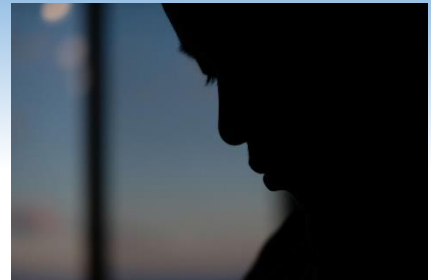


Prevent Team Fact Sheet

Lone Actors



Lone Actors are **either** associates of a terrorist network who are acting independently **or** individuals with no links to external organisations at all, but who have been influenced by extremist material.

Many lone actors have an **unclear, unfixed, or unstable ideology** which may change to suit their own needs.

Overwhelmingly, **the internet** is the source of their inspiration and planning.

Identifying and stopping a lone actor can be extremely difficult as they have **little or no communication with wider extremist networks** and may present little evidence of their ideology to the outside world. On the other hand there is evidence that lone actors may 'leak' their intentions shortly before an attack.

The challenge for security agencies is the sheer quantity of open-source, user-generated content on the internet which must be searched to find material that may have terrorism relevance.

Self-radicalization can take months or years, or it can happen in the space of weeks
Lone actor terrorism occurs worldwide and spans extreme right, Islamist, and single-issue beliefs.

Spotting a Lone Actor

Factors which are often, but not always, present include:

- Socially isolated
- Introverted
- Mental ill-health (including un-diagnosed)
- Most are young males in their teens or twenties
- Academically or professionally low-achievers
- Outside of the workforce (students or unsuccessful self-employed)
- Strong sense of grievance or sense of persecution (whether justified or unjustified) by specific individuals, authority, Government, or society as a whole
- Sense of superiority over others
- Conviction that they can see the world as it really is whilst others cannot
- Tendency to catastrophise - often view the state of society in an extremely negative light
- Preoccupation with gaining fame or notoriety and righting a perceived wrong
- These factors often equally apply to mass-casualty shooters who subscribe to no ideology

• Examples of Lone Actor Terror Attacks

- June 2016 murder of Jo Cox, MP by Thomas Mair
- June 2017 Finsbury Park attack by Darren Osborne
- November 2019 Fishmongers Hall attack
- February 2020 Streatham High Street Attack



Darren Osborne (far left), Thomas Mair (left) and Usman Khan (above) have all carried out lone actor attacks

Sources

(Disclaimer: Hampshire County Council is not responsible for and does not endorse the contents of any sites listed).

<https://rusi.org/projects/lone-actor-terrorism>

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-h-and-sc/docs/ran_h-sc_risk_assessment_lone_actors_11-12_12_2017_en.pdf

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