

Ministerial Submission

From: Isabelle Louise Dugdale

To: the Rt Hon Amber Rudd

Title: Improving the effectiveness (and accessibility) of anti-terrorist hotlines for early prevention of jihadi-related terrorist activity.

Issue

The issue regarding terrorism prevention in Britain is not pertinent to the scale of police deployment, but the ineffective response to hotline tip-offs and the obscurity of the number to the public.

This is important in light of the recent London Bridge and Manchester Arena attacks, as the perpetrators had been reported to the police long before the events occurred. With more resources focused on the hotline tip-offs, community awareness could prevent terrorist attacks through radicalisation.

Recommendation

I recommend a three-pronged immediate course of action, to be officially included in the next CONTEST: counter-terrorism strategy:

1. Increasing the accessibility of the anti-terrorism hotline 0800 789 321, by listing the number at the top of the google search results page, making it highly visible. Further visibility enhanced through mainstream YouTube advertisements and Facebook banners.
2. Implementing an algorithm to pick up specified keywords or phrases (to be determined) in hotline/999 calls and transfer those to a special, higher-priority line. Continue Met Police 24h monitoring of the hotline.
3. Increasing community awareness of signs of radicalisation:
 - bring back the 2015 “It’s Probably Nothing, But...” campaign, to brief people on what to be on the lookout for,
 - the authorities (community officers) should alert people if their neighbours are on a watch-list,
 - identified trouble areas should be monitored for conversions to Islam and radicalisation. This relies on Muslim associations and local mosques having difficult conversations, including parents asking their children about questionable conversations with adults,
 - by raids or unannounced checks by community officers could be conducted following signs (to be determined by experts) of radicalisation.

Timing

I recommend that these changes be implemented urgently, in alignment with the current official threat level of the UK: i.e. SEVERE.

Discussion

Context:

There have been 3 terrorist attacks on England, in 3 months - all with ties to jihadi extremism. The second of these was the deadliest terrorist attack on the UK since 2005. Clearly, preventative measures need to be taken.

Note that this submission follows revelations that attackers in both the Manchester and London attacks had been reported to the police years prior to the incidents. Questions have been raised about the effectiveness of authorities in response to reports of suspicious behaviour. Their operations are impeded by mutual distrust between communities and police officers.

Situation:

There are currently 2 telephone options for reporting suspicious behaviour: 999, or the dedicated anti-terrorism hotline: 0800 789 321.

Official MI5 and Metropolitan Police websites also have online forms that can be filled out (anonymously) and are reviewed within 2 hours of submission. These are intended for less urgent cases than the telephone numbers.

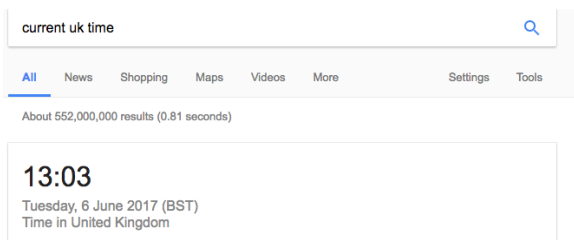
Controversy:

The government could incur a reputational risk. There is much debate about the personal privacy/increased security trade-off. Whilst the tip-offs remain anonymous, people may choose to reveal their identity, and it's often useful to know their location.

However, there are issues with neighbours being 'informants' on each other, wherein a 'social-spying' situation may arise as in Nazi Germany, or post-WWII USSR. Furthermore, any information given by children under the age of 18 would have to have been consented to by their legal guardian or parent.

Financial implications of this recommendation:

1. Assuming a £1 million budget for the entire digital campaign (part 1), a third would go to each of Facebook, Google AdWords and YouTube. The estimated calculations follow accordingly. HMG should decide the extent of the campaign. Ideally, Google Inc. would assist the government free of cost, in displaying the number for the anti-terrorism hotline, as the example of 'time' in the picture below.



If not possible, then the government would pay the same rate as firms advertising on Google AdWords, which typically range between £0.66 and £1.32 per advertisement. YouTube works with AdWords, at approximately £0.10-0.30 per view, with an option of targeting the most relevant people. Facebook can determine the cost of adverts, or a maximum bid can be made.

2. The expense of running the proposed algorithm would be the sum of a new, dedicated phone line (the same cost as the terrorist hotline including that of extra human monitoring), plus that of the software (to be determined by experts).
3. The cost of increasing community awareness of radicalisation would be equal to that of the “It’s Probably Nothing, But...” campaign in 2015 (allowing for inflation, between £1-5 million), as well as the option to increase the number of community officers where necessary. The latter is a temporal, rather than financial, issue.

<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased likelihood of early preventive action on terrorism, through better visibility of hotline number • people know what behavioural signs to look out for, and which number to contact to alert the authorities • rapidly-implemented solution (works in the short-term) • relatively low-cost 	<p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires time • relies on cooperation of neighbours and community members • human resources for education and police and manning of the hotline • does not generate revenue
<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potential to adjust number of officers deployed, as well as frequency of raids – where deemed necessary • possibility of expanded into other social networks, like Twitter 	<p><u>Threats:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • could deteriorate intra-community trust and relations

Alternative Options:

Long-term course of action: conduct of an inquiry into the effectiveness of anti-terrorism hotlines and the reasons for which authorities failed to stop the London and Manchester bombers before an incident occurred. However, though necessary, a concrete outcome must be produced, highlighting areas requiring improvement, or it is invaluable.

