

Subject:	Prevent (preventing terrorism and extremism)		
Date of Meeting:	Thursday the 11th Of March 2021		
Report of:	Rachel Sharpe (Interim Director: Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities)		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 [‘Prevent Duty’](#) created by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015 has been effective since 1st July 2015 on the local authority and other statutory partners. The Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act, 2019 enabled local authorities, in addition to the police, to refer an individual at risk of being drawn into terrorism for discussion at a Channel Panel. This report updates on the legislative and policy context, risks nationally and locally, actions to manage risks and achieve compliance.
- 1.2 The report relates to the Prevent Strategy, the Action Plan, and the work of the Prevent Board which is an extension of the Community Safety Partnership. The priorities and performance indicators need to be reflected within the corporate plans of all specified authorities.
- 1.3 The actions outlined here help achieve compliance with statutory Prevent and Channel duties, improve our responses to reduce risks and harm caused to individuals and communities and increase resilience to extremism and terrorism. The report is a continuation of our work to promote transparency and confidence in the Prevent delivery in the City.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the requirements of the Prevent Duty, the actions required by partners to achieve compliance and role of the Prevent Board.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes that the City is identified as a Prevent Priority Area and within this context concerted partnership actions are required to reduce risks and community tensions, especially following critical incidents.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

National Policy

- 3.1 Prevent is one of the four strands of [CONTEST](#), the Government’s Counter Terrorism Strategy. The ‘Prevent’ Strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from

terrorism and aims 'to safeguard and support those vulnerable to radicalisation, to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'. The Prevent delivery is grounded in early intervention and safeguarding to protect individuals and communities from the harms of terrorism. It is focused on providing support and re-direction to individuals at risk of, or in the process of being groomed /radicalised into terrorist activity before any crime is committed. Through a broad range of initiatives Prevent work tackles both the causes and risk factors that can lead an individual to become radicalised and building resilience in communities.

- 3.2 The National '[Prevent Strategy](#)' addresses all forms of terrorism. Currently the **most significant threat** comes from terrorist organisations associated with *Al-Qaida*, *Daesh*, terrorists associated with extreme right-wing ideologies and lone actors inspired by such organisations.
- 3.3 On 4th June 2018, the national Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) was updated to respond to the heightened threats. This has led to changing one of the three objectives. The national Prevent Strategy has three main objectives:
1. Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the **ideological challenge** of terrorism;
 2. **Safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation** through early intervention, identifying them and offering support; and
 3. Enable **those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate** (changed in 2018).

These objectives are also described as: challenging **Ideology**, supporting vulnerable **Individuals**; and enabling **disengagement and rehabilitation**.

- 3.4 'Prevent' work in the City is delivered in partnership with our communities and residents considering community concerns and establishing agreed practices with our communities. The local response to Prevent is focused on and proportionate to risks, with clear commitment amongst the statutory partners to take decisions in an informed, transparent and open manner, with clear accountability to local communities. Our purpose is to reach the small number of people who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorist related activities and help mobilise and empower our communities to challenge terrorism.
- 3.5 The Prevent Strategy and Duty support other existing freedoms and rights. For example, in Brighton and Hove, Prevent Action plan explicitly states that the Prevent Duty should drive and support Equality outcomes and Prevent Duty is to be promoted within the context of Equality Duty by all partners. The positive duties of freedom of speech and academic freedom on educational sector is upheld and positively supported by Prevent Duty. Similarly, children's welfare and best interest of the Child principles enshrined in law guide Prevent delivery and decision making.

Threat Level to the UK and Risks

- 3.6 On 4th February 2021, the UK national terrorism threat level was lowered from 'SEVERE' to **SUBSTANTIAL** (meaning 'a terrorist attack is likely')¹. The Joint

¹ The terrorist threat level had remained at '**Severe**' for five years since 29th August 2014 and was lowered only on 4th November 2019 to 'Substantial'. The increased threat in 2014 was driven by

Terrorism Analysis Centre (independent of ministers) assesses that there is a significant reduction in the momentum of attacks in Europe since those seen between September and November 2020. Communities and partners are advised of the changed threat level and residents are encouraged to report any suspicious activity to the police as **SUBSTANTIAL** continues to indicate a high level of threat.

