

Cwm Taf

Channel Guidance

2015 - 2017



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

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DEFINITIONS

The following information gives definitions to the following key terms within this action plan and in the context of Prevent/Channel:

- **Terrorism** is defined in the Terrorism ACT 2000 (TACT 2000) as an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person or people, causes serious damage to property or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use of threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of political, religious or ideological gain
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which people come to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism
- **Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different beliefs and faiths
- **Vulnerability** in the context of PREVENT is a person who is susceptible to extremists' messages and is at risk of being drawn into terrorism or supporting at a point in time

INTRODUCTION

The **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015** places a duty on certain bodies, (**local authority, health, police, probation, education**) to have '*due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*'. The Act states that each local authority must ensure a panel of persons is in place for its area with the function of assessing the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The Chair of a panel is to be an employee of the responsible local authority.

Channel comes under the governance of Contest and is a supportive voluntary process where referrals (subjects referred by Police and partners) who are deemed vulnerable to radicalisation are assisted and diverted to prevent radicalisation.

Terrorism is a real and serious threat as terrorists can strike at any time and place without warning.

Cwm Taf's Channel Panel focus is to work with, for and on behalf of our communities.

The support and confidence of communities and partner agencies to improve a two way flow of information is vital in order to identify those most vulnerable and in need of support and interventions.

Cwm Taf's Channel Panel priority is to keep the public safe, by working together with key partner agencies and all our communities to tackle all forms of extremism, violent and non-violent, regardless of race, culture, religion or political preference.

CONTEST

Nationally the Government has had a long-term strategy for countering international terrorism known as CONTEST. The National CONTEST strategy takes into account the changing threat and new challenges faced by the UK and its dependencies, but its aim remains the same:

To reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.

In Cwm Taf a multi-agency Contest Board is in place to ensure a joined up partnership response at a strategic level to address these key areas and concerns.

The Contest strategy is made up of four separate elements, known as the four P's

- **Prevent**
- **Pursue**
- **Protect**
- **Prepare**

Prevent focuses on **early intervention** before any illegal activity takes place and hence operates in the **pre-criminal space**. By involving a broad range of partners, it aims to minimise the risk of people adopting extremist views which support violence or terrorism at an early stage.

Pursue focuses on detecting and **disrupting threats of terrorism**. It is targeted at those who have committed a crime or are planning to commit a crime.

Protect aims to **strengthen our infrastructure against an attack** including buildings, public spaces and our borders.

Prepare focuses on **where an attack cannot be stopped** and aims to reduce its impact by ensuring effective responses.

The successful delivery of Contest is dependent on the engagement of national, regional and local partners across multiple sectors.

People working in neighbourhood and community safety roles, carrying out home visits, volunteering, working in safeguarding roles or those who are already supporting vulnerable people are often the first people to see signs of concern. The help of the public is essential as they often witness 'concerning' behaviours at an early stage. It is important individuals report concerns before the point of crisis.

PREVENT

Prevent has been described as the 'only long term solution' to the threat we currently face from terrorism. Prevent is about taking action before any criminal activity has taken place.

In 2011 the PREVENT strategy was revised by the UK Government to focus on three main themes, commonly known as the 3 I's.

- Responding to the **ideological** challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- Preventing **individuals** from being drawn into terrorism, ensuring that they are given appropriate advice and support
- Working with sectors and **institutions** where there are risks of radicalisation needing addressing

Prevent addresses all forms of terrorist threat and aspects of violent and non-violent extremism. The strategy is flexible and addresses new and emerging threats.

Prevent is prioritised according to the risks we face regardless of faith or ethnicity. This prioritisation is based on an assessment of engagement, intent and capability, not according to demographics or communities.

A key strand of the Prevent strategy is **safeguarding** those who may be vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremism. It aims to protect young people and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse or exploitation and to stop radicalisation.

To be successful in eliminating the threat from violent and non-violent extremism, there is a need to work in partnership with our communities to enable people to make positive life choices. The new legislation states that all areas are required to have local action plans in place to support vulnerable individuals; this process is known as CHANNEL.

CHANNEL

Channel is a national process that has been put in place to **safeguard individuals** who may be vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists or to radicalisation.

The aim of the process is:

- To support and protect people who may be susceptible to radicalisation at a very early stage so that they are not drawn into criminal activity which may affect their prospects in life
- To ensure that individuals and communities have the resilience to resist all forms of violent extremism whether it be far right, Al-Qaeda inspired, animal rights, environmental or any other form

Channel is not about prosecuting or stigmatising individuals who have been referred. Channel aims to work together as partner agencies to support vulnerable people at an early stage preventing them from being drawn into violent extremism of any form.

