

The Incel Movement (September 2021)

The tragic shootings in Plymouth in August 2021, have raised the profile of the Incel movement, whilst it is too early to say whether this was the main motivation behinds these events it is worth highlighting this movement to raise awareness as part of our Prevent work.

Background

Incel' is an abbreviation of 'involuntary celibate', referring to an individual's desire for, but lack of, romantic and sexual success. The modern incel movement evolved out of several communities and strands of thought, including early 'involuntary celibacy' communities which were initially gender-inclusive, 'pick-up artist' communities dedicated to helping men achieve sexual success, and 'red pill' communities who claim that Western society is dominated by women.

Incels believe the world is fundamentally unfair, that sexual success – which they place a very high value on - is impossible for them, and that there is nothing they can do that will change their situation. Incels express intense hatred for women. Incels usually believe that they are entitled to sexual and romantic attention, or that this is a fundamental need. They perceive women as denying them this need, motivating resentment.

In many cases incels' hatred extends beyond women. They hate and often celebrate violence against young girls because they will one day become women. They also target conventionally attractive men and heterosexual couples because they are sexually successful when incels are not. Almost all self-identified incels are male and most incels describe themselves as blackpilled, denoting a lack of hope. As such, they often see life as hopeless.

A very small proportion of incels have moved towards mass violence.

Incels Online

There is a broad online incel ecosystem, including dedicated forums and communities on larger online platforms. Incel communities have been deplatformed on multiple occasions. Incels do not, as a rule, form coherent groups. Influencers are also a rare occurrence in incel spaces online. They do not typically engage in 'offline' activism such as protests. Incels primarily prefer to stay anonymous or pseudonymous, and associate only on social media platforms and forums.

Women are consistently referred to using dehumanising and derogatory language, much of which has been invented by incels themselves. Mass killers, particularly those motivated by misogyny or incel beliefs, are routinely praised and their actions justified by many self-identified incels.

Incel content also presents other safeguarding harms including the promotion of content normalising and encouraging suicide. Individuals who are accessing incel content may or may not themselves identify with the label 'incel'.

More details on signs and symbols used can be found here:

<https://moonshotteam.com/incels-symbols-and-terminology/>