



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee

Report to the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee

Title:	Meeting the Prevent Duty in Buckinghamshire
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Purpose of Agenda Item

This report provides information to the Select Committee about the Prevent Duty, the progress to date in meeting the Duty within County Council and the proposed next steps. This is a complex and sensitive new area of work for the organisation and the several key partners who also subject to the Duty within Buckinghamshire.

Background

1. The Prevent Duty

1.1. The Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 introduced the Prevent Duty (enacted July 2015) which states that the prescribed bodies, in the exercise of their duties:

"...must have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

1.2. In summary, the Duty applies to:

- Local authorities
- Other agencies working with vulnerable adults, children and young people where the work is being discharged on behalf of a local authority
- NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts
- Higher & Further Education
- Schools
- Prison and probation
- The Police



1.3. The statutory guidance sets out that there are two key elements to meeting the Prevent Duty:

- An **assessment of the risk** that goes beyond the Counter Terrorism Local Profiles (CTLP) produced by the Police so that there is demonstrable engagement with partners and those to whom the Duty applies. **Prevent action plans** will need to be developed to address any risks identified for an area and will, naturally, vary depending on whether or not an area is deemed a Prevent priority.
- The establishment of a **Channel Panel** so that any individuals of potential concern can be referred for appropriate interventions.

1.4. Those in leadership positions are expected to:

- Establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of radicalisation
- Ensure staff understand the risk and build the capabilities to deal with it
- Communicate and promote the importance of the duty
- Ensure staff implement the duty effectively

1.5. There is an expectation that local authorities will incorporate the duty into existing policies and procedures, so it becomes part of the day-to-day work of the authority, such as the need to ensure that there are clear and robust safeguarding policies to identify children (or vulnerable adults) at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

1.6. All specified authorities subject to the duty will need to ensure they:

- Provide appropriate training for staff involved in the implementation of this duty, including frontline staff who will need to understand what radicalisation means, why people may be vulnerable to it, how to spot the signs and how to report a potential referral to the Channel Panel;
- Do not provide a platform for extremists through allowing them to hire publicly-owned venues or access public resources to disseminate extremist views (including through IT equipment);
- Do not work with organisations who are engaged in any extremist activity or espouse extremist views; and
- Maintain appropriate records to show compliance with their responsibilities and provide reports when requested; and
- Have effective information sharing procedures in place that are proportionate and comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

1.7. The statutory guidance also states that

1.7.1. *'Local authorities should establish or make use of an existing local multi-agency group to agree risk and co-ordinate Prevent activity. Many local authorities use Community Safety Partnerships but other multi-agency forums may be appropriate.'*

1.7.2. *'In two-tier areas, county and district councils will need to agree proportionate arrangements for sharing the assessment of risk and for agreeing local Prevent action plans. It is expected that neighbouring areas will also agree proportionate*

arrangements for sharing the assessment of risk and for agreeing local Prevent action plans as appropriate.'

2. Local Roles and Responsibilities Around the Prevent Duty

2.1. The diagram at Appendix 1 sets out the how the Prevent Duty is managed in Buckinghamshire from strategic through to operational level. The key message is that whilst each agency has an individual statutory requirement to be compliant with this Duty, it is only by working in partnership, including with local communities and individuals, that we will deliver sustainable outcomes in tackling this agenda.

Counter Terrorism Police: South East (CTP:SE)

2.2. The Counter Terrorism Police: South East (CTP:SE) is responsible for providing a Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) briefing which is an intelligence based assessment of the priorities for partnership action. This information has, to date, been shared confidentially on an annual basis with the Chief Executives and quarterly using an infographic marked "Official: Sensitive" with two Boards and the Network referred to below.

Safer and Stronger Buckinghamshire Partnership Board (SSBPB)

2.3. The Safer & Stronger Buckinghamshire Partnership Board (SSBPB) is a statutory body and is the county's response to the Crime & Disorder Act Regulations 2007:

Regulation 8 – "For each county area there shall be a county strategy group whose function shall be to prepare a community safety agreement for the county area on behalf of the responsible authorities in that county area."

2.4. The SSBPB is the key strategic partnership for promoting safer and stronger communities and crime and disorder reduction at the county level. Through this Board the partners work together to tackle common issues, respond to shared challenges and champion evidenced based needs and robust analysis approach to determining priorities for action. In 2015 it agreed to have the strategic oversight for the Prevent Duty and the Channel Panel.

