

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date:	12 December 2023
Title:	Annual PREVENT Report
Report From:	Director of Adults' Health and Care

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this annual report is to provide information and assurance on:
 - the County Council's delivery of the Prevent duty and responsibilities hosted within Adults' Health and Care;
 - delivery of the County Council's Channel Panel responsibilities; and
 - notable local events and national highlights over the last 12 months since the last Prevent Annual Report was presented to Cabinet.

Recommendations

2. That Cabinet notes this update on Prevent activity in Hampshire, including the work being undertaken by the County Council and its partners in the management and mitigation of issues related to duties under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and the Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019.
3. That Cabinet receive a further update in 12 months' time.

Executive Summary

4. The UK's security services continue to counter terrorist risks and threats at home and to UK interests overseas, with global events impacting the domestic terrorism landscape and leading to growth in hate crime incidences in some communities, resulting in increased demand for Prevent services.
5. The move to radicalisation in the online space has continued, likely exacerbated by the increase in online activity as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst this has potentially increased the risk of people being drawn into terrorism it has also presented opportunities for community-led initiatives in Hampshire to build strong support networks and develop resilience in preventing and responding to terrorist threats.
6. The County Council has robust internal and external arrangements to ensure compliance with its Prevent duties. These have been evaluated by the Home

Office's Office for Homeland Security and have been judged to be meeting or exceeding expectations. The County Council continues to mainstream Prevent across its business through strengthened governance and senior leadership. Leadership and governance is, also provided externally through the Hampshire Prevent Partnership Board, which has progressed the Prevent agenda in Hampshire through the Board's sub-groups in close partnership with stakeholders, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and the Isle of Wight Council.

7. The County Council has applied the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) created by Counter Terrorism Police South-East to the development of a multi-agency Situational Risk Assessment and incorporated it in the Hampshire Prevent Partnership Board's multi-agency action plan and subgroup workplans.
8. The County Council and its partners have responded effectively to the complexity of Hampshire Channel Panel referrals and there is good multi-agency engagement in Hampshire Channel Panels.
9. The Home Office's Office for Homeland Security's Annual Assurance Statement for Channel has been completed and submitted, the outcome of the County Council's level of compliance is awaited.
10. Nationally, the County Council has continued to follow and contribute to inquiries. There have been further publications from the Manchester Arena Enquiry, the publication of the Government's consultation on the Protect Duty, and the publication of the Independent Review of Prevent.
11. Chief Officers and the Leader and Deputy Leader have received confidential briefings in advance of this report being brought to Cabinet.

Contextual information

12. 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, 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. Prevent interventions are focused in the 'pre criminal space'. The lead responsibility for Prevent sits with local authorities.
13. The ongoing importance of this agenda has been highlighted by ongoing protests across the country by Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil, with eight individuals from Hampshire being arrested in London in October 2022. Three men from Hampshire were convicted, in September 2023 of conspiring to plant two smoke devices at Gray's Inn in London, the heart of the English legal district. Stickers and graffiti (stickers are placed in usually prominent public spaces in support of a particular ideology/belief/group) continues to be reported across the communities in Hampshire, and the correlation between hate crime and extremism remains under close investigation. Within the pan-Hampshire area in July 2022 a 15-year-old boy from the Isle of Wight appeared in court charged with a terrorism offence.

14. Across Hampshire we have seen those seeking refuge, escaping war or seeking asylum accommodated within the county. Hampshire citizens have positively welcomed the opportunities afforded by the various UK resettlement schemes and through them HCC services alongside our partners have provided support and care to those in need.
15. Prevent services across Hampshire continue to be called upon to respond to the impact of global and national events on local communities. It is recognised that global events impact the domestic terrorism landscape and lead to a growth in hate crime incidences in some communities, leaving some individuals and groups feeling exposed and unsafe. Consequently, there is also an increased demand for support to those who are identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation. The correlation between hate crime and extremism remains under close investigation.
16. It is anticipated that this will continue to require a response from the wider strategic Prevent partnership led by Hampshire County Council to support the work already started to build strong and resilient communities. The Council's ability to engage with communities and the wider safeguarding partnerships is crucial in the delivery of the Prevent duty to prevent those vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism from being radicalised.
17. At the time of writing, the threat level of International Terrorism to the UK is 'Substantial'¹, meaning that a terrorist attack is 'likely'. For Northern Ireland the threat is 'Severe', meaning that 'an attack is highly likely'.

