

Background/Introduction

In January 2021 the former Home Secretary, Rt Hon. Patel MP, appointed William Shawcross, previously chair of the Charity Commission, to conduct an [Independent Review of Prevent](#). The review, published 8th February 2023, assessed the scope and effectiveness of the current Prevent strategy and set out 34 recommendations for change, all of which the Government accepted.

On 8th July 2023, the Home Office published a refreshed [Counter Terrorism \(CONTEST\) Strategy 2023](#), updating it to deal with the changing threats and risks from terrorism in the UK today. The Prevent element of the Strategy reflects the recommendations from the Independent Review.

On 7th September 2023, the Home Office published revised [Prevent Duty Guidance 2023](#), including sector specific guidance. This is statutory guidance for England and Wales, issued under [Section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#) and, comes into force on 31st December 2023 (subject to Parliamentary approval). A [Prevent Duty Toolkit for Local Authorities](#) was also published.

About this Briefing

This briefing aims to provide an overview of the sections that are relevant to all specified authorities and requirements around partnership working, focusing on what is new or significantly different from the 2015 guidance. It also provides an overview of the changes for the sector guidance for Local Authorities, with reference to the new toolkit. It does not provide an overview for the other sectors, however there are links to some external briefings for other sectors at the end.

This briefing is also specific to Essex and in doing so only refers to the requirements for non-funded (priority) areas and to two-tier areas.

Direct quotes from the guidance are shown in *italics*.

Introduction

CONTEST & The Prevent Duty

This section begins with the slightly revised aims of the CONTEST Strategy 2023:

- *Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism*
- *Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks*
- *Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack*
- *Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack*

It also provides the slightly revised objectives of Prevent, which are to:

- *Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism*
- *Intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation*
- *Enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate*

Threat & Risk

An overview of the current threat and risk in the UK, in-line with the assessment in the revised CONTEST Strategy 2023: *Islamist ideology is resilient and enduring. Extreme Right-Wing ideology is resurgent. Other ideologies are less present, but still have the potential to motivate, inspire and be used to justify terrorism.* It also references the increased complexity of terrorists holding a *range of personal grievances alongside the primary ideology for committing an attack* (often referred to as Mixed, Unclear & Unstable). It also recognises the risk of online radicalisation.

It notes that terrorist narratives have a number of common themes such as *antisemitism, misogyny, anti-establishment, anti-LGBT grievances and religious or ethnic superiority.* It also recognises that *conspiracy theories can act as gateways to radicalised thinking and sometimes violence* and that the those who violently adhere to movements and subcultures (such as Incels) could also *meet the threshold of terrorist intent or action.* This all reflects what is being seen locally and nationally with a

convergence of issues by protest groups and the increased challenge in understanding the risk and providing suitable interventions.

Within the Home Office, Prevent delivery is informed by its Security Threat Check process and it is recommended that local partnership groups consider doing so. The Security Threat Check asks:

- *Is this action mindful of the UK's current terrorism and extremism threat picture?*
- *Is this action proportionate when placed against the UK's current terrorism and extremism threat picture?*
- *Is this action likely to reduce the threat of terrorism or terrorist adjacent narratives?*

Susceptibility to Radicalisation

This recognises that there is *no single profile of a radicalised person, nor is there a single pathway or 'conveyor belt' to being radicalised*. It also reflects the change in language from 'vulnerability' to 'susceptibility' to terrorism, as recommended by the Review of Prevent. It highlights that *a person's susceptibility to radicalisation may be linked to their vulnerability but that not all people susceptible to radicalisation will be vulnerable, and there are other circumstances, needs or other underlying factors that may make a person susceptible to radicalisation but do not constitute a vulnerability*.

Early Intervention: Referral to Prevent

Whilst the exact referral process varies amongst agencies/areas, it is recommended that the 'notice, check, share' procedure should be applied. It stresses that *anyone making a referral should ensure there is concern that someone may be susceptible to becoming involved in terrorism or supporting it. There may be times when the precise ideological driver is not clear. Yet, like any safeguarding mechanism, it is far better to receive referrals which turn out not to be of concern than for someone who genuinely needs support to be missed*.

