

Note of the event held on Campus on Wednesday 31 October 2018

Safeguarding, the Prevent Duty and Working with External Partners

1. Introduction from the Registrar and Secretary, Mike Shore-Nye

- 1.1 Mike Shore-Nye welcomed attendees to the third annual event held on campus, inviting students and staff to learn more about the Prevent duty, and to discuss and debate related issues. Previous sessions have focussed in what the University does internally to ensure compliance and safeguard the University and surrounding community. This year's theme is focused on partnership working in order to safeguard individuals who may be at risk.
- 1.2 Representatives for some of the partners that the University works with are in attendance today to provide an overview of the part that they play in the referral and support processes. This includes:
 1. Introduction and overview from myself
 2. Radicalisation – Threat, Drivers and Programme – The Home Office, Abu Ahmed
 3. The safeguarding role of the police – Counter Terrorism Police South West, Andy Ferris
 4. The role of the Office for Students (OfS) – Director of Compliance, Governance and Risk, University of Exeter, Christopher Lindsay (the OfS representative has been unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances)
 5. Questions and Answers
- 1.3 In addition to those here today, the University is also networked in to key local and national networks, alongside local authorities, further education and higher education providers, police and prisons, the NHS, social care and other support providers. These networks share best practice and provide a forum to discuss and work through common issues.

2. Radicalisation – Threat, Drivers and Programme – Abu Ahmed, Head of Local Delivery and Communications, the Home Office

- 2.1 Abu Ahmed provided some background to his 10 year career history with the Prevent strategy, having been involved following its inception in 2007/08. The threat level in the UK is currently at “Severe”, with the most serious threat at a national level being from Daesh (noted that the main threat in a particular area can vary regionally. In some local areas the main threat can be from the far-right).
- 2.2 Since June 2013, 25 Daesh inspired plots and 4 far-right plots have been foiled by Police and Agencies. Attacks are now more likely to be via lone actors, using low sophistication methods, which are harder to detect or disrupt.
- 2.3 There is also a change in the recruitment method, with Daesh in particular using social media to engage with and “groom” young people who they identify as susceptible. They are using glossy videos encouraging people to join them, and include promises of welfare provision for some of those who join.
- 2.4 For each reported attack seen to emanate from individuals inspired by Daesh, far right reciprocal activity is likely to follow. There are two main types of groups known within this area, which are:

- Far right – “Defence Leagues”, such as PEGIDA and North East Infidels. These are vocal, but less likely to be violent, more likely to hold marches and interfere with businesses
- Extreme right – Neo Nazi and racial supremacist groups – these tend to be more violent, such as the now proscribed National Action group

2.5 Within the far and extreme right, there is also evidence of reaching out to individuals from highly skilled vocations including the armed forces to tap into engineering and weapons training. The propagation of anti-Islamic narratives citing Sharia law and Halal meat are used to exploit fears and patriotism and to draw in support from individuals who feel strongly in these areas.

2.6 The radicalisation process is complex, and there is no single profile. The signs that an individual is at risk of being radicalised are similar to those for other welfare concerns. In general, the conditions under which radicalisation could occur are when an individual has:

- Background vulnerabilities, such as an unstable family life or traumatic and isolating experiences, involvement in drugs and petty crime
- Ideological opening – a feeling of not belonging, and searching for something to believe in and be accepted by
- Initial influences – a situation, person or group who takes advantage of the combination of the vulnerabilities and the ideological opening
- An absence of protective factors and/or obstacles that would otherwise keep the individual from seeking or being drawn into these ideologies

2.7 Prevent has been developed to safeguard people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, and works in a similar way to other safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gangs, drug abuse and physical and sexual abuse. It is aimed at:

