



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2017-0036, 31 January 2017

Implementation of the Prevent Strategy

Westminster Hall Debate 1 February 2017 at 1430hrs

A Westminster Hall debate on the Implementation of the Prevent Strategy has been scheduled for 1430hrs on Wednesday 1 February 2017. The Member in charge of this debate is Lucy Allan MP.

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Joanna Dawson and
Sarah Pepin

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1. Summary

The Prevent strategy, part of the Government's wider counter-terrorism strategy *CONTEST*, seeks to deal with those individuals and groups promoting division and hatred, and with the factors that predispose individuals or groups to respond to terrorist ideologies. Inherited from the previous Labour Government, the strategy was recast in 2011 under the Coalition Government in order to separate out the community based integration work from the more direct counter-terrorism activities. Under Prevent public sector organisations are subject to a duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This duty was recently placed on a statutory footing by the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#), together with guidance setting out how different sectors should play their part in implementing the strategy.

Prevent has been the subject of criticism and the decision to impose a statutory duty on public sector organisations has been particularly controversial.

In August 2016, the Home Affairs Select Committee published a report, [Radicalisation: the counter-narrative and identifying the tipping point](#) following an inquiry into the Government's counter-extremism strategy. The Committee sought views on the effectiveness of Prevent and the key problems with it. The report concluded that failure to address concerns about Prevent among the communities most affected by it must be addressed would mean that it would continue to be viewed with suspicion. It recommended better engagement with communities and more transparency about activities, in order to help communities understand what Prevent is trying to achieve. The report also acknowledged concerns about implementation of the Prevent duty, and recommended the establishment of a panel to assess the adequacy of available training and to review the effectiveness of the statutory duty.

This followed a [report](#) in July 2016 by the Joint Committee on Human Rights on the counter-extremism strategy, intended to inform consideration of an anticipated Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill. The report recommended an independent review of Prevent, and acknowledged concerns about implementation of the duty in schools and universities.

2. Media

2.1 Articles and blogs

Liberty

[Prevent's legacy is division and discrimination - it needs to go](#)

Rachel Robinson 23 January 2017

BBC online

[Prevent scheme 'fundamental' to fighting terrorism](#)

27 December 2016

The New Arab

[Prevent: why the UK's counter-extremism programme is toxic](#)

Jamil Hussein 3 December 2016

Middle East Eye

[Prevent does not make us safer, but sows fear, suspicion and mistrust](#)

Imran Awan 21 November 2016

Open Democracy UK

[We need to talk about how we talk about Prevent](#)

Anthony Cornish 14 November 2016

Guardian

[Prevent strategy to be ramped up despite 'big brother' concerns](#)

Alan Travis 11 November 2016

Middle East Eye

[Muslim Council of Britain set to launch alternative to Prevent](#)

Areeb Ullah 20 October 2016

The Register

[Report: UK counter-terrorism plan Prevent is 'unjust', 'counterproductive'](#)

Alexander J Martin 19 October 2016

Guardian

[Instead of fighting terror, Prevent is creating a climate of fear](#)

Amrit Singh 19 October 2016

Prospect

[Why we should scrap the Prevent Strategy](#)

Alistair Carmichael 12 October 2016

Middle East Eye

[UK Prevent strategy 'promoting extremism', UN warns](#)

Simon Hooper 22 April 2016

2.2 Press releases

Liberty

[Prevent duty must be scrapped: LEA admits discrimination after teachers call police over seven-year-old boy's toy gun](#)

27 January 2017

Open Society Foundations

[New report calls for repeal of UK counter-extremism reporting obligation](#)

19 October 2016

Rights Watch UK

[Landmark report reveals counterproductive Prevent Strategy violates rights of children](#)

July 2016

NUT

[Prevent Strategy](#)

28 March 2016

Islamic Human Rights Commission

[Conference will dissect Britain's pernicious Prevent programme](#)

9 June 2015

Home Office

[New Prevent strategy launched](#)

7 June 2011

3. Parliamentary Business

3.1 Ministerial Statements

[Prevent Strategy](#)

HC Deb 7 June 2011 c52-64 [Extract]

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mrs Theresa May):

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on the review of the Government's strategy to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Intelligence indicates that the UK faces a serious and sustained threat from terrorism. Osama bin Laden may be dead, but the threat from al-Qaeda-inspired terrorism is not. Indeed, the threat level from international terrorism remains at "Severe", meaning an attack is highly likely. That threat comes both from foreign nationals and from terrorists born and bred in Britain.

To tackle that threat, as the Prime Minister made clear in his speech in Munich earlier this year, we must not only arrest and prosecute those who breach the law, but we must stop people being drawn into terrorist-related activity in the first place. That will require a new approach to integrating our divided communities, led by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and delivered by Ministers across the whole of Government. In counter-terrorism policy, it will require an effective strategy to tackle radicalisation in this country and overseas. That is why, last year, I launched a review of the existing counter-radicalisation strategy known as Prevent. That review found that 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 radicalisation, funding sometimes even reached the very extremist organisations that Prevent should have been confronting. We will not make the same mistakes.

