

Report to: CSE Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 24/04/2024

Subject: Update Report for the Prevent Team

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Responsible Director: Matthew Hooper

SUMMARY

1. This report provides PAC with an update on the work of the Prevent Team between 01 April 2022 and 29 February 2024.
2. There are no decisions required from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. For the Committee to note and comment on the report
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Wards Affected: All

| Our Values | Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values |
|---|---|
| Building shared prosperity | A cleaner, greener, safer borough increases opportunities for all |
| Creating a compassionate council | Working with our communities the Prevent Team has built trust to enable residents to share challenging and sensitive concerns impacting them and their communities and the service offers help, support, and advice for all ensuring that everyone's problems are addressed |
| Doing things with residents, not to them | The Prevent team works with residents to understand what works best and has co-designed and co-delivered projects and events to benefit residents. |
| Being ruthlessly financially efficient | The team operates with minimal staff needed to ensure that all work strands are delivered efficiently and to a high standard. |
| Taking pride in H&F | The team strives to create and maintain community cohesion in H&F |
| Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency | The team works in line with the Councils expectations to address the climate and ecological emergency |

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report: None

Background

4. The Prevent Team works across both the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The team has covered both boroughs since its inception in 2011. It was a Home Office decision which dictated that H&F and RBKC would be regarded as one area, and one Prevent Team would be funded to work across both boroughs.
5. The Prevent service was fully funded by the Home Office for over a decade. The service has seen significant cuts over this time concluding in April 2023, when service funding was reduced by 50% and notice was given to the Council that funding would completely cease from the end of financial year 2023/24.

6. The Home Office has cut all Prevent funding from Hammersmith & Fulham from April 2024. This decision follows the Government's decision to significantly reduce funding for the Prevent programme and place greater responsibility on to Local Authorities.
7. From April 2025, just seven London boroughs will continue to receive Home Office funding, and Hammersmith & Fulham will now hold 'non-priority' status, meaning Home Office funding will be completely withdrawn.
8. Over the last two years Hammersmith & Fulham have lobbied the Home Office against the withdrawal of funding. The Home Office have justified their decision by looking at referral figures, number of arrests and convictions for terrorism offences in H&F when compared to other London boroughs. **Appendix 1** shows the comparison of Prevent referral data in London compared to other regions of the UK. London sits in the top 3 areas with the highest referral data.
9. Both H&F and RBKC feel that the terrorism risk has not diminished and have agreed to jointly fund the Prevent service while decisions are made to secure long-term funding for the team.
10. Despite the removal of all Home Office funding from 1 April 2024, the LA must comply with the statutory Prevent Duty and this report provides further details of the work that the Prevent Team have undertaken and the work they intend to deliver once the Home Office funding is removed to safeguard the residents of H&F.

What is the statutory Prevent Duty?

11. The Prevent statutory duty contained in the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 on specified authorities, states that those specified authorities must in the exercise of their functions, have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".
12. This means that specified authorities such as education, health, local authorities, police, and criminal justice agencies (prisons and probation) need to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism and to safeguard the residents of H&F from a terrorist attack.
13. LA's should ensure all staff (especially frontline staff) understand the Prevent Duty and their responsibilities within it, which are to "identify vulnerable individuals and to refer to the appropriate agency for support".

What does local delivery look like under the Prevent Duty?

14. Each local authority's delivery of the Prevent Duty is assessed against a specific performance benchmark framework which is set by the Home Office.
15. The table below outlines the 10 Prevent Duties which LA's must comply with. It is to be noted that the detail and scores come from the most recent Home Office assessment of H&F' s delivery of the Prevent Duty sent to the LA in May 2023.
16. The assurance process uses a scoring system based on a scale of 1-5. A score of 3 against a benchmark indicates that that Duty is being "met", whereas a score of 1-2 indicates that statutory responsibilities "are not being met", and a score of 4-5 indicates that the Duty requirements are being "exceeded".
17. All scores related to our service provision have been returned with a minimum score of three with the majority assessed as "exceeding" which highlights the quality and depth of service delivery being seen by the service. These scores are issued by the Home Office.

