

# SAFE & SOUND

Providing you with news and updates around safeguarding,  
prevent and British Values

## When Fiction Fuels Flames

Fake news refers to false or misleading information presented as news, often with the intent to deceive. The spread of fake news has been amplified by social media algorithms designed to prioritise content that generates high engagement.

In recent years, the rapid proliferation of social media platforms has transformed the way information is disseminated and consumed. While these platforms have democratised access to information, they have also become breeding grounds for misinformation and fake news. This issue has had profound consequences, contributing to social unrest and violence, as evidenced by the recent riots in the UK. The consequences of fake news can be severe, influencing public opinion and behaviour in ways that undermine social cohesion and trust in institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic provided a stark example, as misinformation about the virus and vaccines spread rapidly online, complicating public health efforts and contributing to vaccine hesitancy. The recent riots in the UK highlight the dangers of fake news in exacerbating social tensions. Starting in July 2024, several UK cities experienced riots sparked by misinformation circulated on social media.



False reports of police violence and other incendiary claims fueled anger and mobilised individuals to take to the streets, resulting in clashes with law enforcement and widespread property damage.

One of the most alarming aspects of these riots was the speed at which misinformation spread. Within hours, false narratives gained traction, and by the time corrections were issued, the damage had already been done. This phenomenon underscores the need for timely fact-checking and the challenges faced by authorities in countering misinformation in real-time.

Addressing the dangers of fake news requires a multifaceted approach involving social media platforms, governments, and the public

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# When Fiction Fuels Flames *Continued from page 1*

Social media companies have a responsibility to improve their algorithms and invest in technologies that can detect and limit the spread of fake news. They should also collaborate with independent fact-checkers to ensure that users are exposed to accurate information.

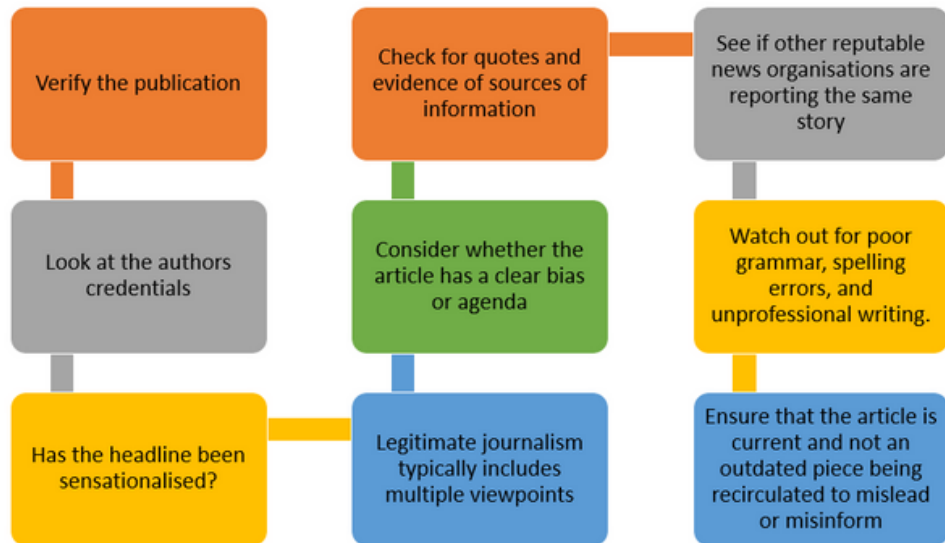
Governments can play a role by implementing regulations that hold platforms accountable for the content they host, without infringing on free speech rights. Additionally, public awareness campaigns are crucial in educating citizens about the importance of critically evaluating the information they encounter online.

By teaching individuals how to identify credible sources, question biases, and verify information, society can become more resilient to misinformation. Schools, community organisations, and media outlets should all contribute to these educational efforts.

Abbeydale aims to educate its students about identifying fake news.

Spotting a fake news story on social media can be challenging due to the rapid spread and often convincing nature of misinformation.

To sum up, although social media brings many advantages, the risks of fake news are evident. Recent events in the UK highlight the crucial requirement for united efforts to tackle misinformation and safeguard social media's positive impact, preventing it from inciting conflict.



## Special dates in August/September

- **18th August- Chinese hungry ghost festival-** Chinese Buddhist and ancestral festival, when paper objects for use in the spirit world are made and offered to aid those spirits who have no resting place or descendants. Large paper boats are made and burnt at temples to help spirits cross the sea of torment to Nirvana.
- **26th August- International Dog Day.** The day intends to highlight the condition of dogs and to encourage the adoption of dogs from shelters.
- **28th August to 8th September- Paralympics 2024 in Paris-** The games will feature 22 sports and 23 disciplines with 549 events



Paralympics

- **29th September- Michaelmas.** the Feast of the Archangels, the Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, and the Feast of St. Michael and all angels.