No action: this inviable option would neither improve, nor actively worsen the current prevention of terrorist acts.

N.B:

1. the recommendations made in this submission are not applicable to Northern Ireland-related terrorism, particularly with regards to the Islamic radicalisation tracking.

2. there would be no interception of conversations amongst private citizens and the logarithm designed to pick up certain words or phrases would be applicable only on a call to 999 or the anti-terrorism hotline: 0800 789 321.

Annex:

Facebook ad cost calculation:

Figure 1: geographical and general demographic selection.

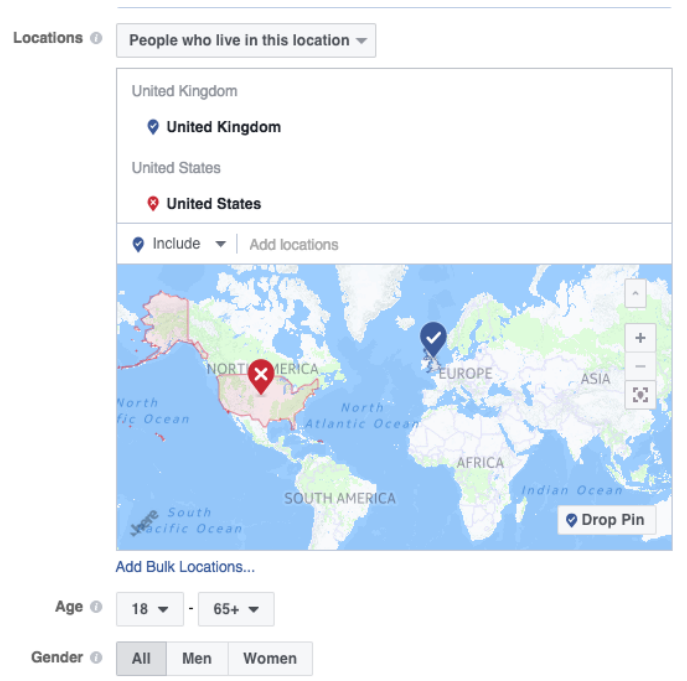


Figure 2: demographic qualities typically associated with the trouble areas and types of employment

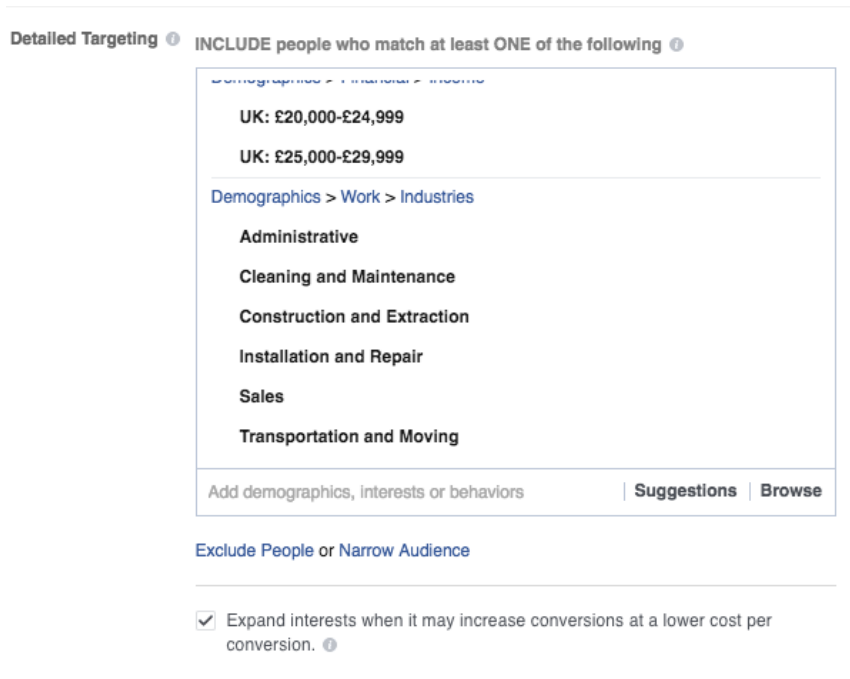


Figure 3: initial estimated costs

Automatic Placements (Recommended)
 Your ads will automatically be shown to your audience in the places they're likely to perform best. For this objective, placements may include Facebook, Instagram and Audience Network. [Learn more.](#)

Edit Placements
 Removing placements may reduce the number of people you reach and may make it less likely that you'll meet your goals. [Learn more.](#)

Budget & Schedule
 Define how much you'd like to spend, and when you'd like your ads to appear. [Learn more.](#)

Budget ⓘ
£1850.00 GBP

Actual amount spent daily may vary. ⓘ

Schedule ⓘ Run my ad set continuously starting today
 Set a start and end date


Start

End
(London Time)

Your ads will run for **183 days**. You'll spend no more than **£338,627.08**.

Figure 4: estimated reach of the Facebook advertisement:

Audience Size



Your audience selection is fairly broad.

Potential Reach: 8,900,000 people
 Your detailed targeting criteria is currently set to allow interest expansion. ⓘ

Estimated Daily Results

Reach
 110,000 - 670,000 (of 7,300,000) ⓘ