

# Tamworth Prevent Strategy 2015 – 2017

## Introduction

The threat from terrorism to the UK remains real and serious. An attack could take place at any time and any organisation could be directly or indirectly affected. Acts of terrorism vary in scale and purpose, some aim merely to inflict superficial damage or cause public distress to draw attention to a particular cause but others can be more violent and indiscriminate with far-reaching consequences.

The current threat level from international terrorism for the UK is assessed as SEVERE.

## The Counter Terrorism and Security Act and National Prevent Strategy

The Counter Terrorism and Security (CTS) Bill was introduced in the Parliament on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and received Royal Assent on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The provisions of the new Act are wide ranging, covering security aspects to better reduce risks from those who may be suspected of terrorism-related activities. The new legislation strengthens the application of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy. 'Prevent' is one of the four strands of CONTEST strategy the others being Prepare (for attack), Protect (the public) and Pursue (the attackers).

The National Prevent Strategy has three objectives:

1. respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it;
2. prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support ; and
3. work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

The Home Office works with local authorities, police, health plus other public sector agencies and community organisations to deliver the Prevent Strategy.

The new strategy also provides a definition of extremism in the context of Prevent.

“Extremism is 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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas”

The Prevent strategy was explicitly changed in 2011 to deal with all forms of terrorism and with non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit. It also made clear that preventing people becoming terrorists or supporting

terrorism requires challenge to extremist ideas where they are used to legitimise terrorism and are shared by terrorist groups. And the strategy also means intervening to stop people moving from extremist (albeit legal) groups into terrorist-related activity.

Our Prevent work is intended to deal with all kinds of terrorist threats to Tamworth. The most significant of these threats is currently from terrorist organisations in Syria and Iraq, and Al Qa'ida associated groups, but terrorists associated with the extreme right also pose a continued threat to our safety and security. The white supremacist ideology of extreme right-wing groups has also provided both the inspiration and justification for people who have committed extreme right-wing terrorist acts.

## **Training**

There is a National Training programme available for all agencies to access which is currently being rolled out across the County to enable frontline staff to identify signs of an individual being drawn into extremism. WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) is a key hour long briefing tool used across all sectors and a counterterrorism e learning package will be available in the future.

## **The Channel Process**

Section 36 of the Act requires each local authority to ensure that a panel (known as the Channel Panel) is in place in its area with the function of assessing the extent to which individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and

- to prepare a plan in respect of identified individuals who the panel considers should be offered support for the purpose of reducing their vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism;
- if the necessary consent is given, to make arrangements for support to be provided to those individuals in accordance with their support plan;
- to keep under review the giving of support to an identified individual under a support plan;
- to revise a support plan, or withdraw support under a plan, if at any time the panel considers it appropriate;
- to carry out further assessments, after such periods as the panel considers appropriate, of an individual's vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism in cases where the necessary consent is refused or withdrawn to the giving of support under a support plan, or the panel has determined that support under a plan should be withdrawn
- to prepare a further support plan in such cases if the panel considers it appropriate

The District Council is defined in the legislation as a partner of the local panel and is required to cooperate with the panel, and the police, in carrying out their functions.

Staffordshire has a Channel panel and complies with the legislation.

## **Safeguarding**

Protecting people becoming radicalised and drawn into terrorism

Is a form of safeguarding and many of the factors that increase the risk of radicalisation are the same as for other safeguarding issues such as child sexual exploitation, neglect, involvement in risky, behaviours, etc.

The Council has a duty to ensure their functions (including any that are contracted out) have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

Similarly, the Care Act 2014 introduced a general duty on the Local Authority to promote individuals' well-being, that includes protection from abuse and physical, mental health and emotional well-being. The Authority, therefore, needs to ensure that its discharge of its functions under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 dovetail with its broader safeguarding arrangements.

## **Use of local authority resources**

Councils should ensure that publically owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. This includes ensuring that IT equipment available to the general public uses filtering solutions which limits access to terrorist and extremist materials.

Where appropriate, when new contracts for the delivery of their services are being made, to ensure that the principles of the duty are written in to those contracts in a suitable form.

## **Governance Arrangements**

Locally strategy and policy will be agreed by the Tamworth Strategic Partnership having due regard to the Staffordshire Prevent Board which has all district authority representation. On going monitoring and evaluation of the Prevent action plan will be undertaken by the community safety partnership joint operations group (JOG). More timely interventions to identified individuals can be heard at the weekly Tamworth Vulnerability Partnership (TVP) this being not withstanding any referral to the Channel process.

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