

Prevent duty guidance update: a briefing for local authority children's social care teams

September 2023

Updated Prevent duty guidance

The [Prevent duty guidance](#) has been refreshed and updated to reflect several recommendations of the [Independent Review of Prevent](#). It is an update to the existing Prevent duty guidance for children's social care in England and Wales (last updated in April 2021).

There are **no new legal requirements or additional responsibilities** for children's social care. Between September 2023 and 31st December 2023 there will be transition period as we do not anticipate that **the revised guidance will come into effect until 31st December at the earliest**.

Local authority Children Social Care teams should continue to understand Prevent duty requirements as part of the wider responsibilities as outlined in [Working Together to Safeguarding Children](#).



Subject to Parliamentary procedure, the updated guidance will come into force on **31 December 2023 at the earliest**

What's changed?

The changes provide greater clarity, practical advice and signposting to best practice. The changes include:

Ideological causes of terrorism

The first objective of Prevent has been changed to "tackle the ideological causes of terrorism". The ideological component of terrorism is what sets it apart from other acts of serious violence.

Updated terminology

Terminology has been updated to reflect current best practice and official terminology. The guidance no longer applies to non-violent extremism unless it can be reasonably linked to terrorism or could draw people into terrorism.

Risk and threat

The risk and threat landscape has been updated in line with the [counter-terrorism strategy \(CONTEST\) 2023](#). The risk and threat picture is broader than that of 2015 but the threat from Islamist terrorism remains the primary concern.

Local authorities should ensure the Prevent duty is part of policies and procedures that deal with identifying and supporting people at risk of radicalisation, such as adult and children's social care. The development of local situational risk assessments is typically overseen by the designated Prevent lead, informed by engagement with other local authority staff, schools, and social workers.

Training

Local Authorities are expected to ensure that appropriate frontline staff have a good understanding of Prevent, are trained to recognise where a person might be susceptible to becoming radicalised into terrorism and are aware of available programmes to provide support, for example the Channel multi-agency process.

The updated Prevent duty guidance specifies examples of appropriate frontline staff who require training. This includes child and adult social workers, family workers, early help workers, youth workers and support workers.

A number of local authorities employ specialist children's social care staff to address radicalisation concerns related to children. Staff with Prevent-specific responsibilities are likely to require additional, more regular training so they can support others on Prevent matters and update them on relevant issues. It remains the responsibility of the local authority to identify and provide training for appropriate frontline staff.

Staff can access Prevent duty training, including [the GOV.UK online training](#), which will assist staff in understanding how to support people vulnerable to radicalisation.

[Information Sharing](#)

There should also be clear systems in place for parents and carers, safeguarding partners, providers and members of the public to report serious incidents – often through the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or children's social care, or if a child is in immediate danger, through the police.

[Services in relation to children](#)

A range of private and voluntary agencies and organisations provide services or, in some cases, exercise functions in relation to children, including children's social care. The Prevent duty applies to those bodies. These bodies should ensure they are part of their local authorities' safeguarding arrangements, and that staff are aware of the Prevent duty and know how to make a Prevent referral where appropriate. Where local authorities have sub-contracted a service, we expect robust procedures to be in place to ensure that, wherever appropriate, the sub-contractor is aware of the Prevent duty and the sub-contractor is not inadvertently funding extremist organisations.

What actions do I need to take?

We recommend those who are responsible for the implementation and oversight of Prevent responsibilities read the updated [Prevent duty guidance](#), including the section for local authorities. You may wish to reflect on risk and threat, and any good practice recommended in the guidance, and ensure children social care is effectively engaged with the overall local authority Prevent lead.

What support is there for children's social care to implement their responsibilities?

If you require further [support you can get help for radicalisation concerns on GOV.UK](#). You can also access [Prevent duty training](#).

The department has also published research on [safeguarding and radicalisation: children's social care learning](#).

For local authorities, specific support you can access includes the Prevent duty toolkit for local authorities and partner agencies on [GOV.UK](#), and radicalisation-related resources from [ADCS](#).

Support designed for education designated safeguarding leads on assessing risk and making Prevent referrals may also be helpful, and is [available on GOV.UK](#).