

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

19th MARCH 2021

LSCSB UPDATE: PREVENT

Background

1. Prevent is part of the UK government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST, and it seeks to stop vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. It does this by providing wraparound, multi-agency support to vulnerable individuals in order to safeguard them from radicalisation. It also raises awareness of, and builds resilience against, radicalisation through projects such as youth workshops, outreach programmes, training and sports engagement.

Notable developments and challenges:

Past Year

2. Over the past year the developments and challenges were:
 - Nationally, the current threat level for terrorism in the UK is SUBSTANTIAL (recently downgraded from severe) meaning that an attack is a "strong possibility."
 - Counter Terrorism Policing and the UK Intelligence Services have foiled three terror attacks since the Covid-19 pandemic began, despite lockdowns causing terrorism-related arrests to fall.
 - Nationally, Prevent referrals rose by 10% in 2019/20 to 6,287. The majority of referrals were made by the education sector and police (31% each.) Referral types were as follows: 51% mixed/unclear ideologies, 24% Islamist-inspired, 22% Extreme right wing, 3% Other.
 - Locally, the highest perceived risk is in the city which accounted for 61% local Prevent referrals.
 - Extremist groups have tried to exploit the Covid pandemic by pushing their own narratives, such as anti-vaccine messaging.
 - Online radicalisation has likely accelerated due to people spending increased amounts of time online during the pandemic.
 - Local Prevent projects have adapted during the pandemic and have utilised technology and the online space when physical workshops haven't been possible.

Coming Year

3. In the coming year the development and challenges are expected to be:

- The Home Office have proposed to fund 13 local Prevent projects in 2021/22 (awaiting budgetary and ministerial approval) that will address local threats and risks and build resilience to radicalisation. Whilst the focus for much of this work will be the city, project delivery can take place in county and districts when a need is identified, or a Channel referral may benefit. Also, since many projects have been adapted to utilise technology, there are fewer barriers to county delivery. (eg, “Real Talk” scannable card that uses AI technology to raise awareness of right-wing extremism and fake news- the entire workshop can be delivered remotely on personal devices.)
- We now have a tiered oversight structure of Prevent which is well-embedded (Prevent Executive Group, Prevent Steering Group and Prevent Operational Leads Group) all of which contain LLR representation. Partnership engagement will continue through improved governance and a detailed Partnership Delivery Plan contains quarterly updates from all sectors with a Prevent responsibility.
- The Home Office are currently implementing a model of “Regionalisation,” meaning that a network of ‘Prevent Regional Advisors’ will be created to ensure that non-funded local authorities are supported in delivering against the Prevent Duty benchmarks. They will be employed by OSCT, and work with non-funded local authorities across their allocated region to identify risk and provide support to areas that need it most. Job advertisements will be going live shortly.
- Prevent will continue to support vulnerable people through the Channel process. Updated Channel Duty Guidance has been recently published and our panel will shortly be undergoing a self-assessment process. The LLR panel is mature and well-function with good representation from across the region.
- The Independent Review of Prevent is currently underway again following a number of delays. The Review Team will publish its Terms of Reference and methodology shortly.

Key issues for partnership working or affecting partners

4. Partnership working is currently very strong with all key sectors across LLR contributing to Prevent delivery.

Issues in local areas

5. There are no particular issues for specific locations in Leicestershire.

Recommendations for the Board

6. The Board is asked to
 - (a) Continue to support the work of Prevent in Leicestershire and the improved Governance procedures;
 - (b) Inform the Prevent Coordinator of any opportunities/issues arising that may benefit/affect local projects.

Officer to contact

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