

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	15 October 2019
Title:	Update on the PREVENT Strategy
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Paul Cooke, Interim Service Manager, Hampshire County Council

Tel: 02392 244096

Email: paul.cooke@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to the panel on progress made in the implementation of the PREVENT strategy within Children's Services. This paper includes how the County Council manage PREVENT referrals and the Channel process in order to safeguard children within Hampshire, who have been referred and identified as posing a potential risk due to extremism / radicalisation.

Recommendation

2. That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the update provided in this report regarding the progress made in embedding the PREVENT strategy across Hampshire County Council's Childrens Services Department.

Contextual information

3. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 created a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. This duty applies to all public bodies (local authorities, police, NHS, schools, further and higher education providers, probation, prisons and youth offending services). The duty also applies to private providers supplying public functions for example, in the education sector. Previously, the lead responsibility for PREVENT lay with the police, however as of 2016, local authorities now have the lead as PREVENT interventions are focused in the 'pre-criminal space'.
4. Local Authorities and schools have a duty under the 2015 Counter Terrorism Act to have strategies in place to divert vulnerable adults and children away from terrorism. The PREVENT Strategy and the Channel Panel is aimed at sharing risks and diverting people away from a path of extremism and terrorism. In Hampshire, Children's and Adults Services have progressed these strategies together.

5. Despite several high-profile attacks in the UK over recent years, referral rates locally have remained stable. Hampshire does have extremist groups operating within its borders to include animal rights and extremist right/ left wing groups. In terms of ideological background to referrals received within Hampshire, most referrals relate to right wing rhetoric then followed by Islamic extremism.
6. Nationally there is a continuing trend towards low sophistication attacks occurring in a spontaneous manner which means that future incidents are potentially difficult to detect, disrupt and prevent. Lone Actor attacks in the west have increased significantly in the last 6 years and reflect a trend towards low-complexity terror attacks. This threat to the UK remains. Al Qaeda and Daesh encouragement of lone actor attacks remains an important element of their strategy.
7. The government publishes statistics providing a picture of Prevent activity nationally. In 2016/17, a total of 6,093 individuals were subject to a referral due to concerns that they were vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Of the individuals referred:
 - the majority (3,487; 57%) were aged 20 years or under. Those aged 20 years or under also made up the majority of the 1,146 individuals discussed at a Channel panel (697; 61%) and the 332 individuals that received Channel support (226; 68%).
 - The majority were male (4,971; 82%). Males also made up the majority of the 1,146 individuals discussed at a Channel panel (943; 82%) and the 332 individuals that received Channel support (290; 87%).
 - 3,704 (61%) were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism and 968 (16%) were referred for concerns related to right wing extremism. Concerns about Islamist extremism also accounted for the majority of the 1,146 individuals discussed at a Channel panel (760; 66%) and the 332 individuals that received Channel support (184; 55%).
 - Of the 1,146 individuals discussed at a Channel panel, 271 were referred for concerns related to right wing extremism (24%). Of the 332 people receiving Channel support, 124 had been referred for concerns related to right wing extremism (37%). Individuals discussed at a Channel panel with extreme right-wing related concerns were proportionately more likely to receive Channel support (124 of 271; 46%) than those with Islamist related concerns (184 of 760; 24%).
8. There are more PREVENT referrals received for children and young people than for adults within Hampshire with schools and police referring most cases. Partner agencies including health, probation, higher education establishments and social workers within the local authority also refer cases directly to the Children's Reception Team (CRT) and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

9. Social media remains a significant influence on both young people and adults who are vulnerable to exploitation. The easy access to extremist material and the anonymity of accessing such material from behind closed doors exposes vulnerable young people and adults to the risk of extremism. As previously reported by the Prevent Board, online extremism is a feature in Channel cases within Hampshire locally as well as nationally.

Current PREVENT Referral Process.

