

# REPORT TO THE EXTERNAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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## REASON FOR ITEM

This report provides an update to the External Services Scrutiny Committee in relation to the work being undertaken in Hillingdon with regards the Government's Prevent strategy and the new Prevent Duty as defined within the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

## OPTIONS OPEN TO COMMITTEE

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and ask questions of the Stronger Communities Manager to clarify any matters.

## INFORMATION

### 1. Introduction

**CONTEST** is the Government's counter terrorism strategy; its aim is to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism.

**PREVENT** is a key part of the CONTEST strategy, its aim is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Early intervention is at the heart of "Prevent" in diverting people away from being drawn into terrorist activity. "Prevent" happens before any criminal activity takes place. It is about recognising, supporting and protecting people who might be susceptible to radicalisation.

**Radicalisation** is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.

**"Extremism** is 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, whether in this country or overseas" (*HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011*)

The Prevent Strategy objectives are:

- **Ideology** - respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
- **Individuals** - prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; and
- **Institutions** - work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

**CHANNEL** is a key element of the "Prevent" strategy and is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation. Channel uses existing collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners (such as education and health sectors, social services, children's and youth services and offender management services), the police and the local community to:

- identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism; and
- assess the nature and extent of that risk; and develop the most appropriate support for the individuals concerned.

Channel is about safeguarding children and adults from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risk they face before illegality occurs.

## **Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015**

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the Act) places a duty on certain bodies ("specified authorities" listed in Schedule 6 to the Act), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". (Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015:

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

Within the duty, there are specific responsibilities and considerations highlighted for different agencies, with a number of common themes throughout, including:

- Partnership working;
- Risk assessment and Safeguarding. Identifying and providing support to those who might be vulnerable to radicalisation and supporting terrorism;
- Safety online; and
- Building resilience and community cohesion.

## **2. Implications for Hillingdon**

### **Co-ordination and Partnership working**

The Local Authority has a role in providing leadership within their area. To establish a local plan based upon agreed risk. To co-ordinate "Prevent" activity that is proportionate and is informed through partnership working, with multi agency and community involvement.

"We expect local authorities to use the existing counter-terrorism local profiles (CTLPs), produced for every region by the police, to assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism. This includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit.

This risk assessment should also be informed by engagement with Prevent co-ordinators, schools, registered childcare providers, universities, colleges, local prisons, probation services, health, immigration enforcement Youth Offending Teams and others, as well as by a local authority's own knowledge of its area." (Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales)

### **Safeguarding responsibilities**

#### **Working Together to Safeguard Children**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguardchildren> identifies exposure to, or involvement with, groups, or individuals who condone violence as a means to a political end as a particular risk for some children. All children and young people's partnerships should have an agreed process in place for safeguarding vulnerable individuals including children's, transition and adult's services. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and local authorities should ensure they are informed of the particular risks in their area.

### **3. Current work**

Currently in Hillingdon, we have been working in the following areas:

#### **1) Partnership working**

There is a local Prevent Partnership group that has been in place since 2008 and works together to develop and implement an annual and local Prevent plan for Hillingdon. This group has a broad membership from both within Council departments and other local statutory services, including: police, probation, Uxbridge College, Brunel University, Schools, mental health and adult services, community health, CCG, Hillingdon and Harefield hospitals, youth offending, children's services, LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children's Board) and safeguarding.

This group meets quarterly and reports into the Strong and Active Communities Partnership which is a theme group of the local strategic partnership (LSP). Regular updates are also provided to the Safer Hillingdon Board and the LSP Executive as required.

Through this partnership, support and co-ordination of how each organisation is meeting their duties under Prevent are discussed alongside a shared risk assessment and agreed proportionate approach for the Borough. Advice and support to partners is also provided by the Stronger Communities Manager as the Council's Prevent lead.

#### **2) Support for vulnerable individuals**

Within the London Borough of Hillingdon, there is a Prevent Multi-Agency Partnership group that is responsible for coordinating work on this agenda and collectively managing referrals and local concerns. The "Channel" process is established in Hillingdon, which consists of a referral process and processes for responding to identified risk and need, and in providing appropriate support.

Through the LSCB, we are working collectively with partners to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are managed effectively and in a co-ordinated manner across all agencies.

Currently, guidance is being drafted for dissemination to local organisations with regards the Prevent duty and how to respond and make referrals when there are concerns.

#### **3) Information sharing and identification of local needs**

There is an information exchange/protocol in place between the Council and Police and regular meetings are held where information, intelligence and local concerns are discussed, and any actions required at a local level are agreed. This sharing of information helps to inform any local risk assessment and local action plans.

#### **4) Training and awareness raising**

A programme of training for staff and other stakeholders in relation to Prevent is ongoing. The facilitation of these sessions has been accredited by the Home Office and delivered by the Stronger Communities Manager. These sessions are open to all Council staff as appropriate and to external partners, including schools.

Approximately 800 staff from across the Council and partner agencies, including schools, have received this training since October 2014.

Training is undertaken at the Council as well as sessions undertaken within agencies' venues.

Schools, in particular, have been increasing their demand for support, advice and training for staff, to ensure that they are able to meet the requirements of the new duty.

## **5) Work with our communities**

Engagement with the community is a key aspect of the Prevent work. Hillingdon Inter Faith Network (HIFN) plays a key role in enabling us to work together with our faith communities in promoting greater understanding and strengthening relationships. HIFN is a member of the Strong and Active Communities Partnership and there are a number of initiatives that have been developed in partnership with them. These include: the Annual Peace walk, Annual Inter Faith week events, Inter Faith workshops in schools and regular themed network meetings on community issues. We have also established an emergency response network of faith leaders to support our management of any incidents or community concerns.

Through the Strong and Active Communities Partnership, a broader approach has been established to promoting community involvement, inclusion, access to local services and participation in learning, leisure, arts and culture underpin the aim of building stronger and more resilient communities.