Step	Detail	Data
1. Tackle causes and respond to ideology	Building resilience in communities by tackling risk factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent projects – critical thinking, e-safety, parenting skills • Online – campaigns, removing content, driving change to drive action • Civil Society Organisations challenging terrorist communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300k pieces of illegal terrorist material removed since Feb 2010 • FB removed 1.9m pieces Daesh/AQ content in Q1 2018
2. Channel Safeguarding interventions	To safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation	332 people supported in 2017, 1 in 3 of these was far right
3. Rehabilitation	Desistence and Disengagement	New intensive and tailored interventions and practical support, including mentoring, psychological and ideological

2.8 A whole society response is required to combat these issues, working in partnership to identify and support individuals at risk of radicalisation. This is where Prevent sits - it is a statutory duty bringing together public bodies to help to identify and support vulnerable individuals within their communities. It is acknowledged that Prevent is not universally popular. There is a misconception of the duty which has held back engagement in some areas. Communication and transparency has improved, and there is now more engagement with local communities to ensure the Prevent programme is understood and reflects local feedback.

3. The safeguarding role of the Police – Andy Ferris, Detective Sergeant, Counter Terrorism South West

- 3.1 Andy Ferris provided some background to his 10 year career history in Counter Terrorism, having worked within the “Pursue” thread of the Government’s CONTEST counter terrorism strategy, and previously within Counter Terrorism based in London.
- 3.2 Prevent is core to the safeguarding of individuals and wider communities from the national threat of terrorism. It’s a partnership led process, and sits at the very beginning of the wider counter terrorism process. It:
 - responds to the ideological threat that we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat that we face from those who promote these views
 - Provides practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
 - Works with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, online and health) where risks of radicalisation may need to be dealt with
- 3.3 Concerns may be raised by police colleagues, partners and members of the public, Checks are then made by the Counter Terrorism Police South West (CTPSW) to assess the suitability of the concern for a Prevent response. The Prevent safeguarding response sits at the initial stages of a concern, where no terrorism offenses have been committed – before an individual has firmed up their views, and is seeking an ideology. Within the South West, a high proportion of referrals relate to Right Wing rather than Islamist issues.
- 3.4 Prevent Officers cannot work alone, and partner agencies are heavily involved in dealing with safeguarding concerns. If such a concern is deemed to be Prevent related, partners are called on to provide a safeguarding team around that person. This is known as a Channel panel. If the individual refuses to engage with Prevent, officers will look for alternative options, including disruption techniques and/or partner agency involvement, such as mental health/drugs/alcohol teams.
- 3.5 The Channel referral process is aimed at all individuals who may be at risk of radicalisation, whatever section of society they may be from. It uses existing collaborations between partners to support individuals and protect them from being drawn into terrorism. A wide range of partners are involved in this process, including:
 - NHS
 - Education
 - Mental Health
 - Social Services
 - Charities
 - Faith groups
 - Family Support Agencies
 - Neighbourhood Policing Teams
- 3.6 The Channel panel will establish how best to safeguard an individual via a vulnerability assessment, and development of a bespoke support plan. Sometimes the individual referred may be known to one or more of the partners involved in the panel, who may then be best placed to support them.

- 3.7 A terror attack is the tip of the iceberg – we don't tend to think of everything that happens before that point to enable the attack to happen. There is a lot of activity that goes on below the water line. There is likely to be a period of days, weeks, months or even years in advance of recruitment, fundraising and radicalisation. This is where Prevent sits, to pick up on a concern early enough to intervene to divert an individual or group from escalating into violence.
- 3.8 Some anonymised regional case studies were reviewed, from both Islamic and Far Right arenas. These illustrated causes of concern that were picked up on and referred into the Prevent process, including:
- Child disruptive behavioural issues and lack of engagement, making comments that could be linked to terrorism, and an evidenced unsettled family background.
 - Adult male identified with an ISIS flag, and having a friendship with a further male who was connected online with Jihadi warriors, posting on social media agreeing with their cause.
 - A South West male student connected with an Extreme Far Right group, posting that he wanted to sort out immigration and start a German division, and identifying with the National Socialism (Nazism) white supremacist mind-set
- 3.9 All of the above case studies were provided as evidence of successful Prevent intervention, where the individuals were diverted from the risk of radicalisation, and that their paths had been changed.

