



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 October 2023

Report of Councillor Rhea Rayside,
Cabinet Member for People and
Communities

Prevent Update – October 2023

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is threefold to provide information and assurance on:

- South Kesteven District Council's delivery of the Prevent duty and responsibilities hosted within the Community Engagement Team
- Activity delivered across Lincolnshire through the Prevent Steering Group
- Notable local events and national highlights.

Recommendations

Given the Council must meet statutory responsibilities under the Prevent Duty, the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is:

- 1. Invited to consider the content of this report and comment if it wishes.**
- 2. Invited to consider if an update relating to Prevent should be added annually to their work programme.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

- Healthy and strong communities
- High performing Council

Which wards are impacted?

All

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no specific financial comments arising from this report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report which are not already outlined in the body of the report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.3 The provision of Prevent training and community engagement is strongly aligned with statutory obligations and responsibilities the Council holds under the Health and Safety at Work 1974 and relevant legislation associated with the Act.

Completed by: Phil Swinton Health and Safety Manager

Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.5 Since its introduction in 2003, concerns have been raised within some communities that Prevent is sometimes implemented in ways which undermine fundamental rights and freedoms, stifle free speech, lead to discrimination, and stigmatise or alienate sections of the population.

- 1.6 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 1.7 The Prevent Duty, which was introduced in 2015, also places the duty of 'due regard' on public bodies to ensure actions relating to Prevent are delivered in an appropriate, proportionate and fair way.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager.

Safeguarding

- 1.8 Prevent sits within the Safeguarding arena. Staff and elected Members need to be aware of the potential for grooming of susceptible people into extremist ideology. They need to be alert to concerns and know who to refer those concerns to. Officers undergo in person Prevent training every three years. This is delivered by an external, Home Office approved trainer. New starters are required to undertake Home Office provided e learning modules via the Council's learning management system if their employment start date falls within the three-year cycle. Elected Members are provided with in person Prevent training as part of their induction following an election.

Officers and Elected Members are also required to undertake safeguarding training which is provided via the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board. This training complements the Prevent-specific training and is provided, for officers, on a six-year pathway. The level of training required is based on the amount of direct contact and involvement staff have in their role with the public. Elected Members are required to complete one module of e learning per year during their term of office.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager.

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2020-2023 to healthy and strong communities. This report, and the work undertaken across the County to deliver against the Prevent Duty contributes to the delivery of this priority whilst also ensuring we remain a high performing council.

Legislation

- 2.2 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 created a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. This duty applies to all public bodies (local authorities, police, the National Health Service (NHS), schools, further and higher education providers, probation, prisons and youth offending services). The duty also applies to private providers supplying public functions for example, in the education sector. Previously, the lead responsibility for Prevent lay with the police, however as of 2016, local authorities now have the lead as Prevent interventions are focused in the 'pre criminal space'.
- 2.3 The National Threat Level for the UK, assessed by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, was reduced to *Substantial* in February 2022 (meaning an attack remains likely). Therefore, awareness of Prevent, the ability to recognise potential concerns and knowing when and to whom those concerns should be raised, are vital in the prevention of radicalisation and terrorism.
- 2.4 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.


Prevent



- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Prevent falls within the safeguarding arena. The grooming of susceptible individuals into radicalisation and extreme ideologies is regarded as a safeguarding concern and must be addressed as such. The referral pathways are different, yet the principles are the same.
- 2.7 Prevent operates in the non-criminal space. This means working with individuals who have not yet committed a crime yet are susceptible to radicalisation in whatever form that takes.
- 2.8 Prevent has three objectives. They are:
- to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it
 - to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they receive appropriate advice and support
 - to work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which require addressing


