



Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Scope of this chapter

Prevent is a strand of the UK Government's Counter-Terrorist Strategy known as 'CONTEST' and the purpose of Prevent is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. All schools and child care providers in England and Wales must have regard for the Prevent duty statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (CTSA) 2015. The Act places a duty ("the Prevent duty") on certain bodies listed in [schedule 6](#) of the Act as 'specified authorities' in England and Wales, and Scotland, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

The CTSA 2015 sets out the duty on local authorities to ensure that there is a local panel in place to assess, and to provide support for, people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and susceptible to radicalisation. The term 'Channel' refers to the local authority-led support and the duty as set out in the Act.

Channel remains a cornerstone of Prevent in providing early intervention to those who meet the Prevent threshold. Children can be vulnerable to the influences of extremism which could lead to radicalisation. Channel panels, established under the Act, arrange for support for individuals who have been assessed as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

National learning has highlighted the importance of compliance with Channel processes to reduce the risk of people being radicalised or supporting terrorism. All partners of a panel, must, as far as is appropriate and reasonably practicable, co-operate with the police and the panel to carry out their functions under CTSA 2015.

1. Definition

Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence. A terrorist 'ideology' is a set of beliefs, principles, and objectives to which an individual or group purports to adhere and attempts to instil in others to radicalise them towards becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. There are several concepts or 'tools' that often feature in terrorist and extremist ideologies, including: narrative, propaganda, grievances, and conspiracy theory.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Extremism is defined in the Prevent strategy as the 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. It also includes extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces.

Since the publication of the Prevent strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from radicalisation and extremist ideology.

Keeping children safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should be approached in the same way as safeguarding children from other risks. Children should be protected from messages of all violent and non-violent extremism.

2. Understanding and Recognising Risks and Susceptibility to Radicalisation and Extremism

Radicalisation is a process rather than an event, and there is no single profile or pathway by which an individual can be drawn into violence or exposed to extremist messages. Some people may be influenced by family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups or organisations. Others may view online content, in particular social media, that can normalise radical views or promote violent extremism.

In all cases, professionals should ensure that judgements consider individual circumstances and place the behaviour of an individual in their whole family and social context.

2.1 Vulnerabilities

A person's susceptibility to radicalisation may be linked to their vulnerability. A person can be vulnerable if they need special care, support or protection because of age, disability, risk of abuse or neglect. A person's vulnerabilities may be relevant to their susceptibility to radicalisation and to the early intervention approach that is required to divert them away from radicalisation.

There are many factors which, either alone or combined with other vulnerabilities, can increase an individual's risk of being radicalised. These can include, but are not limited to:

- **Identity Crisis** - Distance from cultural / religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them;
- **Personal Crisis** - Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- **Personal Circumstances** - Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy; experience of care (previous looked after child);

- **Unmet aspirations** - Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of community values;
- **Criminality** - Experiences of imprisonment; previous involvement with criminal groups.

2.2 Indicators

Indicators that an individual may be experiencing or at risk of radicalisation can include, but are not limited to:

- General changes of mood, patterns of behaviour, secrecy;
- Changes of friends and mode of dress;
- Use of inappropriate language;
- Spending an increased amount of time online;
- Possession of violent extremist literature;
- The expression of extremist views;
- Planning to take long term holidays and visits out of the UK;
- Advocating violent actions and means;
- Association with known extremists;
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

Note: There is an obvious difference between espousing radical and extreme views and acting on them. Holding radical or extreme views is not illegal; what is illegal is the act of committing an offence or inciting others to do so in the name of that belief or view. A common feature of radicalisation is that the individual often does not recognise the exploitative nature of what is happening and does not see themselves as a victim.

3. Protection and Action to be Taken

Any practitioner identifying concerns about the child or young person should report them to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) in their organisation. DSLs should exercise their professional judgment about whether a referral should be made to seek support under Prevent and act proportionately as they do for all other safeguarding risks. Also see: [Get Help for Radicalisation Concerns \(GOV.UK\)](#).

If someone is at immediate risk of harm due to radicalisation or violent extremism, or if you believe that a terrorist act is being committed or planned, alert the police using 999.

If this is not the case, a police referral should be made under the Prevent duty (see below).

If the threshold for raising a safeguarding concern has been met, a concern should also be raised to the local authority in line with safeguarding children procedures. The Safeguarding Referrals Process should be followed. [Concern about a child | NELC](#)

Upon receiving the concern, if the police are not already aware, the local authority should make a referral under the Prevent duty (see below). This will ensure that the police can evaluate the need for any police action to reduce the risk from potential terrorist activity.

Safeguarding people from radicalisation and extremism requires careful assessment and collaborative working across agencies. Initial information may be inconclusive, and the most appropriate action can be dependent on a wider range of factors.

Extremist groups may make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered. Online material which promotes extremism, such as illegal or harmful videos and images, can be reported online to the government.

See: [Report online material promoting terrorism of extremism \(GOV.UK\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/report-online-material-promoting-terrorism-of-extremism).