10. All PREVENT referrals are referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) via the Childrens Reception team (CRT) where additional information is gathered as part of the MASH process. In all cases referred to the MASH team, a strategy discussion is held to enable information to be shared across partner agencies to inform the decision-making process.
11. Within the strategy discussion, partners will seek to establish the level of immediate risk of harm to the child / family and/or members of the public and will then consider any further risks pertinent to capacity and intent which again may increase the level of risk to both child and or others.
12. Where immediate risk of harm has been identified, a S.47 child protection investigation commences to ensure immediate safeguarding of the child / young person. Where the multi-agency decision has agreed no immediate risk of harm but has potentially identified some lower risks related to radicalisation / extremism, the case will be transferred to district CAST teams for a Child & Family Assessment to be undertaken.
13. Police within the MASH are responsible for notifying the relevant Counter Terrorism Unit of PREVENT referrals. MASH police send referrals via the PREVENT co-ordinators who review cases and transfer to the Counter Terrorism Unit accordingly.
14. PREVENT cases identified through the Counter Terrorism are referred directly to the Channel Panel chair. These referrals are then submitted to CRT / MASH, so consistency can be applied to each individual case in terms of process.
15. Further work is planned across the County in October 2019 where the referral process will be reviewed to enable more effective monitoring of PREVENT referrals. A National Referral process will be implemented, where referrals will be directed via the Counter Terrorism Units in the first instance prior to then being referred on to Local Authorities. No date has been set for this implementation and further meetings will be scheduled throughout October with likely implementation in 2020.

The Channel Panel

16. As a result of the Dovetail pilot, HCC now has a dedicated service manager to address the increasing volume of work. The Channel panel is now chaired by the Strategic Service Manager for PREVENT (based in Adult Services) with two named deputy chairs, one from Adults' Health and Care (AHC) and the other from Childrens' Services. The deputy Channel Chair is the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Service Manager for Children's Services who is also the PREVENT Lead for Children's Services.
17. The Channel panel is a voluntary initiative that provides a multi-agency approach to support people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and extremism. For those individuals where the Police / Local Authority assess there is a risk of radicalisation, a multi-agency Channel Panel will be held. Agencies will meet to discuss the referral, assess the extent of the vulnerability, and identify the relevant interventions to meet the assessed level of risk.
18. MASH managers now have responsibility for ensuring both the Chair and lead for PREVENT are notified of all PREVENT referrals submitted to CRT/MASH. This is to ensure both the number of referrals received into children's services and the children subsequently referred on to the Channel panel can be monitored more accurately.
19. Where it has been agreed within the multi-agency forum a child should be subject to Channel, they should have an allocated social worker from Hampshire Children's Services.
20. An allocated worker (including social worker and/or family support worker) is required to attend Channel Panel meetings for the appropriate child. The keyworker's attendance is pivotal to the process to support with the sharing of information and providing a written update to the panel. The CSD strategic lead for PREVENT is also in attendance at the Channel panel. Where a child is at school or in higher education, a member of staff of suitable seniority will be required to attend the meeting. Senior representatives from the Police, Probation and Health are also present at the panel.

PREVENT Training / Awareness Across Hampshire

21. As part of its statutory responsibilities, Hampshire County Council has and continues to provide PREVENT training to all existing and new staff via E-Learning modules.
22. E-Learning has been provided through the Virtual College which has been purchased via Workforce Development. The E-Learning package, which has been endorsed by the Home Office, provides a broad introduction to PREVENT. The learning covers the legal context and signs of extremism and radicalisation, along with processes such as the Channel Panel.

