

Abdullah – Piece of the puzzle: ‘Youth worker’

The youth worker sees that Abdullah and his friends frequently visit a website called DeWareReligie (‘The True Religion’) with Islam-related news, opinions and theology. They also listen to Radio Ghurabaa, a Muslim radio station, online. They share links to film clips, websites and tweets. The boys cut themselves off from people they used to associate with. Fortunately, athletic Abdullah has recently taken up running again. When he runs he tucks his sweatpants into his long socks.

He has been observed by the police playing football with other members of the group at a neighbourhood pitch. He has recently been going to the gym more often and visiting shoarma grillrooms frequented mainly by devout Muslims.

They also go to a couple of mosques to pray with others. After prayers they often gather out front to talk. He sometimes speaks to men who are said to have returned from Syria. His mother has noticed that he is quieter at home than he used to be. She thinks that he is struggling with the loss of his father and of his dream of playing professional football, so she gives him the space he needs to seek comfort and support from his new friends. It bothers her that he says he can’t sleep ‘because of Syria’. She is starting to be concerned, but thinks it’s just a phase he’s going through.