

Name of Tool	Extremism Risk Guidelines (ERG 22+)
Category	Violence Risk (Awaiting Validation)
Author / Publisher	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)
Year	2011

Description

- The Extremism Risk Guidelines (ERG) 22+ is a structured professional judgement (SPJ) tool for assessing the risks and needs of those convicted of terrorist extremism offences, which may or may not include violent extremism ([HMPPS, 2019](#)).
- The tool includes 22 factors categorised into three domains: *Engagement*, *Intent*, and *Capability*.
- The “+” in ERG22+ represents the ability to add factors that are relevant for a given individual.
- The tool does not include a list of protective factors, but assessors are encouraged to consider whether each factor (or its absence) can act protectively.
- Assessors rate items as Present, Partially Present, or Not Present, then develop a formulation to explore the relevance and function of each indicator now and in the future, both in the context of the three domains as well as in disengagement or desistance. ([Powis, Randhawa-Home & Bishopp, 2019](#); [Lloyd & Dean, 2015](#); [Logan & Lloyd 2018](#)).
- The tool does not generate a score or a risk banding system ([van der Heide et al., 2019](#)). Identifying more risk factors as “Present” does not in itself indicate a higher risk; rather, assessors need to explore how these factors combine to tell an individual’s “risk story” ([Lloyd & Dean, 2015](#), p.13).
- The individual items are dynamic, except for *criminal history* ([Lloyd & Dean, 2015](#)).
- The tool has been used in risk assessment and management, including sentence planning and decisions relating to parole, relocation, recall, and licence conditions ([HMPPS, 2019](#); [Lloyd & Dean, 2015](#)).
- The tool is not limited to a specific extremist ideology, and has been used with individuals associated with Islamist, animal rights, far-right, far-left, and gang-affiliated groups ([Dean et al., 2018](#); [HMPPS, 2019](#)).
- The ERG22+ process includes an interview or written comments from the individual being assessed. However, it is possible to complete an ERG22+ without this ([HMPPS, 2019](#)).
- Assessors should use as many sources of information as possible, including interviewing family members in some cases, and work collaboratively with the individual to understand their pathway into extremist offending ([HMPPS, 2019](#)).
- The tool has been integrated into several interventions in England and Wales, such as the Healthy Identity Intervention (HII) and the Motivational and Engagement Intervention, which were informed by the tool’s 22 risk factors. All participants have an ERG22+ assessment completed, the outcome of which guides the interventions used ([Dean, 2014](#); [Herzog-Evans, 2018](#); [Dean et al., 2018](#)). These interventions have since been amalgamated into Healthy Identity Intervention: Foundation and Healthy Identity Intervention: Plus ([Dean et al., 2018](#)).

Age Appropriateness

No age specification

Assessor Qualifications

- Assessors must be chartered and registered psychologists, or experienced probation officers. They must work in a role that requires assessment of convicted extremist offenders and/or those for whom there is credible concern about their risk of extremist offending. ([HMPPS, 2019](#)).
- It is desirable if assessors also have experience with psychologically-informed risk assessment and formulation. ([HMPPS, 2019](#)).
- Assessors must undertake a 2-day training course. ([HMPPS, 2019](#)).
- Currently, use of ERG22+ is only licenced within HMPPS.

Tool Development

- The ERG22+ was developed from an earlier Structured Risk Guidance (SRG) protocol (2009). The SRG was developed from casework with convicted extremist offenders and the literature on terrorism. Following a pilot phase and independent evaluation, as well as feedback from assessors, offenders, stakeholders, and peer reviewers, and developments in the body of literature, the SRG was revised and developed into the ERG22+ in 2011 ([Dean et al., 2018](#)).
- The tool was developed by HMPSS (formerly National Offender Management Service [NOMS]). An ERG22+ assessment is carried out for every individual convicted under terrorism legislation in England and Wales ([Powis, Randhawa-Horne & Bishopp, 2019](#)).
- The ERG22+ was informed by casework (approximately 30% of the convicted terrorist population at the time), the body of literature, and research commissioned by the UK government ([Lloyd & Dean, 2015](#)).
- The ERG22+ was developed to be applicable to extremist offenders with or without a history of violence. The developers note that the majority of those with terrorist convictions in the UK do not have a history of violent convictions ([Lloyd & Dean, 2015](#)).