23. To supplement the E-Learning module, PREVENT workshops had been provided across the wider Children's workforce. This training had been provided through collaboration between the Workforce Development and MASH Team Managers. The workshops have been delivered to raise awareness around the need to refer open cases through CRT/MASH and to supplement the E-Learning module.
24. Given the changing nature of threats and need to ensure practitioners are appropriately skilled in the area of PREVENT, plans are in place to update the PREVENT workshops / training being facilitated within Hampshire. The training package will be updated to ensure staff across the County continue to recognise, understand and manage effectively cases where risk of extremism and radicalisation is evident.
25. PREVENT does fall under the wider safeguarding responsibility of the County Council and as such, future PREVENT training does need to be fully integrated in to the general safeguarding training provided by the local authority.
26. Schools within Hampshire have responsibility for providing their own training around the raising of awareness for PREVENT. Schools over the last 2 years have implemented training for staff through WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness for Prevent) training, which has then been supplemented with additional PREVENT refresher days.
27. To date, approximately 400 of the schools in Hampshire have completed the WRAP training, although the remaining schools may have facilitated this training via other means. No data has been provided on the number of Independent schools within the County who have completed PREVENT training / awareness to staff.

Next Steps

28. Hampshire CSD lead will work in conjunction with the PREVENT Service Manager to implement a National PREVENT Referral form where vulnerable individuals who are identified at risk of extremism / radicalisation will be referred directly to Counter Terrorism Policing prior to referrals being made to the Local Authority. Counter Terrorism Police will then be responsible for notifying Local Authorities / Channel Panel Chair as to the potential threat and or risk the individual may pose.
29. Review of supplementary training workshops will be completed (Service Lead & Workforce Development) to ensure training is up to date and current. The new calendar of training events will be published soon.
30. HCC to maintain a high level of awareness for all staff across the PREVENT Agenda to ensure children within the County are identified, referred and supported where necessary to reduce risk of extremism / radicalisation.

31. Updated communications will be sent to all Children's Services staff to remind them of need to ensure all PREVENT related concerns are referred to CRT to include allocated cases until such time new referral process is implemented across the service.

Conclusion

32. The PREVENT programme recognises that children and vulnerable adults are particularly susceptible to being targeted for radicalisation and extremist views. It also recognises that those who are most likely to be targeted and become victims of extremist words, actions or behaviour are those groups of people defined under the Equality Act 2010 as having protected characteristics. Both the E-Learning and the workshop support existing equalities training and learning.

33. Hampshire continues to be in a strong position in the area of PREVENT work. There are robust procedures for sharing information about vulnerable individuals. Partner agencies where appropriate, will refer children to CRT / MASH using the Inter Agency Referral Form (IARF). The referral process is now embedded into practice across the County. Staff within CRT/MASH have completed relevant PREVENT training which supports with the identification of referrals. Staff within the districts understand the need to ensure all allocated children are still referred via CRT where concerns are identified linked to PREVENT.

34. Hampshire Children's Services are well represented at the Channel panel meetings and sit on the Hampshire PREVENT Partnership Board. Within this partnership, the Counter Terrorism Local Partnership South East (CTLPSE) provides the PREVENT board data relating to the threat of radicalisation locally via the annual Counter Terrorism Local Profile on which regular updates are provided at Board meetings on a restricted basis. The Channel Panel chair presents anonymised case studies to the Board providing contextual information which helps the Board understand the impact and outcomes of the PREVENT work undertaken across the County.

35. Staff across Hampshire CSD and schools now recognise the potential threat to children and vulnerable adults from a range of groups where the risk of exposure to radicalisation and extremism can exist. These include international terror organisations and right-wing extremism which is now becoming more prevalent within the referrals received into MASH.

36. Children who are referred into the Channel Panel are supported through a range of multi-agency professionals who work together to reduce the risk to that young person. The sharing of information and agreed outcomes are then routinely monitored through the process with the Chair having clear oversight of the plans and progress being made.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1 The Channel Panel is a multi-agency forum that seeks to support identified individuals with reducing the risks linked to extremism / radicalisation. The panel through its monitoring and support will seek to reduce the risk of that individual entering the criminal justice system through the committing of extremism / terrorist crime.

3. Climate Change:

a) How does what is being proposed, impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Not applicable.

b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Not applicable.