Our new strategy is guided by a number of key principles. 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.

Within this overall framework, the new Prevent strategy will have three objectives. First, Prevent will respond to the ideological challenge and the threat from those who promote it. As the Deputy Prime Minister said in his speech in Luton, we must be much more assertive about our values. Let me be clear: the ideology of extremism and terrorism is the problem; Islam emphatically is not. Tackling that ideology will mean working with mainstream individuals and organisations to make sure moderate voices are heard. It will mean robustly defending our institutions and our way of life. So where propagandists break the law in encouraging or approving terrorism, it will mean arrest and prosecution, and where people seek to enter this country from overseas to engage in activity in support of extremist or terrorist groups, we will exclude them. Since coming to power, I have already excluded 44 individuals from the UK either because of unacceptable behaviour or for national security reasons.

Secondly, Prevent will stop individuals being drawn into terrorism and will ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support. Radicalisation is a process, not a one-off event. During that process it is possible to intervene to stop vulnerable people gravitating towards terrorism. We will do this by building on the successful multi-agency "Channel" programme, which identifies and provides support for people at risk of radicalisation. I want to use this opportunity to make

one thing clear—Prevent is not about spying on communities, as some have alleged. It is about acting on information from the police, the security and intelligence agencies, local authorities and community organisations to help those specifically at risk of turning towards terrorism. It is incumbent on everyone in this country to play their part in helping them do so.

Thirdly, we will work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation. It is right to acknowledge that progress has been made in this area, but that progress has been patchy and it must be improved. So we will work with education and health care providers, universities, faith groups, charities, prisons and the wider criminal justice system. We will also work to tackle the particular challenge of radicalisation on the internet, and to make better use ourselves of social media and other modern communications technologies.

This review has been independently overseen by Lord Carlile of Berriew, and I pay tribute to him for his contribution. Lord Carlile has said that the new Prevent strategy has his full support. He said that

“it provides a template for challenging the extremist ideas and terrorist actions which seek to undermine the rule of law and fundamental British political values and institutions. Its tone is clear, and its policy compelling. It offers a positive message for mutual respect, tolerance and liberty.”

Prevent has not been without controversy. In the past, it received allegations that it was a cover for spying. Those allegations have been found to be false, but now we will make sure that this is seen and known to be the case. In the past, Prevent was muddled up with integration. It operated to confused and contradictory objectives—not any more. At times funding even found its way to the sorts of extremist organisations that themselves pose a threat to our society and to our security—not under this Government.

Let me be clear. We will not fund or work with organisations that do not subscribe to the core values of our society. Our new Prevent strategy will challenge the extremist ideology, it will help protect sectors and institutions from extremists, and it will stop the radicalisation of vulnerable people. Above all, it will tackle the threat from home-grown terrorism. I commend this statement to the House.

3.2 Debates

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(Amendment\) Bill](#)

HC Deb 27 January 2017 c629-30 [Business interrupted; to be read a second time on Friday 24 March]

[Prevent Strategy](#)

HL Deb 20 December 2016 c1544-6

[Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism](#)

HC Deb 14 December 2016 c911-20

[Prevent Strategy](#)

HL Deb 30 November 2011 c303-18

3.3 Parliamentary Questions

[Counter-terrorism](#)

Asked by: Chris Evans

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Prevent Strategy in countering radicalisation.

Answered by: Ben Wallace | Department: Home Office

Prevent is a key part of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST). Prevent safeguards and supports individuals who are vulnerable to exploitation for radical purposes. Prevent is working. It has made a significant impact in preventing people being drawn into terrorism.

Working with industry and the police we have secured the removal of 220,000 pieces of terrorist material since February 2010. Since 2012, over 1000 people have received support through our Channel programme which safeguards those most at risk of radicalisation. More than 150 attempted journeys to the Syria/Iraq conflict area were disrupted in 2015. This includes action by the family courts. The courts have protected 50 children (from around 20 families) from being taken to the conflict area in 2015. To build resilience in communities against radicalisation in 2015/16, we have delivered 142 projects reaching over 42,000 participants.

29 Nov 2016 | Written questions | 51248

[Radicalism and Religiously Aggravated Offences](#)

Asked by: Julie Cooper

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure an effective balance between its policies on tackling radicalisation and protecting people at risk of Islamophobic attacks.

Answered by: Sarah Newton | Department: Home Office

The Government is determined to tackle hate crime and extremism wherever it occurs.

The Government's Prevent strategy, published in 2011, explicitly tackles all forms of terrorism. That includes protecting individuals who are at risk from far right and Neo-nazi extremism, as well as those vulnerable to Islamist extremism.

Prevent is about safeguarding people who are at risk of radicalisation. Prevent does not target a specific faith or ethnic group. Rather, Prevent protects those who are targeted by terrorist recruiters. Currently the greatest threat comes from terrorist recruiters inspired by Daesh. Our Prevent programme will necessarily reflect this by prioritising support for vulnerable British Muslims, and working in partnership with British Muslim communities and civil society groups.

The Prevent programme is implemented in a proportionate manner that takes into account the level of risk in any given area or institution. In some areas the risk of far right extremism may be significant and we would expect in those circumstances for Prevent activity to focus on the far right threat.

