

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

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| Decision Maker: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 24 November 2020 |
| 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 duties and responsibilities hosted within Adults' Health and Care.

Recommendations

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

Executive Summary

4. Within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, this report seeks to provide information and assurance on the following:-
 - the delivery of PREVENT duties and responsibilities with reference to the Hampshire PREVENT Partnership Board hosted within Adults' Health and Care on behalf of the wider County Council;
 - the delivery of PREVENT within the wider County Council;
 - key PREVENT national policy issues with implications for the County Council.

Contextual information

5. 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. Previously, the lead

responsibility for PREVENT lay with the police, however as of 2016 local authorities now have the lead as PREVENT interventions are focused in the 'pre criminal space'.

6. At the time of writing, the threat level of International Terrorism to the UK has been increased to 'Severe' ¹, meaning that a terrorist attack is 'highly likely'. This has been increased from 'Substantial' following recent events in France.

Covid-19 Pandemic

7. Nationally it is anticipated that the pandemic will lead to an increase in risks in relation to PREVENT.
8. Extremists are using apocalyptic narratives in referring to the pandemic in order to encourage their supporters to take extremist action.
9. There have been calls by terrorist groups for Covid-19 sufferers to deliberately infect as many people as possible, especially amongst those who are already identified as likely to become seriously unwell.
10. Nationally, there is concern that Covid-19 may lead to a resurgence in interest among terrorists for using chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons.
11. Internationally, Governments and authorities have been focused upon the demands of the pandemic – thereby potentially creating a more vulnerable landscape which the terrorist can manipulate more easily. For example, there has been an increase in the Race Realist Movement, which claims that the higher death rate from Covid-19 in the BAME communities is as a result of biological differences and not social inequalities.
12. In the UK the average number of internet-connected devices in the home is 8. Through lockdown there was a 29% increase in time spent online by UK households (USwitch Poll, May 2020), leading to increased risk of on-line manipulation and counter-narratives.
13. The pandemic has required a significant shift in the way the County Council meets its PREVENT Duty.
14. The Channel Panel, receiving referrals to support individuals in our communities, has continued to meet monthly via Microsoft Teams. This has worked well and there has been no identified negative impact on the outcomes of each Panel, either for agencies attending or for individuals who are adopted into the Channel Programme.

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

PREVENT in Hampshire County Council

15. The PREVENT team continues to be hosted in Adults' Health and Care. The team facilitate statutory compliance across Hampshire County Council with duties and responsibilities of the County Council with specific reference to Channel and Partnership arrangements. Chief Officers and the Executive Member for Communities have received confidential briefings in advance of this report being brought to Cabinet.
16. The Hampshire County Council PREVENT Delivery Group has been established and includes senior representation from every department across the County Council. It focuses on strengthening the organisational approach in respect to leadership, workforce capability, awareness, partnerships and information sharing. It is chaired by the Director of Adults' Health and Care. There are many positive examples of how this approach is improving service awareness and reducing risks of harm council-wide.

PREVENT Partnership Board (PPB)

17. The Prevent Partnership Board continues to operate as a multi-agency forum with close links to the Hampshire County Strategy Group and respective Safeguarding Boards for Adults and Children. Through these groups the links with community safety partnerships have been strengthened, providing a much stronger position to support community cohesion initiatives and identifying community tensions at the earliest opportunity with all partners.
18. The Prevent Partnership Board has continued to meet quarterly, albeit on a virtual basis, and a separate Prevent Partnership Board Core Group has met monthly to ensure that the Prevent Partnership Board's business can be met in a flexible and timely way outside of the main Prevent Partnership Board meeting.
19. The multi-agency action plan agreed by the Prevent Partnership Board has been revised over the last 12 months with a focus on the following 3 key strategic areas which echo those used by Counter Terrorism Policing South East:
 - Engagement and Awareness
 - Information Sharing
 - Disrupting radicalising Influences
20. The Prevent Partnership Board action plan also continues to reflect the Prevent Partnership Board's strategy and the Counter Terrorism Local Profile, which is provided annually by Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE). The Counter Terrorism Local Profile provides the Prevent Partnership Board with both local and national data on PREVENT, ranging from number and type of local referrals to emerging national themes and developments. All statutory partners contribute to the final version of the Counter Terrorism Local Profile.

21. The Prevent Partnership Board has also reviewed and improved the process for partners to inform the Counter Terrorism Local Profile, resulting in a more relevant and focussed Counter Terrorism Local Profile.
22. The Prevent Partnership Board's subgroups have been reviewed in the light of the revised action plan, and will continue to take forward the work to deliver the action plan in specific areas, reflecting themes and data from the Counter Terrorism Local Profile, and national developments from the Home Office/Office of Security and Counter Terrorism.