| | Prevent Duty Benchmark | H&F Local delivery | Score |
|----|--|---|--------------|
| 1 | The organisation has a local risk assessment process reviewed against the Counter Terrorism Local Profile. | The prevent Team produce an annual corporate risk assessment and situational risk profile. Risk is monitored & reviewed quarterly at the Prevent Transformation Board and is driving delivery. | 4 |
| 2 | There is an effective multi-agency partnership board in place to oversee Prevent delivery in the area. | H&F have a Transformation Board / Steering Group in place to oversee, monitor and scrutinise local Prevent delivery | 3 |
| 3 | The area has an agreed Prevent Partnership Plan. | The team produces an annual Partnership Plan which is reviewed quarterly at Prevent multi-agency boards. | 3 |
| 4 | There is an agreed process in place for the referral of those identified as being at risk of radicalisation. | The team uses the National Referral Form which can be sent to the police directly or to the team who helps them make referrals if required. | 4 |
| 5 | There is a Channel Panel in place, meeting monthly, with representation from all relevant sectors. (This will now be monitored by a new Home Office team) | This score will now be assessed by the new Channel Team set up in the Home Office, who will be attending a H&F Channel Panel in April, The expected time to receive the indicative assessment score has not been confirmed by the Home Office. Our previous score, however, was 4 | N/A |
| 6 | There is a Prevent problem solving process in place to disrupt radicalising influences. | A problem-solving process (PSP) is in place where Prevent issues are managed as they arise and includes wide membership to include statutory and other relevant agencies. | 4 |
| 7 | There is a training programme in place for relevant personnel. | A Prevent training programme is in place to ensure all frontline staff, including staff within the education sector are trained. | 4 |
| 8 | There is a venue hire policy in place, to ensure that premises are not used by radicalising influencers, and an effective IT policy in place to prevent the access of extremist materials by users of networks. | The team have developed a venue hire policy and provide support & training to community groups /businesses around due diligence & venue hire. | 4 |
| 9 | There is engagement with a range of communities and civil society groups, both faith based and secular, to encourage an open and transparent dialogue on the Prevent Duty. | The team set up the Prevent Advisory Group 12 years ago and regarded as best practice by the Home Office. This group has strong representation from community and faith members who are well engaged with Prevent and have constructive dialogue with the local authority and partners on issues that impact them and their communities. Some members deliver projects in the community which demonstrates local buy in, and they have also lobbied the Home Office against removing Prevent funding. | 5 |
| 10 | There is a communications plan in place to proactively communicate and increase transparency of the reality / impact of Prevent work, and support frontline staff and communities to understand what Prevent looks like in practice. | A communications strategy is in place and regular comms activity is undertaken. A newsletter for schools is produced by the Prevent Education Officer along with Prevent information leaflets shared with key services. Six newsletters are sent to schools by the Education Lead via an education portal. | 4 |

Headlines of the Prevent Teams work for this year April 2023 – February 2024.

18. The Prevent Team is a small team made up of four specialist officers who deliver key workstreams which are designed to meet a range of needs from case management through to community engagement.
19. Due to the sensitive nature of the information we hold, we are only able to share limited data around the different functions of the team.

20. Our posts and their focus are:
- a. Prevent Manager – responsible for the strategic oversight, service delivery and quality assurance of the service with relationship management with Police, Home Office, other government bodies and internal partners;
 - b. Safeguarding lead – responsible for delivery and research of the boroughs Channel meeting, reviewing referrals and queries to the service, providing advice and guidance, ascertaining threat/risk level to ensure that the right referrals are made to the right people and delivering specialist training to professionals.
21. The work of the **Safeguarding Lead** is captured in (**Appendix 2**) with headlines as follows:
- a. 111 Prevent queries to the team where advice and support was given.
 - b. 18 Safeguarding meetings were attended.
22. Education lead – responsible for working with all schools across the LA to ensure that safeguarding leads, management teams, governing bodies and pupils are trained and educated around Prevent. The education lead visits schools to provide training and student sessions on Prevent related subjects along with oversight of cases.
23. The work of our **Education Lead** is captured in **Appendix 3** with headlines as follows:
24. A key element of this work is the delivery of the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training. WRAP is a training session designed to introduce staff who work with service users to the Prevent strategy, so they understand the strategy and their role within it. The aim of the session is for staff to recognise when a vulnerable individual may be in need of help, be clear on what help and support looks like in this area, and who to turn to if there are concerns. Research shows that there is a correlation between training and referrals. Statistics for the current year shows an increase in the number of school staff trained leading to an increase in Prevent referrals and Prevent queries from schools.
25. The year ending 31 March 2023 saw referrals from the Education sector account for largest proportion of all referrals nationally (39%) compared to the previous year (36%). This year:
- a. 1146 school staff were Prevent trained - increase from last year
 - b. 1240 students trained – increase from last year
26. **Community Engagement lead** – the role of our Community Engagement officer is essential to building trust and confidence in the service, the Local Authority and with the Police. We know and understand that many of our communities are nervous around the Prevent agenda and Community Engagement is an essential way for us to engage our community groups, faith leaders and others to establish relationships and break down misconceptions.
27. The work of our Community Engagement lead is captured in detail in **Appendix 4** with headlines of
- a. Our community engagement sessions have increased from 122 to 223 this year.
 - b. Our Prevent Advisor Group (PAG) continues to go from strength to strength with monthly meetings averaging more than 17 representatives present
 - c. Our H&F Faith Forum continues to grow and expand with over 20 faith groups fully engaged.

