

Prevent

THE POLICING APPROACH

Stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism

The police service and our partners have an integral role to play working with local communities to support people who are vulnerable to being drawn into criminal activity. This could be in relation to drugs, knife crime, guns and gangs or involvement in violent extremism. This factsheet provides information on the police preventative strategy to stop people becoming terrorists or becoming involved in violent extremism.

The strategy to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism is known as 'Prevent' and forms just one strand of CONTEST, the Government's national counter terrorism strategy.

Prevent is not about singling out a particular group. It is about addressing the real threat to the security of this country, the most significant of which is from those who claim to act in the name of Islam, therefore much *Prevent* activity takes place in and with Muslim communities. However, *Prevent* work can apply equally to other communities who may be the focus of attention from violent extremist groups.

Prevent is delivered in partnership by a wide range of organisations including the police service. Together we recognise that the best long term solution to preventing terrorism is to stop people becoming terrorists in the first place.

Violent extremists are motivated by an ideology, which wrongly uses religion to justify violence. Working closely with other organisations, our aim is to support local communities and institutions to challenge and reject the message of extremism. The *Prevent* strategy also aims to support vulnerable members of our communities by helping to divert them away from violent extremism.

This is a challenging and complex area that requires a whole 'community approach' between national and local organisations and embraces the experience, energy and ideas of our local communities, as well as police officers and staff.

Through our Neighbourhood Policing Teams and on-going community engagement activity, we already work with communities on various areas of concern in an effort to identify and support vulnerable members of our society and tackle those who disrupt our neighbourhoods. At the same time we are actively engaging with partners, such as local authorities and community organisations, to jointly address underlying problems and identify solutions – this work provides the cornerstone for *Prevent* activity.

Wide-ranging, locally based activity is taking place within our communities to support the aim of *Prevent*. This work ranges from providing support to vulnerable individuals through diversionary activity and providing access to specific services such as education, housing and employment, through to interactive police initiatives such as Operation Nicole. This classroom based exercise aimed at communities, is designed to encourage two-way debate and better understanding about counter terrorism operations from both the community and the police perspective.

Prevent is a long term endeavour for us all and together we need to challenge those who support violence regardless of faith, race or background.

Violent extremists seek to exploit vulnerabilities in individuals and drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. Working with other local and national organisations, it is the aim of the police service to support those who are being targeted and create stronger and more empowered communities who have the ability to reject violent extremism in all its forms.

For further information contact your Force *Prevent* Lead or Regional *Prevent* Coordinator - or visit the *Prevent* page on the internal Police National Counter Terrorism (PNCT) website - www.pnct.pnn.police.uk available via PNN.