- 3.7 The terrorist threat is evolving and has become more complex, diffused and diverse. A step change in terrorist threat was noted in 2017 with five terrorist incidents in the UK, and seven more terrorist incidents since, three of those in 2020. Additionally, twenty-seven terrorist plots (sixteen international terrorism plots and eight extreme right-wing plots) were successfully disrupted by the police, security and intelligence agencies in the UK since March 2017. Four i.e. half of the extreme right-wing plots were disrupted in 2019 evidencing an increase in this threat. There are higher number of arrests and counter terrorism investigations.
- 3.8 International terrorism continues to pose the greatest threat to the UK. Territorial losses of Daesh and the death of its leader have changed the group narrative from success to survival (steadfastness i.e. commitment and patience to re-emerge). However, within the reframed worldview, Daesh's social media capability and calls to inspire lone actor attack continues. In the contestation to claim a dominant position, increased communication/activities are also noted from the Al-Qaida (AQ).
- 3.9 Right-wing terrorism threat has grown and there is internationalisation of right-wing threat. The right-wing groups/causes, despite sharing many similarities have significant ideological divergences with contestations abound. For instance, groups/ influencers broadly identified as promoting 'cultural nationalism' use 'anti-Salafi-Jihadist' views to promote a wider anti-Muslim narrative, whereas some of the 'White-supremacist' groups popularised the term 'White Jihad' and 'admire Daesh's recruitment strategies'. The Government has proscribed three right-wing terrorist groups – 'National Action', 'Sonnenkrieg Division' (SKD) and 'Feuerkrieg Division' (FKD). A 16-year-old young man from Cornwall was sentenced on Monday 8th February 2021 for terror offences after setting up a UK branch of the FKD. [He is the youngest person to commit a terrorist offence in the UK](#), the first of which he committed aged thirteen. A significant increase is noted in intentional reach to the young.
- 3.10 Online space has also provided a major platform in the growth of right-wing terrorism. Online-networked social movements, including forums (e.g. 'Stormfront') and imageboard platforms (e.g. '4chan' and '8chan' in 2019 reconfigured as '8kun' on the dark web) are essential in understanding right-wing terrorist threat. The 'Alt-right' has created a change in communication style whereby extremist content is positioned as 'entertaining'. This style exploits comedy/humour to communicate offensive material creatively (e.g. school

developments in Syria and Iraq. The threat level was raised again to 'Severe' on 3rd November 2020 as a precautionary measure, following several attacks in Nice, Paris, Saudi Arabia and Vienna (October - November 2020). There were also two brief periods (3-5 days) when the threat to the UK was at the highest level '**Critical**' following Manchester Arena and Parsons Green Incidents in May and September 2017 respectively. Threat levels are subject to change as new information becomes available. See up to date information at: <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels>

shooting) and includes satirical 'meme culture' which has expanded reach effectively with 'gamer' communities. There is a 'gamification of violence' noted with high scores etc.

- 3.11 The internet has emerged as a key resource in facilitating the radicalisation process with some direct personal contact. Young people are found to be at an increased risk as digital content is made very attractive and persuasive and can be quickly and widely shared.
- 3.12 Many terrorist incidents globally, across Europe and the UK, have used crude and less sophisticated methods, vehicle borne attacks in public or crowded places, using bladed weapons, many carried out by lone actors or smaller cells. The unpredictable and unconstrained operation of lone actors makes prevention even more difficult.
- 3.13 During the pandemic, conspiracy theories about Covid-19 and anti-vaccination content were shared amongst many communities, however, the right-wing extremist narratives are tailored to cohere with a conspiratorial worldview, such as the 'Great Replacement' or 'White genocide' and have also co-opted the term 'Great Reset'. The narratives intersect with anti-establishment, anti-Semitic, anti-Islam, anti-left and anti-migrant tropes and often include call for violence. Online risks have emerged prominently during the lockdown period, extremists have exploited pandemic to spread disinformation and misinformation. During Covid-19 increased vulnerabilities to radicalisation are reported with reduced protective circles around vulnerable individuals which could be exploited by groomers.
- 3.14 An emerging threat is from '[Mixed, Unclear, or Unstable](#)' ideology where individuals do not adhere to a clearly defined, well-known ideology, are inclined towards use of violence or glorifying violence. Personal grievances and victimisation are framed in the larger wider political context and collective victimisation. [Incel](#) – involuntary celibate and school shooting are other emerging risks noted nationally and locally.

Brighton & Hove Context: Prevent Priority Area and Risks For the City

- 3.15 The Brighton and Hove City was identified as a Prevent priority area in December 2014 following a revised risk-assessment and continues to remain a priority area presently, benefitting from dedicated resources (posts and projects) and support from the Home Office to reduce strategic risks in the City and support long term resilience.
- 3.16 The City's risk profile has changed over these years with some newer trends and nuances. Currently, all the national risks outlined above are evidenced in the City. The right-wing terrorism threat has grown with online space providing a major platform for this growth. The threat from lone actor attacks continues from various extremist perspectives, with Daesh, Al-Qaida and right-wing terrorist propaganda continuing to inspire lone actor attacks. Increased risks are noted from accessing online materials, forums and influencers, social media, online and gaming platforms.
- 3.17 With continuation of anti-Prevent lobby, and circulation of anti-Prevent reports, perception of public and communities, especially some minority communities

about Prevent may fluctuate and needs to continually be engaged with. Nationally, increased transparency is being achieved through publication of Channel data annually. There is high value on communication to maintain professionals and communities trust and confidence in Prevent.