Previous indicators linked to vulnerable people drawn into extremism and terrorism have included:

- Graffiti symbols, writing or artwork promoting extremist messages or images
- Accessing extremist material online; websites, social media etc.
- Substance or alcohol misuse
- Voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideology or narrative
- Race/Hate Crime
- Peer pressure
- Bullying
- Influence from other people or via the internet
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Domestic violence
- Family tensions
- Lack of self esteem or identity

Channel assesses the nature and extent of the potential risk to an individual and community and where necessary, provides an appropriate support package tailored to their needs. The action plan is created by a multi-agency panel and may include diversionary activities and/or support from services such as education, housing, employment and mentoring designed to help individuals resist those aiming to harm or radicalise them. Local and National issues and tensions can contribute to an individual's behaviour.

Channel accepts referrals for any individual who displays a vulnerability to violent extremism, regardless of age.

Partnership involvement ensures that those at risk have access to a wide range of support. Partners include:

- Local Authorities – Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil
 - I. Community Safety Partnership
 - II. Social Services and Adult/Children Services
 - III. Education
 - IV. Youth Offending Service
- South Wales Police and Wales Extremist & Counter Terrorist Unit (WECTU)
- Community Rehabilitation Company
- National Probation Service
- Housing Associations
- Health Service
- University of South Wales
- Further Education Establishments

Other agencies, faith groups, voluntary organisations etc. may be involved in the Channel process depending on the circumstances of the referred individual.

Case Example

A pupil begins to misbehave at school – citing problems with his parental relationships, as well as an apparent disillusionment with the way people are practising his faith.

He meets another young adult who begins to address his questions, then invites him and his friends to a house in town for 'instruction' – even attending a parents evening for the boy, apparently on his parents behalf.

Once concerns are shared amongst staff at the school, the parents are informed, and a support scheme put in place including one-to-one counselling with a mentor from the community.

CHANNEL PANEL PROCESS

- Referral from Police Case Management or 3rd Party e.g. Social Services
- Referral details circulated by LA Channel Chair to partner organisations for scoping
- Initial Vulnerability Assessment undertaken – Carried out every 3 months thereafter
- Channel Panel convened by LA Chair
- Referral discussed and actions agreed
- Action to commission an external Intervention Provider
 - IP provider meets with referral and makes recommendations to Channel. May require several meetings.
 - Recommendations incorporated into referrals action plan
- Action plan circulated by LA Chair – Actions co-ordinated and managed by LA
- LA tracker updated by LA Chair – WECTU Channel Co-ordinator updates CMIS tracker
- Channel Panel reconvenes after an appropriate period of time

INFORMATION SHARING

Information sharing is an essential part of Channel and with referrals from other agencies, requests for partnership scoping with information requests will be sent to panel members by the Police or the Channel Chair. Channel operates within a number of legal and statutory frameworks to ensure that data protection and human rights principles are adhered to. The exchange of any information must be necessary, proportionate and legal.

WAY FORWARD

WRAP – Workshop to raise awareness of prevent

Public sector frontline staff have been identified as a key group that can make an important contribution to the identification and referral of individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

WRAP is a free specialist workshop that is designed to give colleagues:

- An understanding of the Prevent strategy and their role within it
- The ability to use existing expertise and professional judgement to recognise the vulnerable individuals who may need support
- Local safeguarding and referral mechanisms and people to contact for further help and advice

The workshop takes 2 – 2.5 hours to deliver via DVD and a facilitator. It can be delivered in a team setting or to groups of 15 – 30 multi-agency partners, allowing delegates to network and share expertise.

It is an introduction to prevent and covers issues such as crime and social processes that are used to influence and manipulate extreme right wing and Al-Qaeda case studies, terrorist's ideologies and factors which may contribute to an individual's susceptibility to terrorist ideology.

WRAP provides a practical understanding of Prevent, particularly for safeguarding practitioners. All WRAP facilitators have been accredited by the Home Office to ensure delivery is consistent and high quality.

For further information or to book a session for your team or to register your interest as an individual, please contact Janine Thomas (Catherine.J.Thomas@rctcbc.gov.uk) or 01443 425673. Training is provided without charge.

A Channel General Awareness module is also available to complete at: http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness/01/index.html. This module provides information on Channel and on duties and responsibilities. The module aims to:

- Explain how Channel links to the Government's counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST)
- Describe the Channel process and its purpose
- Identify factors that can make people vulnerable to radicalisation
- Define safeguarding and risk ownership of the Channel process

REFERENCES

HM Government Contest Strategy –

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97995/strategy-contest.pdf

HM Government (2011) Prevent Strategy –

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388934/45584_Prevent_duty_guidance_a_consultation_Web_Accessible.pdf

HM Government (2015) Channel Duty Guidance – Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism (*Statutory guidance for Channel Panel members and partners of local panels*) -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425189/Channel_Duty_Guidance_April_2015.pdf