Service highlights

28. In addition to statistical returns the below highlights are designed to provide the PAC with a broader understanding and examples of work delivered over the period of this report.

Safeguarding

29. Provision of support and advice to Childrens Services in relation to the safeguarding of children of a prominent Daesh foreign fighter who was returned to the UK in August 2022 and is serving a prison term in the UK. His family reside in H&F.
30. Israel / Palestine war – international conflict often sees local impact. Unfortunately, during 2023 there were several attacks at the Palestinian Mission in Hammersmith. Due to the nature of the threats and frequency of them the Council's CCTV service, Law Enforcement team, the graffiti removal team and the Prevent team have been working together to address these concerns whilst providing support to the Palestine Mission through this difficult time. The Mission requested extra assistance from the Foreign Office, but none is forthcoming. Joint working between the different LA teams provided intelligence to the police which led to the arrest of the perpetrator who vandalised the Palestine Mission with red paint on four occasions. **(Appendix 5)**
31. Channel is a multi-agency safeguarding panel where Prevent cases are discussed, risks assessed and appropriate bespoke support packages are put in place to divert vulnerable individuals who are at risk of radicalisation, away from extremism and engaging in terrorism. This year the Channel Panel dealt with one of two highest risk cases in London.

Training /Education

32. Our safeguarding officer and community engagement officer have been delivering training in the community. This training has led to two referrals to service from family members in H&F along with several queries from community and faith leaders. Referrals to the service from community and family members are rare both nationally and across London. It is the strength of our relationships, educational offer, and trust in the community that such referrals were received.
33. Our training is well received with a selection of comments from recipients captured below:
- a. *'This has been amongst the most informative and engaging training sessions that I have taken part in. With the current terrorism threat level at substantial and a requirement at national level for counter-terrorism police and intelligence staff to exclusively occupy and operate from the 33 floor Empress State building in London (ironically on the border between H&F and K&C), it begs the question as to why H&F and RBK&C's PREVENT programme funding is being decimated. This training should be made mandatory across all local authorities'.*
 - b. *"The training was delivered excellently by Marilyn, she ensured that it was very interactive and clear. It was honestly one of the best training courses I've attended in a long time! This training is vital in being in a position to identify an individual becoming radicalised and taking action, or not having the awareness and something happening that puts lives at risk."*
 - c. *"The presenter was very knowledgeable, and the slides were well designed and informative. I feel a lot more confident in my ability to spot concerning behaviour and I would be very keen to attend additional training events in future. Thank you for the opportunity to attend this training live (on MS Teams), which made it interactive and very engaging."*
34. As mentioned above the impacts of international incidents are seen locally. With the war in Israel and Palestine, the team have been supporting schools on tackling emerging issues such as hate crime/tolerance.
35. We have facilitated a local Imam to deliver a school assembly on the importance of tolerance following reports of antisemitic comments made in school.
36. We have been engaging young people on critical thinking and fake news. Giving young people an outlet to discuss emerging issues within structured educational environments to prevent them from being exploited by those with extremist views, and engaging in inappropriate and misguided activities, such as travel to areas of conflict, which has been mentioned as a potential issue.