- 3.18 Additionally, international, national and local events impact on communities in the City. Work to monitor and reduce community tensions and fear of crimes, jointly with police and partners, especially following critical incidents, is crucial in reassuring communities and sustaining trust and confidence, particularly of the minority communities. These Developments will continue to present risks for the inter-community relations and community cohesion and managing these will be important to effectively deliver Prevent strategy in the City.

4. Prevent Duty

- 4.1 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015, had created a new general 'Prevent Duty' that required specified authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The Statutory Prevent Duty had commenced from 1st July 2015 on all partners and from 18th September 2015 on further and higher education sectors. A new sector specific statutory ['Prevent Duty Guidance'](#) has been issued to elaborate on the Duty.
- 4.2 The [Prevent Duty Toolkit](#) for Local Authorities and Partner Agencies published in September 2018 provides practical information and examples of best practice to support work to implement the Prevent Duty.

Channel Duty: Information Sharing, Assessment and Support

- 4.3 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015 has also placed 'Channel' i.e. arrangements to support people from being drawn into terrorism on a statutory footing. The Channel Duty on local authorities has commenced from 12th April 2015. All partners have a '**Duty to Co-operate**' as far as compatible with their legal responsibilities in respect of their functions. A new statutory [Channel Guidance](#) has been issued in November 2020 following wide consultation.
- 4.4 Channel provides early support for anyone who is vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism or supporting terrorist organisations, regardless of age, faith, ethnicity or background. Individuals can receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those who want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist-related activity. Cases adopted onto Channel have a vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism.
- 4.5 Support from Channel is voluntary and confidential i.e. support is provided with the consent of the individual or legal guardian. This support is bespoke based on the needs identified for an individual, and varied: addressing educational, vocational, mental health and other vulnerabilities and Ideological mentoring. The role of the Channel panel is to coordinate new activity through statutory partners and/or Channel commissioned Intervention Providers (IPs), or oversee existing activity depending on what is most appropriate and proportionate for the case.
- 4.6 National Channel data published annually by the Home Office revealed that there was an increase of 10% in 2019/20 with 6,287 individuals referred due to

concerns that they were vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism compared to the record low in 2018/19 (with 5,737 individuals referred - lowest number of referrals since 2015/16). In 2019/20, 697 people received Channel support, the highest recorded compared with previous years (highs of 1,328 and 556 respectively, in the year ending March 2019). The proportion of individuals who received Channel support due to right-wing extremism has increased steadily over the years reaching 45% in 2018/19 and continued with 43% in 2019/20. Majority of individuals referred to Channel and who consented to receive support were aged 20 years or under, and male. The full publication of 'individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent programme, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020' can be found [here](#).

- 4.7 The national data/ evidence suggests that on average right-wing referrals are adopted more frequently and supported as Channel cases – i.e. have a higher rate of conversion. This reassures the Board and local delivery in scrutinising if there were any biases seen.

Prevent and Channel Duties: Summary of Key Issues

- 4.8 The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Community Safety Team has led on the delivery of Prevent work since 2009 and this is reflected as a priority in the Community Safety Strategy and action plan. The Prevent workstream follows the three years and annual cycle of strategic assessment, consultation, Strategy and action plan.
- 4.9 Prevent Delivery in the City is about reaching the small number of individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and empowering Communities and partners via an anti-racist approach. This has been the agreed approach, with those principles since 2009 in partnership with our communities and residents. This has also meant openly engaging with our communities continuously on any concerns and addressing them jointly.
- 4.10 A Prevent Board (part of the CSP) was set up in June 2015 to regularly assess threats, risks and vulnerabilities referenced in the Counter Terrorism Local Profile² (created by Sussex Police) and through local engagement with partners and communities. The Prevent Board, led by the Chief Executive of the council, is the co-ordinating and oversight body, tasked with ensuring full compliance with these duties and managing risks. The Board sets strategic direction, monitors the progress on action plan, performance and impact in the City.
- 4.11 The Prevent Partnership Action Plan is annually refreshed and responds to all identified risks for the City and is flexible to respond to any emerging risks and threats. The Prevent Board discusses and approves the plan. The local response to Prevent is focused on and proportionate to risks, with clear commitment amongst the statutory partners to take decisions in an informed, transparent and open manner, with clear accountability to local communities.
- 4.12 The 'Channel' programme provides a structure and process in the City to identify, assess and support individuals vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Our Channel arrangements are already in place and comply with the legal (statutory

² Strategic risks for the City are identified through the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) annually and updated periodically.

guidance) and best practice requirements. The Channel meetings are held monthly chaired by the local authority, with a good buy-in and co-operation from partners. The nature of threat and our responses to them are wide and varied.

