

# Factsheet: Prevent and Channel

## Prevent

The purpose of Prevent is to safeguard vulnerable people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, by engaging with people who are vulnerable to radicalisation and protecting those who are being targeted by terrorist recruiters.

### Background

As one part of the CONTEST strategy, Prevent sits alongside other work that includes Pursue (stopping terrorist attacks happening in the UK and overseas), Protect (strengthen protection against a terrorist attack in the UK or overseas) and Prepare (mitigate the impact of a terrorist incident if it occurs).

Prevent deals with all forms of terrorism, including Islamist and extreme right wing, and does not focus on any one community.

Prevent is about working in areas where there are risks of radicalisation and offers support predominately through local community partnerships.

Through Prevent, vulnerable individuals who are at risk of radicalisation can be safeguarded and supported, while also enabling those already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

Referring possible cases of early stage radicalisation works in a similar way to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gang activity, drug abuse, and physical/sexual abuse.

Our work in Prevent is world-leading. Countries across Europe and beyond have developed preventative programmes inspired by the Prevent model. This shows the growing international consensus that Prevent programmes are vital.

### Key facts and figures

- 203 community based projects were delivered in 2018/19 reaching over 142,000 participants. 47% of these projects were delivered in schools, aimed at increasing young people's resilience to terrorist and extremist ideologies of all forms, including right wing extremism.
- Since February 2010, more than 310,000 pieces of illegal terrorist material have been removed from the internet.
- The Prevent statutory duty has prompted a significant step forward in the delivery of Prevent work in sectors. Since being launched in 2011, Prevent training has been completed over 1.1 million times to enable frontline practitioners, including teachers, to recognise the signs of radicalisation so that they know what steps to take, including, where appropriate, how to make a referral to Channel.
- Since 2012, Prevent's voluntary and confidential Channel programme has helped more than 1,500 people who were considered to be vulnerable to exploitation from terrorist influences.
- Prevent explicitly addresses the threat posed by the far right and extreme right wing. Of the 394 individuals who received Channel support in 2017/18, 179 (45%) were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism and 174 (44%) were referred for concerns related to the right wing extremism.

## **Delivery of Prevent**

### **Communities**

Civil Society groups: We reach out to civil society groups who share our common values and want to challenge extremism.

Co-ordinators: The Home Office oversees a network of Prevent co-ordinators working across the spectrum of extremism, including far right and Islamist. There are co-ordinators, based in local authorities, coordinators who work directly with Higher and Further Education institutions, health coordinators and coordinators who focus on work in schools. Their work involves ensuring risks of radicalisation in the area are understood and then mobilising a response to address those risks with key partners, including communities.

Statutory partners: Prevent is embedded into all aspects of health, education and policing, including neighbourhood and safeguarding functions and in some cases the police may be involved as they are uniquely placed to tackle terrorism.

### **Tackling radicalisation online**

Under Prevent we are also tackling online radicalisation, including action to take down terrorist content on communication and internet service providers by working together with police in the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU), and with companies to develop and maintain counter narratives.

### **Interventions**

Prevent duty: The Prevent duty came into force as part of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and ensures that specified authorities have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. It covers schools, colleges, universities, health, local authorities, police, and prisons.

Channel: The Channel programme provides tailored support for a person vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

A referral to Channel can come from anyone who is concerned about a person they know who may be at risk, whether a family member, friend, colleague or concerned professional (through their normal safeguarding process).

All referrals are carefully assessed to see if they are suitable for Channel. For those cases where it is assessed there is a risk of radicalisation, a multi-agency Channel panel chaired by the local authority will meet to discuss the referral and decide on what tailored package of support can be offered to the individual.

Participation in Channel is voluntary and confidential and is not a criminal sanction. The type of support available is wide-ranging, and can include help with education or career advice, dealing with mental or emotional health issues, and theological or ideological mentoring.