Community Engagement

37. Keeping our residents safe is priority for the Team, and as such, we have increased our community engagement since the war in Israel and Palestine started. We have been regularly engaging with leaders of the Muslim and Jewish faith to understand any emerging community tensions and any instances of hate crime.
38. The team have met with the Prevent Advisory Group (PAG) and the Mosque Advisory Group (MAG) to provide a safe space for community and faith leaders to voice concerns on behalf of their communities / congregation. Both the PAG and MAG members have requested a meeting with the Home Secretary via the Home Office, to share and raise their concerns around the ongoing war in Israel and Palestine. No response has yet been received.
39. We continue to work with and support our faith leaders with the Faith forum. Over the last year members visited Wormwood Scrubs Prison to understand the faith needs of the prisoners and to learn about how faith communities can support the prison.
40. Members of the group came together to support Rabbi Janet Burden for the Hannukah celebration in Lyric Square and the forum produced a joint statement which was sent to both the Prime Minister and Home Secretary raising their concerns and seeking answers around the war in Israel and Palestine. This letter was signed by community and faith leaders from Muslim, Christian and Jewish faiths. At the time of the report being written the group are awaiting a response (the letter was sent 22/12/23).
41. Our communities in H&F are united in their response and condemnation of the war. In Autumn 2024 we will see our first Interfaith week delivered with events to take place across H&F to support each other and to show solidarity. Faith leaders will also continue to attend each other's religious festivals to further enrich this solidarity with the next celebrations being those of Eid and Easter in early April.
42. We have also seen our Muslim residents offering to protect Jewish places of faith, amongst increased fear at the time of religious Jewish festivals.
43. At the request of our PAG members the team facilitated a training session for community and faith leaders on tackling Antisemitism and Islamophobia in February 2024
44. The team have also trained 26 parents on the dangers of radicalisation and how to safeguard young people from engaging in or supporting extremism / terrorism.

Current Priorities, threats, and risks in H&F from the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP)

45. The CTLP is a document which is produced annually by Counter Terrorism Police Command (SO15) in partnership with security agencies. The CTLP provides strategic direction to help deliver the Prevent strategy locally. The most recent CTLP was delivered in February 2024.
46. The current priorities and risks identified in the CTLP this year are (the categories listed are taken directly from the CTLP but some of the narrative for each has been amended to improve accessibility)
 - a. Self – Initiated Terrorism (S-IT). It is thought almost certain that aspiring self initiated terrorists will continue to plan attacks in the next 6-12 months. This applies to both Daesh inspired ideology and the Extreme Right Wing (ERW) ideology.
 - b. Online Space - Continues to be the primary driver for extremist activity in London across all ideologies. It is highly likely that self-radicalisation is occurring online. The wide reaching and readily accessible nature of online material continues to make the online space a viable platform for extremist groups and individuals to exploit, and for radicalisation to occur. It is highly likely that it will continue to feature in Prevent referrals. Drivers influencing these behaviours are likely to be global events, social media trends and personal life changes. All

of which can form a narrative of grievance that can be exploited. Risk is continuous as social media platforms are used by extremists as a radicalisation tool.

- c. Radicalisation - Radicalisation can be a rapid process. The fastest radicalisation process took 3 weeks from online to being entrenched in extremist views.
- d. Places of Interest - Civilians in densely populated, publicly accessible places remain the most likely target for Daesh inspired terrorists as they are most likely to target indiscriminately. In H&F, the three football clubs, Westfield and the Apollo can be potential targets.
- e. Vulnerability and Susceptibility – The referral category ‘Vulnerability present but no Ideology or CT risk’ remains the most prevalent Prevent category for West London (58%). These type of cases can be characterised by individuals with established vulnerability but no established faith/belief who are at risk of being drawn into extremism. This has increased from the last period of 45% and is currently the highest percentage for this category across London. **Appendix 6** shows the increase in this category of referrals along with a breakdown of ideology of the referrals received. The second highest category was 'No risk, vulnerability or ideology present', making up 21% of total referrals. These are referrals where concern has been raised about someone who doesn't otherwise present as a concern. A high number of these referrals were closed and referred onto other services; suggesting that some individuals are better assisted by other services, rather than being referred to Prevent.
- f. Extremism in Prisons - Prisons remain a likely environment for a terrorist attack to occur. Wormwood Scrubs in H&F is a holding cell for those on remand for terrorism offences.

Current Threats and Risks

47. Daesh/Islamist Inspired Extremism - It is highly likely that Islamist Inspired Extremism and narratives will be linked to international politics and events, such as the escalation in the Israel/Palestine war. Grievances are also likely to feature elements of misogyny, anti LGBTQ+, anti Semitism, anti-western, anti-authority views, alongside feelings of perceived injustices and being discriminated against due to being a Muslim. Islamist Inspired influencers and groups often exploit events and trends across society to promote their grievance narratives, adopting them to recruit individuals to their cause.
48. Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism - It is likely that activity from Extreme Right Wing groups and individuals will increase over the next 6 to 12 months. Heightened media coverage of 'triggering' topics, such as UK immigration policy and asylum seeker/refugee housing policy and the governments Rwanda Plan have resulted in anti- immigration rhetoric within mainstream media.
49. Travel - It is essential that LAs are prepared for the arrival of returnees, returning Foreign Fighters and in particularly minors. H&F has historically seen significant Daesh extremist activity, with some high-profile Daesh / ISIS foreign fighters originating from H&F. This includes 3 of the 4 members of the cell known as 'The Beatles' who were residents of White City & Shepherd's Bush. Two were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment last year in the USA. The third 'Beatle' was deported to the UK from Turkey in August 2022 and is serving a prison term in the UK. The Prevent Team are currently involved in multidisciplinary partnership working with several statutory agencies to safeguard his family following his return, as concerns of them being radicalised have been raised. The Home Office will continue to inform us of returnees and we will continue to put in necessary support networks and safeguarding approaches for their families.
50. Mental-Ill Health & Neurodiversity - Neurodiversity and mental ill health feature heavily in Prevent cases and it is highly likely this will continue. There is no causal relationship between radicalisation and involvement in terrorist/extremist activity and mental ill health or neurodivergence. However, vulnerabilities can interact with other risk factors and likely to exacerbate an individual's risk of exploitation or radicalisation.

