

Prevent Strategy 2025

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# 1. Associated Source Materials

- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Government Prevent Strategy (2011)
- Government Prevent duty guidance (England and Wales)
- Home Office Prevent duty toolkit for local authorities
- Prevent | Healthy Surrey
- Counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) 2023 GOV.UK
- Threat Levels | MI5 The Security Service

### 2. Overview

The National Prevent Strategy's (2011) key objectives are to:

- respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
- prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; an
- work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a new Prevent Duty for specified authorities which means they must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" in the exercise of their functions. The term 'due regard' means that the authorities should "place an appropriate amount of weight on the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism when they consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions."

The Prevent duty requires specified authorities such as education, health, local authorities, police and criminal justice agencies (prisons and probation) to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It sits alongside long-established safeguarding duties on professionals to protect people from a range of other harms, such as substance abuse, involvement in gangs, and physical and sexual exploitation. The duty helps to ensure that people who are susceptible to radicalisation are supported as they would be under safeguarding processes.<sup>3</sup>

Home Office guidance on the Duty states that for all specified authorities, leadership in delivering Prevent should be demonstrated by:

 Ensuring staff understand the risk of radicalisation that results in support for terrorism or involvement in terrorism by making sure they can access training resources and further guidance

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 - Part 5, Chapter 1, Section 26

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Prevent duty guidance – Page 5, Point 3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Prevent duty guidance – Page 7, Point 14

- Build and promoting the capabilities to deal with radicalisation concerns, such as formal pathway to escalate concerns and refer through to Prevent
- Promoting the importance of Prevent and the role staff play in countering terrorism<sup>4</sup>

The guidance clearly states that a key component of delivering Prevent depends on effective partnership working and expects coordination of this activity through a multiagency forum. Within Surrey, this is completed through the Prevent Executive Group (PEG) and Channel Panel.

The PEG aims to have oversight of, and co-ordinate Prevent work across the County by providing a strategic and coordinated approach whilst the Channel Panel supports identified individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism as a safeguarding mechanism within the pre-criminal space. This is in recognition that radicalisation of vulnerable individuals is comparable to the other forms of harm and abuse considered by the Council's wider safeguarding activities.

Prevent is one of four strands which make up the government's Strategy for Countering Terrorism, CONTEST. These strands are:

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

Prevent operates in the pre-criminal space, prior to any illegal activity taking place. Prevent is predominantly a safeguarding mechanism, in recognition that radicalisation of vulnerable individuals is comparable to the other forms of harm and abuse considered by the Council's wider safeguarding activities.

The objectives of Prevent are to:

- Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism.
- Intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation.
- Enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.<sup>5</sup>

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon, with atrocities carried out or planned in the United Kingdom by radicalised groups and individuals for many decades. However, there are various reasons for the establishment of the Prevent Duty which holds an increasingly vital aspect of the national Counter-terrorism strategy.

2017 saw a shift in the nature of the terrorist threat to the UK. Between 2011 and 2016, there were four terrorist attacks in Great Britain, each targeting a single individual. The Westminster attack in March 2017 was the first to cause multiple fatalities in the UK since 2005. The five attacks in London and Manchester in 2017 killed 36 people. Five victims died in an attack on Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament, 22 at the Manchester Arena bombing, eight at London Bridge and Borough Market, and one at Finsbury Park. Many more were injured, including in an attack at Parsons Green. Whilst the government aim to reduce the risk from all forms of terrorism, they will not be able to prevent all attacks from happening.

The nature of terror related activities, planning and attacks has changed. Terrorists are a product of extremist views, which in modern technological times are more easily

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Prevent duty guidance – Page 17, Point 64

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Prevent duty guidance – Page 8, Point 17

disseminated to and accessed by the public than ever before. At present, some of the most prominent sources of extremist viewpoints are from the following:

- Islamist ideology.
- Extreme right-right ideology.
- Mixed, unclear and unstable ideology, including violent misogyny/incel, school massacre, violence conspiracy and anti-democratic ideologies.

In February 2022, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) and the Security Service (MI5) changed the threat level to the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) from terrorism to 'Substantial'.

There are 5 levels of threat:

- Low an attack is highly unlikely.
- Moderate an attack is possible but not likely.
- Substantial an attack is likely.
- Severe an attack is highly likely.
- Critical an attack is highly likely in the near future.

