

## PREVENT/Channel Referral Process

The new '**Prevent Duty**' established under the **Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015** requires responsible authorities to '*have due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism in the exercise of their duties*'. **This includes those working with children and young people.**

### Introduction

Prevent is a strand of the Government's [CONTEST](#) counter terrorism strategy that aims to stop people from being drawn into terrorism by:

- Challenging the spread of terrorist ideology
- Supporting vulnerable people from being radicalised and drawn into terrorism
- Working with key institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.

It is increasingly acknowledged that alongside the Police all agencies have an important role to play in preventing terrorism. The new '**Prevent Duty**' established under the **Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015** requires responsible authorities to '*have due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism in the exercise of their duties*' .

This duty includes ensuring that those working with children, young people and adults are trained to understand the risk of terrorism in the local area; to be able to identify when an individual is at risk of radicalisation; and to know what to do once that risk is identified by making a referral through the Channel process.

Whilst Prevent is a national programme, it is delivered at a local level based on the risks identified in each local authority area. Cleveland Police develop a Counter terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) which is shared with operational groups.

Government guidance on the Prevent Duty can be found [here](#)

### What do we mean by Terrorism/Extremism?

Terrorism covers all forms of extremism both violent and nonviolent and is defined in the national Prevent Strategy as any 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.

Prevent covers international and domestic terrorist threats, and includes the activities of far right groups, and animal rights groups.

### What do we mean by Radicalisation?

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.

There is no obvious profile of a person likely to become involved in extremism or a single indicator of when a person might move to adopt violence in support of extremist ideas. The process of radicalisation is different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or within a very short time frame. Safeguarding from extremism is no different to how practitioners would share a concern about drugs, physical and sexual abuse or any other form of criminality.

### What is Channel?

Channel is a key element of the Prevent Strategy. It is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation using collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners, the police and local community 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 individual concerned

Under provisions in the **Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015** Local Authorities are required to establish Channel Panels to support vulnerable individuals from being radicalised and drawn into extremist activity. Government guidance on the Channel process can be found [here](#).

## **Understanding and Recognising Risks and Vulnerabilities of Terrorism or Extremism**

Children, Young People and adults can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extreme groups by many means. These can include; exposure through the influence of family members or friends and /or direct contact with extreme groups and organisations or increasingly, through the internet. This can put a young person or adult at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm. Children, young people and adults may become vulnerable to exposure to, or involvement with, groups or individuals who advocate violence as a means to a political or ideological end. Examples of extremist causes that have used violence to achieve their ends include, animal rights, the far right, internal terrorist and international terrorist organisations.

Most individuals, even those who hold radical views do not become involved in extremism. Numerous factors can contribute to and influence the range of behaviours that are defined as extremism. It is important to consider these factors in order to develop an understanding of the issue. It is also necessary to understand those factors build resilience and protect individuals from engaging in violent extremist activity.

The Channel Panel will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. Panels include the Local Authority and the local Police. There are a number of panel partners including those within the Criminal Justice System, Education, Childcare, Health and Police who are required to cooperate within the Panel in the discharge of its functions. Local Authorities and their partners have to consider how best to ensure that these assessments align with any assessment undertaken within the Children Act, 1989, (**Working Together 2015, Paragraph 28**) and the Care Act 2014.

Where there are concerns that an individual is at risk of being radicalised or being drawn into violent extremism, there is a duty for all partner organisations to cooperate with the Channel Panel, so far as is appropriate and reasonably practicable.

The aim of Channel is to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. This is achieved by offering support to those who are identified as being vulnerable at an early stage to divert them from being drawn into radicalisation. Channel adapts a multi-agency approach to identify individuals at risk and assess the nature and extent of the risk in developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned. Channel is about safeguarding children, young people and adults from being drawn into risk taking behaviour. It is important to note that children and young people experiencing these situations of displaying behaviours are not necessarily showing signs of being radicalised; there could be many other reasons for the behaviours including:

- alcohol
- drug abuse
- family breakdown
- domestic abuse and
- bullying.

It is important to be cautious in assessing these factors to avoid inappropriate labelling or stigmatising individuals because they possess a characteristic to fit a specific profile. The risk of radicalisation is the product of a number of factors and identifying this risk requires that practitioners exercise their professional judgements seeking further advice necessary and it may be combined

with other vulnerabilities that need to be considered. There is no such thing as a typical extremist and those involved in extremism come from a range of backgrounds and experiences.

