Safeguarding Children Vulnerable to Violent Extremism (PREVENT)

RELATED GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION

Prevent Referral Process

Channel Guidance – GOV.UK

PREVENT Duty Guidance – GOV.UK

Counter-terrorism Strategy (CONTEST)

For more information see **Leicester PREVENT**

Contents

1. Introduction

This chapter is based on and summarises the document **Channel: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism: A guide for local partnerships**.

CONTEST is the overall UK strategy for Countering Terrorism. The aim of CONTEST 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. It has four work streams, of which **PREVENT** is one. The purpose of the **Prevent Strategy** is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The strategy addresses all forms of terrorism and focuses work to prevent radicalisation on three key objectives:

- Challenging ideology that supports terrorism;

- Protecting vulnerable individuals; and

- Supporting sectors and institutions where there is a risk of radicalisation.

Channel is a key element of the Prevent strategy. It is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation. Channel uses existing collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners (such as the education and health sectors, social care, children's and youth services and offender management services), the Police and the local community to:

- Identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism;

- Assess the nature and extent of that risk;

- Develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

2. Channel: The Multi-Agency Panel

The role of the multi-agency panel is to develop an appropriate support package to safeguard those at risk of being drawn into terrorism based on an assessment of their vulnerability. The panel is responsible for managing the safeguarding risk which is in line with other multi-agency panels where risk is managed, such as Children and Adult Safeguarding panels and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (**MAPPA**).

The panel should be chaired by the local authority and include the Channel Police practitioner and other relevant statutory partners.

Channel is not a process for gathering intelligence. It is a process for providing support to people at risk. In common with other such programmes, it does require the sharing of personal information to ensure that the full range of an individual's vulnerabilities are identified and addressed. Information sharing must be assessed on a case by case basis and is governed by legislation. For more information see **Information Sharing Procedure**.

It is not the purpose of Channel to provide an alternative to the criminal justice system for those who have been engaged in illegal activity. Channel is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risk they may face before illegality relating to terrorism occurs. Therefore, in line with other safeguarding processes, being referred to Channel will not lead to an individual receiving a criminal record as a consequence of the referral, nor as a result of any support they may receive through Channel.

3. Assessing Vulnerability

Channel assesses vulnerability using a consistently applied vulnerability assessment framework built around three dimensions:

- Engagement with a group, cause or ideology;

- Intent to cause harm;

- Capability to cause harm.

The dimensions are considered separately as experience has shown that it is possible to be engaged without intending to cause harm and that it is possible to intend to cause harm without being particularly engaged. Experience has also shown that it is possible to desist (stop intending to cause harm) without fully disengaging (remaining sympathetic to the cause); though losing sympathy with the cause (disengaging) will invariably result in desistance (loss of intent).

The three dimensions are assessed by considering 22 factors that can contribute to vulnerability based around the three themes of **engagement** with extremist groups or individuals, **intent** to commit harm and **capability** to cause harm. These factors taken together form a rounded view of the vulnerability of an individual that will inform decisions on whether an individual needs support and what kind of support package may be appropriate. These factors can also be added to and are not considered an exhaustive list. By undertaking regular vulnerability assessments the progress that is being made in supporting an individual can be tracked through changes in the assessment.

4. Identifying Vulnerable People

Completing a full assessment for all 22 factors requires thorough knowledge of the individual that may not be available at the point of the initial referral. However, there are a number of behaviours and other indicators that may indicate the presence of these factors.

Example indicators that an individual is engaged with an extremist group, cause or ideology include:

- Spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists;

- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group;

- Their day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause;

- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause;

- Possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause (e.g. The swastika for far right groups);

- Attempts to recruit others to the group/cause/ideology;

- Communications with others that suggest identification with a group/cause/ideology.

Example indicators that an individual has an intention to use violence or other illegal means include:

- Clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social or political ills;

- Using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group;

- Speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group and the importance of action now;

- Expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group, cause or ideology;

- Condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others;

- Plotting or conspiring with others.

Example indicators that an individual is capable of contributing directly or indirectly to an act of terrorism include:

- Having a history of violence;

- Being criminally versatile and using criminal networks to support extremist goals;

- Having occupational skills that can enable acts of terrorism (such as civil engineering, pharmacology or construction); or

- Having technical expertise that can be deployed (e.g. IT skills, knowledge of chemicals, military training or survival skills).

