



**Open Report on behalf of Martin Samuels,
Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing**

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	14 May 2024
Subject:	Annual Review of Prevent

Summary:

This report presents to the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee a summary of Prevent activity in Lincolnshire during the course of 2023/24 and the intentions for the coming year, to ensure Members are sighted on Prevent as a statutory duty.

Actions Required:

Members of the Committee are invited to:

1. review and comment on the contents of this report.
2. seek assurance on the Council's role in meeting its statutory responsibilities under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

1. Background

The UK faces a continuing threat from terrorism. The National Threat Level for the UK, assessed by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, is currently *Substantial* (meaning an attack is likely). Following terrorist incidents that year, the threat level in Northern Ireland was raised to *Severe* (highly likely) in March 2023. This was reduced back to *Substantial* in March 2024.

Every year, the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) is published, which identifies specific threat and risk in each County. Priorities identified for Lincolnshire in 2024 are:

- Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism
- Prison extremism and extremists
- Self-Initiated Terrorists (S-ITs)

Islamist Extremism (AQ/IS) inspired terrorism is still a priority at a national and regional level, but remains low risk in Lincolnshire. The threat from Extreme Right-Wing terrorism is growing and evolving, particularly the radicalisation and inspirational effect of dangerous online content.

Lincolnshire continues to be classified as a low risk, low priority Prevent area by the Home Office, though that does not mean there is no risk at all. There may be low local risk, but terrorist incidents have a high impact often resulting in mass fatalities and/or casualties (Manchester Arena bombing 2017, London Bridge attacks 2017 and 2019, Parsons Green bombing 2017, Reading stabbings 2020) so there is a need for constant vigilance.

Action to tackle terrorism is covered by the Government's CONTEST strategy. Terrorism is defined by the Terrorism Act 2000; in brief it means action, or threat of action, involving violence to the public and/or damage to property. This action must be focused on influencing the Government or intimidating the public, with the purpose of advancing a particular political / ideological cause.

This report is primarily concerned with the Council's role in delivering one element of the CONTEST strategy: 'Prevent' – aimed at reducing the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent places a statutory duty on certain specified authorities, including councils, to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" as per the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Following the Government's Independent Review of Prevent ([Independent Review of Prevent's report and government response - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/reviews/independent-review-of-prevent)), published in February 2023, the Prevent Duty was revised at the end of 2023 ([Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance-england-and-wales-2023)). Prevent retained its three main objectives, with slight wording amendments:

- tackle the ideological causes of terrorism
- intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation
- enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate

The Independent Review recommended 34 areas of improvement to be made to Prevent, 30 of which have now been completed nationally. Lincolnshire fully complies with the recommendations made and the revised Duty requirements.

2. Lincolnshire Prevent

Multi Agency Partnership Group

Overall strategic governance of Prevent in Lincolnshire sits with the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP), with operational oversight provided by the Prevent Steering Group (PSG). Both forums are chaired and administrated by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), and report twice a year to the SLP. Membership includes a number of senior representatives from: Children's Services and Adult Services directorates, Counter Terrorism Policing East Midlands (Prevent), Lincolnshire Police, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, Probation and Prison

Service, District Councils, Ministry of Defence, local health partners, Department of Education, Lincoln College, Bishop Grosseteste and Lincoln University, Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service and JUST Lincolnshire. The PSG meets quarterly with high attendance levels from all agencies.

For Lincolnshire County Council, Prevent activity is overseen by Richard Clare as Community Safety Strategy Coordinator with dedicated lead for Prevent. Training is delivered by Jon Mellor, who ensures LCC staff, schools, LCC commissioned service providers and other groups (where appropriate) receive Prevent related training. The PSG is chaired by Supt Lee St Quinton as Head of Service for Partnerships, and the county's Channel Panel by Clare Newborn, Head of Service for Community Safety. Elected member oversight is provided by the portfolio holder Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE and her Executive Support Councillor, Councillor S P Roe. Both are regularly briefed by the Assistant Director for Public Protection and Head of Community Safety, with Councillor Roe representing Lincolnshire at the East Midlands Prevent Champion Network meetings.

A full Elected Member briefing on Prevent is due to take place following the local elections in May, with the assistance of Counter Terrorism Policing, to provide a wider context to the threat and risk within the county.

This collective attention on Prevent ensures it is appropriately prioritised within the Council and the wider partnership.

Delivery Plan

Prevent activity is centred around risks identified in the CTLP and driven by the Prevent Delivery Plan. This includes actions necessary to ensure compliance with the Duty, such as the change to governance by the SLP and the Venue Hire Policy. The Delivery Plan also documents activity around other areas of work including improving referral quality through training, data sharing and analysis to focus resources, and monitoring the potential radicalising influence of protest activity.

Benchmark Assessment

Every year, compliance with the Prevent Duty is assessed by the Home Office. This breaks down the Duty requirements into a number of categories which are then scored as "Not Met", "Met" and "Exceeded". This year's assessment took place on 28 February, and whilst the report has yet to be formally received, the draft summary stated:

"Overall Lincolnshire is performing very well and meeting the duty in every area bar one, Venue Hire. In some areas delivery is exceptional for example around training."

A Venue Hire Policy was formally agreed by Lincolnshire County Council on 26 March, meaning there are no longer any outstanding Duty requirements. Implementation of the policy will take place over the coming months as a joint venture between LCC Corporate Property and Prevent staff.

On-Line Resilience

As identified in the CTLP, on-line radicalisation is a significant risk across the county, with extremist and terrorist material easily accessible to the public. LCC's training offer has been adapted to incorporate the risks of radicalisation through social media, gaming and the internet.