County Prevent Steering Group and the Counter Terrorism Local Profile

- 2.9 Overall, governance of Prevent in Lincolnshire is undertaken by the Prevent Steering Group (PSG), chaired and administrated by Lincolnshire County Council. Membership includes representatives from:
- The seven District Councils
 - Children's Service and Adult Service Directorates
 - Counter Terrorism Policing East Midlands (Prevent)
 - Lincolnshire Police
 - Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue
 - Probation and Prison Service
 - Ministry of Defence
 - Local health partners
 - Department of Education
 - Lincoln College, Bishop Grosseteste and Lincoln University
 - Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service and JUST Lincolnshire.
- 2.10 These agencies are identified as 'specified authorities' under the Prevent Duty and therefore have an individual and collective responsibility to give due regard to Prevent.
- 2.11 The Steering Group meets quarterly with high attendance levels from all agencies. South Kesteven District Council's Community Engagement Manager represents the Authority on this group.
- 2.12 Prevent activity is centred around risks identified in the Counter Terrorism Local Profile and driven by the Prevent Delivery Plan. The Counter Terrorism Local Profile is produced by police colleagues with input from the membership of the County Prevent Steering Group. The Prevent Delivery Plan is a collaborative document produced by the partners within the Prevent Steering Group and is developed to respond to the Counter Terrorism Local Profile. Monitoring of the actions contained within the Prevent Delivery Plan is also carried out by the Prevent Steering Group. These documents, all produced utilising the guidance provided in the Prevent Duty Toolkit for Local Authorities (see **6.4 Background Papers**), are supported by a county risk assessment document produced by County and District colleagues which identifies potential concerns within each district area and offers mitigations against each risk.
- 2.13 The Lincolnshire Counter Terrorism Local Profile (November 2022) identified three priority areas:
- Self-Initiated Terrorists (S-ITs)
 - Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism (ERWT)
 - Prison extremists and releases

- 2.14 This mirrors most of the national threat priorities, apart from Islamist Extremism which does not feature as an identified risk in Lincolnshire. Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism is the recurring dominant established ideology recorded within Lincolnshire Prevent casework, with most relating to individuals under the age of 25.
- 2.15 The Counter Terrorism Local Profile also identifies, both locally and nationally, the inclusion of neurodiversity and online radicalisation as factors in a significant number of Prevent referrals.
- 2.16 Lincolnshire continues to be classed as a low risk, low priority area for Prevent, though 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.
- 2.17 The County delivery plan outlines activities and progress broken down into four areas. Actions are ongoing and are broadly delivered by County colleagues. Local input is also listed below:

Area	Activity	Progress
Effective Leadership and Governance	This ensures the Prevent Steering Group has good representation from a wide range of partners, who provide assurance statutory responsibilities are being delivered against all Prevent activity across Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire is also represented at regional and national network meetings by Lincolnshire County Council's Prevent Lead. Information and actions from such meetings are fed back to the Prevent Steering Group to ensure effective overview.	<p>In March 2023 the Home Office undertook its annual Benchmark Assessment of Prevent Delivery in Lincolnshire. Overall Prevent delivery was assessed as "<i>excellent, especially when considered against the local threat and risk profile</i>". The assessment included some recommendations around continuing to develop our risk assessment process and delivery plan. It also highlighted the continued lack of a Venue Hire Policy as the only area the County was not fully meeting the Duty. As lead Authority for Prevent, Lincolnshire County Council is in the process of developing a Venue Hire Policy which, the partnership agreed would be shared and adopted across Lincolnshire to ensure consistency of approach.</p> <p>Status:  Ongoing. The delivery plan is a living document. Partners await the Venue Hire Policy from LCC to enable its inclusion in local policy and procedure.</p>

Online Resilience	As identified in the Counter Terrorism Local Profile, on-line radicalisation is a significant risk across the county, with extremist and terrorist material easily accessible. The training offer has been adapted to incorporate the risks of radicalisation through social media, gaming and the internet.	Following a successful bid, by the County Council, 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 Counter Terrorism Local Profile, particularly around on-line radicalisation. Status:  Complete.
Learning and Development	Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Local Authority is required to ensure all relevant 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 (see from 2.15 below for more information) . Within South Kesteven District Council, Prevent training also forms part of the core training offer for Elected Members.	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. SKDC complies with this strategy by providing mandatory training for staff every three years. This training is provided in person. Home Office Prevent e-learning focusing on awareness of Prevent, making a referral and the Channel process, is available, between in person sessions to ensure training is available to all. A link to this training can be found at 6.2 Background Papers In June 2023 a total of 229 staff and 39 Elected Members undertook ‘in person’ Prevent training delivered by a Home Office approved trainer. Further sessions took place in September to give Elected Members and officers additional opportunities to participate in this training. This brought the total of Elected Members trained to 48 and staff trained through this in person training to 236. Status:  Ongoing The responsibility to train is ongoing therefore supporting programmes for e learning between in person training session which take place every three years.

