

Key Principles of Prevent

Prevent is about stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It sits alongside long-established safeguarding duties on professionals to protect people from a range of other harms, such as, substance abuse, involvement in gangs, and physical and sexual exploitation. Prevent seeks to intervene early and ensure that people who are susceptible to radicalisation to terrorism are supported as they would be under safeguarding processes. These key principles have been developed to set out and clarify existing Prevent policy and help people to understand Prevent's core purpose.

Prevent's key principles are below:

1. **Prevent aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorismⁱ.** A referral should be made if there is concern that a person may be on a pathway that could lead to terrorism. Those making referrals should use professional judgement, supported by appropriate training and the [national referral form](#) (NRF)ⁱⁱ. Like any safeguarding mechanism, it is far better to receive referrals which turn out not to be of concern than for someone who genuinely needs support to be missed.
2. **Prevent is the only programme which offers multi-agency radicalisation risk management and support.** It offers interventions to divert people from a path which could lead to terrorism, and can run alongside and complement other safeguarding processes. Where it is considered that other services are providing comprehensive support and no additional intervention is required, Prevent should still provide case management with a regular radicalisation risk assessment.
3. **While ideology is an important consideration, a clear identifiable ideology is not mandatory to make or adopt a Prevent referral.** As the Independent Prevent Commissioner noted, 'adherence to an extreme ideology is in law neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for entry into Prevent or Channel'ⁱⁱⁱ. As an early intervention programme, Prevent must consider *susceptibility* to terrorist ideology or involvement, rather than limiting Prevent to cases where a terrorist ideology has already taken hold^{iv}. For some people, it might take spending time and building trust with a professional before an ideology becomes clear. It is important to consider that emerging movements could evolve to meet the definition of terrorism, and to remain alert to new potential threats.
4. **Each case is unique and a range of considerations and factors should be taken into account to form a clearer picture.** These factors are set out in the national referral form (NRF). A person's vulnerabilities may, or may not, be relevant to their susceptibility to radicalisation and to the early intervention approach that is required to divert them away from radicalisation. For example, vulnerabilities, such as mental ill-health or neurodivergence, should be considered as contextual factors, which may – or may not – affect a person's risk. Where Prevent concerns are present, these MUST NOT be dismissed or accounted for based on a person's mental health or neurodivergence. Mental health services may have a role in supporting people on Prevent, but do not have a remit to manage radicalisation risk. Unlike

safeguarding or mental health services, Prevent will assess terrorism risk and consider both the harm from the person, as well as to the person.

5. **If a person is considered at risk of being drawn into terrorism, a Prevent referral should be made or adopted to Channel.** Where there is not a concern that a person is at risk of being drawn into terrorism, they are not eligible for Prevent support. For referrals which are assessed as not being relevant for Prevent support, alternative local support services should be considered.

Making a referral

6. Frontline professionals, when deciding whether to make a referral, should consider whether they believe the person they are concerned about may be on a pathway that could lead to terrorism. For more information on terrorism and radicalisation, please:
 - a. Complete the [free, online GOV.UK Prevent duty training](#) and/or seek face to face training from your local Prevent lead or equivalent.
 - b. Seek general advice from your local Prevent lead or equivalent.
7. The [notice, check, share procedure](#) should be used. This involves discussing your concern organisationally, with the person responsible for safeguarding, such as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Checking before sharing a concern is a way of making sure you have gathered as much relevant information as possible before making your referral.
8. Referrals should be submitted on the [national referral form](#) (NRF) which is available from your local authority or local police. The NRF helps professionals to articulate their concern and includes factors to consider as part of a referral. It also helps specialist police officers to assess referrals consistently.
9. Specialist police officers should use the Prevent Assessment Framework (PAF) to underpin the decision on whether a referral should progress. The PAF has been in use nationally since January 2025 and considers various factors, including ideology, but no single factor is mandated for a referral to be considered and adopted for Prevent support.
10. For members of the public who have concerns about someone being radicalised into terrorism or supporting terrorism, the [ACT Early](#) website offers advice and guidance, including signs of radicalisation to look out for, case studies and information on how to share those concerns.

Roles and responsibilities

11. **Frontline professionals** (those subject to the Prevent Duty, e.g. teachers, NHS staff) should make a referral using the national referral form if they believe someone *may* be at risk of being drawn into terrorism. They are not required to determine the ideology or type of concern. They should consult their organisation's safeguarding lead and follow the notice, check, share procedure.