4. The role of the Office for Students (OfS) – Director of Compliance, Governance and Risk, University of Exeter, Christopher Lindsay

- 4.1 Christopher Lindsay explained that the representative from the Office for Students (OfS) was unable to make it today, and that he was speaking on her behalf. The OfS had taken over from HEFCE in April 2018 as the regulator for the Higher Education sector, and sat within the Department for Education. The change of regulator had resulted in a more student focused approach, representing the interests of students as consumers. The monitoring of compliance with the Prevent duty was integrated into the OfS Student Wellbeing and Safeguarding team. The University has a dedicated contact within this team.
- 4.2 The OfS had introduced a Prevent monitoring framework that slightly differed from the HEFCE framework, now requiring a more data and evidence driven assurance process. This required the provision of a broader information set relating to external speakers, welfare concerns and staff training. Information was now required detailing the total number of instances in each of these areas, whether Prevent-related or not, in addition to the numbers that *were* Prevent-related. This was to provide assurance that appropriate processes were in place, whether Prevent concerns had been identified or not.
- 4.3 In addition to the requested data and assurance return, the OfS were to arrange Prevent Review Meetings to assess institutions for which compliance was not adequately evidenced. In line with OfS regulation in other areas, an additional random sample of providers would also have Prevent Review Meetings arranged. The University of Exeter had volunteered to take place in a pilot of these meetings, and was to be visited and assessed at the end of November 2018.

- 4.4 The University complies with the duty via active implementation, monitoring and reporting of associated policies and processes. This includes statistics and effectiveness reviews of:
- **External speaker risk assessments:** arranged by colleges, student unions and corporate events. To note:
 - The college speaker assessment process is currently under review to ensure that evidence can be provided for the annual data and assurance return. A new process in consultation with academics and other stakeholders. This will be piloted with volunteered areas, and then rolled out to all colleges.
 - The Student's Guild has a boycott of the duty in place, however speaker risk assessments pre-date the duty, and enable the University to conduct a Prevent risk assessment of all speakers. The Student's Guild Head of Resources and Health and Safety is a member of the University Prevent Compliance Group.
 - **Internal referral of individuals (potential Prevent-related concern):** The Head of Student Services is the Single Point of Contact (SPC) for Prevent-related concerns regarding students, and is a member of the University Prevent Compliance Group. Details of concerns raised are not discussed in detail at these meetings, and no personal data is shared, however in-year reporting (volume and route by which any concerns were raised) is discussed for assurance that the process is working.
 - **Staff mandatory training:** An introductory training session is mandatory for all staff, plus two process related sessions that are mandatory for staff in certain roles:
 - **Speakers and Events, including Freedom of Speech** – mandatory for staff who may request a speaker, or are involved in the booking of speakers. This covers the risk assessment process, and the requirement to balance with the commitment to Freedom of Speech
 - **Support for individuals** – mandatory for staff in certain student facing roles, such as Senior Tutors and Wellbeing staff. This provides an overview of the types of concerns that could be Prevent related, and who you should speak to if you are concerned that an individual may be at risk
- 4.5 Monitoring in these areas informs the University's Prevent risk assessment and action plan, which are documents required by the OfS as evidence of monitoring and implementation. These documents are kept up to date throughout the year, and are used to provide assurance of compliance, and to evidence that proactive management of issues occurs.
- 4.6 The University has a Prevent Compliance Group, who's role it is to oversee the development and implementation of Prevent related policy and procedure. This group consists of representatives from across the University, plus attendance by the Department for Education Prevent Regional Coordinator, and the Counter Terrorism Police. The Student's Guild Head of Resources and Health and Safety attends these meetings, however student sabbatical officers have declined the invitation to attend.
- 4.7 An annual detailed report providing assurance against each of these areas is provided to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group and to Council. The Chair of Council is then required to provide a statement within the Data and Assurance return to the OfS confirming that sufficient assurance has been provided to the Governing Body that the University complies with the duty.