Threat levels do not have an expiry date. They can change at any time as different information becomes available.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Local Context

Due to its proximity to Heathrow, London and the River Thames, Runnymede is a highly diverse Borough, both in terrain and population. Whilst this is overall a positive attribute, it can provide challenges in terms of preventing radical extremism. Areas that are characterised by diverse communities can suffer in terms of racial and ethnic tensions and grievances, often sparked by local, national or international events.

The importance of Runnymede's proximity to key national infrastructure cannot be overlooked. This could potentially lead terrorist organisations to target vulnerable residents to gain influence in a key strategic location. The Borough shares a close proximity to Heathrow Airport, intersected by both the M25 and M3 motorways, and has many train lines running directly into Central London. The proximity of Gatwick Airport is also a factor. In addition, the Borough benefits from a large University, Longcross Studio's, Wentworth Club and contains the popular tourist attraction, Thorpe Park.

### 4. Aims & Objectives

The aim of this strategy is to support the national Counter-terrorism strategy by outlining the issues and actions Runnymede Borough Council will address to fulfil its Prevent duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Threat Levels | MI5 - The Security Service

The objectives of this strategy are in line with those of the National Prevent Strategy, tailored to a local level and are:

- To respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat Runnymede faces from those who promote it.
- To prevent residents, particularly those who avail of Council services, from being drawn into terrorism, and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support.
- To work with members of the community where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

This strategy is intended to address the ever-evolving threat of radicalisation posed by all types of extremist views. Islamist terrorism, has in particular seen a recent shift away from the traditional highly organised, large-scale attacks in high profile locations, often carried out by large (often overseas) terror organisations – examples of these including the September 11 attack in the United States, and the July 7, 2005, attacks in London. Attacks are now more likely to be committed by self-initiated terrorists, or 'lone actors', carried out in isolation by UK residents, often in a location or against a group with which the individual associates, making the attacks much more difficult to anticipate and prevent. The five terrorist attacks carried out in the UK throughout 2017 as well as subsequent attacks since then are examples of this contemporary threat.

In attacks committed by self-initiated terrorists, it is often possible for the individual to self-radicalise, and carry the attacks out entirely on their own, being merely inspired by larger terror organisations rather than directly involved in them. We have witnessed from the attacks in London 2017, that methods of violence used by terrorists have been crude, using vehicles and knives to inflict harm. Instruments that are not difficult for an individual living in the UK to obtain. The Parson's Green bombing in 2017 also demonstrated that radicalised individuals have the ability to learn bomb making from online material. An issue that is evolving and the government are trying to address.

This evolved threat brings more focus to the areas of the UK that would traditionally be viewed as 'low risk', requiring a more formal and systematic approach to preventing and preparing for terrorism. Despite the Borough of Runnymede being a safe place in which to live, work and visit, near universal access to the world wide web and other technology has made it possible for any individual to be radicalised in any place at any time. It is no longer necessary to travel to a specific location to be exposed to such views and material, therefore a Runnymede resident, particularly if already vulnerable, now has a much higher chance than ever to develop extremist views, and indeed act upon them.

## 5. Responsibilities

Surrey is a two-tier authority area which means Surrey County Council (SCC) lead on Prevent with Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) supporting. The Home Office have set out the below responsibilities held for both County and Borough/District Council's within two-tier authority areas.

	County	District
1	Coordinate LA interaction in CTLP process	Provide data and feed into preferred structure
2	Collate county-wide situational risk assessment	Develop district situation risk assessment
3	Coordinate county-wide Prevent board	Agree representation on board
4	Develop Prevent partnership plan	Contribute to plan and take actions
5	Ensure each district has relevant policies	Ensure venue hire and IT policies are in place
6	Develop countywide training plan and register of trainers	Identify cohorts for training
7	Ensure referral pathway is in place	Ensure relevant staff understand pathway
8	Host and chair Channel panel	Contribute information to Channel cases
9	Drive community engagement through multi-agency board	Undertake community engagement in agreed hotspot areas.

### 6. Scope

This strategy covers the duties and expectations associated with Prevent, as well as the associated actions to be taken by Runnymede Borough Council to meet the expectations and duties. It should be noted that the Prevent stage incorporates identifying and supporting vulnerable individuals at risk of being radicalised prior to engaging in criminal activity, but once terrorism-related criminality has taken place, an individual is no longer suited to Prevent and the case will then be handled by the Police under a different element of CONTEST.