## THE DARK WEB

There are three basic levels within this complex thing we call the World Wide Web – open, deep, and dark. The open or surface web is what you access daily through Bing or Google. The deep web has higher security and will be where you find intranets and your internet banking. The dark web – despite the media attention – is a small part of the deep web which is only accessible through a special TOR network. Not only is it more secure, it also is more private as it effectively shuts out online trackers. While it is not flawless in protecting user privacy, it works well enough to give users much more privacy in where they go, the content accessed, and concealing their own identity. There are a number of TOR only sites for illicit drugs or materials. It allows surfers to stay anonymous and go to “members only” forums where they can use untraceable cryptocurrencies for their purchases.

To find out more and some help and advice if someone you know is access the Dark Web please watch this 5-minute video developed by the National Crime Agency in collaboration with The Children's Society and Marie Collins <https://bit.ly/39v7UPE>



# When does animal welfare become animal rights? The danger of extremist views.

## What is radicalisation?

"....the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and then in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups" (ddscp.org.uk)

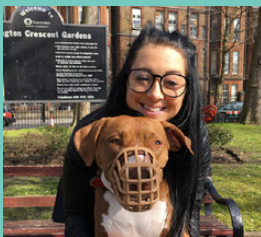
## What is extremism?

"vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs." (HM Government Prevent Strategy)

We often think that radicalisation and extremism is not something that affects or will affect the veterinary industry, let alone decorated and revered RVN, Ms Shakira Free-Miles, having recently made national headlines due to her beliefs and actions. Shakira, a popular and supported speaker who represented the veterinary profession by speaking in Parliament to the All-Party Parliamentary Dog Advisory Welfare Group meeting about Breed Specific Legislation and how this affects not just dogs, but also the veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses both professionally, and personally. She was awarded the prestigious Ceva Animal Welfare Awards, Veterinary Nurse of the Year award twice and the Outstanding contribution to the veterinary profession award from the BVNA. Shakira has also spoken at BSAVA Congress about breed-specific legislation and dog bite intervention and Vegfest conference in Istanbul about veganism. She has also sat on the VNJ editorial boards and has authored numerous articles relating to animal welfare and has worked at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in the Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital.

As a case example; Shakira has found herself in the national headlines as an animal rights activist. She has appeared in news sources such as The Telegraph, Wales Online, msn.com, The Daily Mail, lbc.co.uk and gbnews.uk. The headlines in the sources use the words 'militant' and 'activist'. The news sources report that Shakira has been dismissed from the RVC for gross misconduct for a breach in university accommodation rules by keeping a pet turkey in the flat despite a no pet policy and her involvement with the Animal Liberation Front. Following RVC investigations it was deemed there was sufficient evidence in social media posts of her association with illegal activities carried out by extreme animal rights groups. Shakira was arrested by the police due to these activities and investigated. Reports suggest that she has been linked to animal stealing by the Suffolk Counter Terrorism Unit.

This led Shakira to make an unfair dismissal claim against the RVC, citing that she had been discriminated due to her ethical veganism beliefs. Her claim was overruled by the review panel because her personal views of the right to trespass and remove animals and to disobey laws did not amount to a philosophical belief.



The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) was founded in 1976, by Ronnie Lee a British animal rights activist who was also the founder of Band of Mercy. The ALF was formed to support any activist who is willing to engage in violent action against those considered to be violating animal rights. Their movement has travelled wide to become the most damaging and infamous animal rights group in the United States making them a listed domestic terrorism threat with Homeland Security. They have also been responsible for arson, bombings, and property damage in the UK. The ALF aims to end inequalities to animals which includes speciesism and vivisection by achieving full equality for animals. They are not happy to settle for animal welfarism.

Animal rights activists/extremists believe that they are obligated to undertake/perform acts of sabotage or violence because animals cannot defend themselves. This may be in the form of removing animals from certain situations/organisation or by performing violence against a person or their property. They believe that they are acting in a form of protective 'self-defence' for the animal where an illegal act is necessary to protect that animal.

The incidence of attacks has significantly reduced in the last two decades. It is perceived that the domestic terrorist threat of attack is low but potentially enduring.

