

Child Protection in Education Spotlight Briefing

What is 'Incel'?

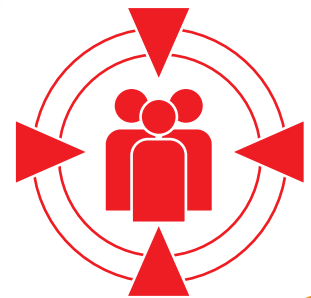
An 'Incel' – shorthand for involuntary celibate – is a member of an online subculture of people who define themselves as unable to get a romantic or sexual partner despite desiring one.

Incel discussion forums are often characterised by resentment and hatred, misogyny, self-pity, self-loathing, a sense of entitlement to sex, racism, and the endorsement of violence against women and sexually active people.

Like many internet wormholes, these forums are riven with conspiracy theories and a complete absence of nuanced and informed debate.

Young people may be intrigued by the subculture and search for information to satisfy their curiosity. For most their interest will be fleeting, but for those who have difficulty forming healthy social attachments and relationships and who have challenging personal lives it could present a real risk. For some of these young people, incel culture might provide them with companionship and understanding and access to a community and a worldview that resonates and offers seemingly straightforward answers to their personal predicaments.

Since the Plymouth murders in August 2021 there have been fears that the culture is spreading in the UK, mainly from the US and Canada where incel networks are well established and have been connected to mass shooting events.



What may happen after sharing this information?

A decision may be made to make a referral to the Prevent Professional Concerns Process (a programme which provides multi-agency support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism).

Further information & resources

- CREST - A short introduction to Incel
- Moonshot - Incels: a guide to symbols and terminology
- Understanding Incel Ideology: Dr Kaitlyn Regehr
- BBC iPlayer - Inside the Secret World of Incels

INCEL

This Spotlight Briefing should be read in conjunction with the PREVENT and Radicalisation Child Protection in Education Spotlight Briefing.

What to look out for

We need to guard against overstating the extent of the risk at this stage, but Child Protection Coordinators must make themselves aware of the culture and be vigilant for warning signs of interest in the culture.

Watching for incel slang doesn't necessarily mean you have an incel movement member in your school. Incel slang is finding its way into mainstream language, boosted by social media. Young people may begin to use this language unthinkingly because it is in the background.

Other things to be alert for are young people who are socially isolated and the general signs of radicalisation. See the PREVENT and Radicalisation School Information Briefing

What should a school do if they have concerns?

Notice → Check → Share

Notice - gather information on the initial concern/s

Check - with Child Protection Coordinator (CPC)

Share - CPC shares with Local Authority PREVENT Lead (IEW Team??) and Police

The Ealing Council - Guide to Incel, contains a list of the main terms and reference points, such as the names "Chad" and "Stacy" as a shorthand for attractive, sexually successful people. Other terms to watch out for are "femoid" or "foid" – another derogatory term for women – and AWALT, an acronym for "all women are like that", a demeaning term used to generalise women.

"CHAD"
"AWALT"
"FOID"
"FEMOID"
"STACY"

Ensure relevant staff are aware of the movement and what indicators to look out for among students. This includes particularly derogatory comments about women and girls. The incel movement has some recognisable watchwords – shorthand terms to stereotype the people they see as responsible for their situation.

