resources link Islamophobia and far-right organisations, and connect to a range of local political action to defend equality in the London borough. Here, students are shown how far-right extremism threatens the rights of Muslims. Whilst these resources may not be directly re-usable in other contexts (as they are so closely focused on the local area), they illustrate the power of explicitly connecting discussion of extremism and radicalisation to the principle of equality.

This kind of focus on equalities issues is also evident in the blog. We can see this in examples such as *Hate crime awareness week* (2019), which includes definitions, suggested actions and useful resources. However, it is clear that some equality issues are given more consideration than others, for example there is very little mention of issues other than religion, ethnicity and sexuality. In particular, religious elements related to extremism occur more than any others, especially references to Islam. This is evident in the post *Using the right terms: Holding discussions around extremism* (2019), in which two terms are defined in relation to far-right extremism and five to Islamist extremism. No references are made to groups outside of this binary.

The blogs are frequently illustrated with photographs, but these largely portray happy white people as students or teachers. The one notable exception, *Stand up! Education: Breaking down barriers through facilitating real conversations* (2017) includes a picture of two adult visitors from the charity *Stand up! Education against discrimination* and four girls from minority backgrounds. There is only one clear picture of an adolescent black boy in any of the posts and this is in *We have a key role in keeping our children safe online* (2018), a post concerned with keeping children safe from 'cyberbullying, grooming and inappropriate content such as terrorist activity or hate speech'.

3. Educational autonomy?

It is a longstanding concern that CVE policy generally, and the Prevent duty in particular, threaten educational autonomy by imposing a security logic onto teachers, at the expense of an educational approach (Ragazzi & Walmsley, forthcoming). Although the website is called *Educate Against Hate*, the section aimed at parents is largely concerned with the individual safeguarding perspective and includes several separate routes for reporting concerns about one's child to the authorities. Many of these resources are repetitive and self-referential, creating the impression of more diverse resources than is the case. These include vague checklists, which parents are encouraged to use to assess whether their children are vulnerable. These typically include factors such as changing friends, changing appearance, and no longer engaging in activities they used to enjoy. Such lists are widely discredited, but appear frequently here. Few of these resources suggest that parents might usefully discuss concerns with schools. The language largely focuses on safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children; for example, in a *Top tips guide for parents* the opening statement suggests that extremism is a threat to parental authority:

[Extremist] groups work to undermine the authority of parents by using sophisticated methods to trigger feelings of anger, injustice and shame towards a parent.

Despite these problematic features, there is also a consistent focus on talking to one's child and an awareness that an authoritarian, controlling approach will not necessarily be helpful:

Trying to stop your child using the internet and mobile devices won't keep them safe. Instead, teach them to understand that just because something appears on a website doesn't mean it's factually correct.

Such approaches do seem to be more aligned with an acknowledgement of children's own agency and rights. For example, the following advice in the *Top tips* document recognises children should be heard:

Ask their opinion... Take care to listen... Let them talk without interrupting.

The repetition of the core message to 'work with your child' and a focus on giving them skills to recognise false news stories also acknowledges that children need some support to develop their capabilities. This reflects, to some extent, the approach adopted by Hart, Biggeri and Babic (2014), who argue that children's participation rights are best promoted through Sen's capability approach, building their capacity to use rights to enhance their lives. However, this language in the EAH resources is undeveloped and generally glosses over other rights, such as the right to information or the right to privacy. Close parental surveillance is generally encouraged, for example, by offering the advice to 'set up a family email address that your children can use when signing up to new games and websites online' (*Childnet International: Parents supporting young people*).

A blog post entitled *School and college closures: Ongoing Prevent management support* (2020) discusses the risk to all children from being at home during COVID-19 and extremists possibly taking advantage of this situation. During the first period of lockdown (in the spring of 2020), schools in the UK remained open for the children of key workers and for children deemed to be vulnerable; for example, those on education health and care plans, on a child protection list, or classified as being 'looked after'. This blog post specifically discusses children that are the most vulnerable to radicalisation and those being given Channel support, and it encourages Channel Panels to consider whether these students can be recommended to attend school because of their particular vulnerability. Here the school is envisaged purely in terms of its safeguarding role, and recommended as a security intervention.

Nearly every blog piece focuses on the teacher's security role as being essential in the fight against extremism and radicalisation. *Talking to children about terrorism: Tips for discussing sensitive issues* (2017) asserts that "Teachers do a fantastic job of safeguarding children against many threats and dangers, even though this is not always an easy task". On the face of it, this reflects the concerns of the critics, that the teachers' educational role is sidelined. However, the blog continues:

The importance of educational professionals in leading these difficult conversations cannot be overstated. If neither school nor home is a safe space to discuss these issues then it leaves an information gap that can be exploited by those with sometimes sinister agendas. This includes those looking to radicalise young people.

