

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

18 JUNE 2015

COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SECURITY ACT 2015 - THE NEW STATUTORY PREVENT DUTY

Introduction

1. Section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory duty to specified authorities including County and District/Borough Councils, the Police, Health and Schools to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.
2. Whilst across Leicestershire much Prevent work is already underway, the new duty gives us the opportunity to look at our policies and practises to ensure that the current work is sufficient and that we are compliant.

Background

3. The Prevent strategy is a key part of CONTEST, the Government’s counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The strategy aims to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and those who promote it, prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, and work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.
4. Prevent is delivered locally in areas considered to be at greatest risk. Thirty local authority areas are currently classed as Prevent “priority” areas and receive funding from the Home Office for a local co-ordinator – Leicester City is one of these areas. In Leicestershire we are in a fortunate position in that the City co-ordinator, currently also works across the County.

Implication of the new Duty

5. The local authorities that are subject to the duty are listed in the Act and include County Councils and District Councils. The expectation is that local authorities will be working with local partners to protect the public, prevent crime and to promote strong, integrated communities. Schools are also subject to the duty; frontline staff should understand Prevent, be able to recognise vulnerability to radicalisation, and know where to go to seek further help.
6. Schools – The legislation refers to the duty of care schools have to their pupils and staff; this includes safeguarding them from the risk of being drawn into terrorism, including non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit.

7. Partnership – The Act states that local authorities should establish or make use of any existing local multi-agency group to agree risk and co-ordinate Prevent activity. Many local authorities use Community Safety Partnerships but other multi-agency forums may be appropriate.
8. Across Leicester and Leicestershire the Prevent Steering Group, chaired by Andy Keeling (Chief Operating Officer for the City Council), currently undertakes this function; the County Council is represented at this Group via Gurjit Samra-Rai (GSR).
9. Furthermore, the ASB Strategy Group now has governance for Prevent within the multi-agency context; this Group reports to the Strategic Partnership Board.
10. There is also an expectation that the local Prevent co-ordinator has access to senior local authority leadership to give advice and support and that multi-agency groups, through local authorities, will put in place arrangements to effectively monitor the impact of Prevent work. Locally this is Will Baldet. He sits on the Prevent Steering Group, and ASB Strategy Group and Senior Officer Group.
11. Intelligence - Local authorities are expected to use the existing counter-terrorism local profiles (CTLPs), produced for every region by the police, to begin to assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism; this includes not only violent extremism but also non-violent extremism.
12. Policies and Procedures - Local authorities are expected to incorporate the duty into existing policies and procedures, so it becomes part of the day-to-day work of the authority. Local authorities should ensure that there are clear and robust safeguarding policies to identify children at risk. With the support of co-ordinators and others as necessary, any local authority that assesses, through the multi-agency group, that there is a risk should develop a Prevent action plan. This will enable the local authority to comply with the duty and address whatever risks have been identified.
13. Training - Local authorities will be expected to ensure frontline staff have a good understanding of Prevent, are trained to recognise vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism and are aware of available programmes to deal with this issue. Furthermore, staff will be expected to make appropriate referrals to and ensure that Channel is supported by the appropriate organisation and expertise.
14. A WRAP3 train the trainer programme shall be rolled out across the County in order to ensure that there are trained officers within each locality ensuring that those who require the training receive it.

15. Local Authority Resource - In complying with the duty local authorities will be expected to ensure that publicly-owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. This includes considering whether IT equipment available to the general public should use filtering solutions that limit access to terrorist and extremist material.
16. Consideration has been given to how we ensure compliance to this element of the legislation. Links to Parish Councils are being explored in order to inform them of the duty and to offer training.
17. Youth provision and the use of wifi connections within them will also be looked into, for example on youth buses (BB90 bus in Blaby), youth café's etc.
18. Two-tier areas – Leicestershire County Council and the 7 District/Borough Councils are required to agree proportionate arrangements for sharing the assessment of risk and for agreeing local Prevent action plans. GS-R has been liaising with District and Borough Councils; all have agreed to produce a local Prevent Action Plan or are incorporating Prevent into their CSP Action Plans.
19. Leicestershire County and Leicester City Council have agreed to jointly fund a Prevent officer to work predominantly across the County to deliver training, work with schools and focus on right wing extremism.
20. Safeguarding - The duty applies to private and voluntary agencies and organisations that provide services in relation to children, including children's homes and independent fostering agencies. These bodies should ensure they are part of their local authorities' safeguarding arrangements and that staff are aware of and know how to contribute to *Prevent* related activity in their area.

Recommendations

The Board notes the progress and development of the work to comply with the new Prevent Duty.

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