

Preventing Violent Extremism – Guidance & Risks

Prevent Duty explained

The aim of Prevent is to “**stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism**” by: countering ideology and propaganda; supporting people at risk of radicalisation (Channel); and working with key institutions where people may be vulnerable such as schools and universities.

- **Prevent is intended to pre-empt criminal activity** – to protect and not to criminalise communities
- **Prevent is prioritised according to risk** – the greatest risk of radicalisation is currently from Daesh (formerly known as IS or ISIL) but extreme right-wing organisations are also within the scope of the programme

The Government has defined extremism in the *Prevent* strategy as: “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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces”.

What is Radicalisation?

In the simplest terms radicalisation is about a change of beliefs to support some form of extremism. In itself belief change is not complicated and can be explained as a three stage process:

- **Personal vulnerability** - a moment or life event which leads an individual to question the way the world works, why things are a certain way, it could be a personal event such as bereavement, being the victim of a crime or linked to external factors such as conflict abroad.
- **Radicalising influence** – an individual or network that introduces a new idea that seems to explain a sense of injustice, often linked to a feeling of “us and them”
- **The absence of obstacles** – where protective factors, such as friendships, family, obligations, do not hold someone back from taking on extreme beliefs.

Radicalisation is a process that people move through, and it can take week, months or even years before someone is ultimately influenced to carry out an act of violence or travel to a conflict zone. During this process the Prevent work seeks to intervene before any criminal actions have taken place to pull people back from supporting extremism.

Online Radicalisation

One of the risks faced by people online, is that they may come across material or meet people who seek to encourage extremist views including support for violence or terrorism. Extremist and terrorist groups are trying to radicalise people through an extensive use of social media and the internet and we need to be aware of these risks. The DfE have produced a Guide to how social media is being used in relation to the Syria conflict here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-social-media-for-online-radicalisation>

The Threat – Nationally and Locally

The terrorist threat to the UK is deemed by Government to be “severe”, meaning an attack is highly likely. The threat we face in recent years have changed and the most significant threat to the UK is now from terrorism inspired by Daesh (formerly known as Islamic State¹, IS or ISIL) previously it was from Al Quada (AQ) influenced groups.

Daesh are different to AQ, they are much larger and better resourced and are trying to recruit far more foreigners to join their forces, in order to attempt to build their state, known as the Kaliphate in Syria and Iraq.



Unlike AQ, Daesh is also trying to radicalise large numbers of people here and in other western countries and has attracted far more foreign fighters and supporters. Its social media propaganda is intense and very professionally managed.

From the UK 800+ people of security interest have travelled to Syria/Iraq since the conflict began; about 50% have returned. A high proportion of all early travellers were motivated by humanitarian not extremist issues but a greater proportion of all later travellers intend to

¹ The UK Government & the Muslim Community have asked that this group are no longer referred to as Islamic State as they do not represent Islam and are not a true state.

join Daesh and fewer are returning. There is a risk that those returning pose a threat to the UK, following weapons and explosives training.

There is also a greater proportion of later travellers that are women and children, and the average age of travellers has decreased. A greater proportion of later travellers are being stopped before departure.

Research has shown that there are a number of factors which can influence individuals to travel to Syria.²

Push Factors	Pull Factors
Alienation, Isolation, Identity Questions, Hate crime	Brotherhood, Sisterhood and a sense of belonging
Feeling the international Muslim community is under attack	Divine spiritual fulfillment and purpose; Utopia building
Feeling that international powers are not doing anything to stop this	Empowerment; adventure, heroism, humanitarian cause

Foreign fighters and supporters are encouraged either to travel or if they can't travel they should conduct simple but effective terrorist attacks back in the UK, for example the Woolwich attack on Lee Rigby.

Whilst firearms are more difficult to obtain in the UK than in the continent, the Government has released advice to the public on the steps they can take to keep themselves safe in the rare event of a firearms or weapons attack. The "Run, Hide, Tell" Guidance and the "Stay Safe" film are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-safe-film>

Extreme Ring Wing (XRW)

The Prevent agenda is not simply concerned with the threat from overseas influenced extremism however, but also domestic extremism, such as that of extreme right-wing groups.

Whilst the threat of mass casualty acts of terrorism may be less, there is still a risk of extremism violence and hate crimes which may in turn lead to retaliation or radicalisation of the victims.



² For more detail on relevant research see: <http://www.strategicdialogue.org/publications/>



Whilst ring-wing groups in the UK are fragmented, groups such as Britain First and the English Defence League are still active around the country and their anti-Islam, anti-immigration narrative is a threat to cohesion in our communities.

