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PREPARE PROJECT

Preventing radicalisation through probation and release

United Kingdom: a strategy for the early prevention of radicalisation including in prison and probation

The United Kingdom has a four-pronged anti-terrorist strategy that includes a strand, "Prevent", aimed at preventing at the earliest possible stage individuals from being drawn to radicalism. This strategy was updated in 2015 to include the role of prison and probation in prevention and disengagement.

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Probation allows for individualised follow-up for prisoners leaving prison and mobilises many services (prison administration, justice services, etc.). As a result, it is a key moment to act against the violent radicalisation of these individuals, whether it took place in prison or on release. Local authorities have a key role to play in coordinating these different institutions. They can also use their knowledge and know-how in the field of prevention of reoffending and disengagement.

PREPARE contributes to the prevention of radicalisation through disengagement and rehabilitation programmes during release and probation, notably through multi-agency partnerships that include local authorities.

Efus coordinates this project from 2017 to 2019 with a broad partnership of local authorities and civil society organisation: City of Malaga and Generalitat of Catalonia (Spain), Rotterdam and The Hague (Netherlands), Bagnolet (France) and Vilvoorde (Belgium), Violence Prevention Network and Denkzeit (Germany), Fryshuset (Sweden), European Forum for Restorative Justice (Belgium) and Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion (France).

1. Preparation of national strategy against radicalisation

>>>> *Background*

The United Kingdom comprises of three jurisdictions:

- England and Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland.

Each of these jurisdictions is distinctive and has responded to the threat of violent extremism in different ways.

The British Government's approach to addressing terrorism was set out in its Counter Extremism Strategy in 2015¹. It defines extremism as "the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of armed forces as extremist." A key theme within the strategy is countering extremist ideology and radicalisation.

Following terrorist attacks in Westminster, Manchester, London Bridge and Finsbury Park during 2017, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy has taken on greater significance. A new Commission for Countering Extremism has been established along with a review of counter-terrorism powers and a commitment to tackling online extremist content.

In June 2018, the Government published CONTEST², a revised strategy for countering terrorism. It updated the four work strands of Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare.

Prevent aims to safeguard people from being drawn into terrorism and ensuring that they are given appropriate advice and support. This aspect of the British government's strategy is the most relevant to the PREPARE project as it directly seeks to respond rapidly and to support those who may be at risk of radicalisation.

Delivery of this strand of safeguarding work is coordinated at a national level by the Scottish Government and Police Scotland working in conjunction with national organisations, local partners and communities. While Northern Ireland experienced an intense period of politically motivated violence between 1969 and 1998, the threat of terrorism is now assessed as moderate rather than substantial due to progress being made on the peace process.³ The British strategy, Prevent, is not applied in Northern Ireland.

There were 441 arrests for terrorist-related activity in the year ending March 2018 in England and Wales (63 more than the previous year; a 17% increase)⁴. This was the highest number in a year since 2001/02. The latest figures include the 52 arrests made following a number of specific terrorist attacks;

¹ HM Government (2015) Counter Extremism Strategy London HMSO.

² HM Government (2018) CONTEST, The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism London HMSO.

³ The Northern Ireland Peace Agreement

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/136652/agreement.pdf

⁴ Home Office Press Release 14 June 2018

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/715708/police-powers-terrorism-mar2018snr.pdf

the Manchester concert (22 May 2017), the London Bridge attack (3 June 2017), the Finsbury Park Mosque attack (19 June 2017) and the Parsons Green attack (15 September 2017).

In the year ending March 2018, there were 81 trials initiated by the Crown Prosecution Service Counter Terrorism Division (CPS CTD) for terrorism-related offences. This was an increase of 3% on the 79 trials in the previous year. Of the 81 persons proceeded against, 72 (89%) were convicted. There were 25 appeals against terrorism convictions, of which just 2 resulted in a reduced sentence.

In March 2018, there were 228 persons in custody for terrorism-related offences, an increase of 27% on the 180 persons in custody in March 2017. Of those in custody, 186 (82%) were categorised as holding Islamist extremist views, whilst 29 (13%) were categorised as holding far right-wing ideologies. A total of 48 prisoners held for terrorism-related offences were released from custody in the year ending December 2017.

