



Preventing violent extremism

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This note gives information on the Government's review of the Prevent strategy, a collection of initiatives aimed at tackling religious extremism, which was inherited from the previous Government. It outlines the new strategy and includes information on the integration work led by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Related notes include SN/HA/5866, [Select bibliography of terrorism resources](#), and [The Counter Terrorism Review](#), SN/HA/5852.

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1 Labour Government’s strategy

The latest version of the previous Government’s strategy for dealing with religious extremism was set out in a Command Paper, *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare: the United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering International Terrorism*, Cm 7833, March 2010. This approach was discussed in Library Standard Note SN/PC/4766, *Preventing Violent Extremism*. As part of the wider counter-terrorism strategy, the strand known as Prevent sought to deal with community cohesion and integration, with those individuals and groups promoting division and hatred, and with the factors that predispose individuals or groups to respond to terrorist ideologies.

The Communities and Local Government Committee published a report on the subject, entitled *Preventing Violent Extremism*, HC 65 2009-10, 30 March 2010. Outside Parliament, the Policy Exchange published *Choosing our friends wisely: criteria for engagement with Muslim groups*, by S Maher and M Frampton, 2009, which was a detailed discussion of Prevent.

2 The present Government’s review and new policy

As part of its wider [review of counter-terrorism](#),¹ the present Government announced a review of the Prevent strand in order to separate the community-based integration work from the more direct forms of counter-terrorism. This was an effort to overcome the view among some Muslims that the integration strand was being used to collect intelligence.

2.1 Background

Action 5.3 of the Home Office’s [Structural Reform Plan](#), issued in July 2010, read as follows:

Review of the ‘prevent’ strand of the counter-terrorism strategy with a clear separation between ‘prevent’ (Home Office lead) and ‘integration’ (Communities and Local Government lead).

In November 2010 the Home Secretary, Theresa May, made the following announcement:

I am pleased to announce today that the Government are formally reviewing the Prevent strand of Contest, the UK’s counter-terrorism strategy.

That we need a preventative approach to terrorism is not in question: we have to deal with the causes of terrorism as well as its symptoms. But we want to avoid the mistakes of the previous Government. The new Prevent strategy will follow the principles of our counter-terrorism legislation. It will be proportionate to the specific

¹ See also, [The Counter Terrorism Review](#), SN/HA/5852, 2 March 2011

challenge we face; it will only do what is necessary to achieve its specific aims; and it will be more effective. It will be separate from work to tackle wider forms of extremism and to promote integration, which is being led by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The review will, among other things:"look at the purpose and scope of the Prevent strategy, its overlap and links with other areas of Government policy and its delivery at local level;"examine the role of institutions—such as prisons, higher and further education institutions, schools and mosques—in the delivery of Prevent;"consider the role of other Prevent delivery partners, including the police and other statutory bodies;"consider how activity on Prevent in the UK can be more joined up with work overseas;"examine monitoring and evaluation structures to ensure effectiveness and value-for-money; and;"make recommendations for a revised Prevent strategy."

I am also announcing today a period of public consultation to enable delivery partners, front-line service providers and all other interested parties to participate in the review of Prevent. Contributions can be submitted by e-mail

(preventreview@homeoffice.x.gsi.gov.uk)

or online at:

(<http://preventreview.homeoffice.gov.uk>).

I am pleased to announce that Lord Carlile of Berriew QC, the current reviewer of terrorism legislation, will provide expert, independent oversight of the Prevent review. His role is essential in ensuring that the review takes into consideration all the relevant information and looks at all the options.

I am also pleased to announce that I intend to appoint Mr David Anderson QC as the new independent reviewer of terrorism legislation. Mr Anderson QC is a specialist in European Union and public law and human rights and has been a QC for over 10 years. He is a Recorder and visiting professor at King's College London. I expect him to take up this role early in the new year. Until then, I have extended the period of appointment of Lord Carlile of Berriew QC, as the current independent reviewer of terrorism legislation. During this period Lord Carlile will also conduct a brief review of the arrests (and subsequent release) of six individuals under the Terrorism Act 2000 during the recent state visit to the United Kingdom by the Pope.

I am extremely grateful to Lord Carlile for his willingness to continue in his role, one he has performed with distinction.²

In December 2010 Andrew Stunell gave an update:

The Home Secretary announced to the House on 9 November 2010 a review of the Government's strategy for preventing violent extremism. That made clear that the new Prevent strategy, which will be led by Home Office, will be more clearly distinguished from work to tackle wider forms of extremism and to promote integration. Work on these last two areas is currently being developed by officials in my Department, working closely with other Government Departments. Announcements about Prevent funding will be made by the Home Office following the publication of the revised Prevent strategy.³

² HC Deb 9 November 2010, cc12-13WS.

