



Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019

Prevent and Channel Panel Measures Fact Sheet

What are we going to do?

- The Act streamlines the process for referring an individual thought to be at risk of being drawn into terrorism under the Prevent programme to a Channel panel so that they can get the help and support needed to turn them away from radicalisation.
- It also places a duty on the Secretary of State to establish an independent review of “the Government strategy for supporting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism”.

Key quote

“Prevent and Channel protect the most vulnerable in our society and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism – over 780 individuals have left the Channel process since April 2015 with no further terrorism-related concerns. This change will improve the efficiency of Channel panels and so ensure that such individuals receive the support they need in a timely manner to guide them away from such activity.”

Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP, Minister of State for Security and Economic Crime

How are we going to do it?

- The Act enables local authorities, in addition to the police, to refer an individual at risk of being drawn into terrorism for discussion at a Channel panel. At the moment, this power is only available to the police. To achieve this change, the Act amends sections 36 and 38 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA 2015).
- This will streamline the process of referring individuals by removing some of the existing administrative burden on local authorities and the police, and ensure that at risk individuals can be supported in a timely manner.
- The Act requires that the independent review must be established within six months of Royal Assent and the report of the review and any recommendations, together with the Government response, must be published within 18 months of Royal Assent.

Background

- The Prevent programme is part of the Government’s counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. Its aim is to prevent people from becoming terrorists, or supporting terrorism. It is designed to ensure that individuals who are identified as being at risk of being drawn into terrorism are given appropriate advice and support so that they may turn away from radicalisation.
- CTSA 2015 sets out the duty on local authorities and other organisations to pay due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism, and to raise concerns about an individual they believe is at risk of radicalisation. Although there is a statutory duty on some organisations, anyone can raise a concern if they believe an individual is at risk of, or is being, radicalised.



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Background

- Channel is a multi-agency programme which identifies and supports at risk individuals, and which delivers this strategic aim of Prevent. Having identified an individual at risk, the Channel panel will assess the nature and extent of the risk, and subsequently develop the most appropriate support plan for the individual concerned.
- Currently, only the police can refer an individual identified under Prevent to a Channel panel. This provision would allow local authorities, in addition to the police, to refer an individual to a panel, thus streamlining the process and removing potential delays.
- The Government has already increased the information available about the Prevent programme by publishing annual statistics and this review is another example of our commitment to transparency. The independent review will provide an opportunity to correct misconceptions and show that Prevent is all about safeguarding vulnerable people at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

Do Prevent and Channel target particular groups?

- No, Prevent and Channel are intended to tackle radicalisation in all communities, regardless of the ideology behind the radicalisation. For example, Channel panels currently deal with individuals who have been referred due to concerns around Far Right extremism as well as for Islamist extremism.

Why are you introducing this change now?

- The recent pattern of radicalisation has shown that individuals can quickly progress from low level terrorism offences to carrying out an attack, and it is therefore imperative that individuals who are at risk of being radicalised are identified promptly. A recent pilot study found that local authorities had information

available to them to enable referrals to Channel panels to be made. This provision will help to streamline the process for referring an individual and save time.

What types of organisations support local authorities by identifying individuals who are at risk?

- Many organisations have a statutory duty to consider what they can do to prevent people being drawn into terrorism.
- These include schools, higher education institutions and hospitals. However, any concerned individual may report someone who they believe is at risk.



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Will these measures apply across the United Kingdom?

- This measure will apply to Prevent in England and Wales, and to Prevent Professional Concerns in Scotland. There is no equivalent programme in Northern Ireland.

What can of support can a Channel panel provide?

- The support provided by a Channel panel can help to address an individual's educational, vocational, mental health and other needs, and address any ideological drivers behind radicalisation.

Key facts

- Between April 2017 and March 2018, there were 7,318 referrals to the Prevent programme.
- Of these, 1,314 were discussed at a Channel panel – 662 for Islamist concerns, 427 for Far Right concerns, and 225 for other concerns.
- Over 780 individuals have left the Channel process since April 2015 with no further terrorism-related concerns.