Dorset Specific Risks

Dorset is not adjudged by the Government to be a high priority area for Prevent activities; however the threats faced by the local community are no different to those faced by the rest of the UK.

We know that radicalisation can take place online, and doesn't necessarily need someone to attend extremist meetings.

Dorset has a small but growing Muslim community and it is primarily from this community that Daesh seeks to recruit supporters.

There is also relatively small but active supporter of far ring wing extremists in the area and both Bournemouth and Weymouth have seen English Defence League activity over the past few years.

High profile public events, a Premier League football team, our port and airport may also add to the risks locally.

Vulnerabilities:

Whilst it is impossible to produce a tick-list of what to look out for, in a potential extremist, there are a number of factors which might make someone more vulnerable to radicalisation.

Indicators of Vulnerability

- Identity Crisis - Distance from cultural/ religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them
- Personal Crisis – Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging

- Personal Circumstances – Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy
- Unmet Aspirations – Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of civic life
- Criminality – Experiences of imprisonment; poor resettlement/ reintegration, previous involvement with criminal groups

Access to extremism / extremist influences

- Is there reason to believe that the person associates with those known to be involved in extremism - either because they associate directly with known individuals or because they frequent key locations where these individuals are known to operate? (e.g the partner, spouse, friend or family member of someone believed to be linked with extremist activity)
- Is there evidence to suggest that they are accessing the internet for the purpose of extremist activity? (e.g. Use of closed network groups, access to or distribution of extremist material, contact associates covertly via Skype/email etc)
- Is the person known to have possessed or is actively seeking to possess and/ or distribute extremist literature/ other media material likely to incite racial/ religious hatred or acts of violence?
- Does the person sympathise with, or support illegal/illicit groups e.g. propaganda distribution, fundraising and attendance at meetings?
- Does the person support groups with links to extremist activity but not illegal/illicit e.g. propaganda distribution, fundraising and attendance at meetings?

Experiences, Behaviours and Influences

- Has the individual encountered peer, social, family or faith group rejection?
- Is there evidence of extremist ideological, political or religious influence on the individual from within or outside UK?
- Have international events in areas of conflict and civil unrest had a personal impact on the individual resulting in a noticeable change in behaviour? (It is important to recognise that many people may be emotionally affected by the plight of what is happening in areas of conflict (i.e. images of children dying) it is important to differentiate them from those that sympathise with or support extremist activity)
- Has there been a significant shift in the individual's behaviour or outward appearance that suggests a new social/political or religious influence?

- Has the individual come into conflict with family over religious beliefs/lifestyle/ dress choices?
- Does the individual vocally support terrorist attacks; either verbally or in their written work?
- Has the individual witnessed or been the perpetrator/ victim of racial or religious hate crime or sectarianism?

Travel

- Is there a pattern of regular or extended travel within the UK, with other evidence to suggest this is for purposes of extremist training or activity?
- Has the person travelled for extended periods of time to international locations known to be associated with extremism?
- Has the person employed any methods to disguise their true identity? Has the child/ young person used documents or cover to support this?

Channel Panel

If you are concerned about anyone who you believe may be becoming radicalised there is then a formal mechanism for referral of individuals to a multi-agency safeguarding arrangement, known as Channel. For Dorset this is through the Safeguarding Referral Unit at Dorset Police email: sru@dorset.pnn.police.uk

Following a referral the Police will undertake background checks and where appropriate a multi-agency meeting will be set up to discuss the case. Consent will be sought from the individual to become involved in the process and support will be offered to help address any grievances they hold. As well as offering bespoke support and intervention to that individual.

Unlike other safeguarding arrangements, Channel has access to specific intervention providers, who offer theological and/or ideological support, who will work with individuals to disengage them from extremism.

Further Information and Guidance

Prevent Training

There is a Home Office accredited course, The Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (known as WRAP) which should be available locally, through your local Prevent lead (details below).

Also an online awareness raising session from the College of Police:

http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness/01/index.html

Guidance Documents & Resources:

Home Office Prevent Duty Guidance (includes specific guidance for FE providers):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

National Channel Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

Department of Education - Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>

Prevent Tragedies – info on the risks of young people travelling to Syria:

<http://www.preventtragedies.co.uk/>

Let's Talk About It - The Let's Talk About It website provides information enabling people to learn more about Prevent with an aim to safeguard those who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. www.ltai.info

Educate Against Hate – resources for schools & parents on protecting children against radicalisation: <http://educateagainsthate.com/>

The Local Prevent Leads within the Local Authorities are:

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