Rehabilitation: The Desistance and Disengagement Programme is being developed as part of the Prevent strategy for individuals who are already engaging in terrorism to disengage and reintegrate safely back into society – it is vitally important to do everything we can to maintain the safety of our country and our communities.

This pilot is aimed at those convicted of terrorism, or terrorism related offences, who have served their custodial sentences and have been released on licence.

It is not a replacement for any police investigation or prosecution response to individuals who have committed terrorism offences, either abroad or at home. This new programme will provide more intensive support, going beyond that provided in Channel, because of the generally higher risk nature of the participants. Unlike the Channel programme, in certain cases the support package can be mandatory although voluntary participation will always be encouraged.

## Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential programme which operates throughout England and Wales to safeguard people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

It is a multi-agency process, involving partners from the local authority, the police, education, health providers, and others.

Referring possible cases of early stage radicalisation works in a similar way to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gang activity, drugs, and physical/sexual abuse.

### Background

Participation in the Channel programme is voluntary and confidential. Many types of support are available, addressing educational, vocational, mental health, and other vulnerabilities. Ideological mentoring is common.

Compared to 2016/17, there was a 15% increase in the number of individuals that were deemed suitable through a preliminary assessment to be discussed at a Channel panel in 2017/18 (1,314 compared to 1,146).

In 2017/18, 394 individuals received Channel support following a Channel panel, a 19% increase in comparison with 2016/17 (332).

Channel panels will only offer support where they consider that it is necessary and proportionate to do so. In 2017/18, 30% of those discussed at a Channel panel went on to receive support from Channel demonstrating the process identifies genuine referrals.

The number of Prevent referrals is very small compared to other forms of safeguarding. In 2017/18 7,318 individuals were referred to Prevent whereas over 655,000 children were referred to social services in the same period.

Channel addresses all forms of terrorism, including Islamist and extreme right wing. Of the 394 individuals who received Channel support in 2017/18, 179 (45%) were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism and 174 (44%) were referred for concerns related to the right wing extremism.

The education sector is engaged and understands the Prevent duty as shown by the high level of engagement through education sector referrals. This is vital given the majority of those found to need support from Channel are under the age of 20.

## **Key facts and figures**

- In 2017/18 7,318 were referred and of those 40% were signposted to alternative support, 42% required no further action and 18% were discussed at Channel panels.
- In 2017/18, 42 per cent of those receiving support on Channel was as a result of referrals from the education sector.
- Of individuals supported by Channel in 2017/18 66% were aged 20 years or under and 90% were male.
- Participation in Channel is voluntary and confidential and is not a criminal sanction.
- The Prevent Duty came into force in 2015 and ensures that specified authorities have to pay due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

## **Who can make a referral?**

A referral can come from anyone who is concerned about a person they know who may be at risk of radicalisation, whether a family member, friend, colleague or from a wide range of partners: social services, children and adult services youth offending teams, health, police, education establishments, and places of worship and community organisations (through their normal safeguarding process).

## **What happens to a referral?**

All referrals are carefully assessed by the police and (in some areas) the local authority to see if they are suitable for Channel or may require another intervention such as mental health support.

If suitable, the case is discussed with all relevant partners at a Channel panel to decide what support, if any, is necessary.

Referred individuals are informed and must give consent (or via a parent or guardian if they are children) before an intervention can take place.

## **How does a Channel panel work?**

The Channel panel is chaired by the local authority and works with multi-agency partners to collectively assess the risk to an individual and decide whether an intervention is necessary. If a Channel intervention is required, the panel works with local partners to develop an appropriate tailored support package. The support package is monitored closely and reviewed regularly by the Channel panel.

## **Who sits on a Channel panel?**

The Channel panel is chaired by the local authority and can include a variety of statutory partners such as the police, children's services, social services, education professionals and mental health care professionals.

## **What kind of support is offered via Channel?**

The type of support available is wide-ranging, and can include help with education or career advice, dealing with mental or emotional health issues, drug/alcohol abuse, online safety training for parents and specialist mentoring from a Channel Intervention Provider.