### 7. Local Authority Toolkit

The Home Office released a Local Authority Toolkit<sup>7</sup> to provide guidance on what is expected of local authorities when concerning Prevent. The toolkit lays out 10 different

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Prevent duty toolkit for local authorities (accessible) - GOV.UK

expectations that each local authority is expected to meet, alongside a self-assessment tool to measure the local authorities' areas of good practice. These expectations are:

#### 7.1 Counter Terrorism Local Profile

This relates to point 1 within the table of responsibilities listed in section 5. The Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) is a risk-profile produced by the Police (Counter Terrorism Policing South East [CTPSE]), collating a host of multi-agency information on the local communities, tensions and contexts within the county to identity potential hot-spots for where radicalisation may occur. It is important that local authorities, and their partners, contribute to it where value can be added. Information provided should highlight any current and emerging themes or vulnerabilities in local radicalisation and extremism, and indicate whether the threats, risks and vulnerabilities have changed or remained the same. There should be demonstrable engagement with partners and those to whom the Duty applies. This process results in the publishing of a CTLP for Surrey, which is subsequently shared with Prevent Leads in all relevant organisations.

#### 7.2 Multi-Agency Partnership Board

This relates to point 3 within the table of responsibilities listed in section 5. There is an expectation for a multi-agency partnership board to be in place which oversees all Prevent delivery and activity in the area. All partners named are subject to the Prevent Duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, but the way that these partners are represented on the partnership board is a matter of local choice. Within Surrey a multi-agency partnership board exists in the form of the Prevent Executive Group (PEG) which is chaired by Surrey County Council.

It is important for such a board to exist as it is here that decisions and actions will be decided to implement Prevent expectations at a local level. The PEG assesses the countywide risk of people being drawn into terrorism and coordinates Prevent activity in relation to the CTLP.

Runnymede Borough Council is expected to attend PEG meetings to contribute key information into the group.

#### 7.3 Prevent Partnership Action Plan

This relates to point 4 within the table of responsibilities listed in section 5. Within Surrey, it is the responsibility of the PEG to develop a Prevent partnership action plan to address any risks identified by the CTLP. This provides accountability and scrutiny to ensure partner actions are followed up. The action plan may vary depending on whether an area is deemed a Prevent priority.

#### 7.4 Referral Process

This relates to point 7 within the table of responsibilities listed in section 5. The agreed process for referring individuals identified as being at risk of radicalisation is through the

Prevent Referral Form accessible on the Healthy Surrey website<sup>8</sup> which is to be submitted to Surrey Police on completion however it is vital that Police are contacted via phone call to 999 if there are immediate concerns.

Prevent does not aim to criminalise people for holding views, instead it seeks to stop individuals from going to the extreme of committing or encouraging violent activity.

Potential terrorist or extremist activity should be reported by calling the Action Counters Terrorism<sup>9</sup> hotline on 0800 789 321. The type of activity may not be related to Prevent and could include (for example) suspicious<sup>10</sup> behaviour, particularly in public spaces, suspect packages, or vehicles. It is important that individuals trust their instincts – where there are suspicions, report them. It is better to be safe and report, even if you are not sure. It won't ruin lives, but it could save them.

#### 7.5 Channel Panel

This relates to point 8 within the table of responsibilities listed in section 5. The Channel Panel is led by Surrey County Council and meets monthly to review Channel cases. The Channel process is a practical programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into extremism. Runnymede Borough Council will have representation on the Channel Panel if the panel is discussing an at-risk individual from the Runnymede Borough.

Individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation are offered targeted and appropriate voluntary support by the multi-agency partnership. Channel Panel meetings only take place if there is an ongoing and active Channel case. It is expected that a channel panel will have representation from all the relevant sectors.

The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by:

- Identifying individuals at risk.
- Assessing the nature and extent of that risk.
- Developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

#### 7.6 Training programme

This relates to point 6 within the table of responsibilities listed in section 5. Whilst it is the responsibility of Surrey County Council to develop a training plan for the County, Runnymede Borough Council have included a Prevent E-Learning package within the core training requirements upon commencement of employment.

Additionally, whilst not specific to Prevent, the Council recognises that the Government's Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) E-Learning<sup>11</sup> is a valuable resource for staff both within and outside of the workplace due to its coverage of unattended or suspicious items, bomb threats and marauding attackers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Prevent | Healthy Surrey

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Trust Your Instincts and Report | Action Counters Terrorism

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The term 'suspicious' in this context would relate to something unusual

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> ACT -E-learning (NaCTSO - Counter Terrorism Awareness)

#### 7.7 Venue Hire and IT Policies

This relates to point 5 within the table of responsibilities listed in section 5. Runnymede Borough Council have in place suitable venue hire and IT policies to ensure that premises are not used by radicalising influencers and to prevent the access of extremist material by users of its network.