This hints that, although envisaged within a securitised frame, the role of the teacher may still be perceived as educational. In this case, the teacher's distinctive role is filling the information gap through a variety of 'awareness raising' educational interventions, and thus resilience is promoted by education.

Kundani and Hayes (2018) suggest that a genuinely educational approach to CVE might also include young people in developing methods and resources to educate their peers and to develop social action (a point we return to below). This is the focus of the *Executive head teacher blog: Preparing young people for life in modern Britain* (2018), where the author argues:

Schools have to remain optimistic about the impact of their work. The recent Manchester terror attack seemed, at first, to put several years' work at risk. After experiencing increasing levels of racism in the street, it was the students themselves who suggested creating a video for assemblies about reporting hate crime.

Although very few of the resources actually enact this approach, this does reinforce the perception that the Prevent duty may in fact be compatible with educational autonomy. Although there are resources in the EAH website that undoubtedly privilege teachers' security role, and treat schools as sites for surveillance, there are also resources that embrace the distinctive educational function of schools. These include resources which reflect the general faith that promoting the FBVs will lead to resilience, and the more specific resources that teach children how individuals might be psychologically manipulated into violent extremism, or develop their understanding of the nature of terrorism and extremism as a political phenomenon.

4. A way forward?

One resource stands out as particularly laudable: *Reclaim radical*, which includes a guidance document and three accompanying videos. On its first content page, the *Reclaim radical* toolkit lists a number of relevant articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child—directly foregrounding children's rights in its approach. Furthermore, the toolkit is described as being developed by a group of 'Young Advisors' in response to the terror attacks across the UK in 2017/18. This direct inclusion of young people in the development of resources stands in contrast to the top-down approach of both the majority of material on the EAH website and much of the official policy and guidance around the Prevent duty, which infantilises, portrays young people as vulnerable and inevitably removes agency from them.

Reclaim radical covers a range of forms of extremism, it does not just perpetuate media stereotypes. It incorporates activities which discuss far-right extremism, Islamism, animal rights activism and the conflict in Northern Ireland amongst other examples. In general, the approach is more nuanced than much of what we have discussed to this point—there is a real debate around exploring educational alternatives within the resource, rather than some of the simplistic approaches seen elsewhere. First-hand accounts from individuals who were themselves radicalised have credibility, and these are accompanied by activities which provide interpretation but also give space for young people to consider whether/how they relate to them.

By using the language of human rights and children's rights, *Reclaim radical* enables educators to not only focus on a safeguarding perspective but to empower young people. There are many reasons why people can be vulnerable, many ways people can be manipulated and radicalised, and many types of people and groups of people that are extreme—a wider acknowledgment of such issues is not just welcome but, we argue, entirely necessary.

Conclusions

Our methodological approach was rooted in Kundnani and Hayes' checklist of goals and pitfalls for CVE policies (2018), and most of the resources we analysed do not really satisfy their criteria. We do not claim that resources which aim for CVE outcomes also fail to achieve EDC/HRE outcomes; that would be an unfair criticism. Rather we make the stronger claim that the absence of a human rights approach often seems to lead to problems or weaknesses within the CVE resources on their own terms. First, some resources tend to ignore the connections and thus either focus solely on aspects of EDC/HRE (e.g. *Rights respecting schools*) or on aspects of CVE (e.g. *Miriam's vision*). This means children do not have the opportunity to think about violent extremism in the context of democracy and human rights. Second, some of the resources (e.g. *Fat face*) present distorted and simplified narratives or portrayals of 'suspect groups' and therefore risk exacerbating prejudice. Third, some of the resources fail to support educators in balancing children's rights to protection with their rights to participation and to access knowledge (e.g. the guidance to head teachers on school speakers). Fourth, some of these resources fail to acknowledge children's own developing opinions and agency and thus talk down to young people in a rather patronising tone (e.g. *Teaching approaches for building pupils' resilience*). Finally, some of these resources, by playing up the security role of teachers, risk undermining the distinctive educational relationships that distinguish schools from other state-funded institutions. Because of these problems many of the CVE resources we have reviewed fail to balance the individual's right to free speech, the right to access a wide range of information and opinions, and the need to ensure citizens are protected from threats to their security. But, as we have also illustrated, a small number of resources demonstrate that these problems are not inevitable as they incorporate the opposite points and adopt an approach which respects children's agency, articulates the tensions between rights, contextualises and develops a political language for understanding political violence, and dispels stereotypes (e.g. *Reclaim radical*). Our application of Kundnani and Hayes' initial framework to develop this detailed critique of the EAH website has enabled us to generate a more developed account of how a human rights approach to CVE might be beneficial. Below, we offer a number of recommendations for those who have the opportunity to develop educational resources in the future.