Compliance the Prevent Duty, Monitoring & Assurance (All Specified Authorities)

Leadership & Partnership

This section introduces a requirement in all specified authorities for *a designated person in a leadership position who is responsible for overseeing Prevent delivery, including ensuring that relevant staff have appropriate training and induction*' (previously the guidance referred to *those in leadership positions*).

Leadership is expected to be demonstrated by:

- *ensuring staff understand the risk of radicalisation that results in support for terrorism or involvement in terrorism by making sure they can access training resources and further guidance*
- *building and promoting the capabilities to deal with radicalisation concerns, such as a formal pathway to escalate concerns and refer through to Prevent*
- *promoting the importance of Prevent and the role staff play in countering terrorism*

Guidance on partnership working remains similar, with expectation that this is led via a multi-agency forum (in Essex this is the Prevent Delivery Group, for Thurrock the Strategic Prevent Board). Requirements to *co-operate as reasonably practicable with local authority-led Channel panels* are also highlighted.

Capabilities

This section provides a much-strengthened set of requirements around training and managing risks. It also covers information sharing, but this has changed little from the 2015 guidance.

Similarly, to the previous guidance, it states that as a starting point to understanding radicalisation in an area *all specified authorities should demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation by ensuring and recording that appropriate staff undertake training, particularly on radicalisation*. The guidance provides greater clarity on what that training should cover, including what radicalisation means, why people may be susceptible to extremist ideologies, awareness of the

signs of radicalisation and how they can refer concerns to Prevent. Frequency and type of training will depend on local factors, further detail is also provided in the sector specific guidance.

Reference is made to the free GOV.UK Prevent duty training but also that further face-to-face training could be made available and that there is an expectation that *all frontline staff working for specified authorities to have reasonable and appropriate understanding of extremist and terrorist ideologies.*

Reducing Permissive Environments

This section is not within the 2015 guidance, although in some way it strengthens previous guidance on venue hire and IT policies within the sector-specific guidance.

This section makes references how *Prevent seeks to tackle the ideological causes of terrorism is by limiting exposure to radicalising narratives, both online and offline, and to create an environment where radicalising ideologies are challenged and are not permitted to flourish.*

Specified authorities should not provide a platform for an offence to be committed, or facilitate this activity through provision of endorsement, funding, or other forms of support. This includes having policies in place that, where appropriate, limit radicalising influences (including online), or ensure that facilities are not used inappropriately.

In line with the findings from the Independent Review, it also stresses the need to ensure that *Prevent funding does not go to organisations or people whose views create an environment in which terrorism is encouraged or supported.*

Monitoring & Assurance

As with the 2015 guidance there is a requirement to *maintain appropriate records to show compliance with the Prevent duty.* The 2023 guidance also adds a specific requirement that *this should include keeping track of any Prevent training being undertaken by staff.* Details of how this will be monitored are laid out in the sector-specific guidance.

Central Support & Monitoring

This section lays in more detail how the Home Office will monitor compliance with the Duty in all local areas, whereas previous guidance had a focus on the priority (funded) areas. It sets out that they will:

- *draw together data about implementation of Prevent from local and regional Prevent leads (including those in safeguarding roles with Prevent duties in health and education), the police, intelligence agencies, and other departments and inspection bodies where appropriate*
- *monitor and assess Prevent delivery in all local areas*
- *set the overall direction for Prevent policy and delivery across relevant government departments and specified partners*
- *uphold governance mechanisms overseeing the implementation of Prevent*
- *guide strategic decision making by conducting a Security Threat Check*

Sector Specific Guidance – Local Authorities

Overview

The guidance makes it clearer that non-funded areas should have a *Prevent lead embedded in a relevant team within the local authority that carries out similar functions.*

It continues to provide an expectation that any sub-contractors are *aware of the Prevent duty* but, in line with new requirements about reducing permissive environments, adds a requirement that the sub-contractors are also *not inadvertently funding extremist organisations.*

It is also made clear (as with the 2015 guidance) that responsibility for meeting the Prevent Duty lays with both senior officers and elected members.