At Abbeydale we undertake numerous compulsory tutorials, covering topics such as prevent, safeguarding and current political issues. Shakira has been discussed at Abbeydale as being a role model due to her 'Save a Bulls' campaigns. We now find ourselves having to discuss her actions in 'current affairs and professional issues' tutorials with links to the Prevent agenda which is why it is essential to be familiar with legislation and professionalism.

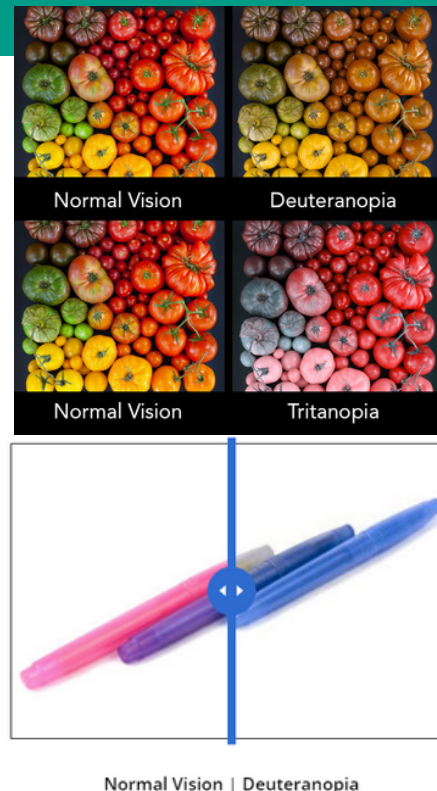
# Colour Blindness

Colour blindness (colour vision deficiency, or CVD) affects approximately 1 in 12 men (8%) and 1 in 200 women. In the UK there are approximately 3 million colour blind people (about 4.5% of the entire population), most of whom are male. Worldwide, there are estimated to be about 300 million people with colour blindness, almost the same number of people as the entire population of the USA!

There are different causes of colour blindness. For most colour-blind people their condition is genetic, usually inherited from their mother, although some people become colour blind as a result of other diseases such as diabetes and multiple sclerosis or it can be acquired due to ageing or from taking drugs and medications.

There are different types of colour blindness and in extremely rare cases people are unable to see any colour at all, but most colour blind people are unable to fully 'see' red, green or blue light.

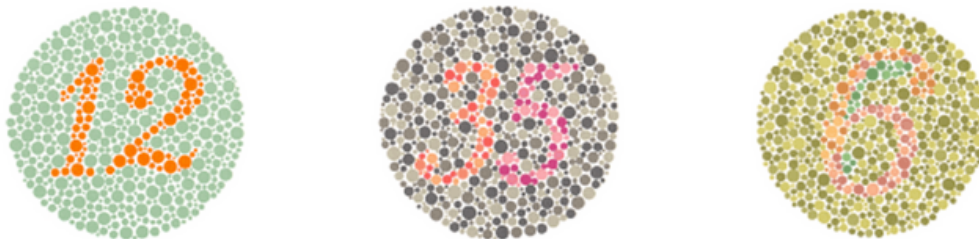
Being 'red/green colour blind' means people with it can easily confuse any colours which have some red or green as part of the whole colour. So someone with red/green colour blindness is likely to confuse blue and purple because they can't 'see' the red element of the colour purple.



## Where to go for a diagnosis

If you have any eye test with an optometrist they should test colour vision as a matter of routine, but not all chains of optometrists in the UK undertake this test routinely. With some, you may have to request a colour vision test specifically and sometimes even be asked to pay for it as an extra. In England and Wales, a colour vision test for children (and adults) does not form part of the NHS eye test and you will need to specifically request a colour vision test.

The Ishihara test is the most widely used for testing for red-green colour vision deficiency and contains 38 plates of circles created by irregular coloured dots in two or more colours. The plates will be put in front of you and you will be asked what number you can see on the plate. Some plates contain information which people with normal colour vision can see whilst others contain information that only people with colour blindness can see. If you make a certain number of errors you will be diagnosed with colour blindness.



## Treatment

There is currently no effective treatment for inherited colour blindness. Some colour blind people have found some coloured filters and some lenses might help them to distinguish between some colour combinations in certain situations, whilst others report no effect or that they can cause further confusion. Caution has been raised however about the use of coloured lenses or 'colour blind' glasses for use in the workplace, in schools/for education or in any situation which could impact upon safety e.g. driving and general recommendations are that extreme caution is taken when using any type of glasses or lenses to 'help' with colour discrimination.

## Support

Any information provided by colour alone can potentially alienate people with colour blindness, consider this when asking for the blue needle or pink cannula, or explaining the types of medication to clients by colour alone.

Your employer can find out information on how to support employees with colour blindness and keep them safe by visiting The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) website.