12. **Prevent practitioners** (e.g. a local authority Prevent lead or a Prevent education officer) should provide advice, training and guidance to frontline professionals on the Prevent process, or on what terrorism and radicalisation are. They should not determine whether a referral should be made into the system.
13. **Specialist police officers** such as Counter Terrorism Case Officers (CTCOs), are responsible for determining whether someone is at risk of radicalisation and should be considered for support through Prevent. Their decisions should be underpinned by the Prevent Assessment Framework and their professional judgement should be informed by regular, relevant training. The PAF has been in use nationally since January 2025 and does not require a clear ideology for referral progression. They are responsible for determining which 'type of concern' category a referral should be recorded under.
14. **Channel Chairs** oversee a Channel panel, which is responsible for deciding whether a case is adopted for ongoing Prevent assessment and support. They should establish strong relationships with Channel partners to ensure effective information sharing, attendance at panel meetings and delivery of support plans. They should ensure that a person's susceptibilities are accurately assessed by the panel, using the PAF, and that the support plan accounts for the person's wider needs.

Useful links

[Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales](#) and [Prevent duty guidance for Scotland](#) are statutory guidance which provide advice, including on how and when to make a referral.

[Prevent duty training](#) is free training which gives further information on Prevent, including factors that should be considered when there are concerns that someone may be at risk of radicalisation.

Face to face training - your local Prevent lead or equivalent will be able to advise how best to access face to face training.

[Channel duty guidance](#) provides guidance on statutory Channel duties details for police, Channel Chairs and others who may attend Channel panels. It explains why people may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism and what support can be provided to safeguard them, and how referrals are assessed in line with Prevent thresholds.

[The Prevent duty toolkit](#) supports the delivery of the Prevent duty by local authorities in England and Wales by providing practical information and suggestions to prevent people from becoming a terrorist or supporting terrorism. It includes examples of good and best practice in putting the Prevent duty guidance into action.

Scotland specific resources

[Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation](#) - PMAP guidance for Scotland.

[Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot](#) - guiding principles in GIRFEC provides Scotland with a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people. It is locally embedded and positively

embraced by organisations, services and practitioners across Children's Services Planning Partnerships.

[GIRFE principles - Getting it right for everyone \(GIRFE\) - gov.scot](#) - A multi-agency approach to health and social care support and services from young adulthood to end of life care.

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill: leaflet - gov.scot](#) - Provides details of the rights that children and young people are entitled to under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill.

Welsh specific resources

[Keeping learners safe](#) - provides guidance for local authorities and governing bodies on arrangements for safeguarding children under the Education Act 2002 and relates directly to the safeguarding procedures and duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

[Keeping safe online](#) - provides access to the resources, guidance and information for education practitioners, learners, and families, on a range of online safety issues such as online radicalisation and extremism.

Education specific resources

[The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation](#) - Guidance for those working in education settings with safeguarding responsibilities.

[Managing risk of radicalisation in your education setting](#) – Guidance to help education settings consider indicators of risk and decide what response is appropriate and proportionate.

[Keeping children safe in education 2025](#) - Statutory guidance for schools and colleges when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Health specific resources

[Prevent duty in healthcare: guidance and training for practitioners](#) - Guidance and training resources on the Prevent duty for those working in healthcare.

ⁱ The current UK definition is set out in section 1 of the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT 2000). In summary this defines terrorism as: 'the use or threat of serious violence against a person or serious damage to property where that action is:

- designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public; and
- for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.'

In addition to 'use or threat of serious violence', downloading or disseminating materials may also be a terrorism offence under section 58 of the TACT 2000. According to section 57 of the TACT 2000, "a person commits an offence if they possess an article in circumstances which give rise to a reasonable suspicion that the possession is for a purpose connected with the commission, preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism".

ⁱⁱ Referrers in Scotland should refer to Police Scotland for the Scottish National Referral Form.

ⁱⁱⁱ [Independent Prevent Commissioner report - Lessons for Prevent](#) Paragraph 1.27

^{iv} The legal threshold for referral to the multi-agency agency Channel programme is set out in section 36(3) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015: “A chief officer of police or a local authority may refer an individual to a panel only if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the individual is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.”