The following indicators have been provided to support professionals to understand and identify factors that may suggest a young person or their family may be vulnerable to being drawn into extremism:

**Identity crisis** – distance from culture religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them

**Personal crisis** – family tensions, sense of isolation, adolescence low self-esteem, disassociation from existing friendship groups 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 and 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, unmet aspirations, perceptions of injustice feeling of failure, rejection of civic life, criminality, experiences of imprisonment, poor resettlement, reintegration, previous involvement with criminal groups

The process of radicalisation is different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or within a very short time frame. Potential indicators of radicalisation include:

- Use of inappropriate language
- Possession or accessing violent extremist literature
- Behavioural changes
- The expression of extremist views
- Advocating violent actions and means
- Association with known extremists
- Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders
- Using extremist views to explain personal disadvantage
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

Annex C of the [Channel Duty Guidance 2015](#) provides the Vulnerability Assessment Framework that Channel Panels will use to guide decision making. It is also a useful tool for agencies to use to guide their assessment and referral decision making processes.

## **The Channel Referral and Intervention Process**

If there is a reason to believe that the child, young person or adult associates with those known to be involved in extremism either because they associate directly with known individuals or because they frequent key locations where these individuals are known to operate, there is a need to refer in to the Channel Panel process (see flowchart and template form).

Information is to be reported directly to [Prevent.Contest@cleveland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Prevent.Contest@cleveland.pnn.police.uk) particularly in the absence of other vulnerabilities, using the police intelligence inform. As prevent is pre-crime / Early Help, this enable the police to undertake preliminary investigations and assess family risk.

There are occasions that risk may be perceived to be immediate, where the information must be reported immediately to the police who will then coordinate with the local authority in taking the most appropriate action to ensure the safety of the child/adult at risk.

However, If there are additional safeguarding concerns which meet the threshold for a Safer Referral Form to be sent to Children's Safeguarding Service, or meet the requirements for an Adult Safeguarding Alert to be sent to Adult Social Care, this should be done so by the referring organisation at the same time as a referral is made to the Channel Panel. The local authority should make contact with the Police Special Branch in all cases referred.

In referring to Special Branch or Safeguarding Services, consent is required unless in exceptional circumstances.

In all cases the Channel Police Practitioner will identify whether or not a representative from Children's Safeguarding Service or Adult Social Care is required at the Panel. Where a child is already known to the local authority, the allocated social worker should attend the Panel.

The Channel Panel will be convened by the Channel Police Practitioner and Chaired by the named Local Authority, Channel Panel Chair using the vulnerability assessment framework.

If there is no further action the feedback will be given to the referring agency and advice given appropriately.

For each Channel case a review will take place 6 and 12 months after that case has been exited from the Channel process.

If there are continuing safeguarding needs identified at the Channel Panel, a SAFER referral will be made to Children's Safeguarding Services or Adult Social Care at the earliest opportunity to enable a Strategy Meeting to be held. In all cases a representative from the Police, Prevent Team Branch should be invited to the Strategy Meeting.

## Local and National Support

In addition to the Prevent Duty Guidance and Channel Guidance issued by Government there is a nationally accredited e-learning pack available that contains information on how the Channel process works along with some useful case studies which can be accessed here [Channel General Awareness Course](#).

A Face to Face training package produced by the Home Office, WRAP 3, is also available in your local area to assist with understanding the radicalisation process and types of interventions available.

For further information on how to access this training contact either Cleveland Police Prevent Team or your local authority Prevent Lead. Both of these contacts will also be able to provide you with advice and support in relation to the Channel referral process. Local contacts are as follows:

## Cleveland Police Contacts

Prevent Team: [Lesley.Clelland@Cleveland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Lesley.Clelland@Cleveland.pnn.police.uk) Tel: 01642 303397

## Local Authority Prevent Contacts

Hartlepool	Clare Clark 01429 523100 <a href="mailto:clare.clark@hartlepool.gov.uk">clare.clark@hartlepool.gov.uk</a> Ken Bennett 01429 523100 <a href="mailto:ken.bennett@hartlepool.gov.uk">ken.bennett@hartlepool.gov.uk</a>
Middlesbrough	Andy Shippey 01642 728690 <a href="mailto:andy_shippey@middlesbrough.gov.uk">andy_shippey@middlesbrough.gov.uk</a>
Redcar and Cleveland	Sue Beevers 01642 837752 <a href="mailto:sue.beevers@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk">sue.beevers@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk</a>
Stockton	Steve Hume 01642 527610 <a href="mailto:steve.hume@stockton.gov.uk">steve.hume@stockton.gov.uk</a>

# Flowchart