5. Questions and Answers

5.1 A Question and answers session was held with the following panel members:

- Abu Ahmed (**AA**) - Head of Local Delivery and Communications, the Home Office
- Andy Ferris (**AF**) - Detective Sergeant, Counter Terrorism South West
- Mike Shore-Nye (**MSN**) - Registrar and Secretary, University of Exeter
- Christopher Lindsay (**CL**) - Director of Compliance, Governance and Risk, University of Exeter
- Tracey Tuffin (**TT**) - Risk and Compliance Officer, University of Exeter

Question	Answer
<p>There has been much talk of Far-Right and Daesh related terrorist groups, why are we not hearing about animal rights activists?</p>	<p>AA – The groups named within the presentations given today were those from whom the greatest risk was currently posed. It also reflected the referrals received to date. If referrals relating to animal rights activists increased and were confirmed to be Prevent related, this would be reflected within the statistics, which were now openly published.</p> <p>AF – Confirmed that the risk in the South West was primarily Far Right, and that no animal rights related extremist groups had been reported in to the process. Local Authority areas build a picture of the treat that is most relevant to them, to ensure that there is a proportionate response.</p> <p>TT – Confirmed that the University training (“Prevent Duty – Support for Individuals” - available to all University staff via LearnUpon) details the full spectrum of ideologies under which extremism can emerge. Important to note the word extremism – possessing views one way or another may not be illegal, it is when those views are extreme and inciting violence/support for violence that a Prevent-related concern would be raised. All staff are encouraged to complete the training.</p>
<p>What are the definitions of Terrorism and of British values? The latter is seen to be fairly inflammatory.</p>	<p>AA – The definition of terrorism is that used in the Terrorism Act 2000 section 1: the use of threat, designed to influence the Government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.</p> <p>AA – acknowledge that the term “British Values” has alienated a lot of people, and could have been better worded as “shared” or “common values”. However, the content should be seen as a good thing. The values are: democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law, mutual respect, tolerance of those with different faiths and belief. An independent review by Coventry University had found that the term “British Values” was not seen favourably, but that the values themselves were used effectively.</p>

<p>If the main threat is seen as the Far Right and tackling the early stages, that messaging could be applied to legal groups and some British Army groups. As educators, what are we looking for to identify a concern? Should I be worried if a student expresses views such as support for Donald Trump? What judgements should I be making?</p>	<p>AA – This is not an easy area. The duty is framed as having “due regard” and is not prescriptive. We are looking for a risk of harm, not where a person has not broken the law but has challenging views. We don’t want to drive the discussion underground, it’s healthy to have these discussions – we must also have due regard to freedom of speech. The absolute key is risk of harm. We are looking to provide more guidance in this area.</p> <p>AF – This is a really good point, and the Police have the same issues. We are not the thought police – unpalatable views may exist and not be illegal. It may help to know that there is a filtering process that is applied to all referrals, misguided referrals would be closed down and not progress through the Prevent processes.</p> <p>MSN – The key thing here is how we work in partnership with our OfS and Prevent Regional Coordinator. We are able to obtain advice based on anonymised data to identify whether a case should be referred on or not.</p>
<p>If Channel is voluntary in nature, what happens if a person doesn’t cooperate? Will they be put on a list somewhere? The relationship between Prevent and Safeguarding is incompatible – there are a number of reports by other organisations and academics showing contrary examples and that it has not been a positive experience.</p> <p>The example provided today using a child’s statement as an indicator – children do say things that might sound violent but that they don’t actually mean.</p>	<p>AF – Channel is very dependent on the assessed risk for an individual. Some people do not engage, and if this happens, then those cases have to be closed. If there are wider safeguarding issues, then the individual can be referred into an alternative support process, although these also tend to be voluntary. We may need to accept that sometimes issues are left unresolved and we are unable to support. I would also like to add that I do see the statements made by the child as a cause for concern, and it is not normal for a child to threaten other children with being bombed, and to state that “my father is a terrorist”. This case led to a successful Prevent rehabilitation of both the child, and the child’s father. The review stage of the process would identify if there was no genuine Prevent concern, at which point the case would be closed and taken no further.</p> <p>AA – The Channel panel is not very different from a “normal” safeguarding panel, and does include representation from broader safeguarding professionals. I respectfully disagree, and do not see an incompatibility between Prevent and safeguarding. I would contest the alternative reports as not being entirely independent, and would welcome more independent reports into the duty. There will of course be Prevent cases that do not completely resolve issues. A case in point is the Parsons Green incident, where the perpetrator had previously been referred into the Prevent process. The Prevent process is an intervention and is reliant on the referred individual engaging with it.</p>
<p>There is no academic evidence that: Autism = terrorist, or that Radicalisation = terrorist</p>	<p>AA – I was very careful in my wording around autism, as it does not indicate that a person is more likely to become a terrorist. Sadly, it is a factor that those recruiting in to terrorism will pray on, as they know that it makes an individual susceptible to coercive influences. When we speak about radicalisation, this should be interpreted specifically as people being groomed into joining a terrorist group, and not to “radical people” such as Marxism etc.</p>

