



# Preventing vulnerable people from being drawn into extremism

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## Foreword

**We are proud to present the new Preventing Vulnerable People From Being Drawn Into Extremism Strategy on behalf of the Councils across Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington**

JTAC - the Joint Terrorist Analysis Centre - recently raised the current threat level to the UK from international terrorism from substantial to severe, meaning that a terrorist attack is highly likely. This was based on the changing nature of the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and developments in Syria.

The Home Office reported that approximately 500 individuals of interest to the police and security services have travelled from the UK to Syria and Iraq since the start of the conflicts, and a number of these have joined terrorist organisations. The return to the UK of around 250 of them has coincided with increased number of detected terror plots.

Although Cheshire, Halton and Warrington may not have the iconic terrorist targets of London and Manchester, we have over 200 miles of motorway, excellent train links, a busy airspace, along with a chemical industry presence.

These features are not a cause for alarm, but do increase the potential for terrorist activity within the area and the need for vigilance, particularly given that isolated individuals - or 'lone actors' - are difficult for security forces to detect using their traditional methods.

The purpose of this document is to set out our strategic approach and provide a robust framework from which we can work effectively with our partners to reduce the risks to our communities. This will include a strong focus on education, maintaining regular and effective dialogue with our communities and safeguarding those most vulnerable to the messages of extremists.

We also hope that this strategy will serve to raise awareness of what extremism and terrorism are, how to recognise the signs of radicalisation in others and what to do about it - and will result in Cheshire, Halton and Warrington remaining safe and happy places to live.

## Introduction

In 2011, the Government published an updated version of its overarching counter-terrorism strategy, '**Contest**'. The aim of Contest is to

“reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.”

It is split into four workstreams:

**Pursue:** to stop terrorist attacks through investigation, detection and disruption

**Prevent:** to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism

**Protect:** to strengthen against terrorist attack, focusing on border security, the transport system, national infrastructure and public places

**Prepare:** to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack where that attack cannot be stopped

## What is Terrorism?

The use or threat of action where

- It involves serious violence or damage, or risk of either, to person, property or electronic system
- It is designed to influence a government or to intimidate members of the public and
- It is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause



The Counter Terrorism and Security Act received Royal Assent in 2015. Among other provisions, the Act places the Prevent strand on a statutory footing for “specified authorities” - one of the recommendations of the Extreme Taskforce, which was set up following the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby in 2013. Recent incidents, like the siege in Sydney, attack on the Charlie Hebdo offices and further attacks in Paris and Tunisia, have put a greater focus on work to prevent radicalisation.

Specified authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. As such, the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on offender institutions, schools, health and social care agencies, the police and local authorities.

## What is Prevent?

The long-term solution to the threat faced by the UK from domestic or international terrorism is not just about more effective policing. It is about tackling the factors that can cause people to become drawn into violent extremism and empowering individuals and communities to stand up to violent extremists.

**An integral part of CONTEST, the Prevent programme aims to stop people either from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It does this by:**

- challenging the spread of extremist ideology
- preventing vulnerable individuals from being drawn in by it, and
- working with a wide range of sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation

In essence, it is concerned with early intervention; supporting those who may be at risk of committing a criminal offence if they are not appropriately supported.

**Channel is a key part of the Prevent strategy. It uses existing links between local authorities, statutory partners, the police and local communities to:**

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

Support may consist of help with family problems, mental health support, religious support, mentoring or anything else deemed to be suitable. Wherever possible, Channel will compliment any mechanisms or interventions already in place to safeguard the individual.

## What is Extremism?

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 (the government) also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

There are many different types of extremism, but could be grounded in religion, the far right, islamophobia, animal rights or politics, among others

## What is Radicalisation?

Radicalisation is process by which people come to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism

It is distinct from radicalism - within which Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King might be appropriately categorised - in that it seeks to disenfranchise; that is, to create a narrative that doesn't already exist rather than fight for a cause borne out of injustice and oppression

**Radicalisation has a complex, often overlapping, range of causes which vary from one organisation or individual to another, but may include:**

- Political or economic grievances
- Social and psychological factors
- A feeling of not being accepted by, or having an affinity with, family, community or state

“ 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. ”



## Local authority duties

The Prevent duty guidance, published alongside the Act, goes into more detail about what is expected of us as a local authorities.

### We must:

- Communicate and promote the work and intentions of the Prevent programme
- Establish or make use of an existing local multi-agency groups to agree risk and co-ordinate and monitor the impact of our Prevent activity. These are known locally as the Channel Multi-Agency Panels (MAPs) and include a wide variety of relevant partners, including each local authority, Cheshire Police, probation, health, social care functions and youth offending services
- Use our existing counter-terrorism local profiles to begin to assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism
- Engage with our Prevent co-ordinator, our education institutions, health, probation services, enforcement agencies and others as part of the risk assessment process
- Mainstream the Prevent duty so that it becomes part of the day-to-day work of each authority - in particular safeguarding
- Develop Prevent Action Plans where, through each Multi-Agency group, a risk has been highlighted
- Ensure that front-line staff have a good understanding of Prevent, are trained to recognise vulnerability and are aware of available programmes to deal with this issue

## What is already happening across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington

- **Community Engagement**, helping communities to themselves identify and challenge extremism
- **Channel Programme**, which has operated successfully across the Cheshire Police footprint for around three years
- **Training Staff** within partner agencies, including education, health, young offending and the police - as well as key organisations in the private sector - to spot and refer people at risk of supporting extremism
- **Support for organisations and individuals** to change extremist ideology and uphold values of tolerance, democracy, cohesion and equality, through community-based activities and projects



2011: Govt publishes its overarching  
**Counter Terrorism Strategy: CONTEST**  
split into four streams  
Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare

**Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015**  
puts Prevent and Channel on a statutory  
footing for all partner agencies

## Prevent

**Aim:** to stop people becoming or supporting terrorists by:

- challenging the spread of terrorist ideology
- supporting vulnerable individuals
- working in key sectors where there may be risks

Contact: [prevent@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@cheshire.pnn.police.uk)

What's happening in Cheshire, Halton and Warrington?

