

Self-Initiated Terrorism (S-IT)

Guide for Prevent Practitioners

‘Person(s) who threaten or mobilise to violence (as defined in s1 TACT 2000) without material support or personal direction from a terrorist organisation; but who may still be influenced or encouraged by the rhetoric or ideology of a group’



Attacks have increased significantly in recent years; reflecting a trend towards low-complexity terror attacks.



The threat from Self-Initiated Terrorist attacks is a national priority. Early identification is key.

Behaviours when considered together may indicate that an individual is potentially a ‘Self-Initiated Terrorist’ and is moving towards taking violent action¹. Research on previous S-IT attacks identifies behaviours and indicators that, when considered together, may suggest an individual is moving towards taking violent action.



- Having various motivations/grievances; sometimes with no clear ideology. Individuals without ideology or motive may still be capable of constructing or acquiring items which cause harm.
- Latching on to multiple ideologies, blending them with personal grievances.
- Self-radicalising online.
- Reaction to having suffered a traumatic event, leading to blame for a particular section or sections of society.



Intervention and Mitigation

Prevent have a key part to play in the effort to either prevent radicalisation or to identify and mitigate against the threat of S-IT. Key points to consider -



- Successful Self-Initiated Terrorists have had previous contact with the authorities such as Prison, Probation, Police, Prevent and Mental Health Services. Early identification and recognition is vital.
- Self-Initiated Terrorists display higher rates of mental health disorders compared to group based terrorists.²

Self-Initiated Terrorists can act alone, but are they really alone? They are part of society, with neighbours, colleagues, case workers, family members and even friends.

.... often **less secretive** than expected, and generally **someone will know** of their intentions, beliefs grievances or extremist ideology due to **“leakage”**.

For example:



1.This is not an exhaustive list, there may be other behaviours displayed not included within.

2. Dr Simon Copeland & Dr Sarah Marsden, Nov '20, *The Relationship Between Mental Health Problems and Terrorism*, CREST.

Key behaviours to look out for -

Timeline of S-IT incidents in the UK -



Developing Intent

Indicators

- Commitment to the role:
 - A sense that something must be done, and they will be the one to do it.
 - May increasingly see themselves as ‘warriors’, ‘defenders’, or ‘martyrs’.
- Increasingly fixated on a grievance and target, such as fixated on an individual, or on weapons or explosives. Traumatic event?
- Testing legitimacy of violence and exploring other options. Have they voiced a grievance to anyone?



Developing Capability

- Developing skills and knowledge and deciding on tactics. Military training? Specialist skills (eg demolition)? Violent history?
- Identifying and sourcing resources.
- Developing psychological capacity to act.
- Favouring low sophistication methods.









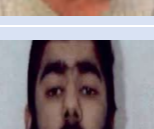
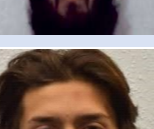



Planning & Preparing for an attack

- Acquiring resources and material needed, carrying out reconnaissance, practicing for an attack (improving fitness, playing computer games to develop combat skills and psychological readiness).
- Getting psychologically ready i.e. changes in behaviour/demeanour.
- Making final preparations:
 - Trying to tie up loose ends (such as paying off debts, closing bank accounts etc.).
 - May show signs of farewell behaviours e.g. writing a will, saying goodbye to family and friends.
 - May make threats online or public pronouncements for having no alternative but to act.



Not all Self-Initiated Terrorists will necessarily display all of the above behaviour categories as they are interchangeable, and can follow any order. This is not exhaustive.

	PERPETRATOR	IDEOLOGY	DETAIL
2013	 Michael ADEBOLAJO & Michael ADEBOWALE	Islamist	Murdered off duty Fusilier Lee Rigby. ADEBOLAJO had claimed he was a "soldier of Allah" and the killing was an act of war. Example of lone actors acting as a pair ("Dyad").
2013	 Pavlo LAPSHYN	Right Wing	Inspired by Timothy McVEIGH, murdered Mohammed Saleem in April 2013, and then planted explosives at three mosques during a campaign between June and July 2013
2015	 Zack DAVIES	Right Wing	A loner fascinated with far right ideologies and violent video games screamed "white power" as he launched a racially-motivated attack in revenge for Fusilier Lee Rigby's death.
2016	 Thomas MAIR	Right Wing	Murdered the Rt. Hon Jo Cox MP outside her constituency surgery. During the attack he shouted "This is for Britain... Keep Britain independent... Put Britain First.". MAIR drew inspiration from David Copeland.
2017	 Khalid MASOOD	Islamist	Drove a vehicle into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge, then crashed the vehicle into railings outside New Palace Yard, and ran into the grounds, where he fatally stabbed a Police Officer. MASOOD was then shot and killed by armed police at the scene.
2017	 Darren OSBOURNE	Right Wing	Drove a vehicle into a crowd of Muslims leaving Finsbury Park Mosque, killing Markab Ali and injuring nine others. The attack was fuelled by a hatred for Muslims.
2018	 Mahdi MOHAMUD	Unknown	Conducted an impulsive and brutal knife attack on members of the public at Victoria Station in Manchester. He was detained under the Mental Health Act.
2019	 Vincent FULLER	Right Wing	Approached a vehicle in a Tesco car park in Stanwell, Surrey stabbing one of the male occupants, who were Asian in appearance. On the morning of the attack Fuller was heard shouting racially abusive comments including "Kill all Muslims" and "White Power". The attack was inspired by the New Zealand terrorist attacks that occurred the day before.
2019	 Usman KHAN	Islamist	Conducted a knife attack at Fishmongers hall, Westminster resulting in the fatal stabbing of two innocent Victims. Suspect faked compliance with authorities following release from prison in 2012 for his part in an Al-Qaeda inspired bomb plot. Fatally shot by Police at the scene.
2020	 Sudesh AMMAN	Islamist	Conducted a knife attack in Streatham High Street, London where he stabbed Two victims. Suspect had stolen a knife from a local shop before the incident and had a silver canister strapped to his chest. Fatally shot by police at the scene.
2020	 Khairi SAADALLAH	Islamist	Conducted a knife attack in Forbury Gardens, Reading fatally stabbing 3 victims and seriously injuring 3 further victims. Extensive history of mental health problems and had a string of criminal convictions.

This guide is to assist the early identification of Self-Initiated Terrorists. Should this document prompt any urgent concerns for your existing case work, make a referral through policing partners / regional FIMU.