Leadership & Partnership

This section sets out how *Leaders in local authorities* are vital to promoting the importance of Prevent and ensuring that the risks of radicalisation to terrorism are understood and managed. They should ensure that appropriate capabilities are in place throughout the local authority. It is important that local Prevent leads have access to their senior local authority leadership to give advice and support.

The guidance continues to reflect the need for multi-agency arrangements in a similar way to the 2015 guidance. The expectations for *proportionate arrangements* in two-tier areas for sharing the assessment of risk and action plans, as well as doing so with neighbouring areas also remain the same.

It continues to highlight the need for *effective dialogue and co-ordination with community-based organisations* but provides more guidance on how this should *focus on raising awareness of the risks of radicalisation and providing credible challenge to the ideologies of extremist groups, including any disinformation about Prevent that they promote.*

As with the 2015 guidance, it is clear about the responsibilities of private/voluntary agencies exercising local authority functions in relation to children (i.e. children's homes) and a requirement that *these bodies should ensure they are part of their local authorities' safeguarding arrangements and that staff are aware of the Prevent duty and know how to make a Prevent referral where appropriate.*

Capabilities: Understanding Risk

The guidance continues to place an expectation on local authorities to *ensure appropriate frontline staff, including those of its contractors, have a good understanding of Prevent, are trained to recognise where a person might be susceptible to becoming radicalised into terrorism, and are aware of available programmes to provide support* and adds that this should be *delivered at the earliest opportunity to ensure staff are adequately equipped for their role.*

In addition to the GOV.UK Prevent duty training, the guidance adds that *those with specific Prevent responsibilities are expected to have a good understanding of extremist ideologies as a key driver of radicalisation and should complete any required ideology training* and that those staff in *frontline roles are also expected to receive training on how to make a Prevent referral within their local authority or to police if they think someone is at risk of being radicalised, and to understand the Channel process.*

Those with Prevent-specific responsibilities are recommended to refresh training every two years to update on *referral statistics, local referral trends and emerging issues, relevant local or regional incidents and radicalising influences, or new resources and training materials.*

As with the 2015 guidance, in reference to out-of-school settings, there is an expectation on local authorities to *take steps to understand the range of activity and settings in their areas and should take appropriate and proportionate action to ensure that children attending such settings are properly safeguarded (which should include considering whether children attending such settings are at risk of being radicalised).*

Capabilities: Managing Risk

There continues to be an expectation that a risk assessment is carried out (known as Situational Risk Assessments), with an added expectation that *to ensure that Prevent delivery and activity is guided by the threat, the Security Threat Check should be conducted.* There is also a new expectation that Local Authorities include Prevent within their corporate risk register. There continues to be an expectation that Local Authorities ensure the Prevent duty is part of policies and procedures.

The requirement for a Partnership Plan remains in order to *comprehensively identify, prioritise and facilitate activities to reduce the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism specific to the region.* Clarification is now given that in a *two-tier area, they can be developed by a lead authority inclusive of the needs of all authorities in the area.*

Reducing Permissive Environments

As with the general guidance, this new requirement strengthens those in the 2015 guidance around venue hire and IT policies as well as requirements of 'contractors'.

It requires that Local authority settings should have measures in place to ensure their facilities are not exploited by radicalisers. This includes ensuring that any event spaces, publicly owned venues and resources or IT equipment are not being used to facilitate the spread of extremist narratives which can reasonably be linked to terrorism, such as narratives used to encourage people into participating in or supporting terrorism.

It continues to state that Local authorities should have a policy, based on local risk assessments, that clearly articulates the activities and behaviours of a group or person which may make them subject to restrictions on access to publicly owned venues and resources. The policy should articulate relevant considerations for awarding contracts for the delivery of local authority services.

