



Open Report on behalf of Martyn Parker, Assistant Director, Public Protection

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	20 June 2023
Subject:	Annual Review of Prevent

Summary:

To present to the Scrutiny Committee a summary of Prevent activity in Lincolnshire during the course of 2022/23 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 consider the contents of this report, and comment on the Councils 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, was reduced to *Substantial* in February 2022 (meaning an attack is likely). Following recent terrorist incidents the threat level in Northern Ireland was raised to *Severe* in March 2023.

The revised Counter Terrorism Local Profile (Nov 2022) identified 3 Priority Areas for Lincolnshire:

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

This mirrors most of the National Threat Priorities, with the exception of Islamist Extremism, which does not feature as an identified risk in Lincolnshire. ERWT is the recurring dominant established ideology recorded within Lincolnshire Prevent casework, with most relating to individuals under the age of 25.

The CTLP also identifies, both locally and nationally, the inclusion of neurodiversity and on-line radicalisation as factors in a significant number of Prevent referrals.

Lincolnshire continues to be classed as a low risk, low priority area for Prevent, though that does not mean there is no risk at all. Convictions in the recent past of Lincoln residents Ben John (2021) and David Parnham (2019) show the continuing need for 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 Councils' 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

Overall governance of Prevent in Lincolnshire is undertaken by the Prevent Steering Group (PSG), which is Chaired and administrated by LCC. Membership includes a number of senior representatives from: Children's Service and Adult Service 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.

Prevent activity is centred around risks identified in the CTLP and driven by the Prevent Delivery Plan. The delivery plan documents activities and progress broken down into 4 areas:

Effective Leadership and Governance

This ensures that the PSG has good representation from a wide range of partners, who provide assurance that statutory responsibilities are being delivered against and ensure oversight of all Prevent activity across Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire is also represented at regional and national network meetings by the Prevent Lead.

Elected member oversight is provided by portfolio holder Cllr Bradwell and Cllr Roe. Both are briefed when required by the Community Safety Head of Service, with Cllr Roe representing Lincolnshire at the newly established East Midlands Prevent Champion Network meetings.

In June 2022 the new role of “Community Safety Strategy Coordinator, Leading on Prevent” was created within the Community Safety Service, in the Adult Care and Community Wellbeing (Public Protection) Directorate of LCC. This post leads on Prevent for LCC and co-ordinates Prevent activity across all partner agencies.

In March 2023 the Home Office undertook its annual Benchmark Assessment of Prevent Delivery in Lincolnshire. Overall Prevent delivery was assessed as *“excellent, especially when considered against the local threat and risk profile”*. The assessment included some recommendations around continuing to develop our risk assessment process and delivery plan, however it also highlighted the continued lack of a Venue Hire Policy as the only area we were not fully meeting the Duty.

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. LCC's training offer has been adapted to incorporate the risks of radicalisation through social media, gaming and the internet.

Following a successful bid to the “Home Office Preventing Radicalisation Fund”, several workshops were held throughout February and March 2023. These were specifically aimed at carers and support workers for teenage males with neurodiverse conditions. This was identified as a core at-risk group within the CTLP, particularly around on-line radicalisation. These workshops were significantly over-subscribed, and it is hoped to secure additional funding to repeat these later on in 2023.

Community Engagement and Awareness Raising

The Council's Prevent Officer and Lead have worked 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 to help them know what to do if they have concerns about someone who may be susceptible to radicalisation.

Several partnership engagement events took place throughout 2022 including a Women's Engagement Event in Grantham, a Families Safeguarding Event at RAF Waddington, and a Heritage, Faith and Communities Event in Skegness.

Elected members play a key role as figureheads in the community, in raising awareness of Prevent and facilitating community cohesion. The Independent Review of Prevent identified a lack of community generated referrals, and this is true in Lincolnshire. This is an area that Elected Members could have an influence on; identifying concerns themselves about members of the public, but also supporting others in their local communities to do the same. Elected Members can also benefit from advice and guidance around Prevent and Protect (ACT) to help support their own safety and wellbeing.