<p>(There is no academic evidence that: Autism = terrorist, or that Radicalisation = terrorist)</p>	<p>AF – to confirm, of all Prevent cases reviewed within the Devon and Cornwall area, only one was referred with mental health issues. The initial review of the case identified that the concern was not Prevent related, and it was closed down with the individual being referred for mental health support.</p>
<p>There is a perception that Prevent relates to Islam, how do we safeguard and protect the wellbeing of international students who may feel discriminated against?</p>	<p>AF – This is mainly about being open about what Prevent is about, and that it isn't aimed at one group of people. TT – There is a lot of work underway at the University with regard to inclusivity and diversity, in particular the Provost Commission and Exeter Speaks Out, allowing easy and anonymous reporting of bullying and/or harassment. The Prevent training also sets out the wide range of ideologies that a Prevent concern could apply to, and again I would encourage staff to undertake the session with regard to Support for Individuals. In addition, a representative from the Multi Faith Chaplaincy is in attendance at the University's Prevent Compliance Group meetings, and there is an understanding within the Chaplaincy of associated activity. The Multi-Faith Chaplaincy is available for advice and support. If discrimination occurs, it should be reported and it will be dealt with.</p>
<p>Is it right that the Students' Guild does not comply with Prevent due to the boycott?</p>	<p>CL – The University sees all Guild speaker risk assessments, which enables us to fulfil our duty to ensure that all speakers are assessed from a Prevent perspective. In addition, the Students' Guild Head of Resources and Health and Safety attends the Prevent Compliance Group meetings. The Student's Guild is a separate charitable entity, and the University has no jurisdiction to enforce engagement with Prevent. We have invited sabbatical officers to become members of the Prevent Compliance Group to have input into the implementation of the duty, but the invitations have been declined due to the boycott. This is a shame, and we have had to find alternative ways of communicating with our students, such as via the Prevent web page and events like this one. The OfS wants more student engagement going forward.</p>
<p>There is a misconception of what happens in the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, which is sometimes referred to as "the Mosque at the top of the hill". We have speakers in such as individuals who have previously been involved with proscribed extremist organisations but have since rescinded. These speakers come in to talk about their experiences and what changed their perspective. There is often backlash from other students on social media. Does the University monitor this, or does it rely on it being reported?</p>	<p>MSN – this is a difficult question to answer. We value all parts of the University community, and are working hard on diversity, chiefly via the Provost Commission. Our default position is to enable free speech and allow speakers to be heard. There are increasing issues with the use of social media, and from this year the student induction has included clear guidance on what you can and cannot say. Unfortunately we are unable to monitor all social media feeds. TT – The University has a social media team who monitor by using key words that would identify the University, but are unable to capture everything, it would be reliant on those key words being used. I would absolutely encourage that any instances of harassment or intimidation are reported. Posting such content on social media would in effect be providing the evidence required to deal with it.</p>