- Community engagement ... to identify/challenge, and root out issues
- Channel
- Safeguarding and training
- Support for organisations and individuals ... including community activities and projects

## Channel

A key element of the Prevent strategy

**Aim:** to identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, assess the nature and extent of that risk; and develop an appropriate support plan

Contact: [prevent@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@cheshire.pnn.police.uk)

What's happening in Cheshire, Halton and Warrington?

- Operating successfully for around 2 years
- People assessed as vulnerable have been given multi-agency support
- Safeguarding and training
- consisting of, among other things, help with family problems, mental health support, religious support and mentoring

Duty to  
actively  
participate

## Specific Authorities

**Local Authorities**  
Offender Institutions  
Schools  
Health and Social Care  
Police

## Home Office Prevent Duty Guidance

**Local Authorities** should:

- establish mechanisms, or use existing, for understanding the risk of radicalisation
- ensure that staff understand/ are equipped
- communicate and promote Prevent
- ensure that staff implement it effectively

## Plan for our local Councils

- maintain regular and effective dialogue and co-ordination with communities
- use existing counter terrorism local profiles produced for every region by the police to assess local risk
- ensure that there are clear and robust safeguarding policies to identify children at risk
- train staff to recognise people at risk and report their suspicions appropriately
- ensure that publicly-owned venues and resources don't provide extremism platform
- make appropriate referrals to Channel

## Our Vision is

“ To stop people within our communities becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism ”

### This will be delivered through three Priorities

- Embed Prevent into our mainstream activities
- Build resilience to extremist ideologies within our communities
- Safeguard those most vulnerable to the messages of extremists

#### Embed Prevent into our mainstream activities

##### Why?

It is not possible to resolve the current terrorist threats we face simply by arresting and prosecuting more people. The Prevent programme is based on the ethos that prevention is better than cure, and

intervening at the earliest possible stage of the process of radicalisation is the most effective way to ensure a reduction in support for terrorism of all kinds. Our local Channel Multi-Agency Panels will assume operational responsibility for the duties

##### How?

Train our staff to recognise the signs of vulnerability and know what to do about it

Maximise links between policies and strategies that deal with vulnerability

Maintain an awareness of risks and put measures in place to mitigate them

#### Build resilience to extremist ideologies within our communities

##### Why?

This strategy will not be effective if communities do not play a key role in the development of preventative work and

community based solutions to local issues which create a potential platform for extremists to spread their divisive and dangerous ideologies

##### How?

Communicate and promote the work and intentions of the Prevent programme

Identify, understand and counter extremist ideologies in partnership with a range of institutions

Maintain regular and effective dialogue and co-ordination with community-based organisations

## Safeguard those most vulnerable to the messages of extremists

### Why?

Safeguarding individuals from radicalisation and violent extremism is important. More and more vulnerable people are being influenced by alluring and dangerous views through new social peer groups and online,

are not making conscious and rational decisions about supporting or becoming terrorists and need to be protected by the agencies and professionals who have a duty to care for them

### How?

Ensure there are clear and robust safeguarding policies to identify children and adults at risk of radicalisation

Share information regularly and effectively with our partners

Ensure that publicly-owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists

## Signs of radicalisation

There is no definitive list of factors that will be present in the case of a person who has been radicalised. Every person is different, their personal experiences are different and the ways in which they might be exploited are wide-ranging.

A victim of radicalisation who we spoke to during the development of this Strategy noted that the feelings she experienced in the course of being radicalised were:

- A sense of superiority
- Being inappropriately euphoric
- Loss of her sense of humour
- Being more argumentative and quick to condemn contradictory views
- Loss of abstraction and erosion of critical-thinking skills
- Being cold, emotionless, isolated, withdrawn and secretive

However, any changes in a person's views or behaviour must be considered against the unique personal circumstances of the individual in question - some or none of the above may be present in other cases.



## How to report suspicions

Members of the public should always remain alert to the danger of terrorism and report any suspicious activity to the police on 101, 999 or the anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321.

If your information does not relate to an imminent threat, you can also contact the Security Service via the How You Can Help us page on the M15 website.

### Our local co-ordinator can be contacted on:

Email: [prevent@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@cheshire.pnn.police.uk) Telephone: **01606 362121**

## Governance and Accountability

It is the responsibility of each local authority across the sub-region to establish its own governance and accountability structures, and decide how best to monitor performance against individual Action Plans. This is likely to involve the operational Channel MAPs being overseen by one or more strategic groups, such as Safeguarding Boards, Community Safety Partnerships or local Health and Wellbeing Boards.

The Cheshire Resilience Forum prepares for, responds to and recovers from any emergency - including those relating to terrorism - across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington. It is a multi-agency group covering our policing area which shares information and resources and responds together to an incident.

Along with neighbouring local authorities, its membership includes our emergency services, NHS and other relevant agencies, and is our front line local response to terrorist activity.