4. Prevent, the Prevent Duty and Channel

4.1 Prevent

'Prevent' is one of the four pillars of the UK government's counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

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

'Prevent' has three main objectives:

1. Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism;
2. Intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation;
3. Enable individuals who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

4.2 The Prevent Duty

Under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, specified authorities must, in the exercise of their normal functions, have due regard to the need to prevent individuals of any age from being drawn into terrorism. This includes becoming a terrorist or supporting terrorism. This is the Prevent duty.

The aim of the Prevent duty is to stop individuals from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Supporting individuals already involved in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate is also part of the duty. The duty helps to ensure that individuals who are susceptible to radicalisation are supported as they would be under existing safeguarding processes.

The specified authorities to whom the Prevent duty applies are:

- Local authorities;
- Education;
- Healthcare;
- Police;

- Criminal justice agencies (prisons and probation).

[Prevent Duty Guidance: Guidance for Specified Authorities in England and Wales \(GOV.UK\)](#) - is the statutory guidance that sets out the expectations for each specified authority and the ways in which it should comply with the Prevent duty.

Where an individual is identified as being susceptible to radicalisation, a Prevent referral should be made to the police. These referrals should be made in line with local processes and requirements.

The police will evaluate the referral and, if there are reasonable grounds to suspect the individual is at risk of radicalisation, make a further referral to the local Channel Panel (see below).

If the risk is serious or imminent, the police may decide that a Channel Panel approach would not be appropriate. Neither should a Channel Panel referral be made after radicalisation has occurred.

4.3 Channel Panel

Under Section 36 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, as part of the UK Government's Prevent strategy, each local authority has a duty to ensure there is a local Channel Panel in place.

Where the police assess a radicalisation risk following a Prevent referral, a Channel panel will meet to discuss the referral, assess the risk and decide whether the person should be accepted into Channel. Once accepted, the panel agree a tailored package of support to be offered to the person.

The Channel Panel is a multi-agency panel chaired by the local authority that must include the police and other relevant local partner agencies. It can be a single area panel or a combined panel with other local authorities.

The role of the Panel is to intervene as early as possible to ensure that people of any faith, ethnicity or background who are at risk of radicalisation receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist activity.

The Children Act 1989 promotes the view that all children and their parents should be considered as individuals and that family structures, culture, religion, ethnic origins, and other characteristics should be respected. When providing support to an individual on the Channel programme, local authorities and their partners should consider how best to align assessments under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. Links should be established between Channel panels and other statutory partners, including safeguarding partners and YOTs.

The following are a few examples of possible support responses:

- Faith guidance;
- Counselling;

- Diversionary activities;
- Access to specific services, such as health or education.

Wherever possible the response should be appropriately and proportionately provided from within the normal range of universal provision available from local agencies and partners.

Multi-agency involvement in Channel is essential to ensure the full range of information is accessible to the panel, so that susceptibility, vulnerabilities, risk and support needs can be fully assessed.

Each agency is responsible for implementing the actions allocated to them. The effectiveness of the response should be regularly reviewed and updated as required should the risk level change.

In carrying out their role, the Channel Panel must have regard to the [Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting People Susceptible to Radicalisation \(GOV.UK\)](#) .

The Channel process is a voluntary process. If an individual is over the age of 18, it can only take place if they consent (or in their best interests if they lack capacity to consent). Where the individual is under 18, consent must be sought from a parent or legal guardian. In all cases, if consent is not obtained within 3 months of the Channel process starting, the case must close and alternative options to safeguard the individual explored. (For example, this could be a health/social care intervention).

5. Training and Awareness

All professionals and staff who engage with the public should:

- Understand what radicalisation means and why individuals may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism as a consequence of it;
- Be aware of what the government means by the term 'extremism' and the relationship between extremism and terrorism;
- Know what measures are available to prevent individuals from becoming drawn into terrorism and how to challenge the extremist ideology that can be associated with it;
- Understand how to obtain support for individuals who may be being exploited by radicalising influences.

There is a range of free, online training available on the government website. This includes an awareness course, Prevent referrals course and a Channel course. For further information, or to access the training courses see: [Prevent duty training \(GOV.UK\)](#) .

Note: The Home Office can provide additional training to Channel Panel Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Panel members.

NHS staff should also use the [NHS Prevent training and competencies framework \(GOV.UK\)](#).

6. Further Information

Legislation, Statutory Guidance and Government Non-Statutory Guidance

[Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[Counter-terrorism strategy \(CONTEST\)](#)

[Channel Duty Guidance: Protection of vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[Make a Referral to Prevent \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[Get help for radicalisation concerns \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[The Prevent duty: an introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[Managing risk of radicalisation in your Education setting \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[The Prevent Duty: Safeguarding Learners Vulnerable to Radicalisation \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[Prevent duty: risk assessment templates - Prevent duty risk assessment templates for early years, schools and further education providers \(GOV.UK\)](#)

Useful Websites

[Educate Against Hate](#) - learning materials and resources for schools and further education providers on how to challenge radical views.

[Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[Act Early for Signs of Radicalisation - What to Look For](#)