>>>>> *Objectives*

The UK Counter-Terrorism (CONTEST) Strategy has been developed to address the terrorist threat. There are four strands:

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

The Prevent strategy was first published in 2011. It has three objectives:

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

These were revised in 2018:

- Objective 1: Tackling the causes of radicalisation.
- Objective 2: Early intervention: safeguarding and supporting those most at risk of radicalisation by identifying them and offering support.
- Objective 3: Rehabilitation: enabling those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

>>>>> *Actions*

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015⁵ places a duty on certain bodies in England, Wales and Scotland to have, in the exercise of their functions, “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. A key part of Prevent is to raise awareness of the causal factors and risks

⁵ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/pdfs/ukpga_20150006_en.pdf

of radicalisation and engagement in or support for terrorism. The aim is to intervene at the earliest possible stage, and proactively support individuals or groups to prevent them from becoming or supporting terrorists.

Revised Guidelines⁶ on Prevent were published to support the new legislation, which outline a risk-based approach. They emphasise the importance of effective leadership, effective partnership and appropriate capabilities. All specified authorities are expected to comply and keep records of their compliance.

The Revised Guidelines specify the following activities:

- Focus our activity and resources in those locations where the threat from terrorism and radicalisation is highest.
- Expand our Desistance and Disengagement Programme with an immediate aim over the next 12 months to more than double the number of individuals receiving rehabilitative interventions.
- Develop a series of multi-agency pilots to trial methods to improve our understanding of those at risk of involvement in terrorism and enable earlier intervention.
- Focus our online activity on preventing the dissemination of terrorist material and building strong counter-terrorist narratives in order to ensure there are no safe places for terrorists online.
- Build stronger partnerships with communities, civil society groups, public sector institutions and industry to improve Prevent delivery.
- Re-enforce safeguarding at the heart of Prevent to ensure our communities and families are not exploited or groomed into following a path of violent extremism.

The Prevent strategy has been subjected to criticism on the basis of a 'serious risk to human rights'⁷. According to the Open Society's report these include violations of the right against discrimination and the right to freedom of expression. Prevent's overly broad and vague definition of "non-violent extremism" creates the potential for systemic human rights abuses including inappropriate referrals to programmes and the cancellations of events in universities. It fosters an Islamophobic culture. By requiring the identification and reporting of individuals at risk of radicalisation, Prevent creates a risk of violations of the right to privacy. The principle of the best interests of the child may be compromised by early intervention with children at risk of radicalisation. Prevent also places health professionals in conflict with their duty of confidentiality. Ultimately the strategy may be counterproductive by alienating Muslims.

2. Prevention of radicalisation in prison, release and probation

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has overall responsibility for both the Probation Service and the Prison Service in the UK. In 2008, a team in the NOMS Interventions Unit began to develop assessment systems and interventions to address violent extremism. The 'What Works' research and principles of effective practice were adapted to what was known about violent extremism.

Delivery of the Healthy Identity Intervention⁸ (HII) was tested in 2010 and evaluated positively in 2011. Following revisions to the intervention, it has been available for delivery to all convicted extremist offenders in both custody and community who are assessed as suitable.

⁶ Revised Prevent Duty Guidelines for England and Wales (2015) HM Government; London

⁷ Eroding Trust: The UK's Counter-Extremism Strategy in Health and Education (2016) Open Society Foundations. New York.

⁸ Prison Service Journal, Special Edition "Combating Extremism & Terrorism", September 2012, N°203. <https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/sites/crimeandjustice.org.uk/files/PSJ%20September%202012%20No.%20203.pdf>

The purpose of HII is to prevent individuals from committing extremist offences. The programme is designed to disengage participants from extremist groups or ideologies and focuses on the concept of identity. It enables them to reflect upon motivations, beliefs and perceptions associated with violent extremism. Through this process they are encouraged to dissociate themselves from negative influences and to move on with their lives in a positive direction.

The process is facilitated through individual rather than group work by two practitioners. The relationship between the participant and the workers is critical to the success of intervention. The individual will be assessed through the Extremism Risk Guidelines 22+ ⁹ (ERG22+). The programme is then tailored to each participant's identified risks, needs and circumstances.

Through the modules participants will have the opportunity to:

- Meet their personal needs without needing to be committed to an extremist group, cause or ideology
- Strengthen their own sense of personal agency in making decisions about their current and future commitments
- Address their offence-supportive attitudes, beliefs and thinking
- Express their values and pursue their goals without needing to offend
- Increase their tolerance and acceptance of challenging emotions.