2.5. In January 2016 the SSBPB agreed a two year [strategy "Preventing Extremism"](#). The strategy underpins our work to meet our statutory requirement under the Prevent Duty and also reflects the strategic priorities of the Government's Countering Extremism Strategy (published in 2015). The Board wrote to all schools in May 2016 to raise awareness of the Prevent Duty and the support available from the County Council. The SSBPB strategy is due for a refresh in 2018 and the timetable for this work is under development.

2.6. The Prevent Action Plan to support the strategy is reviewed twice a year by the Board and quarterly by the Prevent Network (see paragraph 2.10 below).

2.7. The statutory guidance also makes strong links between Prevent and Safeguarding and, therefore, the SSBPB also links with the Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards and Health and Wellbeing Board. In addition both the Safeguarding threshold documents make

reference to possible indicators of radicalisation so that it can be recognised and referrals to CTP:SE made.

Wycombe District Council

- 2.8. Wycombe District Council, as a Prevent Priority Area, has established its own Prevent Board to ensure that there is a coordinated approach from partners to work to tackle extremism and radicalisation locally. Chaired by the Chief Executive, it oversees the development and implementation of local Prevent priorities and objectives and the delivery plan for Wycombe. Through additional Government funding received, the District Council employs a Prevent Coordinator, Prevent Education Officer and is able to commission Home Office approved projects. The County Council is a member of the Wycombe Prevent Board.

Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council

- 2.9. Each of the District Councils has developed an action plan to ensure that they are meeting the Prevent Duty and this is overseen by their individual Community Safety Partnerships.

Prevent Network

- 2.10. The county wide Prevent network was re-established in November 2014 in response to discussions with the districts and county. It is an operational group, chaired by the County Council and meets quarterly to review progress against the SSBPB Prevent action plan and update it when new risks or actions are identified. It also shares knowledge about good practice, problem solves, identifies existing and future training needs/opportunities and the resources to meet them.

3. Channel Panel

- 3.1. Buckinghamshire County Council has operated a Channel Panel since 2012. Channel is a statutory safeguarding process, with clear terms of reference (reviewed in 2017), based on national guidance, reviewed annually. It is a multi-agency group of public sector agencies including police, CCGs, Youth Offending Service, Mental Health Trust and the Probation Service. It is chaired by the County Council (currently a Head of Service in Children's Services). District Councils attend when a referral under discussion is a resident in their area.
- 3.2. The Channel Panel is bound by the Buckinghamshire Community Safety/ Information Sharing Protocol or any protocol that supersedes it. Each panel member is required to sign a confidentiality statement at each meeting.
- 3.3. The aim of the panel is to protect and divert individuals away from radicalisation and to do so before they have been drawn into terrorism. In doing so, the intended outcome is that both the individual and the wider community are kept safe. It is important to note that the

individuals considered by Channel are in the non-criminal space and that consent is required from individuals subject the Channel.

- 3.4. Referrals can be made to First Response in either Children’s or Adults’ Social Care, or direct to Prevent officers. The referral process is clearly explained on the [Buckinghamshire County Council website](#), and in face to face and on line training. Referrals are received from schools, the police, other professional agencies and the local community and individuals referred to the Panel are assessed to see what risk they pose to themselves and to others and a plan is drawn up to support them. The Prevent process flow diagram below is taken from “*Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent programme, April 2015 to March 2016*” (Home Office, Statistical Bulletin 23/17 published November 2017)