³ HC Deb 21 December 2010, c1317W.

Mrs May also commented on this during her statement on the review of counter-terrorism legislation:

The Government are committed to tackling the promotion of division, hatred and violence in our society. We must expose and confront the bigoted ideology of the extremists and prosecute and punish those who step outside the law. The review considered whether counter-terrorism legislation should be amended to tackle groups who are not currently caught by the law, but who still aim to spread their divisive and abhorrent messages. After careful consideration, we have concluded that it would be disproportionate to widen counter-terrorism legislation to deal with these groups, however distasteful we find their views. To do so would have serious consequences for the basic principles of freedom of expression. We therefore propose to use existing legislation, as well as tackling such groups through our wider work to counter extremism and promote integration and participation in society.⁴

Further details of the review of Prevent were given on the Home Office website:

Review of the Prevent strategy

The current threat level to the UK from international terrorism is severe. The most significant international terrorism threat to the UK remains violent extremism associated with and influenced by Al-Qa'ida.

The Prevent strategy, launched in 2007 seeks to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism both in the UK and overseas. It is the preventative strand of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

The Review

The government has been clear that the continued existence of a preventative strand of CONTEST is not in question. However, we believe that the current Prevent strategy is not as effective as it could be and we are committed to reviewing it.

We have agreed the broad parameters for a revised Prevent strategy and are now seeking the views and recommendations of delivery partners, opinion formers, locally and nationally elected representatives and members of the public. There will also be some consultation overseas.

This review is a valuable opportunity for us to test these parameters with a wide range of partners. It is also an opportunity for those partners to examine our assumptions, offer new ideas for how the new parameters might be delivered in practice and contribute to the development of a revised Prevent strategy.

What is changing?

We have agreed that the following areas of the existing Prevent strategy require review:

- we want to more clearly separate work on preventing violent extremism from work to promote integration. The former will be led by the Home Office and the latter by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). As part of its work on integration, DCLG will also be coordinating work across Government to address the challenges we face from non-violent extremism

⁴ HC Deb 26 January 2011, cc306-8.

- we want to consider whether the Prevent strategy should address all forms of violent extremism, recognising that the risks to national security from groups associated with or influenced by Al-Qa'ida are greater than the risks from others
- we believe Prevent needs to be more focused in specific areas and sectors where propagandists for terrorism are known to be operating
- we want to strike the right balance between decision-making, prioritisation and accountability at local and national levels, recognising the need for local flexibility while mindful of the need to manage risks to national security
- we will be assessing whether promoting community resilience and addressing grievances should be part of our counter-terrorism strategy, or whether they should be led and delivered within other Government policies
- we will consider how activity on Prevent in the UK can be more seamlessly joined up with Prevent activity overseas
- finally, we will also be looking closely at how we monitor and evaluate Prevent to ensure that it offers value-for-money.

What is staying?

The revised Prevent strategy will continue to address the most significant security risk that we face: the risk from international terrorism. The heart of Prevent – targeted, local work to support people who are most vulnerable to radicalisation and to disrupt propagandists for terrorism – will also remain. There will continue to be an overseas element to the strategy.

The existing Prevent strategy

The existing strategy is based on an assessment of the drivers of radicalisation in the UK informed by a growing amount of intelligence from a variety of Government sources and from open academic research. The strategy identified five causes of radicalisation in this country:

- an ideology associated with Al Qai'da (though predating it) which purported to justify terrorism
- radicalisers and propagandists in the UK and overseas who young people found compelling and credible and who applied the ideology in a local context
- a group of people vulnerable to extremist messages for a range of personal reasons, including a low sense of belonging in this country, uncertainty about identity and under achievement
- lack of resilience to and in some cases, tacit support for violence in vulnerable communities
- grievances, regarding both international and local issues (e.g. the experience of racism and perceived inequalities)

The strategy to date

The Prevent strategy of the last government was designed to address the causes, or drivers, of radicalisation at a variety of stages. The strategic objectives were designed to:

- challenge the ideology behind violent extremism through targeted communications and work with credible religious authorities both in the UK and overseas to counter the extremist narrative
- disrupt the activities of those who seek to recruit vulnerable people
- provide interventions to support vulnerable people, largely concentrated in high priority, high risk geographical areas as well as within specific sectors, such as prisons and higher education
- build community resilience primarily through work at a local level but also including initiatives to build community capacity, such as the support of national bodies and the establishing of best practice guidance for mosques
- address wider grievances including work in the UK and overseas.