#### 7.8 Community Engagement

This relates to point 9 within the table of responsibilities listed in section 5. Specific engagement with the community around Prevent is not completed within Runnymede as it is not deemed to be a hot-spot area. Surrey County Council considers ways in which engagement with local communities can be achieved to promote the Prevent agenda, including collaborating with the Hate Crime Lead.

#### 7.9 Communications

Whilst not outlined within the table of responsibilities listed in section 5, as the lead for Prevent, Surrey County Council are also responsible for leading on any communications around Prevent, including alerting Runnymede Borough Council if there is a relevant Channel case within the Borough and extending an invitation to the Channel panel.

## 7.10 Publicly Owned Property & Avoiding Affiliation With Extremist Organisations

Whilst not outlined within the table of responsibilities listed in section 5, Runnymede Borough Council have safeguards are in place to prevent affiliation with extremist organisation.

The Council's venue hire policy mitigates the risk of inadvertently allowing extremist activity to occur within Council owned buildings whilst the use of Web Filtering Software mitigates the risk of accessing or sharing extremist material. Additionally, the criteria set out within Grant requests minimises the risk of working with, or funding, extremist organisations.

## 8. Safeguarding

Runnymede Borough Council, and Surrey County Council, already hold safeguarding responsibilities to protect young people and adults at risk from harm, abuse, or exploitation. The Prevent Duty expands on this responsibility to protect against harm from extremism and radicalisation. The safeguarding emphasis is on supporting vulnerable people, rather than criminalising those who may have been radicalised. This emphasis on safeguarding the individual at risk should be reflected in all aspects of the Council's Prevent activities.

# Whilst Prevent does fall under the remit of safeguarding, the referral pathway for extremism concerns differs from other safeguarding concerns. See section 9 for further detail.

It is important to remember that safeguarding is not solely the responsibility of organisations. Safeguarding is still everybody's business, and as neighbours, citizens, and community members we need to be alert to signs and behaviour which give cause for concern, and be committed to reporting these concerns.

There is no obvious profile or single indicator of a person likely to become involved in extremism. The process of radicalisation is different for every individual, and the time taken can vary substantially from one case to another. Some instances of radicalisation can take a number of years, whereas others may adopt an extremist ideology in a very short space of time. Vulnerable people can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many different means and mediums, these can include (but are not limited to):

- The influence of family members and friends.
- Direct contact with extremist groups and organisations.
- Through the internet and social media.

Extremist groups have frequently and very effectively made use of extremist sympathies through the use of social networking and media sites.

The following push/pull factors have been attributed as vulnerabilities to extremism, regardless of the specific ideology:

	Push Factors	Pull Factors
1	Sense of alienation from wider society.	Belonging to an extremist group can offer a clear identify.
2	Lack of engagement with mainstream politics.	The clarity of an extremist ideology, devoid of nuances and complexities.
3	Lack of social skills to be able to mix with unfamiliar communities.	Reinforcement of extremist views by close contact with like-minded people, both online and offline.
4	Lack of critical thinking abilities to be able to challenge propaganda.	Sense of community developed by extremist groups, both online and offline.

This is not an exhaustive list, nor does it suggest that someone who fits one or all of these definitions will adopt a violent agenda, but they are factors to consider when working in a safeguarding environment, particularly in relation to extremism.

### 9. Referral Pathways

#### If you suspect an immediate danger, please call 999 now.

Surrey County Council lead on the delivery of Prevent and maintain up to date information on the referral pathway via their Healthy Surrey website.

For professionals with concerns about an individual who may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism you can make a referral by completing the Prevent Referral Form available to download from <a href="Prevent">Prevent</a> | Healthy Surrey</a> and returning it to the Surrey Police Prevent Team

Whilst Surrey is a low-risk county for terrorist activity, we still need to be alert to tensions and extremist groups in our communities. If you are a member of the public who is concerned that someone you know may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism, you have several options:

- If it is not an emergency, contact Surrey Police by dialling 101
- Call the Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321
- Report your concerns anonymously to CrimeStoppers by dialling 0800 555 111

#### How do I report possible terrorist activity?

If you are suspicious of something that could identify a terrorist threat anywhere in the UK, report it quickly and confidentially via the online tool to report possible terrorist activity or call the Anti-Terrorism Hotline on 0800 789 321.

A textphone service is available for people with speech or hearing difficulties on 0800 032 4539 (text messages from mobile phones are not accepted).

