



‘Make it easier for families to report radicals’

Yorkshire study proposes change to terror policing

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GREATER LEVELS of sensitivity and understanding must be shown towards people who are considering telling the authorities of their fears that a friend or family member has been radicalised, according to a landmark study by Yorkshire academics.

A report into the barriers stopping people reporting family and friends who they suspect of being drawn into extremism has been published by the [University of Huddersfield](#) to fill a “critical blind spot” in counter-terrorism efforts.

The university’s experts say friends and family of potential terrorists can often provide advance warnings that prevent atrocities like the recent attacks on Manchester and London and the failed Parsons Green bomb attempt.

Paul Thomas, Professor of Youth and Policy at the university, said very little was known about the experiences of these “intimates” who could provide the first line of defence against acts of violent extremism.

Researchers spoke to 48 members of Muslim and marginalised white communities in West Yorkshire and Manchester about how they would act if they knew

a loved one was in danger of becoming a terrorist.

The vast majority would try and dissuade the person before approaching the police, and if they did report it would prefer to do it face-to-face with local police rather than a counter-terrorism unit or a hotline.

The study said: “Many identified concerns about the negative, collective impacts of reporting, including the different forms of anticipated or experienced backlash against those concerned.”

Among the suggestions made in the report are making the reporting process more personal and offering more support.

Professor Thomas said: “It al-



most like safeguarding, so that people can share concerns and that there will be a response that helps the people they are con-

cerned about, rather than an immediate criminal investigation, particularly if it is further down the line that a terrorist act is going to happen.

“It is important there is a response that’s more about welfare, safeguarding and counselling for both the person and the people doing the reporting.”

In 2015, Talha Asmal, of Dewsbury, described as an “ordinary Yorkshire lad”, became the youngest Briton to die in a suicide bombing in Iraq. His family said his “tender years and naivety” were exploited by extremists.

Detective Superintendent Nik Adams from the North East Counter-Terrorism Unit said: “This has been a comprehensive research project and its findings will inform both the UK Counter Terrorism policing network and local policing colleagues. We continue to appeal to anyone who has concerns about a friend or loved one becoming radicalised to share their concerns.”

■ Detectives were granted more time to question two men over last week’s Parsons Green attack and a third man, 25, has been arrested in Newport, Wales.

Online giant condemned

ONLINE VIDEO giant YouTube was condemned today for failing to take down extremist content including films praising Adolf Hitler and Taliban propaganda.

An extensive study of Islamist and far-right extremist material shared on the website found more than 120 videos were not removed even after they had been flagged to the site’s administrators.

Yvette Cooper, chairwoman of the Commons Home Affairs Select Committee, said it was “simply unacceptable” that some content remained live weeks after being reported. The West Yorkshire MP said: “this material is far too easy to access.”