Current situational update

18. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt in Hampshire, as it does throughout the whole of the UK. Those consequences previously identified remain relevant, with others emerging as circumstances allow:
 - The increase in time spent online has likely increased the risk of some people being drawn into terrorism through exposure to extremist narratives. For example, extremists have used apocalyptic narratives in referring to the pandemic encouraging supporters to take extremist action;
 - Conspiracy theories initially related to COVID-19 have further developed in focus with some now including seemingly non-related COVID-19 themes such as anti-establishment and right wing ideology;
 - Misinformation and disinformation about COVID-19 and the vaccines are increasingly present in populist narratives to further the idea that the 'elite' are controlling and abusing citizens in an attempt to undermine societal and community cohesion.
 - Gaming platforms continue to be increasingly used as social media platforms with encrypted chat rooms where terrorists can recruit, radicalise and raise funds through the use of crypto currency. Video games are sometimes altered to promote terrorism.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/terrorism-national-emergency>

- Increase use of Deep Fakes and AI technology, could present a variety of security challenges, as seen by May 2023 when the Kremlin critic Bill Browder disclosed he was targeted by a deepfake hoax when he participated in a video call with somebody impersonating the former Ukrainian president. In June 2023, the release of a deepfake of Vladimir Putin declared martial law and stating that Ukraine's army had invaded Russia in footage aired on the country's television channels and radio stations
- The emerging threat of 3D firearms continues to evolve with the Police continuing to make large seizures of 3D printed firearms components and a large amount of homemade gun-making guides from the internet. Members of far-right groups have the most interest in this technology with discussions taking place on far-right extremist forums and communities sometimes including instructions on how to produce 3D printed weapons.
- Recent events in the Middle East following the attack upon Israel are currently difficult to predict in terms of the potential consequences on our communities.

19. Hampshire's community focus is supported by the county's Community Safety Network, and close joint working with District Council partners and Hampshire Constabulary has enabled proactive messaging to be shared with communities in Hampshire.

PREVENT arrangements within Hampshire County Council

20. The **Prevent team** is hosted the Adults' Health and Care Department and comprises 2 FTE and 1 FTE business support resource. Additionally, there is a 0.6 FTE 12-month temporary post to support the work of the **Hampshire Prevent Partnership Board**. The team facilitates compliance with the statutory duties and responsibilities placed upon the County Council and supports the Prevent Delivery Group, Partnership Board and **Channel** arrangements, outlined below.
21. The County Council's **Prevent Delivery Group** meets quarterly and includes senior representation from each County Council directorate. It focuses on strengthening the organisational approach with respect to leadership, workforce capability, awareness, partnerships and information sharing. It is chaired by the Director of Adults' Health and Care and since its formation last year, has served to mainstream Prevent across the County Council's business. Key achievements over the last 12 months include:
- Completion of the County Council's Prevent e-learning by over 95% of the total workforce.
 - Further development of staff guidance on the Prevent duty and how to respond to Prevent concerns following a trauma-informed safeguarding approach.
 - Promotion of the National Referral Form referral pathway for all Prevent referrals, including how to recognise signs of radicalisation.
 - Delivery of additional briefings and training to staff, including senior leaders at the Hampshire Leadership Network, across all directorates at each

Departmental Management Team detailing the Prevent duty and how it impacts on each service area.

- Development and publication of a bespoke training package for frontline staff in Adults Health and Care and Children's Services.
- Review and update of the HCC communications strategy to support consistent and sensitive communications between the council and communities/partners.
- Publication of several awareness-raising factsheets on terrorism-related specific risks and themes.
- Development and delivery of input and briefings library services.
- Development of Prevent input to countryside services.
- Development of a Prevent and Autism Strategic plan.
- Collaboration on web-based, Prevent Toolkits with the HSCP and HSCP.
- Continued development of Prevent community engagement areas of work.

Hampshire Prevent Partnership Board

22. The **Board** is a multi-agency forum with close links to the Hampshire Community Safety Strategy Group, the Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board and the Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership. Further work is underway through these groups to build stronger community safety partnership links. An example of this would be District Council community safety input into the planning of the counter-terrorism local profile.
23. The Board meets virtually on a quarterly basis and sets the overarching strategy and multi-agency action plan. The plan focuses on the following three strategic areas:
 - Engagement and Awareness
 - Information Sharing
 - Disrupting radicalising Influences
24. These areas reflect those used by Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE) and specific actions are informed by the CTLP, as well as national developments from the Home Office's Office of Homeland Security. The CTLP provides local and national data on Prevent and highlights emerging risks and themes. The Hampshire Prevent Partnership works closely with CTPSE, which produces the CTLP, to improve the relevance and accuracy of local data within it.
25. A Core Group meets bi-monthly in addition to the Board to provide oversight of the action plan's implementation. Specific actions are delivered through thematic sub-groups. The sub groups are:
 - **Communication and Community Engagement**
 - **Education**
 - **CTLP**

The priorities for each subgroup are agreed by the Hampshire Prevent Partnership and seek to mitigate those risks and themes identified in the CTLP and the Hampshire Prevent Partnership Board's action plan.

26. Key achievements of the Hampshire Prevent Partnership Board over the last 12 months year include
- Monitoring of the embedded Prevent referral pathway across the Hampshire area.
 - Implementation of the Training Strategy and Communication Strategy.
 - Development of an assurance framework for partners.
 - Development of a Prevent and Autism Strategic plan.
 - Publication of a Situational Risk Assessment.
 - Completion of the Office of Homeland Security's Benchmarking Exercise.
 - Development of an Engagement strategy
27. In March 2023 Hampshire County Council submitted the Prevent Duty Benchmark 2022-2023 to the Office of Homeland Security at the Home Office using their given template. The official briefing of the outcome of the Prevent Duty Benchmark for Hampshire is due to take place on 18 October 2023. However, early indication from the Office of Homeland Security have noted the high standards in Hampshire considering it is an unfunded area.