The examples above are not exhaustive and vulnerability may manifest itself in other ways. There is no single route to terrorism nor is there a simple profile of those who become involved. For this reason, any attempt to derive a 'profile' can be misleading. It must not be assumed that these characteristics and experiences will necessarily lead to individuals becoming terrorists, or that these indicators are the only source of information required to make an appropriate assessment about vulnerability.

5. Managing Risk

Risk is a theme that runs through the entire Channel process: risk to the individual; risk to the public; and risk to statutory partners and any intervention providers.

The safeguarding risk: ownership of this risk lies with the multi-agency Channel panel. This is the risk to an individual as a result of their vulnerability. The multi-agency panel is where the full range of an individual's vulnerability factors should be reviewed and addressed. The Chair of the panel is responsible for ensuring that any safeguarding risks are referred to the most appropriate agencies for action; until this happens the Channel panel owns these risks. See **Responding to Abuse and Neglect Procedure** and **Referrals** Procedure for more information.

The risk of involvement in terrorism: ownership of this risk lies with the Police. This is the risk posed by the individual to themselves and society through their potential active involvement in criminality associated with terrorism. The Police are the most appropriate agency throughout the entire life of each Channel case to assess and manage this risk.

6. Referral Process

See **Flowchart for Safeguarding Children Vulnerable to Violent Extremism**

Any agency or member of the public can make a referral to Channel. A referral from an agency / organisation should go via the Prevent Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Manager.

A potential referral from the local authority should first be discussed with the relevant Community Safety Team within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Leicestershire
Gurjit Samra-Rai, Community Safety Team Manager
Tel: 0116 305 6056
Email: **Gurjit.Samra-Rai@leics.gov.uk**

Leicester
Daxa Pancholi, Head of Community Safety at Leicester City Council
Tel: 0116 454 0203 / 0777 328 9340
Email: **daxa.pancholi@Leicester.gov.uk**

Any referral received should initially be screened by the Channel Police practitioner and their line manager. All cases that progress through the Channel process will be subject to a thorough assessment of vulnerabilities in a multi-agency safeguarding environment.

The preliminary assessment is led by the Channel Police practitioner and will include their line manager and, if appropriate, senior statutory partners (such as the local authority, the Police, Probation Trusts, children's and youth services and the education sector). It should be informed by multi-agency information gathering and can include consideration of an initial vulnerability assessment.

At this point partners should collectively assess the risk and decide whether the person:

- Is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and therefore appropriate for Channel;

- Should be referred to a different support mechanism; or

- Should exit the process.

In assessing the risk, consideration should be given to:

- The risk the individual faces of being drawn into terrorism; and

- The risk the individual poses to society.

In some cases a Channel referral will exit the process at this stage and be signposted to those support services most appropriate to their needs. If there are concerns that the child or young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, a **Referrals to Children's Social Care** must be made. If there are no concerns or low risk but the child or young person requires additional support, a referral may be made for **Early Help Assessment Procedure**.

7. Intervention Process

The multi-agency panel using their professional expertise will develop a support package. This will be based on a review of the vulnerability assessment completed by the Channel Police practitioner at the preliminary assessment stage, the needs of the individual and any risks posed to potential support providers.

Multi-agency panel members should consider sharing any further information with each other for the purposes of Channel, subject to a case-by-case assessment of necessity, proportionality and lawfulness.

Wherever possible, the informed consent of the individual (and their family / carers) should be obtained. The panel may conclude that the individual is better suited to alternative support mechanisms or that further assessment indicates that the individual is not vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. In such cases the Chair of the panel is responsible for confirming the recommendation and ensuring that the decision is properly recorded.

All cases exiting Channel at this stage should be reviewed at 6 months and 12 months, from the point at which they exit the process, by senior managers.

If the panel consider that support to reduce vulnerability of being drawn into terrorist-related activity is required, they should devise an appropriate support package. This should take the form of a support plan setting out details of the statutory or community partners who will lead on delivery of the support. Consideration must also be given to potential risks posed to the provider of any support package. The action plan should highlight identified behaviours and risks that need to be addressed. This will assist in case reviews and evaluating the effectiveness of the support package. All decisions should be properly recorded.

