

## **The Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill – Independent Review of Prevent Fact-sheet**

### **What are we going to do?**

1. Remove the existing statutory deadline for the Independent Review of Prevent (12 August 2020), while maintaining the legislative commitment to undertake it.
2. Ensure the Review can conclude as soon as possible, without constraining the Reviewer's ability to complete a robust, evidence based and comprehensive assessment and produce useful recommendations.
3. Aim to complete the Review by August 2021 (subject to agreement with the new Independent Reviewer of Prevent) without enforcing a new statutory deadline, which would be inappropriate considering the uncertainties associated with the current circumstances.

### **How are we going to do it?**

4. The Bill will:  
include a measure to remove this existing statutory deadline for the Review, while maintaining the legislative commitment to undertake it.
5. The Bill will not:  
identify a new statutory deadline to complete the Review.
6. The Government will:  
aim to finalise the Review by August 2021, subject to agreement with the new Independent Reviewer of Prevent.

### **Background**

#### ***Prevent***

7. Prevent is a key part of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) which was most recently refreshed in June 2018.
8. The Prevent programme is fundamentally about safeguarding and supporting vulnerable individuals to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
9. Prevent safeguards people who are vulnerable to radicalisation in a similar way to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gangs, drug abuse, and physical and sexual abuse.
10. The overarching objectives of Prevent are to:
  - Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism;
  - Safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support; and
  - Enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

### ***Independent Review***

11. In January 2019, the Government accepted an amendment during the passage of the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 to undertake an Independent Review of Prevent. This required the Home Secretary to take steps to set up an Independent Review of Prevent within six months and to lay a final report from the Review and a government response in Parliament by 12 August 2020.
12. The aim of the Independent Review of Prevent is to look at the effectiveness of the Government's strategy to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism and make recommendations for the future.
13. Lord Carlile was appointed Independent Reviewer on 12 August 2019 and stepped down in December 2019 following a decision not to defend a legal challenge to the appointment. A full and open competition for a new Reviewer was launched on 27 April 2020 and closed on 22 June 2020. Interviews took place on 23 September. An announcement will be made as soon as possible
14. William Shawcross was appointed as the new Independent Reviewer of Prevent on 26 January 2021, following a full and open recruitment campaign for the role.
15. The Counter Terrorism and Sentencing Bill was introduced on 20 May 2020 and includes a measure to remove the existing statutory deadline for the Review (12 August 2020), while maintaining the legislative commitment to undertake it.

### **Q&A**

#### **What will the Independent Review do?**

- The Independent Review of Prevent will look at the effectiveness of the Government's strategy to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. It will also make recommendations for the future.

#### **Why is an Independent Review of Prevent taking place?**

- A provision was included in the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 to set up an Independent Review of Prevent. The Review is an important opportunity to understand the views of both critics and supporters, to identify what changes might need to be made to safeguard those who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and to increase transparency on how the programme works.

#### **What are the terms of reference for the Review?**

- Revised Terms of Reference for the Review will be published shortly once Mr Shawcross has had an opportunity to review them and consider any amendments he might want to make, taking into account views which have been shared with the Review team on the previous Terms of Reference. These will outline the timescales for completing the Review and ensure this important work fulfils the Government's objective of diverting vulnerable people away from terrorism.

#### **How will the Review operate during COVID 19?**

- The government is committed to the Independent Review of Prevent and will support the Reviewer to carry out this important review.

- The new Reviewer will need to take into account the restrictions in place when undertaking the next phase of the Review.
- This is especially true in engaging with stakeholders and listening to communities. The Reviewer is considering options on how best to do this and will publish his plans in due course.

#### **When will the Review restart?**

- The Review has restarted now that a new Reviewer is in place. Mr Shawcross will publish his plans in due course for how he will deliver this important review. These plans will take into account the conditions in the country and how to engage with communities and stakeholders, gather evidence and thoroughly deliver the new Terms of Reference. Our priority will be to support the Reviewer to ensure that the Review can be undertaken properly and safely.

#### **Why are you removing the statutory deadline for the independent review of Prevent?**

- To identify the best candidate for this role, we decided to appoint the next Independent Reviewer through a full and open competition which took time to complete.
- This had implications for the Reviewer's ability to meet the existing legislative timescale for completing the Review (12 August 2020). In response we have taken steps to remove the statutory deadline, to ensure that the new Reviewer has sufficient time to complete the Review while maintaining the legislative commitment to undertake it. This Independent Review presents a valuable opportunity and it is important that the new Reviewer has sufficient time to complete it.

#### **When is the Prevent Review going to report its findings?**

- The Government is committed to the Independent Review of Prevent and we have been aiming for it to be completed by August. This is subject to discussion with the new Reviewer and the precise date will be announced in due course.
- Given it is important that the new Reviewer has sufficient time to complete the Review, we are taking steps to remove the statutory deadline (of August 2020), while maintaining the legislative commitment to undertake it, through the Counter Terrorism and Sentencing Bill. We believe a new statutory deadline would not be appropriate in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainties it brings.