Channel

28. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced the **Channel** process to provide multi-agency, tailored support to people identified as at risk of being drawn into terrorism. The level of risk and nature of support is considered by the multi-agency Channel Panel. Risks related to terrorism are owned by counter terrorism police, with support provided by the wider Prevent partnership in the Channel Panel and delivered to the individual assessed to be at risk of radicalisation.
29. Statutory guidance requires a Channel Panel to be held monthly. There is an increase in the complexity of referrals in relation to vulnerability/susceptibility, threat, risk and harm. The complexity of the changing threat picture has significantly increased the workload of the Prevent team and impacted on the workload of the social work teams across the county.
30. Panel meetings are held virtually and are well attended by multi-agency partners. Support is provided to a range of adults and children with varying ideologies and backgrounds. Due to the security and sensitivity of Counter Terrorism intelligence, this annual report does not include details on referrals into Hampshire over the last 12 months.
31. The Hampshire Channel Panel adopts a trauma-informed safeguarding approach and supports a holistic model of support. In order to address concerns relating to radicalisation, the Panel also assesses other needs – for example housing, education, support for parents, domestic abuse. In many instances families/individuals are in crisis, and Hampshire Channel supports the engagement of the wider Prevent network to mitigate and minimise vulnerability to radicalisation through its individual support planning.
32. It is through the support of the Prevent partnership in Hampshire that the Panel is able to achieve successful outcomes together with those referred to

the Hampshire Channel Panel. At an operational level the Panel members not only support organisations in Hampshire to deliver interventions to individuals, but also identifies strategic need which is then addressed by the Hampshire Prevent Partnership Board.

33. In April 2023, the County Council submitted its Annual Assurance Statement for Channel to the Home Office demonstrating full compliance.

Notable Events for Hampshire County Council in the last 12 months

34. Drag Queen Story telling events - protests took place across the country during 2022 and 2023, impacting locally on Hampshire library services.
35. Continued protests by Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil across the county which impact on Hampshire.
36. The arrest and conviction of three men from Hampshire for conspiring to plant two smoke devices at Gray's Inn in London.
37. Stickers and graffiti continues to be reported across the communities in Hampshire and appear to be motivated by various ideologies - for example anti-state.

Key National Highlights

38. The Independent Review of Prevent was published in February 2023. The purpose of the Review was to look at how efficient Prevent is in delivering at the national and local level and how effectively the Statutory Prevent Duty is being implemented. There were 34 recommendations from the review, all of which have been accepted by the Home Secretary.
39. Inquiry hearings for the Manchester Arena Independent Public Inquiry began in September 2020. Volume Three of its report was published in March 2023. This focuses on the Radicalisation and Preventability elements of Salman Abedi's pathway to committing a terrorist offence.
40. Project Starlight published its findings on the prevalence of domestic abuse related incidences within Prevent referrals. The report concluded that there is a 'striking prevalence' of domestic abuse in the lives of those referred to Prevent as being vulnerable to radicalisation. Further research is underway to widen the initial dataset and examine more closely the link between domestic abuse and the pathway to radicalisation.
41. The UK Government's counter terrorism strategy, Contest 2023, which was under review, was released in July 2023. The revised Contest Strategy acknowledges that the threat from terrorism is enduring and evolving. Despite a prevalence of lower sophistication attacks in the UK, the threat is now more diverse, dynamic, and complex:
42. In September 2023, the Home Office released a refreshed version of the Prevent Duty 2023. The duty will come into force on 31 December 2023.
43. Hampshire County Council is awaiting the publication of the reviewed Channel Duty Guidance, which is due to be released between October and November 2023.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

44. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience impacts of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
45. This report does not detail specific projects or initiatives that can be assessed using the County Council's climate impact assessment tools but rather provides an annual assurance update on delivery of the Prevent duty. Consequently, no Climate Change assessment has been undertaken.

Conclusion

46. The County Council continues to deliver the requirements of the Prevent duty and is compliant with the Channel Duty guidance. The County Council, with its partners, will continue to adapt its approach to respond to the impact of global events and manage the increase in demand for Prevent support, including the increase in volume and complexity Channel referrals. Hampshire County Council will keep under review the resources and, in particular, specialist resources deployed in maintaining our duties in respect of Prevent and Channel, given the increased activity seen in this area.
47. Hampshire County Council will continue to fully support the work of the Hampshire Prevent Partnership Board, providing leadership and governance alongside its partners. The key strategic priorities of the Board will be delivered through the Board sub groups, the aims of which are to engage our communities and to raise awareness about the impact of radicalisation of individuals who are subject to the growing threat of extremist ideologies in Hampshire.
48. The County Council has taken note of the publication of key national documents and together with partners will implement any relevant recommendations or requirements in a timely manner and with a focus on keeping Hampshire communities safe.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015	2015
Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019	2019
Channel Duty Guidance 2020	2020

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

As this is annual update there is not a requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment.