

Title of meeting:	Health and Wellbeing Board
Date of meeting:	25 th September 2024
Subject	Preventing Violent Extremism Strategy
Report by:	Rachael Roberts, Deputy Director, Adult Social Care Charlie Pericleous, Prevent Officer, Adult Social Care
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the local authority's plans to meet the Prevent statutory duty.

2. Recommendation

The Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to:

- 2.1 Endorse the local authority's plans to meet its statutory obligations under Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Prevent strategy is one of the four elements of CONTEST, the national counter terrorism strategy, covers all forms of extremism and has three strategic objectives:
- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
 - Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate support; and
 - Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address
- 3.2 Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed responsibilities on "specified authorities" in the exercise of their functions to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This became a legal requirement on 1st July 2015¹. Specified authorities include the local authority, criminal justice, including prisons, education sector, health and social care and the police.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

- 3.3 In complying with the duty, all specified authorities should demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation in their area. The guidance identifies sector specific duties with three themes throughout:
- a. Effective leadership - those in leadership positions to have mechanisms to understand the risks, ensure staff have the capabilities to respond to risk, communicate and promote the importance of the duty and implement the duty effectively.
 - b. Working in partnership - demonstrate evidence of productive co-operation, in particular with local Prevent co-ordinators, the police and local authorities, and co-ordination through existing multi-agency forums, for example Community Safety Partnerships.
 - c. Appropriate capabilities - ensure frontline staff have the training and skills to be aware of Prevent, how to challenge the extremist ideology and be able to support people who may be exploited by radicalising influences.

4. Local Authority delivery performance benchmarks

- 4.1 The Home Office have designed the following benchmark to enable local authorities² and their partners to assess Prevent delivery in their local area against statutory requirements and best practice delivery.

This includes a requirement to produce an annual self-assessment and action plan based upon the local counter terrorism risk profile.

- a) There is an effective multi-agency partnership board in place to oversee Prevent delivery in the area
- b) The organisation has a local risk assessment process reviewed against the Counter Terrorism Local Profile
- c) The area has an agreed Prevent Partnership Plan.
- d) There is an agreed process in place for the referral of those identified as being at risk of radicalisation.
- e) There is a Channel Panel in place, meeting monthly, with representation from all relevant sectors.
- f) There is a training programme in place for relevant personnel.
- g) There is a venue hire policy in place, to ensure that premises are not used by radicalising influencers, and an effective IT policy in place to prevent the access of extremist materials by users of networks.
- h) There is engagement with a range of communities and civil society groups, both faith based and secular, to encourage an open and transparent dialogue on the Prevent Duty.
- i) There is a communications plan in place to proactively communicate and increase transparency of the reality / impact of Prevent work and support frontline staff and communities to understand what Prevent looks like in practice.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-toolkit-for-local-authorities-and-partner-agencies>

Home Office Assessment 2023-24

- 4.2 The Home Office assesses Prevent operational delivery and Channel practice in Portsmouth to be strong, with aspects highlighted as national good practice. Portsmouth City Council are currently meeting all relevant Home Office Prevent benchmarks and are exceeding the Prevent Duty in multi-agency partnership working and risk assessment. The current service provides expertise and support to stakeholders and the Channel Panel in managing cases.
- 4.3 The inclusion of academics at the Prevent Board to give presentations on their area of expertise and the improvement in community outreach with the voluntary sector was noted.
- 4.4 Recommendations for improvement include enhancing Prevent Referral-associated webpages to ensure they provide clear and accessible guidance, incorporating Prevent training into the induction process for new staff, and developing a plan to engage the wider community - such as faith and community organisations, and private sector companies - to foster a broader understanding of permissive environments.

Annual Assurance Statement

- 4.5 In addition, the Home Office now require the completion of an annual assurance statement in relation to the Channel Panel and the Prevent Duty. This will be completed each year by the Channel Panel chair, in conjunction with standing channel panel members. The assurance documentation linked to the Prevent Duty is currently produced by the Prevent Officer, Charlie Pericleous. Rachael Robert, Deputy Director of Adult Social Care, produces an annual assurance document for the Channel Panel.