Channel

23. Channel, the arrangements for multi-agency case-conferences for individual referrals within the overall PREVENT approach, continues to operate effectively in Hampshire, within the published guidance, targeting a range of individuals with varying ideologies and backgrounds.
24. The Channel Panel has continued to meet monthly on a virtual basis. This has worked well and there has been no identified negative impact on the outcomes of each Panel either for agencies attending or for individuals who are adopted into the Channel Programme. The business model for Channel was reviewed and changed to allow for the seamless continuation of the Panel whilst it moved from face-to-face to online.
25. The number of referrals has significantly increased since the work led by the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism in the light of the Reading attack, and the recognition that the multi-agency partnership is an effective tool in achieving holistic outcomes for those adopted into Channel. Channel continues to receive referrals for individuals with no clear ideology, as well as clearly identified ideologies.
26. Alongside this increase in the number of referrals made to Channel is a continued increase in the complexity of the cases, with some having an international focus. With this increase in complexity comes an increase in risk levels and an increase in risks to the reputation of the County Council.
27. The links between referrals into Channel and mental health remains close.
28. The Channel Panel continues to support both children and adults in Hampshire.
29. Due to the security and sensitivity of Counter Terrorism intelligence, this annual report will not include exact details on referrals into Hampshire.
30. Broadly, Prevent referrals to Hampshire reflect regional and national data. Hampshire has seen an increase in right wing referrals, with most referrals coming from schools and non-Counter Terrorism Policing.
31. Trends associated with Prevent referral numbers into Hampshire reflect the national picture in terms of volume and ideology type.
32. 18% of Prevent cases in Hampshire have been adopted into Channel – last year the figure was 12%.
33. The majority of referrals into Channel were for Right Wing ideology, with an increased number on last year's figures.

34. 3% of referrals to Prevent in Hampshire had an undetermined ideology – this was 16% last year.
35. 92% of referrals to Prevent in Hampshire were for men, with only one individual adopted in to Channel being female.
36. 44% of referrals in to Prevent in Hampshire were in the age range 0-17; 33% were in the age range 30+. Of the cases adopted in to Channel, 50% were for individuals under 18 years.

Significant Events for Hampshire County Council in the last 12 months

37. Recent work has led to a review of the PREVENT training strategy for schools in Hampshire, with a greater emphasis upon joint working between Hampshire County Council and the Department for Education, and closer partnership working with Counter Terrorism Policing South East, neighbourhood policing and District Councils. Going forward Hampshire County Council's Prevent team will facilitate a multi-agency event to ensure that new ways of working can be understood, implemented and cascaded by all relevant agencies.
38. Also, in June 2020 there was a terrorist attack in Reading. This resulted in a review having to be undertaken of the Channel process led by Hampshire County Council. This work was completed successfully within a tight timeframe and the relevant assurance was given to the Home Office/Office of Security and Counter Terrorism, without recommendations for any additional measures to be implemented.

Key National Highlights

39. National Referral Form – this has been in use in Hampshire since February 2020. All Prevent referrals are completed on this Counter Terrorism Policing-owned form and submitted electronically direct to Counter Terrorism Policing South East and Hampshire Constabulary, who then forward the form to Hampshire County Council if there are any specific social care needs identified for our Children's or Adult's services.
40. The Independent Review of Prevent was postponed by the Government, with it anticipated to begin again in 2021. Consultation on the Terms of Reference has begun.
41. Increased focus on PREVENT in the business world and bringing PREVENT closer to the PROTECT AND PREPARE strands of the national strategy.
42. In March 2020 the National Counter Terrorism Security Office released the Action Counters Terrorism app – the ACT App. It is designed for use across business and industry, including the security, sporting and retail sectors. It includes live-time news updates from UK Protect and practical advice and guidance to help protect business, plus information on how to respond in the event of an attack.
43. The new Channel Guidance is expected 1.11.2020. It has not yet received Ministerial sign-off so may be further delayed.

44. It is anticipated that Police-Led Panels will be introduced nationally within the next few months. They are already operational in some areas of the country, and are police-chaired multi-agency panels which consider those Prevent-relevant referrals not deemed suitable for Channel, or where consent for Channel is not secured.
45. The Home Office has released a broad training offer for Channel Chairs, deputy Chairs and standing Panel members. This aims to address the training needs in a constantly evolving agenda.
46. Regionalisation – The Home Office has recognised that there needs to be a much more agile response to dealing with the threat of terrorism, especially the Right Wing threat. It is considering how to change the current delivery model for Prevent, with the potential for a clustered approach to some areas where authorities are more closely linked together to provide more consistency nationally. As an unfunded area, Hampshire may benefit from this cluster model. The Office of Security and Counter Terrorism is currently consolidating its feedback on this.

Summary

47. Hampshire County Council is undertaking its statutory responsibilities to lead on the PREVENT agenda both with key stakeholder agencies as members of the Prevent Partnership Board and as a result of strengthening its internal governance via the Prevent Delivery Group.
48. The establishment of the Prevent Delivery Group has begun to mainstream PREVENT throughout the whole County Council and will touch all areas of the County Council's business. Through its action plan, a communication strategy and a training strategy will mandate the sharing of information and training in a structured and robust way to identified groups of staff.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

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| 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

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| 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 | |

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

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.)

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| <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.