Locally, local authorities, the police and community organisations have taken the lead in developing and jointly managing a local programme of action that met the objectives of the strategy, was proportionate to the level of threat in the area and reflected the local context. Nationally, key departments were tasked to oversee and coordinate delivery of Prevent, delivering training and guidance and establishing best practice. Internationally, programmes were developed to challenge extremist ideology overseas, complemented by work to build community resilience and address grievances which might drive support for violent extremism.

Challenges

Prevent is a relatively new programme, delivering sensitive and often difficult objectives. There have been significant challenges. Although a broad consensus on the nature and the scale of the threat has been established it has not always been clear what the appropriate policy response should be or whether and at what stage the government should intervene.

At the local level, Prevent resources have sometimes been used to fund other areas of work, including race equality, multiculturalism and cohesion. Activity in these areas, while often useful in itself, has not always addressed Prevent objectives and has led to accusations that the government's interest in Muslim communities is related only to the risk of terrorism.

Next steps

At the end of the review period, all responses to the review process will be collated and analysed by the Home Office. A revised Prevent strategy will be published in 2011, accompanied by a report recording the findings of the review.⁵

2.2 Outcome

Theresa May announced the outcome of the review of Prevent on 7 June 2011. She criticised the approach under the Labour Government:

the Prevent programme that we inherited from the previous Government was flawed. It confused Government policy to promote integration with Government policy to prevent terrorism. It failed to tackle the extremist ideology that not only undermines the cohesion of our society, but inspires would-be terrorists to seek to bring death and destruction to our towns and cities. In trying to reach out to those at risk of

⁵ [Review of the Prevent strategy](#), Home Office, accessed 18 March 2011.

radicalisation, funding sometimes even reached the very extremist organisations that Prevent should have been confronting. We will not make the same mistakes.⁶

She went on to outline the new approach:

Prevent should remain an integral part of our counter-terrorism strategy, Contest, a full update of which we will publish later this summer. Its aim should be to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent should address all forms of terrorism, including the extreme right wing. That is only right and proper and will also provide a more flexible basis to adapt to emerging threats in the future.

In a world of scarce resources, it is clear that Prevent work must be targeted against those forms of terrorism that pose the greatest risk to our national security. Currently, the greatest threat comes from al-Qaeda and those it inspires. The majority of Prevent resources and efforts will therefore be devoted to stopping people joining or supporting al-Qaeda, its affiliates or like-minded groups. But Prevent must also recognise and tackle the insidious impact of non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views that terrorists exploit.

Prevent depends on a successful integration strategy, but integration alone will not meet our counter-terrorism objectives, and our integration programme should go much wider than just security and counter-terrorism. This was a fundamental failing of the last Government's approach. They failed to promote integration, and where they did promote it, they did so through the narrow prism of counter-terrorism. So we will do more than any Government before us to promote integration, including through teaching our history and values in our schools, through the national citizen service, and through other policies, but we will do so separately and differently from Prevent. The combined effect of this work and of the new Prevent strategy will be an unyielding fight against extremism, violent extremism and radicalisation.

It is critical that agencies, Departments and local authorities work to a common set of Prevent objectives to deliver the outcomes that we want. Public funding for Prevent must be rigorously prioritised and comprehensively audited. The previous Government were far too lax in spending in this area, as they were in so many others. Let me reiterate that under this Government, public money will not be provided to extremist organisations. If organisations do not support the values of democracy, human rights, equality before the law, participation in society—if they do not accept these fundamental and universal values—we will not work with them and we will not fund them.⁷

She presented three objectives that would sit within this framework. Prevent “will respond to the ideological challenge and the threat from those who promote it,” it “will stop individuals being drawn into terrorism and will ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support,” and “we will work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.”⁸

The new Prevent Strategy was published at the same time as a Command Paper, [Cm 8092](#). This gave a summary of the points made by Mrs May:

The new *Prevent* strategy will be based around the guiding principles outlined in chapter 6. They represent a significant departure from the previous strategy:

⁶ HC Deb 7 June 2011, c52.

⁷ HC Deb 7 June 2011, cc52-3.

⁸ HC Deb 7 June 2011, c53.

- The aim of *Prevent* should be to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- *Prevent* should address all forms of terrorism, but continue to prioritise according to the risks to our national security. Its principal focus will therefore remain terrorism associated with Al Qa'ida and related groups.
- *Prevent* needs to deal with extremism where terrorism draws on extremist ideas; and where people who are extremists are being drawn towards terrorism-related activity.
- *Prevent* will depend on wider Government programmes to strengthen integration and should be carefully coordinated with them. Other than in exceptional circumstances, *Prevent* should not fund these programmes and should be distinct from them.
- *Prevent* will remain one part of our counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. The relationship between *Prevent* and what we call *Pursue* (such as work to investigate and disrupt terrorist activity) must be very carefully managed. *Prevent* is not a means for spying or for other covert activity.
- We intend that agencies and Departments work to a common set of objectives in this area. But we look to local authorities and communities to consider how those objectives can best be implemented: they will have the expertise and the understanding of local context which in this as in many other policy areas is vital.
- Funding for local authority projects will be precisely targeted and dedicated to ensure it is used for the purposes for which it is intended. But central Government should not seek to micro-manage decisions about local delivery which are properly the responsibility of local partners.
- Funding will not be provided to extremist organisations.
- It will not be part of this strategy to use extremists to deal with the risk from radicalisation.
- Public funding for *Prevent* must be rigorously prioritised at home and overseas. The balance of investment within domestic *Prevent* work and between that work and *Prevent* overseas needs to be regularly assessed. All our *Prevent* programmes need to be relevant to *Prevent* objectives.
- The evaluation of *Prevent* work is critical and must significantly improve. Data collection must be more rigorous.

7.2 Within this overall framework the new *Prevent* strategy will have three objectives. It will:

- 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 a wide range of sectors and institutions (including education, faith, health and criminal justice) where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to

address.⁹

For the Labour Party, Yvette Cooper responded,

Today we expected the Home Secretary to update the Prevent strategy, but she has done nothing of the sort. We support updating the Prevent strategy, but there is a massive gap between her rhetoric today and the reality of her policies. Where she should be building consensus around counter-terrorism, instead she has been political point-scoring. She has set out no actual proposals on how she would deliver in such an important area.¹⁰

A number of other reactions to the Prevent review can be found on the [New Civilisation](#) website. There was also reaction from [Conservative Home](#), the [Spectator](#), the [Guardian](#), and the [Royal United Services Institute](#).

There was a short debate on the Prevent strategy in the House of Lords on 30 November 2011. Lord Noon questioned the separation of work to prevent people engaging in terrorism and work on integration:

If the success of the programme depends on our sense of belonging – which is what I call integration – then how could this not be a part of Prevent? By separating integration and extremism, the Prevent strategy will create its own pitfalls.¹¹

The point was backed by Lord Ahmad, who argued that prevention of terrorism, integration of communities and education of future generations were “all part of the same equation.”¹²

Baroness Hamwee questioned the concept of integration, since it might imply asking people to integrate to a society which no longer exists:

Integration, of itself, does not secure loyalty to a set of values or instil patriotism; they are more than learnt behaviours. It is about a view of society and one’s place in it, and perhaps we should be talking more about social cohesion in a wider sense.¹³

The Bishop of Hereford addressed similar issues, saying that

One strategy does not stand alone. I would be delighted to hear the Minister talk about the way in which this strategy sits alongside other strategies and work on community cohesion, the development, building-up and strengthening of our communities and the avoidance of those social ills that cause the very divisions that can further isolate.¹⁴

Baroness Prashar argued that

We do not have a clearly understood and clearly articulated policy on how to develop a sense of belonging, how to create support for our core values or how to encourage integration.¹⁵

She also argued that “cultural diversity and pluralism do not threaten cohesiveness; inequality does,” a point supported by Lord Hameed.¹⁶

⁹ Cm 8092, pp39-40.

¹⁰ HC Deb 7 June 2011, c54

¹¹ HL Deb 30 November 2011, c304

¹² HL Deb 30 November 2011, c306

¹³ HL Deb 30 November 2011, c307

¹⁴ HL Deb 30 November 2011, c313

¹⁵ HL Deb 30 November 2011, c307

Lord Patel, who carried out a confidential review of the original Prevent strategy for the Labour Government, welcomed the present review, which he felt had addressed some of the issues he had raised. He raised two areas for further thought: how young people could be engaged in Prevent, and how professionals and elected officials could gain the skills and confidence to challenge extremism.¹⁷

Lord Rosser, for Labour, questioned what financial resources would be available, given the point in the review statement that public funds for Prevent would have to be rigorously prioritised:

What does that statement mean in terms of the amount of funding for Prevent – not least on training and personnel – that will be provided in future from the Home Office and other departments? Will funding be going up or will it go down?¹⁸

He referred to the stated objectives of stopping the radicalisation of young people and tackling the threat from home-grown terrorism, and concluded that

If it remains the Government's view that their Prevent strategy will single-handedly and without doubt achieve those objectives in full, then I fear that the Government have underestimated the complexity and difficulty of what they are quite rightly seeking to achieve.¹⁹

For the Government, Lord Henley made the following comments on integration:

My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government plans to make a Statement to Parliament and publish a document setting out the Government's approach to integration later this year. I hope that the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, will be able to wait for that Statement. In the meantime, the elements of that approach are beginning to take shape. It will be an approach that emphasises what we have in common rather than what is different; draws out the responsibilities that we have to each other and to society; enables people to realise their potential to get on in life; gives people opportunities to work together and to take decisions for themselves; and ensures a firm response to threats to integration like discrimination, extremism and disorder.²⁰

In December 2011 Andrew Stunell gave the following update:

We are working closely with a number of Departments on issues of community cohesion and integration. The Government plan to publish a document setting out their approach to integration in due course. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the right hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr Pickles), will make a statement to Parliament at this time.²¹

2.3 Integration

On 21 February 2012 Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, made a statement on the new approach to integration. This was accompanied by the publication of a document, *Creating the conditions for integration*, which gave greater detail:

¹⁶ HL Deb 30 November 2011, c311

¹⁷ HL Deb 30 November 2011, c309

¹⁸ HL Deb 30 November 2011, c315

¹⁹ HL Deb 30 November 2011, c315

²⁰ HL Deb 30 November 2011, c317

²¹ HC Deb 20 December 2011, c1112W

I am today publishing “Creating the Conditions for Integration”, the Government’s approach to enabling and encouraging integration in communities throughout England.

“Creating the Conditions” sets out how integration is achieved when neighbourhoods, families and individuals come together on issues that matter to them. It is based around five key factors:

I. *Common ground*—Shared aspirations and values, and a focus on what we have in common rather than on difference.

II. *Responsibility*—Promoting a strong sense of mutual commitment and obligation.

III. *Social mobility*—People able to realise their potential to get on in life.

IV. *Participation and empowerment*—People have the opportunities to take part and take decisions in local and national life.

V. *Challenge to intolerance and extremism*—A robust response to threats which deepen division and increase tensions.

Most people from different backgrounds get on well together, feel they belong to their neighbourhood and to this country, and have a sense of pride in the place where they live, but challenges remain in particular places. Building a more integrated society requires collective action across a wide range of issues, at national and local levels, by public bodies, private companies, voluntary and community organisations and, above all, communities and individuals. “Creating the Conditions” sets out the Government’s views and our role in this process.

We recognise that integration is a vital local issue. We will ensure that the integration benefits of national programmes and projects are recognised and supported. All Government Departments have an important role in tackling barriers to integration, in particular those relating to long-term social and economic challenges.

Beyond this, integration requires a local response and we strongly encourage local partners such as local authorities, police forces and other statutory bodies to work together to drive action and to learn from each other. To support this we will use tools such as the Localism Act 2011 to give people the power to come together to take action. We will seek opportunities to support projects that are sustainable through community or business support and which exemplify positive activities or pioneer new approaches. We are committed to outflanking and challenging extremism and intolerance and we will take the necessary action to do so.

Together, these are fundamental changes to how Government Departments and the rest of the public sector work in this area. This approach will make integration the everyday business of public services, the private sector and wider civic society, while ensuring local responsibility and the opportunity for everyone to contribute.

“Creating the Conditions for Integration” is available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/integration>. A copy of this publication will be placed in the Library of the House.²²

Some further information was given in a [press release](#), which included the following notes to editors:

²² HC Deb 21 February 2012, c72WS

2 The Department for Communities will lead on integration but the following Departments will also have an important contribution to make: Home Office/UK Border Agency, Department for Education, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, Office for Civil Society within the Cabinet Office.

3 Departments' mainstream services will make the most impact on integration, rather than any specific new integration activity. For example, the most important actions on social mobility will be those already set out in the Social Mobility Strategy.²³

²³ *Eric Pickles: Communities together not apart*, 21 February 2012