



**Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham,  
Executive Director - Resources**

Report to:	<b>Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>08 December 2020</b>
Subject:	<b>Annual Review of Prevent</b>

**Summary:**

This report presents to the Scrutiny Committee an update on Prevent activity in Lincolnshire during 2019/20, to enable Members to keep a 'watching brief' of Prevent.

**Actions Required:**

Members of the Committee are invited to consider the contents of this report, and comment on the Council's role in meeting its statutory responsibilities under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

## **1. Background**

The UK faces a substantial and continuing threat from terrorism, currently assessed by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre as Severe, meaning an attack is highly likely. The most significant of the threats is currently from terrorist organisations associated with Al Qa'aida and Daesh. Terrorists associated with extreme right-wing ideologies and lone actors inspired by such organisations also present a risk to our safety and security. Coupled with the increasingly sophisticated use of the web and social media by organisations to spread extremist propaganda, it presents a complex picture for organisations.

In respect of terrorism, Lincolnshire is assessed to be a low risk area, but it is important not to be complacent.

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 cause.

Action to counter extremism is framed by the Government's 2015 counter-extremism strategy. Extremism is more difficult to define but is identified in the

counter-extremism strategy as “the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs”.

A third element to the strategic context for work around Prevent and counter-extremism is integration and cohesion. Extremism is a threat to community cohesion and will grow if cohesion fails; fostering cohesion helps build resilience to rises in extremism and helps limit opportunities for extremists to exploit.

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.

Prevent has three objectives:

- tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism
- safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support
- enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate

## **2. Lincolnshire Prevent**

### **- Governance**

To ensure that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) continues to effectively deliver its Prevent Duty, it has put in place a robust framework for governance and leadership.

In terms of management and coordination, LCC's Prevent Officer now sits within the Safer Communities Service in the Resources Directorate of Lincolnshire County Council. The purpose of the Safer Communities Service is to prevent crime and enhance community safety, and to do so by facilitating effective partnership working (amongst other strategies), so the Prevent agenda sits neatly within that Service.

To demonstrate effective compliance with the duty, specified authorities must be part of a coordinated approach to multi agency working. Lincolnshire has a strong and effective Prevent Steering Group, and LCC is a key contributor providing both chair and administrative support to the Group. Membership is comprised of senior representatives from Children’s Services and Adult Care and Community Wellbeing directorates, as well as Counter Terrorism Policing East Midlands (Prevent), East Midlands Special Operations Unit - Special Branch Lincolnshire Police, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, Thames Ambulance Service Ltd (patient services), Probation and Prison Service, District Council, Ministry of Defence, Department for Education, local health partners, Lincoln College, Bishop Grosseteste and Lincoln

University, Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service and JUST Lincolnshire. In terms of membership, Lincolnshire has one the best attended Steering Groups country-wide, and is one of the few to have secured third-sector involvement.

The Prevent duty requires all eligible authorities to devise strategies and action plans proportionate to the local risk in order to be able to achieve the three objectives set in the Prevent strategy, namely to: provide a response to the ideological threats of terrorism, prevent people from being drawn to terrorism, and assist organisations, sectors, and institutions that may face risks of radicalisation. The Council's dedicated Prevent Officer has worked with key partners to develop a partnership Prevent delivery plan, based on the assessment of local risk (Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP)), and the Steering Group directs the activity detailed within that plan.

The CTLP shapes the work of the Prevent Steering Group; helping to focus Prevent activity and allowing partners to best target their efforts and resources. The CTLP is reviewed every year, and the Steering Group has just completed a collation of information across partners to help inform that review. When the revised CTLP is shared in December all work plans, including the County Council's, will be reviewed in light of its recommendations. With this in mind, a further report will be prepared for this Committee in March 2021 detailing the proposed key pieces of work for the year. This will give Members a meaningful opportunity to comment on future activity, and make recommendations for consideration.

A Prevent Community Engagement Subgroup has been recently established to consider the development of new and innovative approaches to community work, to ensure Prevent partners can continue to engage with local communities and tackle the negative narrative that can divide communities and lead to extremism. A Communications Subgroup has also been established to develop on-line and social media messaging around Prevent.

#### - **Channel**

A key element of Prevent delivery is Channel; a multi-agency approach to provide support at an early stage to those identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism or supporting terrorist organisations. This process is managed by a statutory 'Channel panel', a body chaired by the County Council with representation from relevant sectors including health, safeguarding, education, housing, immigration and border control, prison and probation providers and others. The Channel panel assesses the nature and extent of the risk, and decides on the most appropriate support to protect people at risk of radicalisation.

Channel is a voluntary programme and individuals must consent to receive support to address their vulnerabilities and reduce the risk to them. This support can range from access to mainstream services, such as health and education, through to family support and specialist guidance to understand and challenge ideological, theological or fixated thinking. It can also include wider diversionary activities such as appropriate training courses.

Every case adopted into Channel is kept under review and routinely re-assessed for any changes to identified vulnerabilities and risks in relation to terrorism-connected offending.

## - **Training and Development**

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 vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. This is a core area of activity for LCC's Prevent Officer.

Alongside Home Office Prevent and Channel eLearning training, Lincolnshire County Council delivers a Prevent training package that incorporates elements of the Home Office WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) training, but with some local context. Training and briefing sessions are free to all agencies and are delivered to:

- All LCC employees (every 5 years); from front line waste management services to back office staff and school crossing patrols.
- LCC commissioned or grant funded service providers.
- District Council colleagues.
- Educational establishments; from child minders and nurseries to teachers, Governors and Safeguarding leads in Primary and Secondary schools.
- Community Groups.

There is always a healthy take-up of Prevent Awareness training, and request for bookings have remained constant. Government restrictions imposed in March of this year, which included the closure of schools, has had a bearing on the number of sessions delivered over the course of the last 12 months. The figures quoted below are from October 2019 to October 2020:

- Prevent Awareness sessions (face-to-face and via Microsoft Teams) to LCC staff: 471.
- Prevent E-learning package available to LCC staff via Lincs 2 Learn: 1146.
- Prevent Awareness sessions (face-to-face) to District Councils, schools and academies, LCC commissioned service providers and community groups: 77 sessions (to 1057 staff).

The preference for interactive workshops is deliberate. These workshops encourage more meaningful engagement, discussion and debate on what can be a sensitive issue. In response to the challenges presented by COVID-19, the Prevent Officer has sought to develop an online Prevent workshop offer, in order to ensure the continuation of this style of workshop regardless of any restrictions. This virtual workshop has been delivered via Microsoft Teams to LCC staff and some schools, and the virtual training package is being trialled with Town and Parish Councils.

On-line sites, forums and profiles of an extremist nature are in abundance and easily accessible, and LCC's training offer needs to ensure it incorporates the risks of radicalisation through social media and the internet. In the coming months,

LCC's Prevent Officer will be working to develop a new presentation designed for practitioners and safeguarding leads that tackles these issues.

There is a recognition that the extensive network of voluntary and community sector providers are critical partners in Prevent and there would be benefit from delivering more training across voluntary and community sector providers within the County. This is something the Service will be seeking to develop in the coming year.

Member development training (delivered by LCC Prevent Officer and the Counter-Terrorism Special Branch Lincolnshire Prevent Officer) has not taken place this year, again as a consequence of COVID-19. This would ordinarily be a yearly offer, and will be prioritised for Members in the New Year.

#### - **Community work**

The cornerstone of Prevent is our work with local communities and civil society organisations. The Council's Prevent Officer works with third sector organisations across the county to support a wide range of projects, working with schools, families and in local communities to build their awareness of the risks of radicalisation, their resilience to terrorist narratives and propaganda, and to help them know what to do if they have concerns about someone who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

COVID-19 restrictions have presented some challenges to the delivery of community interventions this year, including Women's Engagement Group events and Engagement and Diversity Awareness Workshops, although these are now restarting.

Women's Engagement Events are aimed at raising awareness of the important role that women play in safeguarding others around them from being drawn towards extremism. They present opportunities for women to come together in a safe space to talk about prejudice, discrimination and racism and how they can manifest and create suspicion, division and hatred. Previous events have been attended by a combination of female practitioners working with women in the community, and female members of the local community.

Engagement and Diversity Awareness Workshops are designed to explore people's experiences of diversity and cohesion within their own communities, and how integration and difference can be valued in order to provide resilience and strengthen community collaboration. The sessions have previously been delivered to town and parish councils, community groups, faith groups and third sector organisations, such as the Volunteer Centre Services network meetings. Examples of the topics covered are nationality, culture, tradition and faith. These workshops provide a safe environment for debate and critical discourse, which promotes greater understanding and stronger and more positive relationships between people of different backgrounds in our communities in Lincolnshire.

Young people can be amongst the most vulnerable to extremist narratives so they will continue to be a particular focus for activity. LCC and Lincolnshire Police are

working with the Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service (LCVS) on a project designed to engage young people in the Prevent agenda in the Boston area. The aim of the project is to work with Youth Ambassadors to:

- Develop their understanding of the Prevent agenda.
- Develop ways to enable other young people to gain a greater understanding of the main concepts of Prevent.
- Develop the project role in order to support Prevent objectives across the county.
- Implement ideas about how best to promote Prevent amongst other young people.
- Co-produce Prevent promotional materials, using a variety of methods such as social media and website content.
- Be critical friends of Prevent - how to get the message out there better, to who and how young people can support this.

Any engagement with pupils in schools is currently undertaken by the Prevent Officer Lincolnshire Police Special Branch. One of the benefits of Prevent moving into the Safer Communities Service is the ability to use the team's collective resource. The Stay Safe Partnership already sits within the Service; their remit is to deliver prevention messages to school pupils on a number of safety issues. Our intention is to capitalise on this and work with the Partnership, Lincolnshire Police Prevent Officer and Education colleagues to ensure Prevent messaging reaches a wider number of pupils in secondary, sixth form schools and colleges.

LCC's Prevent Officer has also been working closely with the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism, and Birmingham and Leicester City Councils around our Armed Forces.

### **3. Conclusion**

This report summarises the nature of work that is being carried out by Lincolnshire County Council to deter people away from terrorism and extremism. It is hoped the report demonstrates to the Committee the meaningful contribution Lincolnshire County Council makes to the Prevent agenda; in its own right and as member of a Prevent partnership.

### **4. Consultation**

#### **a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

N/A

### **5. 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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