

UK Prevent Strategy 2010

3. Executive summary

3.1 The Government is committed to a *Prevent* strategy. But the strategy over the past few years has not been fully effective and it needs to change. This review evaluates work to date and sets out a strategy for the future.

Context

3.2 The UK faces a range of terrorist threats. The most serious is from Al Qa'ida, its affiliates and like-minded organisations.

3.3 All the terrorist groups who pose a threat to us seek to radicalise and recruit people to their cause. But the percentage of people who are prepared to support violent extremism in this country is very small. It is significantly greater amongst young people.

3.4 We now have more information about the factors which encourage people to support terrorism and then to engage in terrorism-related activity. It is important to understand these factors if we are to prevent radicalisation and minimise the risks it poses to our national security.

3.5 We judge that radicalisation is driven by an ideology which sanctions the use of violence; by propagandists for that ideology here and overseas; and by personal vulnerabilities and specific local factors which, for a range of reasons, make that ideology seem both attractive and compelling.

3.6 There is evidence to indicate that support for terrorism is associated with rejection of a cohesive, integrated, multi-faith society and of parliamentary democracy. Work to deal with radicalisation will depend on developing a sense of belonging to this country and support for our core values.

3.7 Terrorist groups can take up and exploit ideas which have been developed and sometimes popularised by extremist organisations which operate legally in this country. This has significant implications for the scope of our *Prevent* strategy. Evidence also suggests that some (but by no means all) of those who have been radicalised in the UK had previously participated in extremist organisations.

Guiding principles: a framework for *Prevent*

3.8 *Prevent* is part of our counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. Its aim is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

3.9 *Prevent* will address all forms of terrorism but continue to prioritise according to the threat they pose to our national security. At present, the majority of our resources and efforts will continue to be devoted to preventing people from joining or supporting Al Qa'ida, its affiliates or related groups.

3.10 We remain absolutely committed to protecting freedom of speech in this country. But preventing terrorism will mean challenging extremist (and non-violent) ideas that are also part of a terrorist ideology. *Prevent* will also mean intervening to stop people moving from extremist groups or from extremism into terrorist-related activity.

3.11 Policy and programmes to deal with extremism and with extremist organisations more widely are not part of *Prevent* and will be coordinated from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

3.12 *Prevent* must deal with all forms of terrorism and not just with Al Qa'ida. But the allocation of resources will be proportionate to the threats we face. At present the greatest threat to the UK as a whole is from Al Qa'ida and groups and individuals who share the violent Islamist ideology associated with it.

3.13 We envisage no changes to the legal framework for *Prevent*-related work.

3.14 *Prevent* depends on a successful integration strategy. But integration alone will not meet *Prevent* objectives. And *Prevent* must not assume control of or allocate funding to integration projects which have a value far wider than security and counter-terrorism: the Government will not securitise its integration strategy. This has been a mistake in the past.

3.15 There have been allegations that previous *Prevent* programmes have been used to spy on communities. We can find no evidence to support these claims. *Prevent* must not be used as a means for covert spying on people or communities. Trust in *Prevent* must be improved.

3.16 The Government's commitment to localism will support the *Prevent* strategy. Communities and local authorities have a key part in this strategy. But as a national security issue, *Prevent* needs to be developed in very close conjunction with central Departments.

3.17 *Prevent* will be funded from the Home Office and other Departments. Grants will be made available for local authority *Prevent* work. Evaluation of *Prevent* activity to date has been poor. Money has been wasted. We will tighten up arrangements for evaluation at all levels in future. Funding and other support will not be provided to extremist organisations. Neither Government Departments nor the police will rely on extremists to address the risk of radicalisation.

3.18 The review found no evidence to indicate widespread, systematic or deliberate funding of extremist groups, either by the Home Office or by local authorities or police forces. But there have been cases where groups whom we would now consider to support an extremist ideology have received funding. Stricter monitoring is required to ensure this does not happen in future.

3.19 The process of radicalisation in the UK often has overseas connections. To be effective, *Prevent* work must take place overseas as well as in the UK. But that work has not always been effective to date and funds have been wasted. In future, the work needs to be much better aligned with domestic priorities and more rigorously appraised.

3.20 We will assess in the coming year whether the balance between the three main areas of *Prevent* expenditure – local projects, policing and *Prevent* work overseas – is appropriate.

Objectives

3.21 Within this overall framework the new *Prevent* strategy will specifically: ● 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; and ● work with **sectors and institutions** where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

3.22 These areas of work are outlined in detail in the remainder of the document.
Objective One: the ideological challenge

3.23 All terrorist groups have an ideology. Promoting that ideology, frequently on the internet, facilitates radicalisation and recruitment.

3.24 Challenging ideology and disrupting the ability of terrorists to promote it is a fundamental part of *Prevent*.

3.25 Previous work in this area has made some progress but has not consistently reached the few people who are most susceptible to terrorist propaganda. It has failed to recognise the way in which terrorist ideology makes use of ideas espoused by extremist organisations and has not fully understood the implications this should have for the scope for our work. It has not effectively engaged with and used the influence and reach of communities and community groups. Previous *Prevent* work has sometimes given the impression that Muslim communities as a whole are more ‘vulnerable’ to radicalisation than other faith or ethnic groups.