#### How do I report online terrorist or extremist content?

If you have come across a website or online content (including emails, forums or social media) that you feel is of a violent extremist or terrorist nature, please report it using the UK government's quick and anonymous reporting form - Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism - GOV.UK

### 10. Action Plan

In adherence to the responsibilities of Runnymede Borough Council as a second-tier authority, we have already, or commit to undertaking the following:

	Responsibility	Action
1	Provide data and feed into preferred structure	Ongoing.  We will continue to feed into the CTLP via attendance by the Community Safety Team at CTLP briefing sessions.
2	Develop district situation risk assessment	Completed.  We have developed the following in conjunction with the SCC Prevent Lead:  "The risk in Runnymede and Surrey mirrors the UK terror threat picture. The UK terrorism threat level has been at SUBSTANTIAL (meaning an attack is likely) since 09/02/2022. It is assessed that an attack would most likely be conducted by a 'self [1] initiated terrorist' (S-IT) acting independently of an established terrorist group or organisation. Targets could include people, places and events, and in recent years there has been a trend towards low sophistication attacks involving knives and vehicles. Police use a wide range of overt and covert tactics to disrupt terrorists and Prevent is used to try to stop people being radicalised by terrorists or extremists in the first place."
3	Agree representation on board	Completed.  The Community Safety Team maintain attendance at the Surrey Prevent Executive Group (PEG). Within Surrey, the PEG fulfils the requirements of the Prevent Board.
4	Contribute to plan and take actions	Ongoing.  We will continue to obtain actions related to RBC from PEG meetings and provides updates back to the PEG.
5	Ensure venue hire and IT policies are in place	Completed.  We have suitable venue hire and IT policies in place to counter extremism.
6	Identify cohorts for training	Completed & Ongoing.  We have included Prevent E-Learning as a mandatory package for all new members of staff upon commencement of their employment. Additionally, we will identified suitable cohorts for bespoke training sessions as required.  See section 11 for further details.
7	Ensure relevant staff understand pathway	Completed & Ongoing.

	Responsibility	Action
		We have included the pathways to refer within the Council's wider Safeguarding Policy and ensure this is included within any Prevent related inhouse training.
		Additionally, we will keep our public facing website up to date with information related to Prevent.
	Contribute information	Ongoing.
to Channel cases	We will attend Channel Panel when required, via the Community Safety Team. The SCC Prevent Lead has stated the following:	
8		"Surrey County Council coordinate the Surrey Channel Panel and will approach Runnymede Community Safety Team if there is a necessity for them to attend the meeting. District and Borough Community Safety Managers are not required to be standing members of Surrey Channel Panel. If there is concern that a Channel Case may involve any element of community impact, then the District and Borough will be notified."
	Undertake community	Ongoing.
9	engagement in agreed hotspot areas.	We will undertake community engagement as directed. The SCC Prevent Lead has stated the following:
		"The Surrey Prevent Executive Group have not identified 'hot spot areas' of Prevent concern in Surrey. Community Engagement is led by Surrey Police. The Surrey Prevent Executive Group has a Disruptions Policy in place to raise any concerns about any emerging location based issues, and in the event that this occurs in Runnymede then the Borough Council will be made aware."

# 11. Training

#### Mandatory E-Learning for Runnymede Borough Council staff.

To ensure that all employees are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil our Prevent duty, we have introduced mandatory training. This training will cover:

- An overview of the Prevent duty and its importance.
- Different forms of extremism and terrorism.
- How to identify individuals at risk of radicalisation.
- Procedures for making a Prevent referral

All employees are required to complete the following E-Learning courses:

• Awareness (gov.uk - support people susceptible to radicalisation - Course 1)

#### **Supplementary E-Learning for Runnymede Borough Council staff.**

Employees are empowered to further their understanding and awareness of Prevent through the completion of further training such as, but not limited to:

- Prevent (SLP Course: NEW from June 2024 Public Sector Safeguarding -Prevent)
- Referrals (gov.uk support people susceptible to radicalisation Course 2)
- Channel (gov.uk support people susceptible to radicalisation Course 3)
- Prevent Refresher (gov.uk support people susceptible to radicalisation Refresher Course)

#### Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) E-Learning for all.

Employees and members of the public are encouraged to complete the Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) E-Learning course. Previously this training was only available to staff working in crowded places like shopping centres and entertainment venues. Now it has been opened to anyone who wants to become a Counter Terrorism Citizen by learning how to spot the signs of suspicious behaviour and understand what to do in the event of a major incident, including the Run, Hide, Tell principle.

ACT (Action Counters Terrorism) E-Learning

#### For all information contained within this document contact:

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