The type of activities that are included in a support package will depend on risk, vulnerability and local resource. To illustrate, a diversionary activity may be sufficient for someone who is in the early stages of radicalisation whereas a more focussed and structured one-on-one mentoring programme may be required for those who are already radicalised.

The following kinds of support might be considered appropriate:

- Life skills - work on life skills or social skills generally, such as dealing with peer pressure;

- Mentoring support contact - work with a suitable adult as a role model or providing personal guidance, including guidance addressing extremist ideologies;

- Anger management session - formal or informal work dealing with anger;

- Cognitive/behavioural contact - cognitive behavioural therapies and general work on attitudes and behaviours;

- Constructive pursuits - supervised or managed constructive leisure activities;

- Education skills contact - activities focused on education or training;

- Careers contact - activities focused on employment;

- Family support contact - activities aimed at supporting family and personal relationships, including formal parenting programmes;

- Health awareness contact - work aimed at assessing or addressing any physical or mental health issues;

- Housing support contact - activities addressing living arrangements, accommodation provision or neighbourhood; and

- Drugs and alcohol awareness - substance misuse interventions.

Community or non-statutory partners providing support to vulnerable people need to be credible with the vulnerable individual concerned and to understand the local community.

They have an important role and their reliability, suitability to work with vulnerable people and commitment to shared values needs to be established. Multi-agency panels should make the necessary checks to be assured of the suitability of support providers; including checks to the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** for those seeking to work with young people and **Adults at Risk**.

If the panel is satisfied that the risk has been successfully reduced or managed they should recommend that the case exits the process. A closing report should be completed as soon as possible setting out the reason for the panel's recommendations. The recommendations will need to be endorsed by the Chair of the panel and a senior manager within the Police.

If the panel is not satisfied that the risk has been reduced or managed the case should be reconsidered. A new support plan should be developed and alternative support put in place. If the risk of criminality relating to terrorism has increased the Channel Police practitioner must consider escalating the case through existing Police mechanisms and whether the case remains suitable for the Channel process.

All cases should be reviewed at 6 and 12 months, from the point at which they exit the process, using the vulnerability assessment framework. All decisions and actions should be fully recorded.

8. Raising Awareness

All Channel Police practitioners and local authorities should use their networks to highlight the importance of protecting those who are susceptible to being drawn into terrorism and to raise awareness about how Channel coordinators, practitioners and the local authority can offer support. They should develop effective links between those coming into contact with vulnerable individuals, such as the education sector, social care, children's and youth services, offender management services and credible community organisations. It is recommended that these organisations provide a single point of contact.

A tool for raising awareness of Prevent and how and when to support vulnerable people is available in the form of a two-hour workshop: the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP). The workshop is designed for all front line staff and can be rolled out across all sectors. More information can be found by e-mailing Police's Prevent Team: **prevent.team@leicestershire.pnn.Police.uk** There are specific WRAP products for the health; and higher and further education sectors.

Appendix 1: Flowchart for Safeguarding Children Vulnerable to Violent Extremism

Flowchart for Safeguarding Children Vulnerable to Violent Extremism

| Identifying concerns | Cause for concern identified | Is there an immediate risk or emergency? If yes, Contact emergency services |

Identifying concerns

Cause for concern identified

Is there an immediate risk or emergency? If yes, Contact emergency services

Initial Response

Concern reported to manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Designated Safeguarding Lead or Manager gather information and determine if further action is required

Discuss with Police Prevent Team, tel 101 or go to www.eastmidlandsprevent.co.uk

Further information gathering from relevant agencies and people including family if appropriate

Convene an initial gathering information meeting for all involved

Low risk ─ further action with normal support process with further mentoring; Early Help or CAF

Multi-Agency Assessment

Medium or High Risk. Organise multi-agency meeting (CHANNEL) involving relevant police officer and key personnel

Are there grounds for not informing parents / carer?

Yes

Are there safeguarding concerns?

Yes ─ implement safeguarding processes

No

Involve parents / carers

Is there need for CAF or CiN referral?

Yes ─ refer to Early Help / CAF / CiN

Young person and/or family to agree - initial Channel meeting and other options

Young person accepted by Channel

Delivery of support and Review

Prevent and other agencies will write up intervention plan

Intervention provision and action plan reviewed at 3months, 6months & 12 months