The CTLP highlighted the risk of online extremism, which is the most common radicalising factor found within Prevent referrals. It also identified the particular vulnerabilities of people with neurodiverse conditions. As a result of this, Home Office funding was obtained to hold workshops in April and May of this year entitled "*Young People, Radicalisation & Autism Workshop*". This is a joint venture led by Lincolnshire, incorporating Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire County Councils. Workshops are being held online across all four counties; designed specifically for parents, carers, and those who provide direct support for neuro-diverse children, particularly males. It will provide the following awareness:

- Understanding the specific vulnerabilities of young males with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or other neurological conditions which makes them particularly susceptible to radicalisation.
- Identify when a young person in their care, or who they support, is at risk of online radicalisation.
- Provide the skills and knowledge to intervene directly in an appropriate way to safeguard the young person.
- Know how to seek further support in mitigating that risk.

Training

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Local Authority is required to ensure all staff are appropriately trained in order to be able to recognise radicalisation, extremism and vulnerability, and know how to refer those individuals who may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism into Channel. This is a core area of activity for LCC's Prevent Team.

The Prevent Partnership has an agreed Prevent Training Strategy which documents the minimum standards for training provision by all partners. LCC complies with this through its own Training Policy, which includes mandatory training and refreshers for all LCC staff and contracted services, appropriate to their role. Training is provided free of charge to all secondary and SEN schools in the county. There is also a "Targeted Training Offer" available, dependant on need, which allows training to be provided to community groups, voluntary sector and other schools where appropriate. This was an evidence-led decision based on the types of referrals received in Lincolnshire, our identified threat and risk, and the rationalisation of our training resource.

LCC facilitate three types of Prevent training:

- Prevent E-learning package via Lincs2Learn for all LCC staff.

- Prevent Awareness sessions (face-to-face) via Microsoft Teams to frontline LCC staff through Lincs2Learn.
- Prevent Awareness sessions (face-to-face) to schools, academies, partners and community groups.

The below charts show the total numbers of people trained over the last three years through these three methods, from 1 April to 31 March each year.

Prevent Course	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
L2L e-learning (LCC staff)	1699	851	910
L2L Face to Face (LCC staff)	362	262	311
Face to face (schools etc)	1866	1285	376

The recruitment of a dedicated Prevent trainer resource in 2023/24 had an impact on the availability of training, particularly for schools, during that year and this is reflected in the figures above. The Prevent Trainer is now in post and prioritising schools delivery, so we expect to see a return to usual figures in 2024/25.

Prevent and Extremism training is also available through the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership’s “Enable” website. During 2023/24, 2470 people completed this online as follows:

Agency	Total
Charity	267
District Council	144
Early Years	538
Education	1131
Foster Carers	5
Health	13
LCC Adult Care, Resources, PH, Place	196
LCC Children's Services	172
Police & Criminal Justice	4
	2470

“Enable” training numbers are relatively consistent with previous years, although there was a slight increase in schools undertaking this type of training given the reduced availability of the LCC training offer.

Reducing Permissive Environments

This is a new category in the revised Duty Guidance, aimed at limiting the permissive spaces used by those who radicalise people into participating in, or supporting, terrorism. This includes ensuring venues or IT equipment are not used by speakers and groups who spread extremist narratives which could reasonably be linked to terrorism. The new Venue Hire and Speaker Policy is a key part of this Duty.

3. Channel

Channel is a multi-agency approach to provide support at an early stage to those identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism or supporting terrorist organisations. Channel is chaired by the County Council with representation from relevant sectors including police, health, safeguarding, education, housing, immigration and border control, prison and probation providers and others.

Where a person has been identified as being susceptible to radicalisation, a Prevent Referral Form is completed that is then submitted to the local Counter Terrorism Policing Team. These are assessed by Counter Terrorism police and if an ideology and potential national security risk is identified, put before a Channel Panel for consideration.

The Panel then decides whether to adopt an individual onto Channel, or whether alternative interventions are more appropriate. If adopted to Channel, consent is then sought from the individual before a supportive action plan is put in place. Channel is a voluntary programme and individuals must provide consent to take part.

Every case adopted into Channel is kept under review and routinely re-assessed for any changes to identified vulnerabilities and their risk to national security.

In March 2024, LCC Prevent and Channel staff and Counter Terrorism Police undertook a Referral Case Review. This Review looked at a dip sample of cases where the police had closed referrals prior to Channel to validate the rationale for that decision being made. In all cases, LCC staff agreed fully with these decisions, and were reassured by the extensive work undertaken by the police in assessing and safeguarding referees before closure.

4. National Developments

The UK Home Office has pledged to introduce a new legal requirement for public places to ensure preparedness for, and protection from, terrorist attacks. This new 'Protect Duty' commitment comes after the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing, in which 22 people were killed. The Government is due to pass legislation during 2024 formalising the "Protect Duty", though the extent of this Duty is yet to be finalised. Its progress is currently being monitored by the LCC Prevent Lead, and Head of Emergency Planning, Ian Reed.

New definition of Extremism

On 14 March 2024, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced a new definition of extremism and engagement principles for Government departments in England, together with accompanying guidance.

The new the definition of extremism is set out as below:

- *Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:*
 - (1) Negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or,*
 - (2) undermine, overturn, or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or*
 - (3) intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2).*

The definition also sets out the types of behaviour that are indicative of the kind of promotion or advancement which may be relevant to the definition; [New definition of extremism \(2024\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-definition-of-extremism-2024). Whilst this provides a helpful reference when talking about Extremism within the context of Prevent, this definition does not change the threshold or remit for Prevent activity.

5. Conclusion

This report summarises the work being carried out by Lincolnshire County Council, and its partners, to deter people away from terrorism and extremism, and meet its Prevent Duty. We are currently meeting all Duty Requirements, with a strong Prevent Partnership in place, and an exceptional training offer available to the county.

6. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

7. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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