The intervention is not designed to re-educate participants' beliefs. It does however allow participants to think critically. There is a programme manual to ensure consistency and integrity and it is delivered by specially trained workers who are supervised throughout the process.

The modules include:

- **Engagement and Insight Sessions:** Focus on the participant's needs, beliefs and values, help them explore what is important in their lives and how they can work towards fulfilling these values and goals without having to remain engaged in an extremist group or cause or having to offend.
- **Foundation Sessions:** Participants identify how they have come to be the person they are today (their identity), why they became interested and involved with a group, cause or ideology and (if relevant) the reasons why they offended.
- **Mindfulness Sessions:** Help participants to manage and tolerate specific thoughts or feelings which may impair their daily lives, their ability to engage fully in intervention work and/or their ability to relate to staff.
- **Personal Identity Sessions:** Participants re-examine the specific commitments they have made in their lives and how they can make new commitments or strengthen old ones to get on in life without offending.
- **Group Involvement Sessions:** Participants explore the costs and benefits of their involvement and offending (including any disillusionment) and the changes they can make to their involvement to get on in life without offending.

⁹ In 2009 Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS formerly the National Offender Management Service (NOMS)) developed and piloted the Structured Risk Guidance (SRG) for Extremist Offenders. The SRG process is divided into three stages: planning and gathering information, assessing potential areas of criminogenic need according to 21 factors which may be linked to extremist offending and considering the risk of serious harm in the context of an individual's beliefs, intent, motivation and capability. Following an evaluation the SRG was revised in 2012 and became the Extremism Risk Guidance 22+ (ERG22+).

- **Self-Image Sessions:** Participants explore how they can make changes in their life to maintain a desired self-image/identity without offending.
- **Group Conflict Sessions:** Participants develop insight into why they may have taken sides and supported or committed harm against another group and how they can deal with similar events differently in the future.
- **Seeking Change Sessions:** Participants reconsider and question the legitimacy of offending to achieve and express their own ideological or political goals and values.
- **Moving on Sessions:** Help participants consider how they can move forward with their lives in a way that fits with their values, beliefs and needs in a constructive way. They also look at concrete ways in which participants can make progress including skills they can develop, opportunities they can make and take, relationships they can form or strengthen and any additional intervention work they may need.

The Revised Prevent Duty Guidelines for England and Wales (2015) specify the role of prisons and probation within the Prevent strategy. In prisons there is an emphasis on initial and ongoing risk assessment and intelligence gathering. Risk may be managed through the privilege system, anti-bullying intervention, adjudication or segregation. Appropriate theological, motivational or behavioural programmes may also be offered.

On release Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) should be used to manage risk and consideration should be given to referral to Channel (see below).

Probation in the UK comprises of two organisational structures: a public agency, the National Probation Service, which supervises high risk cases and the Community Rehabilitation Companies, which are private organisations supervising lower risk offenders. Probation has a key role in reducing risk of terrorism in the community. Each National Probation Service division is expected to have a designated Probation Counter-Terrorism Lead (PCTL) and to work through Community Safety Partnerships. Probation staff are expected to adopt an investigative approach to risk assessment. Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG) and Extremism Risk Screening (ERS) should always be written with the intention of sharing the document with the offender. In those cases where the report relies upon information that should not be disclosed to the offender, a sanitized version should be prepared or if this is not feasible the document should be marked OFFICIAL SENSITIVE and stored in the non-disclosure section of the case records.

The NOMS Extremism Unit (ExU) is part of NOMS Security Group and is responsible for developing the strategic, policy and procedural responses appropriate to the risks presented by terrorists, extremists and radicalisers. It receives intelligence and information on extremism from all prisons in England and Wales and uses this information to produce a strategic analysis to assist operational colleagues in prisons and to inform future intelligence gathering. The ExU works with Regional Counter Terrorism Coordinators (RCTCs) based across the regions in England and Wales to develop intelligence and to monitor and manage terrorist or extremist prisoners in custody. RCTCs work with key partners such as probation, police and security services to share information and help manage the risk these offenders pose. Probation CT leads work closely with the RCTC.

