



DON'T SAY THE 'T' WORD!

By Usman Nawaz,
MYP for Rochdale

Isn't it quite rare to switch on the television to watch the news and not see something about terrorism or extremism? Indeed since the devastating events on 7th July 2005, words such as 'terrorism', 'extremism', 'violent extremism' and 'preventing violent extremism' are often heard, seen and read in the media. But what do they actually mean? For instance, what is 'violent extremism'? How is it different from 'non-violent' or 'peaceful extremism'? In fact, what is 'extremism'?!

If you can answer those questions then you must be a genius. But by in large, I believe that the majority of people, both young and old, don't quite know what all these different terms mean. To be honest, I'm not too sure about them myself. Furthermore, many people, particularly young people, are not comfortable in discussing issues relating to terrorism or extremism at the football pitch, in the classroom or on the bus

home from school and this may be for a number of reasons. These may include the possibility of offending somebody, fear of what others may think because of your views, or even just not knowing enough about the 'T' word...Terrorism.

Feeling the anxiety of young people, UKYP recognised the need for there to be 'safe spaces' to discuss terrorism and preventing violent extremism. Working in partnership with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), UKYP then launched Project Safe Space. The key aim of this initiative is to empower young people to share their thoughts and opinions regarding terrorism and violent extremism in a setting where they feel safe, confident and comfortable. In August, UKYP published the results of its survey which asked over 1000 young people for their views on terrorism and preventing violent extremism. The survey found that nine out of ten

young people wanted to be able to discuss issues relating to terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

UKYP and ACPO working with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Home Office will run a series of conferences across England which will all be young people led and facilitated from planning to evaluation. These conferences will be safe spaces for young people to discuss what terrorism means to them, what they understand by 'violent extremism' amongst other issues and all this will be done in a safe atmosphere. Some of the conferences may feature policy makers from local authorities, police forces and other organisations, allowing young people to share their thoughts with some of the most influential people in their regions.

There will be a Project Safe Space conference coming to your region soon...watch this space!

YOUNG DEMAND TERRORISM TALKS

9 out of 10 young people say they need opportunities to discuss issues surrounding terrorism and preventing violent extremism, according to a UKYP survey. Of those young people wanting more opportunities to discuss terrorism and preventing violent extremism, schools (94%), youth centres (88%) and public meetings (84%) are

the preferred environments. The national survey of over 1000 young people aged 11-25 also found that:

- Over 60% of young people do not feel able to discuss terrorism and preventing violent extremism with the police.
- Over half of those young people who attend university do not feel able to discuss

these issues with university staff (53%).

- Young people who identify themselves as being from a religious background are more likely (90%) than those who do not identify themselves as being religious (70%) to want more opportunities to discuss issues surrounding terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

ABOUT PROJECT SAFE SPACE

How did Project Safe Space begin?

Project Safe Space was created from work which was carried out with young people from Blackburn and Darwen Youth forum, which led to a wider piece of work with young people and youth workers at the UKYP Annual Sitting in Glasgow in July 2007. During the Annual Sitting over 141 young people gave their views on terrorism and violent extremism. Young people felt there were no safe places for them to discuss or raise issues of concern around this topic. The funding to deliver the 9 regional events in England has been given to UKYP by the Home Office and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

What is the purpose of Project Safe Space?

The purpose is to provide young people with a safe place to discuss terrorism and violent

extremism at a regional level. Each event should be led and delivered by young people. The key areas that will be discussed at each of the events are: violent extremism, terrorism, young people working with the police, youth community leaders.

Who is involved with Project Safe Space?

Project Safe Space currently has 14 young people who represent the 9 English regions on the National Steering Group. The National Steering Group met for the first time in September at Scotland Yard. This was a fantastic start to Project Safe Space and we have a group of very committed individuals who want to ensure that each of the events is a success. The regions must have representation from



young people from diverse communities, based on faith, race, sexual orientation, gender and disability.

When will Safe Space events take place?

The first Safe Space event took place at St James' Park, Newcastle, in August. The next event will take place on 22nd November at Bradford University. In the coming months more Safe Space events will take place in the West Midlands, London, South West, East Midlands, North West, South East and the East of England. For more information, go to www.ukyp.org.uk/safespace