3.26 Much more needs to be done in this critical area. But it must be proportionate and focused. It must not imply a need to change the attitudes of most people in this country towards terrorism. It must not seem to pass judgment on faith or to suggest only a particular kind of faith is appropriate or acceptable. It must be done in conjunction with communities here and overseas who are often better able than Government itself to disprove the claims made by terrorist groups and to challenge terrorist and associated extremist ideologies.

3.27 A future strategy in this area will include better communication of Government security and foreign policies to rebut claims made about them; more projects in education, communities and the criminal justice system to enable understanding of and challenge to terrorist ideology; and support for experts where ideology draws on and misrepresents theology and requires a detailed response.

3.28 It will be vital to challenge apologists for terrorism. Challenge may mean simply debate about extremist ideas which also form part of a terrorist narrative. But, where propagandists break the law in encouraging or approving terrorism, it must also mean arrest and law enforcement action. And where people seek to enter this country from overseas to engage in activity in support of extremist and terrorist groups, we will also use the Home Secretary’s power to exclude them.

Objective Two: supporting vulnerable people

3.29 Radicalisation is usually a process not an event. During that process it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into terrorist-related activity.

There are some analogies between this work and other forms of crime prevention.

3.30 Programmes of this kind, although central to an effective *Prevent* programme, are comparatively new and evidence of impact is correspondingly limited. Allegations have been made that the programmes have been disproportionate and intrusive and have restricted free speech. We recognise the risk that the criteria for entry to these programmes can be too broad. We have considered further allegations that the programmes have been used for spying.

3.31 We conclude that, properly handled, programmes of this kind are essential. They should pre-empt and not facilitate law enforcement activity. They will not be a means for covert activity. Safeguards will ensure their integrity and, in particular, appropriate protection of data.

3.32 This area of *Prevent* will build upon Channel, the existing multi-agency programme to identify and provide support to people at risk of radicalisation. Channel has had some success. The programmes will address the risks from all forms of terrorism. They must draw on the expertise of policing, local authorities and community organisations.

3.33 Organisations commissioned to provide support to vulnerable people are in a position of great influence. They must be credible and able to reach and talk to people at risk. But we will not fund, or work with, extremist groups for this (or any other) purpose.

3.34 As in other areas of *Prevent*, evaluation of these programmes has not been fully effective. It will be significantly enhanced and new procedures will be put in place to ensure value for money. 3.35 We will conduct research and collaborate with other countries to continuously improve our understanding of radicalisation. This is vital to ensure the effectiveness of these programmes.

Objective Three: working with key sectors

3.36 A wide range of sectors in this country are helping to prevent people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The way Government works with particular sectors will vary.

3.37 Priority areas include education, faith, health, criminal justice and charities. The internet is also included here as a sector in its own right although delivery of *Prevent* programmes through the internet is a theme running through this review and strategy.

3.38 Some progress has been made in and with all these sectors. Some sectors (like faith) have been at the forefront of work to tackle radicalisation in this country. But more can and must be done. Like other areas of *Prevent*, programmes must be proportionate to the risks we face; we look to engage with these sectors because they are capable of addressing and resolving some of the challenges we face.

3.39 There should be no 'ungoverned spaces' in which extremism is allowed to flourish without firm challenge and, where appropriate, by legal intervention.

Prevent delivery

3.40 This section explains how *Prevent* will be implemented in the future.

3.41 It describes the structures that are in place to ensure effective coordination, oversight and accountability and outlines how we will strengthen them. *Prevent* will be coordinated from and by the Office for Security and Counter-terrorism (OSCT) in the Home Office and the Home Secretary will be the lead Minister.

3.42 We explain here the new arrangements and structures that we will put in place for the local delivery of *Prevent* and the partnerships which will be the basis for success. In future *Prevent* will be prioritised according to the risks we face and not (as has been the case) on the basis of demographics. This is a significant development. The 25 priority areas are listed here. We expect these areas to change over time.

3.43 The role of policing has been important in the development of *Prevent* to date. *Prevent* is not, however, a police programme and it must not become one: it depends on a wide range of organisations in and out of Government. Some changes to the police role in *Prevent* are essential to enhance confidence in the programme. But we judge that one of the effects of *Prevent* to date has been the improvement in understanding and cooperation between police and communities in this country on a range of issues, including security.

3.44 We anticipate that there will continue to be three main areas of *Prevent* funding: local authority work in association with communities; policing; and work overseas. The funding for the first two areas will be provided by the Home Office. The funding for the third will come through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The balance between funding in these areas will be constantly reviewed.

3.45 It has been a theme in this review that evaluation and performance monitoring have been weak and they must now be improved. Data collection has been inadequate. It has not always been possible to understand what funding has been used for, or what impact projects have had.