

The PREVENT Duty

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 is an important piece of legislation to support the Government’s approach to reducing the risk of terrorism in the UK, and to reduce the number of “home-grown” terrorists. The aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent duty is designed to help ensure that people who are susceptible to radicalisation are as supported as they would be under other safeguarding processes. It means that all schools and childcare providers have a duty to help stop people being radicalised into terrorism. The Home Office has updated the [Prevent duty guidance](#). It has been simplified into one document for all education settings - this helps to create greater consistency in the core expectations, whilst still acknowledging differences between education phases. These changes will come into effect on 31 December 2023 at the earliest. There are no new legal or additional responsibilities for schools. However, the following updates have been made:

- The school should designate a staff member to oversee Prevent (although it's likely that your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) already does this)
- The guidance includes clarification that you don't need consent to share information about a pupil who might be susceptible to radicalisation

Prevent does not target a specific faith or ethnic group. It addresses the ideological causes of terrorism and deals with all kinds of terrorist threats to the UK.

What does the Prevent duty mean for your school?

You need to protect pupils from the risk of radicalisation, as part of your wider safeguarding duties and duty to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

To do this, you should:

Teach a broad and balanced curriculum

Promote the fundamental British values in your curriculum. These are:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs

Talking about and promoting these values is encouraged in education settings as this helps to build resilience to radicalisation in young people; the Prevent duty is not intended to stop pupils debating controversial issues.

Make your school a safe space

To prevent pupils from being drawn into terrorism, you have a responsibility to provide a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.

Follow safeguarding procedures to report a concern

Ensure you have robust safeguarding procedures to identify children at risk and ensure that staff are confident in reporting concerns.

Assess the risks of pupils being drawn into terrorism

Engage with your LA’s risk assessment to determine the potential risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism in your local area.

Incorporate the duty in existing policies

You don't need a separate policy for the Prevent duty, but make sure your existing policies (e.g. safeguarding, whistleblowing, online safety and behaviour) cover the protection of children at risk of radicalisation.

Keep pupils safe online

Make sure you have measures in place to protect pupils from harmful online content, including setting up appropriate filtering and monitoring systems.

Work together with agencies and parents/carers

Take into account the policies and procedures of local safeguarding partners and update your policies to reflect these arrangements.

Parents/carers are "in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation", and so you should engage effectively with them. You should help and advise families who raise concerns and point them to the right support mechanisms.

Staff training

Make sure staff receive training to help them identify pupils at risk, challenge extremist ideas, and know how to act if they have a concern

As a minimum, your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should have Prevent awareness training every 2 years. But it's best practice for all staff to be trained in the Prevent duty.

Radicalisation, extremism and terrorism

*Radicalisation is...*the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence. It's where terrorism begins. People might be susceptible to radicalisation due to a variety of circumstances, needs or other underlying factors. There is no single model of someone's radicalisation journey or single profile of a radicalised person.

*Extremism is...*the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs.

Terrorism is... an action or threat designed to influence the government or intimidate the public. Its purpose is to advance a political, religious or ideological cause.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2023) includes information about terrorism: an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Definitions of extremism

Extreme Right Wing This category covers sub-ideologies, including Cultural Nationalism, White Nationalism and White Supremacism. These themselves span a range of extreme beliefs such as antisemitism, anti-Islam, neo-Nazi, ethno-nationalism or anti-establishment.

Islamist Extremism Islamist extremist inspired acts of terrorism are perpetrated or inspired by politico-religiously motivated groups or individuals who support and use violence as a means to establish their interpretation of an Islamic society.

Left-Wing, Anarchist and Single-Issue Extremism Also known as LASI Extremism and can include environmentalists, the extreme left-wing, or animal rights movements that advocate violence.

Mixed, Unstable, and Unclear (MUU) Ideologies

Mixed - ideology presented involves a combination of elements from multiple forms of extremist ideologies.

Unstable - shifts between different ideologies.

