

Speaker: *Edvin Sandström and Lenita Törning*

Presentation title: “Bottom-up”: The role of first responders in developing a Swedish assessment model for concerns for violent extremism

In 2020, the Swedish Centre for Preventing Violent Extremism (CVE) made the decision to start developing a Swedish assessment model to help first responders (e.g. the Social Services and the local police) deal with concerns for radicalisation and violent extremism. Inspired by the Danish assessment model for concerns for extremism, the goal is to develop a similar dialogue-based model that includes individual and contextual risk and protective factors, and respond to a need from first responders to have an accessible and pedagogical tool to help them ask questions and collaborate with each other in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism.

To get insights into the experiences and needs of first responders, the CVE carried out semi-structured focus groups interviews with individuals from different municipalities across Sweden. These interviews focused on a wide range of themes about what it means to prevent violent extremism, the challenges facing first responders and what they want to see in an assessment model. In this paper, we focus on the methodological opportunities and challenges in including first responders in developing a Swedish assessment model for concerns for violent extremism. We attend to the recruitment and selection process, and how the data material is analysed and used. Lastly, we touch upon the opportunities and challenges facing government agencies that want to conduct their own interviews in developing assessment models and tools, and the implications this might have on the result and process going forward.