
GUIDING NOTES TO HELP YOU RESPOND TO THE COMMISSION FOR COUNTERING EXTREMISM'S CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON EXTREMISM

January 2019

The Commission for Countering Extremism is holding a call for evidence to help it to understand extremism and to examine the Government's current approach to countering it.

A full list of questions is available below. Please read this guidance in conjunction with the consultation document:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/consultation_response_form_data/file/707/CCE_CfE_response_document.pdf

If you want further pointers, you can also find Humanists UK and Faith to Faithless's full joint response at:

https://humanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018-11-2018-RTR-Commission-for-Countering-Extremism_-_Call-for-evidence.pdf

You can [submit your response online](#) or alternatively you can email your response to this address, callforevidence@extremismcommission.independent.gov.uk

Many of the questions have a word limit of 100 words, so you need to check your word count before you submit.

The deadline for submissions is Thursday 31 January.

Suggestions on how you might want to respond:

SECTION ONE - EXPERIENCES OF AND INSIGHTS INTO EXTREMISM

1a.) Can you describe extremism?

We suggest you answer 'yes'.

1b.) If you said 'yes' or 'not sure', please describe what extremism looks like to you

You might want to raise the point that any description of extremism must not infringe upon the right to free speech or the right to freedom of religion or belief.

We have suggested the alternative definition of extremism as 'the manifestation of political, religious, or other beliefs in a manner that encourages, threatens or carries out acts of violence or the wholesale eradication of rights of those who do not hold such beliefs.'

2a.) How helpful is the following definition of extremism? "Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths

and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist". (HM Government Counter-Extremism Strategy, 2015)

We suggest you answer 'unhelpful' or 'very unhelpful'

2b.) What is the main reason for your response?

You might want to suggest that this definition is problematic because it mandates respect and tolerance towards faiths and beliefs. This conflicts with the principles of free speech, including the right to criticise or show disrespect towards religious beliefs.

Section one - Part two

3.) How important do you think the following factors are when considering extremism in this country?

We suggest that all of these factors are either 'very important' or 'fairly important'.

4a.) Is there one factor from the list above that you think is most important when considering extremism?

We suggest you answer 'yes'.

4b.) If you said 'yes' or 'other', please tell us which factor you think is most important and why. Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

We suggest that segregation e.g by ethnicity, religion, or gender is the most important factor. You might want to expand on why this is the case, focusing on the problems of religious selection in schools.

5a.) Have you witnessed anything you would regard as extremist happening in your local area, elsewhere in the country or online?

Please answer this from your own perspective. You might want to think about whether you have seen extremist views online, on your social media, if you have seen protests or demonstrations that you would consider extremist, or if you know about this elsewhere in the country.

5b.) If you said 'yes', what type(s) of extremism have you witnessed?

Please select as many as are appropriate to what you have witnessed. Remember that the type of extremism is defined by the perpetrator, not its victim.

5c.) For option one, what attitudes, activities or behaviours have you witnessed that you regard as extremist? Please describe what you have witnessed below any of the following options that apply. (100 word limit)

For each of the categories of extremist activities, please expand on what you have witnessed, giving details about what actions the extremists took and what their motivation was for doing so. Remember that the word limit is 100 words, so you can only write two to three sentences.

5d.) Do you think this type of extremism...?

Please choose between the three options: is increasing, remains the same, is decreasing.

5e.) What is the main reason for your response? Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

Please expand on why you think this. Please include any statistical evidence you have to support your point.

Section one – Part four

6a.) Can you describe the harms caused by extremism?

We suggest you answer 'yes'.

6b.) If you said 'yes' or 'not sure', how would you describe these harms? Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

Please use your own experience and knowledge to answer this question. Have you been personally harmed by extremists or know someone who has experienced harm?

7a.) From the following list, which are the three groups you believe are most at risk of harm caused by extremism?

We suggest that either you use your own experience to answer this question or answer 'everyone' and describe your reasons why in the following section.

7b.) What is the main reason for your response? Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

If you have selected three particular groups, please expand on why you chose those groups. If you answered 'everyone' you might want to say that from a definitional point of view there is no one group which can be singled out as most at risk.

8a.) Have you seen evidence of extremism online causing harm?

Please use your own experience and knowledge to answer this question. Online can include social media, online news websites, and forums, as well as conventional websites.

8b.) If you said 'yes' or 'not sure', how would you describe these harms? Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

Please use your own experience and knowledge to answer this question. If you have seen online extremism or know someone who has what harm has it caused them, this could include legal, personal, well-being, or social harms.

8c.) Would you describe extremism online compared to extremism in your local area as...?

We suggest you answer 'more harmful'.

8d.) What is the main reason for your answer? Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

We suggest that you write about how online extremism has a much wider audience and is less likely to be critically challenged.

9a.) Does extremism cause harm to society and its institutions more widely e.g. to democracy?

We suggest you answer 'not sure'.

9b.) If you said 'yes' or 'not sure', how would you describe these harms? Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

We suggest that you describe the ways in which counter-terrorism measures could damage freedom of speech.

10a.) Do you think more should be done to counter extremism?

We suggest you answer 'yes'.

10b.) What is the main reason for your response? Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

We suggest you describe how removing religious discrimination in public bodies, such as schools and hospitals, would help to alleviate intergroup tensions that leads to extremist views.

11.) How much should be done in the following areas to counter extremism?

We suggest that more can be done in all of these categories.

12a.) Is there one area from the list above that you think is most important when countering extremism?

We suggest you answer 'yes'.

12b.) If you said 'yes' or 'other', please tell us which factor you think is most important and why. Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

We suggest that you address how the education system can be used to help promote integration between diverse communities and counter-extremist views.

13a.) Are there particular institutions or groups that you see as having a role in improving our current efforts to counter extremism? Please select up to three from the following options that were suggested to us during our engagement and from our ongoing research.

We suggest that you select groups/institutions that have a statutory duty to counter-extremism.

13b.) What is the main reason for your response? Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

We suggest you describe how national and local politicians as well as civil servants have a legal duty to promote equality between different religious and ethnic groups and to do so would remove the intergroup tensions that leads to extremists views.

14.) What is the one thing you would give greater priority to, in our efforts to counter extremism offline and online, and why? Please write your answer here (100-word limit)

We suggest that you expand on the answer you have given to 13b.

SECTION TWO – EVIDENCE ON EXTREMISM

This section looks in detail at the effectiveness of counter-extremism measures. If you are responding as a practitioner in this field, please answer as many of these questions that are applicable to your area of expertise. You do not have to answer every question, but please do include references to evidence claims that you have made. If you are answering as an individual please use your own knowledge or experience to answer this section. You may find that you don't have anything to contribute, in which case feel free to leave either individual questions or the entire section unanswered.

For more details, information and evidence, contact Humanists UK:

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