Probation Regional Counter Terrorism Leads (PCTLs) are responsible for ensuring that, at a divisional level, the NPS has in place robust processes that support information sharing, intelligence and decision making

on the prison pathfinder project¹⁰ and the police-led Multi Agency Extremism Screening Meeting (MAESM). They will:

- Ensure that the National Probation Service (NPS) divisions are compliant with the mandatory actions outlined in the probation instruction of October 2014 titled PI 10/2014.
- Co-ordinate the sharing of intelligence between police, prisons and other partner agencies e.g. Special Cases Directorate in the Home Office due to their involvement with foreign national offenders, with the National Probation Service at (NPS) a regional and local level.
- Co-ordinate information sharing between police, prisons and the national probation Service on relevant convicted offenders.
- Provide information and assessment at the Counter Terrorism Unit's regional Multi Agency Extremism Screening meetings and Prevent Case Management meetings and attend these as the NOMS/NPS divisional representative.
- Maintain close working relationships with the Prisons Regional CT co-ordinator, including the high security estate, to ensure prisons are providing effective sentence planning, and appropriate work whilst offenders are in custody and effective preparation for release and supervision on licence or any other form of post-sentence supervision.
- Ensure information from Pathfinder meetings is shared with the NPS and MAPPAs (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement), if appropriate.
- Support and provide guidance to all grades of NPS staff and partners on effective risk assessment and management of these offenders. This will include the use of a range of recently developed assessments and interventions, and advice and guidance in relation to the storage, sharing and management of sensitive data.
- Attend MAPPAs meetings on known extremists and facilitate police CTU staff attendance. Provide specialist advice and guidance to MAPPAs as appropriate.
- Ensure the NPS has processes in place to report concerns about extremism directly to CTU and other partners.
- Raise awareness about how sentences are managed and the broader work of NPS/MAPPAs with the CTU and other stakeholders.
- Facilitate sound partnership arrangements with the Prevent section of the CTU including Channel staff, and develop protocols for joint working with referred NPS cases.

¹⁰ Pathfinder prisons are establishments where detainees can spend the last three months of their sentence so that release plans can be properly prepared.

- To provide the centre with a single point of contact to update on progress of individual offenders and co-ordinate any new developments in extremism work. This would include attendance at monthly national meetings alongside the prison regional counter terrorism coordinators (RCTCs) to ensure that local views can be shared nationally but also provide a co-ordinated NOMS (National Offender Management Service) position on this work across the country.

The Desistance and Disengagement Programme (DDP) is new to Prevent work. The programme has been running in pilot during 2017, focusing on people subject to court approved conditions, including all terrorism and terrorism-related offenders on probation licence, as well as those on Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIMs) and those who have returned from conflict zones in Syria or Iraq and are subject to Temporary Exclusion Orders (TEOs). Where mandated for individuals subject to TEOs, TPIMs or probation requirements, non-compliance could lead to the possibility of being charged for breach of conditions or being recalled to prison.

A range of intensive tailored interventions and practical support have been designed to address the causes of radicalisation, needs for identity, self-esteem, meaning and purpose, and to address personal grievances that the extremist narrative has exacerbated. Support can include mentoring, psychological support, theological and ideological advice.

3. *Role of local authorities within the above mentioned initiatives in release and probation*

In 2015, the law was strengthened to place an obligation on specified public organisations to prevent people being “drawn into terrorism”. This included local authorities.

The Revised Prevent Duty Guidelines for England and Wales (2015) specify government’s expectations of local authorities. They should work through a multi-agency partnership and use the counter-terrorism local profiles produced by the police to assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism and engage Prevent coordinators, schools, registered child care providers, universities, local prisons, probation services, health, immigration enforcement and youth offending teams. Local Prevent action plans should be produced to identify, prioritise and deliver projects, interventions and other activities to address the risk of involvement in terrorism. Records should be kept on these activities and these will be subject to reporting mechanisms to government. Staff should be trained appropriately and local authority resources, including the internet, should not be used to provide a platform or to disseminate extremist views.

The Local Government Association published *Councils’ role in preventing extremism*¹¹ in 2017. The guidance highlights the importance of local authorities basing their work on a properly understood level of risk within their areas using Counter-Terrorism Local Profiles, and drawing together information from a wide range of stakeholders. It also sets out a number of other key considerations including:

¹¹ Local Government Association (2017) Councils’ role in preventing extremism
<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/councils-role-preventing--d11.pdf> (2017)

- Councils should work with a number of private and voluntary agencies which work with children, for example children's homes, independent fostering agencies, and bodies exercising local authority functions. These bodies must ensure as part of their local authority safeguarding arrangements that staff are aware of Prevent.
- Local authorities should take steps to understand the range of activity happening in their area to support children outside of local schools and take appropriate and proportionate steps to ensure that children attending such settings are appropriately safeguarded.