Unclear - individual does not present a coherent ideology yet may still be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

How to spot the tell-tale signs of radicalisation

- Being overly secretive about their online viewing – this being one of the core ways in which extremist groups are known to communicate.
- Displaying feelings of isolation or expressions of an ‘us and them’ mentality – a sign of the sense of social isolation.
- Becoming more argumentative or domineering in their viewpoints, being quick to condemn those who disagree and ignoring views that contradict their own.
- Questioning their faith or identity.
- Downloading or promoting extremist content, taking part in extremist activities, such as marches.
- Social isolation – losing interest in activities they used to enjoy, distancing themselves from friends and social groups.
- Altered appearance – change in style of dress and/or personal appearance.
- Abnormal routines, travel patterns or aspirations.

Children from all kinds of different backgrounds can become radicalised

You need to be aware of the factors that make your pupils more vulnerable to radicalisation. The following is a guide only, and you need to use your professional judgment to assess their vulnerability.

- Young people often struggle with their sense of identity, and this can make them vulnerable to extremist influences. Some may feel distant from their cultural or religious heritage, or isolated from the prevailing British culture, which may lead them to question their place in British society.
- Personal circumstances, such as tensions in the family or having experienced a traumatic event, can also increase vulnerability. Extremists prey on low self-esteem, perceptions of injustice and feelings of failure combined with a sense of grievance, often triggered by first-hand experience of racism or discrimination. If your pupils have special educational needs, or find it difficult to interact socially, empathise or understand the consequences of their actions, they may be more vulnerable to radicalisation.
- External factors, such as tensions in the local community, events affecting their country or region of origin, having friends or family who have joined extremist groups, and exposure to narrow points of view, are also a factor.
- Young people involved with criminal groups, and those who have found it difficult to reintegrate after being in prison or a young offender institution, may also be at risk.

Staff responsibilities in relation to Prevent

- If you are concerned about a child or young person, speak to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and, if deemed necessary, with children’s social care. Staff can also contact the local police force or dial 101 (the non-emergency number).

- Collect as much contextual information as possible to be shared with the police. The DSL or an equivalent might share this information on your behalf, or you can share it directly.
- The local authority or police might suggest a referral to the “Channel” programme, a voluntary Government programme which aims to safeguard children and adults from being drawn into terrorist activity.
- You may be called upon to provide information to the panel and provide support to the person as agreed in the action plan.
- The Education Lead for PREVENT in Essex is Jo Barclay, Safeguarding Adviser to Schools.

How Ofsted inspects the Prevent duty

The Prevent duty falls under Ofsted's evaluation of safeguarding. Inspectors will want to see that the school has a clear approach to:

- Implementing the Prevent duty
- Keeping pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, including by encouraging open debate about different points of view and beliefs

Schools who do not protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism may be rated 'inadequate' in the personal development judgement (see paragraph 447 of the [School Inspection Handbook](#).)

In summary:

- Prevent sits alongside your safeguarding duties. It's the same as any safeguarding work that you do.
- Prevent is about helping people make better choices and staying safe. The aim is to support a person that is susceptible to being radicalised so that they do not become involved in terrorism or terrorism-related activity.
- Trust your instinct. You should be confident that you know what to do if you spot a concern.

Additional guidance and further reading

- Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales April 2021 [Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- The Prevent duty: an introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation>
- Understanding and identifying radicalisation risk in your educational setting <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation/understanding-and-identifying-radicalisation-risk-in-your-education-setting>
- Educate Against Hate <http://educateagainsthate.com/>
- E-learning training package [Prevent Awareness e-Learning - Educate Against Hate](#)
- Essex Prevent Safeguarding Arrangements <https://www.escb.co.uk/working-with-children/radicalisation/>
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023
- Hope not Hate <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/>
- Anti-Terrorist Hotline 0800 789321
- **Essex Police Prevent Team:** prevent@essex.pnn.police.uk
DC Rachael Harris Tel: 01245 452196