- 4.13 Channel arrangements sit alongside and are integrated with the wider safeguarding (children and adults) arrangements, as necessary.
- 4.14 With additional resources from the Home Office, Prevent team delivers and coordinates Prevent activity in the City in support of the Action Plan. Projects that respond to identified strategic needs and engage with young people, women and institutions have been delivered.
- 4.15 We continue to deliver training and briefings to improve communities and professionals understanding of the City picture in terms of risks, threats and vulnerabilities, understanding the signs and vulnerabilities to being drawn into terrorism and support available.
- 4.16 Monitoring and oversight responsibilities for Prevent form part of local governance arrangements within the local authority (e.g. TECC and Full Council). Prevent and Channel now feature within a range of inspection regimes too. Thus, creating a system of scrutiny and accountability.
- 4.17 The Prevent Board is satisfied that we comply with the legal duties and are carrying out all actions required of us in partnership with our communities within the adopted anti-racist approach.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 One Voice Partnership name was formally adopted in June 2013, in meetings with communities following 'Lee Rigby murder'. 'One Voice' was re-launched in 2015 with an aim to provide a structure for statutory organisations to work with a broad spectrum of BME, faith and interfaith individuals, third sector organisations and participating members of the public to deliver the objectives of 'Prevent'. The engagement and partnership work encourage an open and transparent dialogue on the Prevent Duty with our communities.
- 5.2 The quarterly meetings are chaired by the CEO of the BHCC and have proved to be effective in engaging and involving communities. Following terrorist incidents in [France](#) and Saudi Arabia on 29th October and [Vienna](#) on the 2nd November 2020, engagement with communities were undertaken to understand sentiments and reassure communities to prevent any escalations of tensions. One Voice Statements were issued following each incident with faith leaders and communities and disseminated widely across the City.
- 5.3 In addition to the One Voice meeting, other specific meetings with communities are held in response to specific issues/ concerns.
- 5.4 There are opportunities to explore some of the community concerns through dialogue. There have been Prevent Community Roundtables that offers the opportunity for community members to ask direct questions about Prevent with the Home Office. Additionally, two of our Muslim community members in Brighton have been members of the National Counter Terrorism Advisory Group

for at least five years. Furthermore, there remain regular 'briefings' for community members.

- 5.5 The Prevent Strategy has been reviewed periodically in the past to address community concerns. A national Independent Review of Prevent had begun in August 2019, this was stopped in December 2019 due to legal complications. Following an open competitive process, in January 2021 William Shawcross was announced as the new Independent Reviewer of Prevent. The aim of the Review is to look at the effectiveness of present strategies to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism and make recommendations for the future. Prevent Review will be an opportunity to engage with the public and partners, including critics, understand where the programme can be improved, and also capture best practice in our work to protect the vulnerable and ultimately keep the public safe. The new terms of reference and timescale will be published shortly. Partners and communities will be advised of opportunities to feed into the review to influence national policy, as appropriate.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The approach and actions outlined here help achieve compliance with statutory Prevent and Channel duties, improve our responses to reduce risks and harm caused to individuals and communities and increase resilience to extremism and terrorism.
- 6.2 The BHCC and partnership resources will continue to be harnessed to effectively deliver Prevent action plan and projects to address identified and emerging risks in a proportionate manner in partnership with communities.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations made in this report. Existing provisions such as 'best value duties' (Local Government Act) can be used to monitor and enforce actions to comply with the Prevent Duty. The monetary assistance and support from the Home Office is subject to an annual process of prioritisation and may cease from April 2022.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michael Bentley

Date: 17/02/21

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The Prevent duty is the duty in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 on specified authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This report sets out the actions being taken to ensure the Council complies with this duty.

Lawyer Consulted:

Alice Rowland

Date: 16.2.21

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 Equalities and Prevent duties are incorporated together in existing policies, commissions and contracts. A separate equality impact assessment has not been carried out.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 Actions to achieve compliance are also expected to mainstream Prevent work and increase consistency in our responses.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.5 Discussions around 'Brexit' had been characterised by the use of divisive language, with right-wing audiences in particular expressing a stronger 'Betrayal' narrative further emphasising anti-establishment and anti-mainstream media narrative. Current political and economic landscape and local grievances are often exploited by the terrorist groups causes and ideologies and 'Brexit' has seen emboldening of prejudices towards minorities, political elite, establishment, refugees, and migrants, amongst others.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.6 Supporting individuals at an early stage and diverting them from risk and illegality is likely to have positive impact on reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour and increase trust and confidence.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Background Documents

None