The report outlines a range of examples of action taken by local authorities:

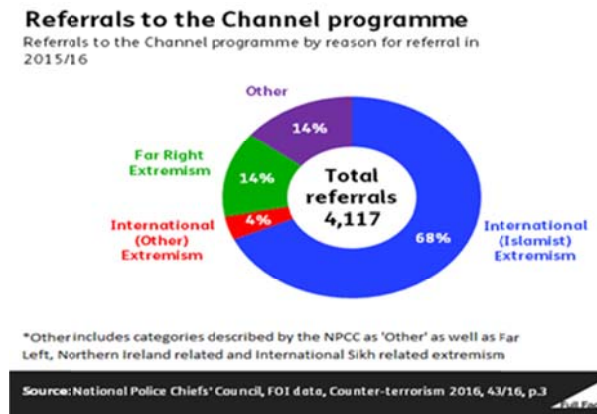
- Birmingham has appointed a schools resilience adviser to help them address the Prevent agenda. The post-holder is working with over 400 schools making sure they have the support they need and are able to access the right training. The role also involves providing more tailored support to schools that need it, including regular one-to-one contact where necessary.
- Bristol established a successful partnership with the Muslim community called Building the Bridge. It is now redeveloping that scheme so it has a wider focus to tackle the new Prevent agenda head-on. This includes setting up advisory groups to engage women and young people and tackle far-right extremism.
- Calderdale Council has worked with taxi drivers to maximise the reach of its Prevent work. It has been able to recruit dedicated staff, including a Prevent coordinator. The focus for the future will be working with women and schools.
- Cornwall has put a big emphasis on helping tackle dangerous internet use. It has used an EU project to help parents keep their IT-savvy children safe. Prevent training is also being rolled out to groups such as local Scouts to ensure its impact is felt far-and-wide.
- Greenwich has been working on this issue since 2012 and has used football as a medium to reach out to the local community. The project resulted in participants playing a friendly match against soldiers from Woolwich barracks where Lee Rigby¹² was based when he was murdered. The council has also developed an interactive DVD for school children which is being rolled out nationally.
- Another London borough has worked closely with local schools. More than 1,600 pupils have taken part in its Digital Resilience programme to help children stay safe online. A Young Leaders training programme is also being run to create a network of 'community connectors' to tackle extremism.

¹² Lee Rigby was a British Army soldier who was murdered by two assailants in a street of London near his barracks in 2013. The perpetrators told passers-by they had killed a soldier to avenge the killing of Muslims by the British armed forces.

>>>> Channel

Channel is part of the Prevent strategy. Through this programme the police work with local councils, social workers, National Health Service staff, schools and the justice system to identify those at risk of being

Channel is part of the Prevent strategy. Through this programme the police work with local councils, social workers, National Health Service staff, schools and the justice system to identify those at risk of being drawn into terrorism, assess the risk and determine how to intervene to reduce the risk. Interventions may include mentoring or structured programmes to address the risk.



4. Other relevant initiatives Role of local authorities within the above mentioned initiatives in release and probation

Quilliam is a London-based organisation that focuses on counter-extremism. It campaigns specifically against Islamism and lobbies government. It works to take on radicalisation through challenging its arguments.

Quilliam publishes reports, engages with the media, and delivers through its “Outreach and Training” unit a “radicalisation awareness programme” intended to develop students' understanding of the following:

- The difference between Islam as a faith and Islamism as a radicalising political ideology which justifies violence;
- The different pathways into radicalisation;
- A detailed explanation of the process of radicalisation, the key causes of it and how it manifests itself;
- A thorough understanding of Islamist paradigms and extremists' propaganda;
- An exposition of the political narrative and manipulation of grievances which are exploited and used to groom vulnerable individuals;
- The cultivation of a climate which provides support for political violence;
- Explanation of the contextual nature of Islamist political ideas – as a modern and totalitarian manipulation of traditional religious ideas;

- A comprehensive ideological and theological refutation of Islamist thought, providing a counter-narrative for those who need to engage directly.

This is a controversial organisation that is criticised by other Muslim organisations, which see it as not typical of the general Muslim population in the UK.