

Open Report on behalf of Nicole Hilton, Chief Community Engagement Officer

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	30 November 2018
Subject:	Prevent and the Implications for Children and Young People

Summary:

This report presents to the Scrutiny Committee an update on Prevent activity in Lincolnshire during 2017/18, as a result of changes to the Counter-Terrorism Bill 2014 and the introduction of the Government Counter-Extremism Strategy 2015 and the updated CONTEST Strategy 2018, including the new responsibilities placed upon Local Authorities and in particular the Implications for Children and Young People.

Actions Required:

Members of the Committee are invited to consider and comment on the report and highlight any recommendations or further actions for consideration.

1. Background

The Government response to counter-terrorism is built on an approach that unites the public and private sectors, communities, citizens and overseas partners around the single purpose to leave no safe space for terrorists to recruit or act. The strategy, CONTEST, is the framework that enables Government to organise this work to counter all forms of terrorism. CONTEST's overarching aim remains to reduce the risk to the UK and its citizens and interests overseas.

2. Strategic Context

The threat from terrorism, globally and in the UK, is higher than when the Government last published CONTEST in 2011. The UK is facing a number of different and enduring terrorist threats. The increased threat has mainly been caused by the rise of Daesh and the creation of its cult-like "Caliphate", combined with the persistent threat from Al Qa'ida.

Using pernicious, divisive messaging and amplifying perceived grievances, Daesh and Al Qa'ida exploit the internet to promote warped alternative narratives, urging extremists within communities to subvert our way of life through simple, brutal violence. They deem anyone who does not share their rejectionist views as a

legitimate target and any method of murder acceptable. They cynically groom the vulnerable and the young to join their movement, inspiring people within our own communities to commit senseless acts of violence. The recent attacks across Europe and the UK have also served to highlight the diversity and accessibility of methods by which individuals that are vulnerable to these radicalising messages can commit attacks.

This has had a profound effect on the threat to the UK, seen so starkly through the attacks in 2017. The current UK National Threat Level is SEVERE, meaning an attack is highly likely. Islamist terrorism is the foremost terrorist threat to the UK. Extreme right-wing terrorism is a growing threat. In December 2016, the then Home Secretary proscribed the first extreme right-wing group, National Action, under the Terrorism Act 2000. The Government took further action in September 2017, proscribing Scottish Dawn and National Socialist Anti-Capitalist Action as aliases of National Action.

In 2017, we saw a significant shift in the terrorist threat to the UK, with five attacks in London and Manchester that led to the deaths of 36 innocent people and injured many more. The Government responded decisively, rapidly adapting their priorities and capabilities, to break the momentum of these attacks. Since last year's Westminster attack, the police and the security and intelligence agencies have successfully foiled a further 12 Islamist plots, and since 2017, have disrupted four extreme right-wing plots.

However, government will not always be successful in stopping attacks. Most future terrorist plots in the UK will employ simple methods that can be developed with ease and at speed. Terrorists still have the intent to also mount complex, potentially more destructive attacks, probably targeting crowded places or the global aviation system. The general availability and use of encrypted communications allows terrorists to disguise their plans better.

3. Government Response

The updated and strengthened CONTEST 2018 strategy reflects the findings of a fundamental review of all aspects of counter-terrorism, to ensure we have the best response to the heightened threat in coming years. The review found CONTEST to be well-organised and comprehensive and that the Government should update their approach within the tried and tested strategic framework of four 'P' work strands:

- Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks.
- Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack.
- Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.

However, the review concluded that a change in the approach within this framework would increase the ability to counter the shift in threat. This will include a step-change in domestic investigative capabilities through implementing the recommendations of MI5 and CT Policing's Operational Improvement Review.

The Government will prioritise strengthening the resilience of local communities to terrorism as they are at the forefront of our response, in particular those where the threat from terrorism and radicalisation is highest. The support to British citizens affected by terrorism at home and overseas remains a top priority.

The four 'P' national work strands will coalesce into a single local or overseas response as the government focus on improving frontline integration of our capabilities and people. Over the next three years the Government will take forward the following priorities under the Prevent work strand:

- To safeguard and support those vulnerable to radicalisation, to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- Focus activity and resources in those locations where the threat from terrorism and radicalisation is highest.
- Expand our Desistance and Disengagement Programme with an immediate aim over the next 12 months to more than double the number of individuals receiving rehabilitative interventions.
- Develop a series of multi-agency pilots to trial methods to improve our understanding of those at risk of involvement in terrorism and enable earlier intervention.
- Focus our online activity on preventing the dissemination of terrorist material and building strong counter-terrorist narratives in order to ensure there are no safe places for terrorists online.
- Build stronger partnerships with communities, civil society groups, public sector institutions and industry to improve Prevent delivery.
- Re-enforce safeguarding at the heart of Prevent to ensure our communities and families are not exploited or groomed into following a path of violent extremism.

4. Channel

The Channel programme, part of the Prevent strategy, is a multi-agency programme co-ordinated by the Police to identify individuals vulnerable to radicalisation and direct them towards appropriate support. It was first piloted in 2007, and was rolled out across England and Wales in 2012. It focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The latest Channel guidance states that the programme consists of three elements:

- I. Identifying individuals at risk;
- II. Assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and
- III. Developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals involved.

In delivering the programme, the Local Authority and Police work with agencies including the NHS; Social Workers; Educational Institutions; Youth Offending Services; Immigration & Boarder Agency; Housing Services; Prisons; and Probation Services.

This assessment informs decisions on whether an individual needs support and what kind of support package might be appropriate. Channel aims to stop people

moving from extremist groups, or from extremism, into terrorism. Association with organisations that are not proscribed and that espouse extremist ideology is not, on its own, reason enough to justify a referral to the Channel process. If professionals determine that someone attracted to the ideology of such groups also exhibits additional behavioural indicators that suggest they are moving towards terrorism then it would be appropriate to make a referral to Channel.

5. Young People Anxious from Terror Coverage

CHILDWISE, a leading specialist in research with children and young people, has produced a series of 'What Kids Think About...' reports, designed to shine a spotlight on what children and young people have to say about a variety of topics. The themes chosen tap into issues concerning children and young people and/or largely derive from, and expand upon these. The first report focuses on children's personal, local and global concerns about war and terrorism.

The CHILDWISE report claims that "Media coverage of terror attacks and extremism can leave young people anxious and with an exaggerated fear of becoming victims", adding that "terrorism was seen as a bigger worry than issues such as bullying, racism, cruelty to children or worries about getting a job."

The report interviewed a representative sample of 1,557 children aged between 7 and 16. Much of the information reaching children about terror was indirect rather than news reports, such as comments heard from adults or found on social media. The study found that almost four in 10 young people were afraid because they thought they themselves could be victims of terror.

6. Lincolnshire Prevent

Local Authorities with their wide-ranging responsibilities and democratic accountability to their electorate are vital to Prevent work, including working with their local partners to protect the public, prevent crime and to promote strong, integrated communities. Whilst the Prevent Duty outlines the requirements placed upon Local Authorities and its partners, it offers the freedom to further develop individual processes appropriate to each geographical area, reflecting both risk and demographics. To ensure that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) continues to deliver the Prevent Duty, a robust framework for governance and leadership has been put in place. LCC has responsibility to both Chair and provide the secretariat of the Prevent Steering Group.

7. Prevent Training & Development:

Training and briefings to frontline staff and the voluntary sector continues to be delivered in a rolling programme accessible (and free) to all agencies. The demands from schools has increased dramatically since the PREVENT Duty was introduced, and more latterly since recent attacks.

During the last twelve months, 36 face to face, Prevent awareness sessions have been delivered to Schools and Educational settings (such as Child minders etc.) During November 2017 four CHANNEL referral awareness sessions were jointly

delivered by the Prevent Officer from the East Midlands Special Operations Unit, the Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) Prevent officer and the Safeguarding & Education Welfare Supervisor LCC. These sessions were provided to designated safeguarding leads and head teachers allowing for open discussion and questions about concerns that schools may have in relation to children and young people becoming drawn into the extremist narrative and the possibility of being radicalised.

8. Key Projects in Lincolnshire

• Young People and On-Line Extremist Narrative

A task and finish group has been established to consider how to engage with young people to discuss concerns around the on-line narrative of extremist ideologies, such as those based around the extreme right wing. These websites are designed to look attractive and appealing to a young audience, they talk about 'Duty', 'Responsibility' and 'Values'. Young people can be drawn into the extremist rhetoric, without actually fully understanding the broader aims of those groups.

The task and finish group is made up of:

- Prevent Officer from the East Midlands Special Operations Unit
- LCC Prevent Officer
- LCC Engagement Project Officer (Stay Safe Partnership)
- e-Safety Officer – Stay Safe Partnership
- Participation Officer (LCC Youth Services)
- Two Head Teachers

• Prevent Duty Guidance for Schools

The guidance for schools has been amended to include the updated and strengthened CONTEST 2018 strategy and new contact details and supporting websites. The update of the Guidance was undertaken in partnership with the LCC Safeguarding & Education Welfare Supervisor and LSCB Audit and Policy Officer. The document was sent out with the safeguarding bulletin via Perspective Light and can also be found in the safeguarding documents on Perspective Light that all schools except independent schools have access to. The safeguarding bulletin is sent separately to independent educational settings.

• Supplementary Schools

The Community Engagement Team is supporting the delivery of a three year, county wide, Community Collaboration Project (ending 31st March, 2020). Two LCC Officers have been working in partnership with the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team to support Supplementary schools and to offer training from both the Lincolnshire Police Prevent Officer and the LCC Prevent Officer to raise their awareness of Prevent.

• Safeguarding against Extremism Presentations

Over 250 'Safeguarding Against Extremism' workshops have been delivered to young people by the Lincolnshire Police Prevent Officers in an attempt to create a

safe space for debate and discussion around sensitive and current issues. The sessions which have been delivered at schools, colleges and at other establishments where young people are supported, have included information and awareness on the current threat level, exploration of the concept of 'radicalisation', protecting oneself from extreme online content and PREVENT as an agenda and what it should mean to young people. Sessions have been delivered over a two year period.

9. Conclusion

The challenge the new legislation presents to Lincolnshire County Council still remains those of performance, training and awareness. Resources are being committed through existing staffing structures with demand absorbed by the Community Engagement Team which is developing a community integration approach. This team is currently exploring what other service areas of LCC can offer in relation to the delivery of training and awareness alongside existing training delivery.

10. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

n/a

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

Yes

11. 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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