It also re-iterates the importance of ensuring Prevent funding does not go to organisations or people whose views are used to legitimise, encourage, or support terrorism-related activity and adds that it is expected that local authorities to conduct their own due diligence checks to ensure that organisations who they work with on Prevent do not espouse or endorse extremist views linked to terrorism.

Monitoring & Assurance

This section provides specific details of the measures that the Home Office can take if there are concerns about compliance.

The Home Office may consider the appropriateness of using existing mechanisms such as appointing an inspector, requiring the local authority to undertake specific actions, requesting an inquiry, or issuing a direction. Powers under the Local Government Act 1999 may be used. If the Secretary of State is satisfied that a local authority is failing to perform any function relating to education, childcare or children's social care to an adequate standard, they may use their powers under the Education Act 1996, the Children's Act, and children's social care under Section 50(1) of the Children Act 2004 to take whatever action is deemed appropriate to achieve necessary improvement.

Local Authority Toolkit

Background

The Toolkit for Local Authorities has also been updated to reflect the new guidance and offer ways of demonstrating best practice. The toolkit sets out benchmarks that are used as part of the annual assurance programme to monitor the delivery of Prevent (via an assessment with each Local Authority).

Benchmarks

The changes mostly place them in line with the terminology and expectations within the new guidance, particularly tightening up requirements around training and reducing permissive environments. The benchmarks in relation to the Channel Panel have been removed, as this was a duplication on the separate assurance carried out in relation to the panels.

The following benchmarks are now set out in the toolkit, with details of how both good and best practice can be evidenced:

- *There is an effective multi-agency partnership group (also known as a board) in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of Prevent delivery and provide strategic governance.*
- *The local authority produces a risk assessment reviewed against the counter terrorism local profile (CTLTP) and other data sources, including local knowledge, and understanding of the area.*
- *The area has an agreed Prevent partnership plan.*

- *There is an agreed pathway in place for the referral of those identified as susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism or supporting terrorism.*
- *Frontline staff across the local authority, including those of its contractors, have a good understanding of Prevent, are trained to recognise where a person might be susceptible to becoming radicalised into terrorism, and are aware of available support programmes. Designated safeguarding leads and those with Prevent responsibilities have more in-depth training.*
- *There is an established multi-agency forum in place (using existing structures if appropriate) to identify, agree and implement (where necessary) lawful and appropriate actions to reduce permissive spaces used by those who radicalise people into participating in, or supporting, terrorism. This includes ensuring venues or IT equipment are not used by speakers and groups who spread extremist narratives which could reasonably be linked to terrorism.*
- *A communications and engagement plan is delivered to provide people with information about Prevent, increase awareness of Prevent's aims, and ensure they know where to go if they have concerns that someone is susceptible to radicalisation. The plan includes proactive public communications on Prevent and engagement activity with a range of community groups and civil -society organisations, encouraging an open dialogue on Prevent and building public confidence.*

Further References

Background

[Home Secretary's Full Statement to Parliament \(07/09/23\)](#)

[Independent Review of Prevent](#)

[Counter Terrorism \(CONTEST\) Strategy 2023](#)

[Prevent Duty Guidance 2023](#)

[Prevent Duty Toolkit for Local Authorities](#)

[Prevent Duty Guidance 2015](#)

Communication & Training Tools

[Prevent Duty Training](#)

Prevent duty animation - [Public sector staff working together to stop radicalisation](#)

Prevent duty animation - [The role of education in safeguarding learners from radicalisation](#)

Prevent leaflet – [What is Prevent and how to stop radicalisation](#)

Department for Education Guidance

[Prevent duty guidance update: a briefing for schools and early years providers](#)

[Prevent duty guidance update: a briefing for further education and skills providers](#)

[Prevent duty guidance update: a briefing for Higher Education providers](#)

[Prevent duty guidance update: a briefing for local authority children's social care teams](#)