Far right extremism often brings with it the threat of anti-Muslim or antisemitic attacks. We have a strong record of action against Islamophobia and antisemitism and deplore all religious or racially motivated crimes.

We strongly condemn the increase in attacks on Muslims that have been seen in this country in recent years. We know the majority of people in United Kingdom join our condemnation, and we have seen great examples of individuals and communities standing together to tackle this hatred.

Muslims make an enormous contribution to British society. They are all too often the victims of hatred and intolerance in this country and overseas. This Government is determined to act to protect British Muslims.

The United Kingdom has in place one of the strongest legislative frameworks in the world to protect communities from hostility, violence and bigotry. We will keep it under review to ensure it remains effective and appropriate in the face of new and emerging threats. We also published a new Cross-Government Hate Crime Action Plan on 26 July which will drive forward action against all forms of hate crime, including anti-Muslim hatred. This will be taken forward in partnership with communities to ensure we target the harm that hate crime causes.

7 September 2016 | Written questions | 44664

[Schools: Counter-terrorism](#)

Asked by: Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what response they have made to the NUT motion rejecting the Prevent strategy and suggesting that it causes "suspicion in the classroom".

Answered by: Lord Nash | Department: Education

It is highly disappointing that the NUT conference took this stance towards the Prevent strategy.

The Prevent duty is entirely consistent with schools' existing responsibilities and it is irresponsible to suggest that it requires teachers to spy on pupils or close down discussion in the classroom. Good schools will already have been safeguarding children from extremism and promoting fundamental British values long before the Prevent duty came into force. Schools provide a safe space for debate and play a key role in helping young people develop critical thinking skills, which increases their resilience to a range of risks, including extremism. We have published guidance on the Prevent duty and made a wide range of advice and materials available to schools through our Educate Against Hate website.

My officials have met representatives of the NUT to discuss Prevent and we will continue to provide school teachers and leaders with support to keep children safe and build their character and resilience.

27 April 2016 | Written questions | HL 7800

[Terrorism](#)

Asked by: Diana Johnson

The Home Secretary cut spending on community *Prevent* projects from £17.4 million to £1 million. She cut the number of areas delivering *Prevent* from 92 to 21, and in one year just four local authorities received funding for *Prevent* projects. At the same time, the Department for Communities and Local Government has funded just eight local integration projects, none of which is aimed at Islamic fundamentalism. Will the Home Secretary explain why local *Prevent* and integration projects have been so neglected under this Government?

Answered by: Theresa May | Department: Home Office

I must tell the hon. Lady that her analysis is wrong. This Government did make a difference to the *Prevent* programme when they came to office. We observed that, all too often, people were seeing the Labour Government's integration work under *Prevent* through the prism of the Government's spying on them, and of counter-terrorism, so we changed the way in which *Prevent* operated. The Home Office has not cut its funding for *Prevent*, and I am pleased to say that *Prevent* programmes have reached more than 50,000 people in this country.

HC Deb 9 February 2015 c541

4. Organisations and further reading

[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(Amendment\) Bill 2016-17](#) , Commons Library Briefing CBP-7878, 24 January 2017

[Counter-extremism policy in English schools](#) , Commons Library Briefing CBP-7345, 20 January 2017

David Anderson, Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, [The Terrorism Acts in 2015: report of the Independent Reviewer on the operation of the Terrorism Act 2000 and Part 1 of the Terrorism Act 2006](#) , December 2016

Open Justice Society Initiative, [Eroding trust: the UK's Prevent counter-extremism strategy in health and education](#) , October 2016

Joint Committee on Human Rights, [Counter-extremism: Government response to the Committee's second report of session 2016-17](#) , HC 756 2016-17, 19 October 2016.

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Radicalisation: the counter-narrative and identifying the tipping point](#) , HC135 2016-17, 25 August 2016.

Home Office, [CONTEST: the United Kingdom's strategy for countering terrorism: annual report for 2015](#) , Cm 9310, July 2016.

Rights Watch UK, [Preventing education? Human rights and UK counter-terrorism policy in schools](#) , July 2016.

Joint Committee on Human Rights, [Counter-extremism](#) , HC 105 2016-17, 22 July 2016.

Joint Committee on Human Rights, [Counter-extremism Bill: legislative scrutiny: oral evidence](#) , David Anderson QC, Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, HC 647 2015-16, 9 March 2016.

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Countering extremism: supplementary written evidence](#), David Anderson QC, Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, 29 January 2016.

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Countering extremism: oral evidence](#), Shami Chakrabarti CBE, HC 428 2015-16, 19 January 2016. [Q957-982]

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Countering extremism: oral evidence](#), David Anderson QC, Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, HC 428 2015-16, 19 January 2016. [Q926-956]

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Countering extremism: written evidence](#), David Anderson QC, Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, 7 October 2015.

Muslim Council of Britain, [Concerns on Prevent: meeting between David Anderson QC and the MCB](#), July 2015.

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Radicalisation in schools: oral evidence](#), HC 352 2014-15, 17 June 2014.

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