Learning 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 susceptible to being drawn into terrorism, into Channel. This is a core area of activity for LCC's Prevent Lead.

The retirement of LCC's previous Prevent Officer in 2022 impacted training delivery whilst recruitment took place for a replacement Prevent Lead Officer and Prevent Training Officer. In the interim training of LCC staff has been prioritised, but schools' training was suspended from 1st September 2022. This will recommence in June 2023, now that LCC has a Prevent Training Officer in post.

In January 2023 the Prevent Steering Group undertook a review of Prevent training arrangements and agreed to adopt a partnership-wide Prevent Training Strategy, providing a standard level of Prevent training across all partners. LCC complies with this strategy by providing mandatory e-learning training for all of its staff every 5 years, face to face training for all front line staff every 5 years, and training every 3 years for Children's Services staff.

E-learning is now directly linked to the revised Home Office packages, whilst face-to-face training remains predominantly via Teams, with some specific group training done in person.

LCC facilitate 3 types of Prevent training:

- Prevent E-learning package via Lincs2Learn for all LCC staff.
- Prevent Awareness sessions (face-to-face) via Microsoft Teams to front-line LCC staff through Lincs2Learn.
- Prevent Awareness sessions (face-to-face) to schools, academies, partners and community groups (prior to Sept 2022).

The below charts show the total numbers of people trained over the last 3 years through these 3 methods, from 1st April to 31st March each year.

(Note – schools closed throughout most of 20/21 due to Covid, hence reduced face to face sessions during that time)

Prevent Course	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
L2L e-learning (LCC staff)	873	1699	851
L2L Face to Face (LCC staff)	385	362	262
Face to face (schools etc)	660	1866	1285

Communications

A subgroup of the PSG has been established and meets regularly, to ensure that messaging around Prevent is consistent across all partners. We are planning to create a quarterly partnership Prevent Newsletter later in the year.

The revised CTLP has been circulated across the partnership and to Cllrs Bradwell and Roe. We are planning to hold a Development Day for all Elected Members in due course, with the assistance of Counter Terrorism Policing, to provide a wider context to the threat and risk.

3. 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 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.

Prevent Referrals are initially assessed by the 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 the individual onto Channel, or whether alternative interventions are more appropriate. If adopted to Channel, consent is then sought off the individual before a supportive action plan is put in place. Channel is a voluntary programme and individuals must provide consent.

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.

Channel training and development is ongoing, with Channel Panel members taking part in a Development Day in October 2022, Channel Chairs Conference 10th January 2023, and Channel Peer to Peer Review 13th January 2023.

4. National Developments

In 2019, the Government committed to carrying out an independent review of the Prevent strategy. This review, carried out by William Shawcross, was concluded in 2022 and published in February 2023. The Review made 34 recommendations underpinned by four guiding principles, all of which the Home Secretary has accepted. The 4 principles are:

1. Prevent should go back to first principles and reassert its overall objective of stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
2. Prevent needs to develop expertise and instil better levels of understanding of extremist ideology and radicalisation across the system.
3. Prevent needs to enhance its approach to delivery (e.g. regionalisation).
4. Prevent should create processes for responding to disinformation being spread about the scheme. It should encourage public trust by improving transparency and establishing better oversight of how the strategy is implemented.

We will ensure that Prevent delivery in Lincolnshire complies with these recommendations. The full report can be found here: [Independent Review of Prevent's report and government response - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114424/independent-review-of-prevent-report-and-government-response.pdf)

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 2023 formalising the "Protect Duty", though the extent of this Duty is yet to be ascertained. Its progress is currently being monitored by the LCC Prevent Lead.

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 it Prevent Duty. National developments are likely to result from the Independent Review of Prevent throughout 2023, but our strong Prevent partnership arrangements locally and regionally will ensure we are in a strong position to respond.

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.

This report was written by Clare Newborn, Community Safety Head of Service, who can be contacted on 07825 696534 or via clare.newborn@lincolnshire.gov.uk.