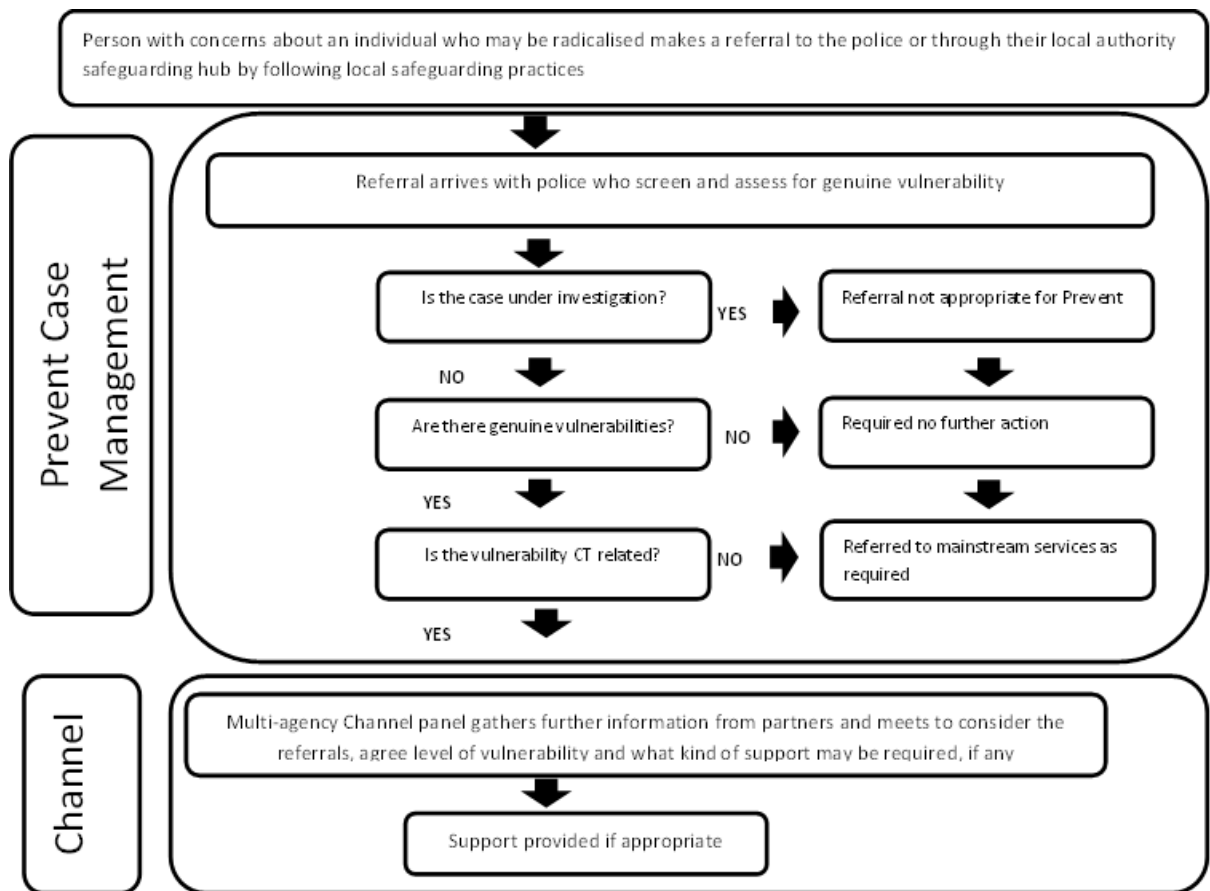


Figure 1 Prevent process flow diagram (Home Office, November 2017)

4. How the Prevent Duty is implemented in the County Council

- 4.1. In addition to partnership work undertaken by the County Council to support and work with partners to meet the Prevent Duty, it also has its own internal Prevent action plan. This is reviewed by the Corporate Management Team every 6 months and key areas of activity are covered below.

Engagement with Schools

- 4.2. The drive to get upstream of the risk of radicalisation has meant schools are a key partner to support this targeted work with children and young people. The work in schools continues with WRAP training now delivered on request by individual schools or via catch up sessions organised by the School Liaison Officers (SLOs) on a termly basis. We currently have over 90% of schools who have received WRAP on a whole school basis training. The Prevent Lead for schools (situated within BCC's Children's Business Unit) is, therefore, now targeting the few remaining schools who have yet to complete WRAP in order to achieve 100% at the earliest date possible.
- 4.3. The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in Buckinghamshire's schools have all received WRAP training and continue to be supported with refresher training to increase their confidence to deal with any issues related to radicalisation of children and young people.
- 4.4. "Critical Thinking" is a useful programme of work that many schools in Buckinghamshire advocate as it supports children and young people to become independent thinkers. 20 Bucks teachers attended a 2 day training course on Critical Thinking to enhance their skills in teaching in this area.
- 4.5. A plethora of research on vulnerabilities indicate that many young people can lack a sense of identity and have low self-esteem which can make them feel vulnerable and excluded from their communities. DSL training now includes discriminatory incident awareness to ensure staff feel confident to address any incidents which may impact on social exclusion and community cohesion.
- 4.6. Another project which supports children and young people to have a strong sense of identity is the Linking Project. This is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department for Education (DfE). It supports schools to forge links with schools from different contexts across Buckinghamshire. It also enables pupils and students to engage with their peers from diverse backgrounds and helps them to develop a strong sense of identity and respect for others. This work supports the statutory duty on schools to promote British Values under the Prevent agenda.
- 4.7. The ERASMUS + Anti radicalisation project is mid-way through its 3 year timeline and has seen teachers from Bucks schools participate in 3 days of workshops with their counterparts in France and Spain on addressing the risk of radicalisation facing young people at the Secondary phase. The outcomes of these workshops will see the said teachers developing innovative resources to support teaching and learning.
- 4.8. Advice and guidance to schools on Prevent is ongoing and the Prevent Lead for schools, with support from the Education Safeguarding Advisory Service, regularly receives calls from schools wanting further guidance to support keeping children and young people safe and free from the risk of radicalisation.