1. Resources should explicitly engage with both CVE and EDC/HRE so that students have an opportunity to think about the tensions between security and liberty. This will help to avoid an excessively narrow focus.
2. Resources aimed at school leaders should provide guidance on how to balance children's right to security and their other rights to information, to develop informed opinions, and to express themselves. Otherwise, security concerns may lead children's rights in education to be marginalised.

3. Resources must include a better representation of minority groups and include diverse examples drawn from across CVE policy. Ideally, resources should offer students the opportunity to learn about different people's experiences, and thus avoid narrow stereotypes.
4. There are political debates about the extent to which CVE policies unfairly focus on minority groups; most obviously Muslims, who have been the main focus of Prevent work, but latterly white working class communities associated with the far right. It would be wise to encourage teachers to engage with these debates, so students can connect their learning with discussions occurring in the media and local communities.
5. The voices of young people should be incorporated, particularly in the creation of both policy and resources which interpret it.
6. Resources should clearly articulate the learning intentions to ensure that the educational purpose is clear. Otherwise, resources can appear to adopt a security perspective, with no obvious educational benefit.

By acknowledging the agency of young people, by providing better representation of different groups, and by adopting a more nuanced approach to extremism which allows for educational autonomy we argue that it is possible for CVE policy enactment to adopt a human rights approach.

Educational resources reviewed

Educate Against Hate website resources are identified in inconsistent ways and so here we list the titles of resource pages referred to, which are available to download from <https://educateagainsthate.com/>

Resource pages:

Advice for independent schools. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/dfeguidance-schools-providing-advice-promoting-fundamental-british-values-spiritual-moral-social-cultural-sm-sc-development-pupils/>

Childnet International: Parents supporting young people.
<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/childnet/>

Democracy challenge. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/democracy-challenge/>

Fat face. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/fat-face/>

Generation global. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/generation-global/>

He named me Malala. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/he-named-me-malala/>

Hosting speakers on school premises.
<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/hosting-speakers-school-premises/>

Interfaith explorers. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/interfaith-explorers/>

Mike Haines: *Global acts of unity*. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/mike-haines-global-acts-unity/>

Miriam's vision. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/miriams-vision-2/>
Premises protocol (Westminster Local Authority).
<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/westminster/>

Prevent duty in further education: Guidance.
<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/prevent-duty-further-education/>

Prevent duty: Statutory guidance.
<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/prevent-duty/>

Prevent mythbuster. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/prevent-myth-buster/>

Prevent referrals e-learning. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/prevent-referrals-e-learning/>

Reclaim radical. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/reclaim-radical/>

Respectful school communities.
<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/respectful-school-communities-self-review-signposting-tool-2/>

Talking to your teenager about radicalisation.
<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/talking-teenager-radicalisation-2/>

The deliberative classroom. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/the-deliberative-classroom/>

Top tips guide for parents. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/top-tips-guide-parents/>

Tower Hamlets secondary resources.
<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/tower-hamlets-secondary-resources/>

UNICEF–Rights respecting schools award.
<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/unicef-rights-respecting-schools-award-rrsa/>

Walls. <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/walls/>

Working together to safeguard children.
<https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/working-together-to-safeguard-children/>

Blog posts:

Executive head teacher blog: Preparing young people for life in modern Britain. (2018, March 15). Retrieved from <https://educateagainsthate.com/blog/posts/preparing-young-people-life-modern-britain/>

Hate crime awareness week. (2019, October 15). Retrieved from <https://educateagainsthate.com/blog/posts/hate-crime-awareness-week/>

How extra-curricular activities can help schools fulfil the Prevent Duty. (2018, March 2). Retrieved from <https://educateagainsthate.com/blog/posts/extra-curricular-activities-can-help-schools-fulfil-prevent-duty/>

School and college closures: Ongoing Prevent management support. (2020, April 30). Retrieved from <https://educateagainsthate.com/blog/posts/school-closures-ongoing-prevent-management-support/>

Stand up! Education: Breaking down barriers through facilitating real conversations. (2017, October 17). Retrieved from <https://educateagainsthate.com/blog/posts/stand-education-breaking-barriers-facilitating-real-conversations/>

Talking to children about terrorism: Tips for discussing sensitive issues. (2017, October 17). Retrieved from <https://educateagainsthate.com/blog/posts/discussing-extremism/>

Teaching approaches for building pupils' resilience to extremist narratives. (2017, October 8). Retrieved from <https://educateagainsthate.com/blog/posts/building-resilience-extremist-narratives/>

Using the right terms: Holding discussions around extremism. (2019, April 25). Retrieved from <https://educateagainsthate.com/blog/posts/using-right-terms-holding-discussions-around-extremism/>

We have a key role in keeping our children safe online. (2018, June 2). Retrieved from <https://educateagainsthate.com/blog/posts/saleha-jaffer-key-role-keeping-children-safe-online/>

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*The Authors have not discussed one resource (*The Deliberative Classroom*) due to associations with this resource and therefore a conflict of interest which is declared here.