Community Engagement and Awareness Raising	<p>The Council's Community Engagement Manager works with third sector organisations across the district to support 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. As the Council's representative on the County Prevent Steering Group, involvement in engagement activity extends outside of South Kesteven.</p>	<p>Partnership engagement events took place in 2022 including a Women's Engagement Event in Stamford and a Families Event at RAF Waddington. The Council's Community Engagement Manager was integral to the development and delivery of these events which featured sessions on cyber safety, modern slavery, domestic abuse and Prevent.</p> <p>Status:  Complete</p> <p>Planning is currently underway to develop further sessions to take place in South Kesteven from 2024.</p>
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2.18 Going forward, should the Committee choose to receive future updates on the Council's delivery against the Prevent Duty, the action plan provided will exclusively contain information relating to activities that have taken place within South Kesteven.

2.19 Effective communication of Prevent, its purpose and the support available is vital. A subgroup of the Prevent Steering Group meets regularly to ensure that messaging around Prevent is consistent across all partners. This subgroup has developed a new, quarterly partnership Prevent Newsletter. The first edition of this newsletter has recently been disseminated by the Steering Group and has been shared with community-facing teams within the Council.

Channel Duty Guidance – Channel Panels

2.20 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.

2.21 Prevent Referrals are initially assessed by the police. Should an ideology and potential national security risk be identified, this is 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 from 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.

2.22 Individuals referred to Channel who do not meet the threshold for intervention are referred to other safeguarding agencies for support.

Key National Highlights

- 2.23 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 four principles are:
- Prevent should go back to first principles and reassert its overall objective of stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
 - Prevent needs to develop expertise and instil better levels of understanding of extremist ideology and radicalisation across the system.
 - Prevent needs to enhance its approach to delivery (e.g. regionalisation).
 - 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.
- 2.24 A link to the full report has been provided under **6.1 Background Papers**.
- 2.25 An outcome of the review into Prevent carried out by William Shawcross has been an update of the Prevent Duty. New guidance was published on 7th September concerning forthcoming changes to the Duty. Subject to Parliamentary approval, changes will come into force on 31st December 2023. Any changes relating to the duty placed on the District Council will then be implemented and will form part subsequent updates to this Committee. Updates have also been made to the supplementary Prevent duty toolkit. The toolkit is designed to support the delivery of the Prevent duty by local authorities in England and Wales by providing practical information and suggestions to protect people from radicalisation. Links to the latest guidance and the update toolkit have been provided under **6.3 and 6.4 Background Papers**.
- 2.26 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, also referred to as “Martyn’s Law”, comes after the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing, in which 22 people were killed.
- 2.27 The Government is due to pass legislation by early 2024, formalising the Protect Duty, although the extent of this Duty is yet to be ascertained. Progress is being monitored by the Community Engagement Manager. Any developments relevant to the Council will be brought to the attention of this Committee.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 These are set out in the body of the report.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council must meet statutory responsibilities under the Prevent Duty. Therefore, the do nothing option was discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 Prevent activity is delivered across Lincolnshire through the Prevent Steering Group. The recommendations provide Members with the opportunity to have an overview of the Council's involvement and to comment on the content of this report. Any comments requiring the attention of the Prevent Steering Group will be communicated via the Council's representative on the Group.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 *Independent Review of Prevent's report and Government response*, published 8 February 2023, updated 22 June 2023 and available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-prevents-report-and-government-response>

- 6.2 *Prevent duty training: Learn how to support people susceptible to radicalisation* – Home Office e-learning, available online at:

<https://www.support-people-vulnerable-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/prevent-duty-training-learn-how-support-people-susceptible-radicalisation>

- 6.3 *Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales*, updated 7 September 2023, available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revised-prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales>

- 6.4 *Prevent duty toolkit for local authorities*, guidance produced by the Home Office, updated 7 September 2023, available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-toolkit-for-local-authorities-and-partner-agencies>

- 6.5 *Channel Duty Guidance: protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism*, published 2020, available online at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964567/6.6271_HO_HMG_Channel_Duty_Guidance_v14_Web.pdf