Not providing a platform for extremists

- 4.9. The risk of the County Council's IT systems being used as a platform to promote extremism is mitigated through the use of the Palo Alto web filtering system. ICT have also purchased a service from Cisco called Umbrella which provides an additional layer of protection sitting in front of the web filtering. The Council's libraries and community libraries that use the County Council's networks are also protected through this system. Community libraries who do not use our networks have been reminded of their responsibilities to ensure adequate filtering systems are in place.
- 4.10. The County Council provides Bucks Public Services Network (PSN) and Bucks Grid for Learning (GfL) to schools (including Pupil Referral Units and Specialist schools). The service provides a web filtering system, Netsweeper and a base set of blocking policies. 155 schools purchased this system in 2016/2017
- 4.11. The County Council reviewed its standard Terms and Conditions for contracts with suppliers and, as part of a number of changes made, a Prevent clause has been added.
- 4.12. Libraries, Youth Centre and Adult Learning Centre policies have been updated to reduce the risk of their venues hosting events which promote or support extremism. All the district councils wrote to their community centre venues in 2015/16 sharing guidance issued by the (then) Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).
- 4.13. The County Council has reviewed best practice examples of lettings policies from other councils and has prepared updated local guidance. At the time of preparing this report, the draft guidance is with partners for their comment. Once finalised and agreed, the intention is to share the guidance with relevant individuals who manage or lease County Council owned facilities. The next step will then be to identify any other venues that may be at risk of being exploited in this way and share the guidance with them as well. The aim is to make it as difficult as possible to promote extremist messages or recruit individuals through face to face meetings as well as reducing the risk of community tensions created by such events .

Raising awareness amongst County Council employees

- 4.12 The Home Office has, over the last few years, produced and updated a training product, *Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP)*, which combines video clips and group work to explore the topic of radicalisation. It is aimed at frontline staff and is intended to give them an overview of the Prevent agenda and their role within it, and the ability and confidence to recognise vulnerable individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation and the actions they are expected to take as a result. This is a facilitated face to face session is delivered by accredited trainers. Several staff within the County Council are trained to deliver this package. The Home Office has announced that WRAP version 4 will be released in 2018.
- 4.13 There are also several e-learning training packages available to employees. The Channel General Awareness is a short e-learning package developed by Metropolitan Police and College of Policing introduces both Prevent and Channel. Additionally, the [WRAP e-learning package for local authorities and schools](#) was launched by the Home Office in December 2016. We are able to monitor uptake of the tool through the Home Office, and are currently preparing for this to be a mandatory e-learning course for county council staff. A staff survey is also in development to ascertain a baseline of knowledge before the

mandatory training is launched. However the Home Office has made clear that reliance upon e-learning only is insufficient to evidence meeting the requirements of the Prevent Duty.

- 4.14 The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board completed an audit with partners under Section 11 (s.11) of the Children Act (2004). The Act places a number of duties on a range of organisations and individuals (and the services they contract out to others) to ensure that when they go about their day to day business, they do so in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 4.15 The audit made specific reference to Prevent and, in particular, how statutory partners ensure employees receive relevant and proportionate training on Prevent. The outcome reported to participants in July/August suggested the need for a more robust approach to training and development across a wide range of partners. In response the County Council is supporting the development of a partnership training strategy. Whilst this approach takes longer as several agencies need to consider the strategy within their own organisations, it is anticipated that this will be rewarded with higher buy in from the partnership. The Prevent network will be reviewing feedback on the training strategy in March and expects the training strategy to be implemented in May.
- 4.16 In December 2017 the County Council hosted the Preventing Extremism conference, a thought-provoking and hard hitting event which included a leading international authority on counter terrorism, Dr Dave Sloggett, and experts from within the Home Office and our local Counter Terrorism Police. We were also pleased to welcome local Mum, Sally Evans and her son Micheal, who shared the sad and very moving story of the local radicalisation of her elder son, Thomas, who died fighting for the terrorist group Al Shabaab in 2015.
- 4.17 Despite some last minute cancellations, 95 delegates from County and District councils, police, probation, health, housing associations, schools, targeted voluntary and community sector organisations and RAF Halton attended. The survey feedback we received from delegates showed that:
- all presenters introduced them to new information, with agreement ranging from 68% to 100% depending on the speaker
 - all presenters gave them ideas to take back to their place of work, again this varied by individual speaker ranging from 54% to 100%
 - 93% of them strongly agreed/agreed they had a better understanding of radicalisation as a safeguarding issue as a result of the conference
- 4.18 There has also been a presentation to informal cabinet in January which looked at how the Channel panel operates and the Home Office's proposed changes.
- 4.19 The County Council is planning an all-Member briefing to follow on after the Council meeting in April. It is also planning for another Preventing Extremism conference later in 2018 and is working with partners to design the content.