Documents to be produced/updated on an annual basis include:

1. Action plan
2. Situational risk assessment
3. Corporate risk assessment
4. Venue hire/speaker policy
5. Training plan
6. Community engagement strategy
7. Communication strategy

5. Current Arrangements in Portsmouth

- 5.1 Portsmouth established a Prevent Delivery Board in 2015 and has representatives from the specified authorities:

Local Authority (to represent relevant departments)
Home Office representatives
Youth Offending Team
Civil Contingencies

Health
Education representation (to represent schools, FE & HE)
Regional Prevent FE/HE lead
Ministry of Defence
Portsmouth University
Portsmouth Channel Chair
Probation
Police
Counter Terrorism Police
Training providers

Portsmouth City Council are members of the Hampshire Prevent Board and participate in thematic sub-groups. Portsmouth City Council also have strong links with regional Prevent forums and the London Prevent Network.

Staff

- 5.2 Prevent is a statutory duty and Rachael Roberts provides the strategic lead with operational delivery provided by Prevent Officer Charlie Pericleous.

Education support

- 5.3 Support has been given to education settings since the Prevent Duty became legislation in 2015. This is currently provided by Charlie Pericleous, since the dedicated Prevent education officer left his post in August 2023. Schools regularly request training for whole teams or specific groups such as senior leaders or the governing body. Schools also know there is a point of contact for advice on vulnerability or increasing children's resilience to radicalisation. A quarterly newsletter is produced so that relevant updates and signposting to best practice is shared across all settings.
- 5.4 In 2024, Portsmouth City Council successfully secured additional Home Office funding to provide specialised training for frontline practitioners, including within schools. This initiative aimed to better equip professionals in the Portsmouth area to identify signs of radicalisation and vulnerabilities, while also fostering a deeper understanding of issues related to media literacy. The enhanced training helped practitioners address the complex challenges posed by misinformation and extremist narratives, strengthening their ability to safeguard individuals and communities.

6. Channel and Safeguarding

The Channel process, including the Channel panel, is part of the Prevent strategy. The Channel process is a multi-agency safeguarding approach to identify and provide early support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism or violent extremism. Channel works by partners jointly assessing the nature and the extent of the risk and where necessary, providing an appropriate support package tailored to the individual's needs. The three key stages of Channel are:

- i. Identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism or violent extremism.
- ii. Assess the nature and extent of risk; and
- iii. Develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

Channel addresses all forms of violent extremism. Referrals can come from a wide range of individuals and partners and could include youth offending teams, social services, health, police, education and local communities. If appropriate, a multi-agency panel is convened to provide appropriate support and intervention.

A monthly Channel panel is established in Portsmouth and has been recognised by the Home Office for its effective multi-agency approach to ensure positive outcomes for those referred and those that are adopted as cases. This is currently chaired by Rachael Roberts, Deputy Director of Adult Social Care and the Deputy Chair is Linda Mortimer, MASH manager in children's social care.

7. Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP)

- 7.1 A Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) is an assessment of risk that informs planning and delivery locally. The CTLP is presented to the Prevent Delivery Board by Counter Terrorism Policing South-East (CTP-SE) on an annual basis. A version that is approved for wider circulation is then sent out to Portsmouth Prevent Board partners. The CTLP recommendations and identified risks are used to form the basis of the Portsmouth Prevent Delivery Plan. The Prevent Board and action plan identify broad themes that could lead to inter-authority partnership work across Hampshire and the South-East.
- 7.2 In the summer of 2024, nationwide unrest and riots following the tragic murder of three children in Southport underscored the importance of collaboration among local government, police, community groups, and other key stakeholders. In Portsmouth, multiagency teams came together to ensure public safety while facilitating legitimate demonstrations and prioritising the well-being and safety of city residents. This coordinated response, including offering Home Office protective security support, was important in managing the situation effectively, minimising public disruption, and highlighting the positive role of community engagement.

8. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 8.1 As this report is an update on current arrangements for the Prevent Strategy a IIA is not required.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 As indicated in the body of the report, section 26(1) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ("the Act") places a duty upon "specified authorities", in exercising their functions, to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This is referred to as the "Prevent Duty".

9.2 The City Council is such a "specified authority" in accordance with Schedule 6 of the Act.

9.3 The Home Office has issued statutory guidance to authorities regarding the Prevent Duty under section 29 of the Act. Under section 29(2) of the Act, authorities must have regard to that guidance in carrying out the duty.

10. Director of Finance Comments

10.1 There are no financial implications arising from the report.

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 Signed by: Rachael Roberts, Deputy Director of Adult Social Care, Portsmouth City Council

Appendices: No appendices

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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 Signed by: