

Children, Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee: Prevent Task Group Report

Draft v1.00

January 2016

The Prevent Task Group was set up by the Children, Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee



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1.0 Introduction

In 2011 the UK's National Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) was updated, the strategy aims to "reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence". The strategy has four strands "Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare". The 'Prevent' strand aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act came into force for a number of public bodies on 1st July 2015; the Act moved some requirements of the "Prevent" strand onto a statutory footing.

The Children Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee set up the Prevent Task Group in September 2015. The focus of the Task Group review was:

- To understand the implications of the recent Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 in terms of the statutory requirements around Prevent and the implications for children and young people.
- To consider how we are responding to this in Sheffield and identify any recommendations.

The Task Group was chaired by Cllr Cliff Woodcraft Deputy Chair of the Children Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee. As a result of the overlap with the work of the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee they were approached to appoint up to two members to the Task Group.

Membership of the group is outlined below:

- Cllr Cliff Woodcraft – Children Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee Deputy Chair & Task Group Chair
- Cllr Chris Rosling-Josephs – Children Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee, Chair
- Cllr Ian Saunders, Children Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee Representative
- Cllr Nasima Akther, Children Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee Representative
- Alison Warner – Children Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee, School Governor Representative
- Jules Jones – Children Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee, Parent Governor Representative
- Cllr Aodan Marken, Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee Representative
- Cllr John Campbell, Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee Representative

The Task Group review was undertaken from September 2015 - January 2016.

2.0 Background

The Task Group chose to focus on the new statutory requirements around Prevent which have arisen as a result of the recently enacted Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which came into force for the local authority and schools in July 2015 (the guidance for higher and Further Education institutions was agreed later in the year). As the Council is in the process of working with partners to develop its response to the requirements of the Act, it was felt a timely piece of work for Scrutiny to undertake.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a number of new measures for Councils and other public sector bodies. The Task Group review focussed on Part 5 of the Act which introduced statutory measures intended to reduce the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorist activity, thus moving Prevent onto a statutory footing.

Due to the remit of the Scrutiny Committee the Task Group review focused on any implications for children and young people in Sheffield.

The UK's National Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) was first developed by the Home Office in 2003; it has had a number of revisions and was most recently updated in 2011. The aim of the strategy is "to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence". The scope of the revised CONTEST strategy was broadened to cover all forms of terrorism.

The strategy has four strands "Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare".

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 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act came into force on 1st July 2015. Section 5 of the Act placed a legal duty on Councils (and other public sector bodies) to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. Other public bodies impacted by this change are, schools and childcare providers, further education institutions, higher education institutions, the police, NHS and health sector, and prisons and probation services.

The legal duty is backed by statutory guidance which sets out specific expectations of different public sector bodies; this includes specific guidance for both schools and further and higher education institutions issued by the Department of Education. Compliance will be monitored via existing inspection arrangement such as OfSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) who inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people as well as services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

The Act also requires Councils to have a strategic overview and to form a Channel Panel to assess and support individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. In Sheffield the Channel process is based on our adult and children safeguarding pathways. The Channel Panel is a multi-agency approach involving a range of agencies and local partners. The Channel Panel work together to jointly assess the nature and the extent of any risk and where necessary, provide an appropriate support package tailored to the individual's needs: Detailed discussion takes place before any referral is made to ensure that only appropriate cases are referred to the Channel Panel.

The overall expectation with the Act and statutory guidance is that local Councils and other public sector bodies will take appropriate action to 'mainstream' efforts to identify, safeguard and ensure early intervention with anyone identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

The Task Group met with lead officers from the Council to understand the implications of the 2015 Act for Sheffield Council's Children Young People & Families Portfolio, which can be summarised as:

- Providing strategic support for work with children, young people and families
- Deliver Prevent awareness training for frontline staff
- Continue to ensure effective multi-agency safeguarding pathways and processes
- Working with partners e.g. voluntary, community and faith sector, schools, police
- Manage public spaces and internet access

In Sheffield the approach has been to continue to incorporate the new requirements around Prevent as an element of the multi-agency approach to safeguarding vulnerable children and young people, building upon existing established safeguarding processes and approaches.

The Council also has governance arrangements in place to support the overall strategic direction and partnership working and has established a multi-agency panel, built upon existing arrangements, to assess and support any individuals identified as being at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

3.0 Approach

The Task Group used a range of approaches to gather data for the review including desk top research and evidence gathering sessions, as part of these sessions the Task Group met with the following individuals / representatives from organisations:

- Maxine Stavrianakos, Head of Neighbourhood Intervention & Tenant Support (Prevent lead), Sheffield City Council
- Tim Wright, Partnership Project Officer, Sheffield City Council
- Sam Martin, Assistant Director, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Children Young People & Families Portfolio Prevent lead), Sheffield City Council
- Dean Wilson, Director of Human Resources, Sheffield Health & Social Care Trust
- Steve Kelly, Head of Student Service and SEND, Sheffield College
- Prevent Lead, South Yorkshire Police
- A local School
- Roger Farrington, member of the Religion & Belief Hub (Equalities Hub Network)
- Shahida Siddique, Chair of the Religion & Belief Hub (Equalities Hub Network)
- Mike Fitter, voluntary and community sector representative and member of the Religion & Belief Hub (Equalities Hub Network)

In addition the 3 members of the Task Group attended the Prevent training sessions being run by the Local Authority for Schools and 4 members of the Task Group attended a meeting of the “Prevent Silver Group” to observe the meeting, this is one of the strategic partnership working arrangements that are in place.

A number of Task Group members also completed the Home Office recommended online [Channel General Awareness](#) Training Course.

The Task Group reviewed the evidence gathered and identified a set of findings and recommendations as outlined in the next section.

4.0 Findings & Recommendations

The Task Group focus their findings and recommendations around the following four themes:



4.0 Findings

4.1 Training & Education

The Task Group heard concerns about the focus of some of the nationally produced Home Office training materials for Prevent, in terms of them being both out of date (some of the scenarios / case studies) and also unsuitable / inappropriate for some of the target audiences, in particular those working with primary age children. The Task Group were advised that these comments have been reflected at a national level to help refine future training and support being offered to localities.

The Task Group also agreed that materials needed to be accessible both in terms of language (interpretation / translation) and cognitive ability. Some concerns were also received in terms of a lack of curriculum based materials to support Schools with broader work and discussion around cohesion and integration and managing “safe conversations” as required by the legislation. The Task Group were also advised that this issue is being taken up at a national level by the Department for Education.

The Task Group also heard about examples of some good practice materials that have been developed locally around e-safety, including materials for parents. However, there was a sense from some witnesses that these could be shared more broadly and effectively to ensure further dissemination and developing of good practice in the City.

The Task Group received examples of how young people have been directly involved in work around cohesion and integration in a range of settings across the City, including schools and voluntary sector youth provision, approaches adopted including using creative technologies and design as engagement tools. The Task Group welcomed the work that had been undertaken and supports its continuation.

The Task Group heard clearly about some examples of good practice in the City, however there were concerns about some of the Home Office training materials, broader dissemination of e-safety materials developed in Sheffield and effective resources for schools and so based on the evidence they received the Task Group makes a series of recommendations under the theme “training and education” (please see section 5)

4.2 Partnership Working

The Task Group heard some positive feedback from partner organisations about the working relationships and governance arrangements in place to support work around Prevent. In addition, although some arrangements are acknowledged to be at an early stage of development there was encouraging feedback from both individuals and organisations about the role the Local Authority was playing in terms of co-ordination and support.

Since the enactment of the 2015 Act a number of people the Task Group spoke with said they would now be more likely to approach the Authority for support and advice (previously they would have contacted the Police as the lead on this area). There were also some good examples of working with the voluntary, community and faith sectors, including current work with the Cohesion Advisory Group to co-produce a Cohesion Strategy for Sheffield. The Equality Hub Network (supported by Sheffield Council) was also seen as a very valuable place to engage with Sheffield’s diverse communities.

The Task Group also felt there should be greater involvement of Elected Representatives around Prevent.

The Task Group heard of concerns that some parents are worried about the innocent talk of children being misinterpreted; the group also heard of concerns about possible implications of Prevent in terms of freedom of speech. The Task Group are aware that these concerns have been raised with officers leading on Prevent and that officers are working with organisations and communities to try and address these issues.

Although there were some good examples of partnership working the Task Group did however feel that there was scope for further engagement with the voluntary, community and faith sectors and that this should be continued through existing networks, including the

Equality Hub Network and the Religion and Belief Hub (a sub group of the Network). This should include all sectors working in partnership to tackle any potential concerns or possible misconceptions regarding local implementation of the Prevent strategy. Based on the evidence they received the Task Group makes a number recommendations around partnership working (please see section 5).

4.3 Safeguarding - Telephone Support and Advice:

The Task Group heard from a number of individuals and organisations (including from the Council) who commented on how Prevent has been effectively integrated into existing safeguarding policies and pathways and that this had worked well. There was positive feedback about the support and advice that has been provided through the multi-agency Safeguarding Team; in particular comments were made about the value of the high quality support available via the safeguarding telephone advice line. Some individuals also felt there was clearly now more specialist knowledge across the partnership in terms of vulnerable people and extremism.

The Task Group also heard some concerns from one witness that there may have been a reduction in terms accessibility of the safeguarding telephone service which could impact on individuals being able to receive timely advice and support. The Task Group understands there may be some changes to how this telephone advice and support service is provided in the future; the Group's understanding is that these changes should improve the co-ordination of the service and should not affect its accessibility.

The safeguarding telephone and advice service was clearly seen as very valuable for professional seeking support / guidance. In light of the concerns raised and possible changes to the services in the future the Task Group makes a recommendation that the Children, Young People & Families Scrutiny Committee monitor the impact of any changes (please see section 5)

4.4 Information Gathering / Sharing

The task Group received a number of positive statements about information sharing, particularly at a strategic level and there was a sense that some real progress had been made in recent years. However, although there was recognition that arrangements were working well this was also supported by a sense that this should remain an area for continuous improvement in that we could always "be even better".

The Task group also considered feedback on how the Council gathers and collates data across the organisation to support services for vulnerable people. Again, although considerable progress continues to be made, the Task Group would like to make a recommendation that this area continue to be explored to look at how further improvements could be made (please see section 5).

5.0 Recommendations

Training & Education

In order to influence national policy and approaches:

1. The Children Young People & Families Portfolio continue to recommend to the Home Office / Department of Education that in reviewing Prevent training materials they ensure they are appropriate for the target audiences, including those working with primary age children and that materials are accessible in terms of language (translation/interpretation) and cognitive ability.
2. The Children Young People & Families Portfolio continue to engage with the Department of Education to encourage the development of further curriculum based materials to support both Primary and Secondary Schools with work around cohesion and integration and managing “safe conversation” as required by the legislation.
3. Any relevant local best practice materials identified by the Children Young People & Families Portfolio are shared with the Home Office / Department of Education.
4. In order to support the development of good practice and ensure parents have effective advice and support we recommend that the Children Young People & Families Portfolio ensure e-safety training and best practice materials are shared more broadly within the City including all members of the 0-19 Partnership and Learn Sheffield.

Partnership Working

5. In order to ensure skills and expertise are maximised and that there is sustainability and continuity in terms of work undertaken the Prevent Silver Group work more closely with the voluntary, Community and faith sectors through existing networks, including the Equality Hub Network and the Religion and Belief Hub (a sub group of the Network).
6. In order to have a greater input from Elected Representatives as strategy and approaches are developed and to support engagement with communities, further consideration is given in terms of the options for increasing the involvement and engagement of Elected Representatives around Prevent.

7. That officers leading on Prevent continue to work with National Government to look at opportunities for funding to support work with the voluntary, community and faith sectors and local communities.
8. The Task Group recommends that, in order to ensure effective processes are in place, that referrals into the safeguarding service continue to be monitored; and that effective feedback is given to individuals and agencies to ensure that only appropriate referrals are being made.

Safeguarding - Telephone Support and Advice:

9. In order to monitor the impact of any changes to the telephone based safeguarding advice and support services the Children Young People & Families Scrutiny Committee requests an update report from Children Young People & Families Portfolio by August 2016.

Information / data gathering

10. In order to support work with vulnerable individuals the Council's approach to information / data gathering and collation continues to be explored and that Prevent leads engage in this work.

Role of Scrutiny

11. The Children Young People & Family Support Scrutiny Committee Requests an update on progress against their recommendations by the end of 2016.
12. The Committee also recommends that the Healthier Communities & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee consider looking at Prevent as part of their future work programme.

This report will be shared with Sheffield City Council's Cabinet and local MP's.