General Notes

- The tool is adaptable to any individual, regardless of age or gender. The factors are psychological, requiring a qualified assessor to interpret and apply them to a given individual. However, the developer notes that the tool may not be suitable in certain contexts, such as jihadi children taken abroad by their parents who are returning to the UK (M Lloyd, personal communication, 22 February 2021).
- [Herzog-Evans, \(2018\)](#) concluded that the ERG22+ may work best in countries with a legal threshold for terrorism offences that includes non-violent terrorist acts, such as in the UK and France.
- [Powis, Randhawa-Horne & Bishopp \(2019\)](#) applied the tool to a sample (n=171) of convicted Islamist extremists and used multidimensional scaling analysis (MDS) to examine construct validity and internal consistency reliability. The tool had good internal consistency overall, with an alpha coefficient of 0.80. Individual domains had varying results: the Engagement and Intent domains showed moderate internal consistency (alpha coefficients of 0.65 and 0.79, respectively). The Capability domain showed low internal consistency (0.46). The authors concluded that the 22 factors may be better organised into different domains (they suggest *Identity & External Influence; Motivation & Ideology; Criminality; Capability; and Status and Personal Influence* as preliminary categories) rather than the existing domains of *Engagement, Intent, and Capability*. They also suggest the mental health item could be refined and defined further.
- [Powis, Randhawa-Horne & Elliot \(2019\)](#) tested the inter-rater reliability of the tool using two formats: to test research reliability, two experienced raters assessed 50 randomly-selected

cases; to test field reliability, 33 raters of varying experience assessed two specially-developed test cases, which were then compared to “gold standard” ratings. The inter-rater reliability of the research reliability test was in the ‘excellent’ range, while the field reliability test had more varying results: the Intent domain had poor inter-rater reliability, while the engagement and capability domains were ‘moderate’ to ‘borderline good.’ Experienced raters had higher levels of agreement. The authors conclude that additional training and clearer definition of terms could improve inter-rater reliability.

- There is a screening version of the tool, the Extremist Risk Screen (ERS), for offenders with no previous convictions for terrorist offences. The ERS is meant to assist security staff, police liaisons, and offender managers in assessing the credibility of concerns related to potential involvement in extremism. It also informs intervention, which may include a full ERG22+ assessment ([Lloyd & Dean, 2015](#)). The ERS has good face validity and utility with assessors and offenders ([Lloyd, 2019](#)).
- The ERG22+ has also informed the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF), a tool to assess risk of radicalisation as part of the Channel programme in the UK. The VAF uses the same items as the ERG22+ and groups them into the same categories of engagement, intent, and capability. The VAF can be used with non-offenders, and is used most often with people under the age of 20 ([Skleparis & Knudsen, 2020](#)).
- [Lloyd & Dean \(2015\)](#) state that the tool’s basis in literature and the pathways of terrorist offenders gives the tool some empirical grounding in the absence of validation data.
- A group of experts summarised the strengths and limitations of the tool. Strengths include:
 - the tool’s links to a treatment programme (HII);
 - that it is completed collaboratively with the individual;
 - the ability to add additional factors where relevant; and
 - the ability to explore pathways that do not necessarily involve violence.
- Limitations include:
 - the need for more research into the tool’s validity and reliability;
 - the lack of research proving that the factors included can predict risk, given the low base rate of extremist recidivism; and
 - that the casework that informed the tool was mostly focused on al-Qaeda-inspired extremism.
- The growing body of literature should be reviewed regularly to ensure the tool remains appropriate for use with groups such as women and young people ([Lloyd, 2019](#)).
- The ERG22+ is the intellectual property of HMPPS.