51. Asylum Seekers and Refugees – Although not in H&F, there have been instances where asylum seekers and refugees have been involved in violence and extremism throughout Europe and the UK. Similar activity is expected over next 6-12 months.
52. Minors under 18 - Counter Terrorism Policing's Head of Prevent has warned that the latest Prevent statistics show a continuation of the 'worrying trend' of children becoming more prevalent in Counter Terrorism casework. The graph in Appendix 6 shows the number of under 18's referred to Prevent nationally. The picture is similar in H&F. Across London, 13% of all Terrorism arrests were under 18's including a 12-year-old. This is an increase from 8%. Under 18s make up 44% of total referrals (4% increase) of which 14-16yo represent 24%. Under 13's was 9% (often referred because of family member). Most arrests featuring minors involved online activity and ranged from possession and dissemination of Terrorism material, radicalising others online, aspiring to attack plan and possession of bomb making material.

Emerging issues affecting/influencing the work of the Prevent team

53. Israel / Palestine war – The war has led to:
- Increased hate crimes and community tensions – Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism.
 - Increased anti-West sentiment for involvement/lack of in conflict.
 - ERW response towards Muslim and Jewish communities.
 - Prevent referral increase.
54. Proscription of HuT Britain - previously held influence in West London and the proscription is likely to cause grievances.
55. Artificial Intelligence - threat of Deepfakes (hyper-realistic films) and AI has intensified, and it is likely that extremists and radicalisers may start using these tools for the purpose of creating compelling radicalising content.
56. Social injustice and grievance-initiated violence - can involve individuals adopting a lower tolerance towards government action and policies which appear unfavourable to the majority or are taken advantage of by minority groups. This presents a long term, evolving threat as this alignment with social issues represents a move away from more traditional forms of political or religiously motivated terrorism. Elections in the US, UK and India can mobilise individuals who have such grievances and this can impact communities in the UK.
57. Due to the nature of the CTLP whilst we can share headlines as the full report cannot be shared. Briefings on the CTLP have been delivered to the CEX and senior leaders within Community Safety and the findings/risks will influence the work of the Prevent team, partners, and broader Community Safety Partnership over the coming 12 months.

Prevent Delivery over next 12 months

58. With the removal of funding from the Home Office we will be developing a new workplan for the next 12 months and beyond to allow us to transition and deliver Prevent with our own resources.
59. We will continue to deliver our work in schools, with our community groups and safeguarding to ensure that the LA can deliver its requirements of the Prevent Duty.
60. Alongside this the team will develop a work plan based on the CTLP. This will include:
- Safeguarding our residents by working with stakeholders to identify individuals at risk and providing support.
 - Understanding ideologies that feature in recent cases identified in **Appendix 6**.
 - Continue delivering training to all frontline staff including educational settings.
 - Continue to listen to our communities and provide a safe space for them to share concerns
 - A focus on engaging with young people to understand their grievances.
 - Raising awareness of the potential for artificial intelligence to generate text and pictures which further extremist narratives. This will improve the ability of individuals to identify the key indicators of Deepfakes, and scope prevention techniques

61. **Appendix 7** provides national Prevent data for the period April 2022 – March 2023 and comparisons with the year before where data allows. At the time of writing, data for 2023 / 2024 has not yet been released.

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – No. of Referrals in the UK by region

Appendix 2 – Comparison of Prevent queries raised with the team.

Appendix 3 – Comparison of staff and students Prevent trained.

Appendix 4 – Comparison of community engagement activity

Appendix 5 - Article about the arrest of Palestine Mission attacker.

Appendix 6 – Comparison of types of concern/ideology featured in referrals

Appendix 7 – National Prevent statistics as per Home Office data.