5 The challenges

- 5.1 Attitude remains a key challenge. In the main, terrorist acts are perceived as horrific events which happen somewhere else to someone else. Therefore, it is, perhaps, unsurprising that

individuals can become complacent to the risk and unaware of their ability to affect it. In some cases the fear of the imagined personal consequences of sharing information, mean that people choose not to say anything at all.

- 5.2 There continues to be a perception that Prevent is only about the Muslim community and that the “problem” is only about the South Asian communities or urban areas. This perception persists despite evidence showing that
- 25% of those supported through Channel in 2015/16 were due to far right ideologies (Home Office Statistical Bulletin 23/17)
 - those referrals based on Da’esh/ISIS/Al Qa’eda derived narratives of ideology differ by gender, age and ethnicity (Home Office Statistical Bulletin 23/17)
 - 6 of the 8 terrorism related deaths in Great Britain in 2016 were unconnected with Da’esh/ISIS/Al Qa’eda derived narratives of ideology (House of Commons Library Briefing on Terrorism Statistics in Great Britain, published in 2017)
- 5.3 Another significant challenge is how Prevent is viewed. Processes are rarely flawless in their design or implementation. Prevent is no exception, as a process, it attracts a certain amount of antipathy nationally expressed through a variety of public media. Some of the antipathy is based on misreporting and misrepresentation of purpose and outcomes, some because of perceptions of, or actual errors in, how it has been implemented in different areas and some is driven by personal agendas (such as wanting to sow fear and mistrust within communities).
- 5.4 The nature of the threat has and continues to change. This can be seen in the mixture of sophisticated and unsophisticated attacks reported in the media, the lowering of some of barriers such as cost and the relative ease of access to information/support to enable implementation of a range of attacks. Consequences include shorter planning timescales, the variety of attacks that can be carried out by an individual or a group and the impact.
- 5.5 Prevent is about safeguarding and our mantra is that safeguarding is everybody’s business. More work, therefore, is necessary to engage with communities locally (including civil society groups) so that misunderstandings and misgivings can be discussed. However, engagement and building trusting relationships needs a significant investment of time and is not the sole responsibility of a single agency.
- 5.6 Wycombe District Council, with support from the Home Office, is hosting a community roundtable event at the end of February. The aim of the event is to enable local residents to hear from the Home Office and others about Prevent and to share their views or ask questions. Depending on the success of this approach, it is one that could be considered for similar application elsewhere across the county.

6 What’s on the horizon

- 6.1 A Home Office / OSCT year-long pilot, also referred to as the Dovetail pilot, with 9 local authority areas to assess the feasibility of transferring responsibility and resources for the Channel programme and case management from the police to local authorities was evaluated by the Home Office as successful. A phased national roll- out is now underway. Buckinghamshire and SE region implementation is likely to be late 2018/early 2019 (i.e. the final phase).

- 6.2 Whilst there will be nearly twice the number of posts than at present, there will not be enough posts for one per local authority nationally. This is different to the pilot areas where one coordinator was provided per local authority. There will be a small team, funded and recruited by the Home office but line managed by a host local authority, which will be upper tier to link best with safeguarding. The team will operate on a regional basis and will cover a wider range of duties than under the present system. A variety of models for the grouping of local authorities are being considered for the South East region and are yet to be discussed with the local authorities.
- 6.3 Based on the limited information currently available, the new process represents a significant change to the management of risk in relation to Channel and safeguarding those individuals susceptible to radicalisation. It is unclear to what extent this will impact on the local authority's resources going forwards.
- 6.4 The Government is expected to publish a revised Counter Terrorism Strategy in 2018 although it is unclear whether there will be any changes to the Prevent element and again, whether this will impact on the local authority and its resources.

