Home Office

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025

Guidance: Principal Use

1. This guidance explains how to determine the 'principal use' of premises, in accordance with the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) (Principal Use of Premises) Regulations 2026. This determination must be made where individual premises are used for two or more specified uses listed in Schedule 1 to the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, for the purposes of identifying the responsible person.

2. The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 is subsequently referred to as ‘the Act’. References to premises in this guidance refer specifically to qualifying premises under section 2 of the Act.[1] Uses listed in Schedule 1 to the Act (see Annex A to this document) are subsequently referred to as 'Schedule 1 uses'.[2] The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) (Principal Use of Premises) Regulations 2026 are subsequently referred to as 'the Regulations'.

3. At the time of publication of this guidance, there is no legal requirement to comply with these regulations until the requirements imposed on those responsible for premises and events come into force. The Act received Royal Assent on 3 April 2025 with a minimum implementation period of 24 months to run from that date, therefore this is not expected to be until Spring 2027. However, you may wish to start considering what you need to do in advance of this. The guidance is intended to support those considerations in advance of the requirements coming into force. The Regulations setting out information on principal use were laid on 10 September and come into force on 15 October. [3]

The examples contained in this document have been written to aid understanding and are not instructions. The examples are not exhaustive and will not directly apply to all premises. It is essential that those responsible consider the specific circumstances of the premises and apply the approach set out in the Act and the Regulations, as explained in this guidance, rather than relying solely on an example that may appear to be similar to their circumstances. Each case will be unique and determined based on the facts of the specific circumstances, taking into account the factors detailed in the Regulations. The Home Office is not liable if the examples are applied without proper consideration of the individual circumstances of the premises.

Context

4. Where individual premises have two or more Schedule 1 uses, the Regulations set out how to determine which use should be treated as the principal use of the premises ("the relevant use") for the purposes of determining the responsible person (section 4 of the Act).

5. The person who controls the premises for the relevant Schedule 1 use will be the responsible person under the Act, who must ensure the requirements of the Act are met. This includes ensuring that public protection procedures and, where relevant,

[1] See section 2 to the Act (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/10/section/2/enacted) or Chapter 4 of the Home Office statutory guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-terrorism-protection-of-premises-act-2025).
[2] Alternatively, see Schedule 1 to the Act (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/10/schedule/1) or Figure 3 in Chapter 4 of the Home Office statutory guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-terrorism-protection-of-premises-act-2025).
[3] The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) (Principal Use of Premises) Regulations 2026 are available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2026/1005/contents/made

public protection measures are in place, as appropriate and so far as is reasonably practicable, in relation to all the activities that take place at the premises.

6. **To note: determining the principal use of premises is only necessary in limited circumstances**. Where qualifying premises have only one Schedule 1 use, that is the relevant Schedule 1 use. Determining the principal use applies only to individual premises that have more than one Schedule 1 use and where it is necessary to identify the responsible person. It does not apply to premises which have multiple uses because they are within other premises (for example, a unit in a shopping centre) or because the premises form part of a larger premises (for example, a large gym within a multi-occupancy building), where these are separate qualifying premises. In such cases, please refer to the [Home Office statutory guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-terrorism-protection-of-premises-act-2025).[4]

Example 1: A shopping centre contains several units. One of those units is a large flagship retail store with its own entrances and clearly defined boundaries. The flagship store is a separate qualifying premises within the wider shopping centre, used for one Schedule 1 use ("shops etc"). As the store is a separate qualifying premises, there is no need to apply the principal use test to determine whether its use should be considered alongside the other uses taking place elsewhere in the shopping centre. The principal use test only applies where individual premises have more than one Schedule 1 use and it is necessary to identify the principal use of those premises.

Determining the principal use

7. If individual premises have more than one Schedule 1 use, you should first determine which use relates most closely to the **purpose and nature** of the premises.

8. When determining the purpose and nature of the premises, you must take into account the factors in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Factors that **must** be considered when determining purpose and nature

A) Whether the premises were built or have been modified to be used for a particular Schedule 1 use.
B) Whether the premises continue to be used for the same Schedule 1 use identified at point A above.
C) The physical characteristics of the premises (for example, this could include the layout, size and specific features).
D) Whether the premises are treated by a local authority (in the area that the premises are situated in) as having a particular Schedule 1 use (for example, planning permission, premises licences, alcohol licences, entertainment licences).[5]

[4] The Home Office section 27 statutory guidance is available here, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-terrorism-protection-of-premises-act-2025
[5] The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) (Principal Use of Premises) Regulations 2026 state, "Whether the premises are treated by a local authority for the area in which the premises are situated as having, for any purpose, a particular Schedule 1

9. Where it is not possible to identify the principal use by considering the purpose and nature of the premises, the determination must be made on a case-by-case basis taking account of all relevant circumstances. This includes the factors to be considered at Figure 2, which are all of equal weight to each other.

Figure 2: Factors to be considered in each case

A) The factors specified in Figure 1.
B) Whether the whole of the premises, or only part of the premises, is occupied for each Schedule 1 use.
C) How much of the premises are occupied for each Schedule 1 use.
D) The amount of time that the premises are occupied for each Schedule 1 use during any period which is relevant in the circumstances of the premises.
E) Whether one Schedule 1 use takes place to support another Schedule 1 use.

10. This assessment could take into account information such as plans of the premises, licences, leases, operating hours, ticketing, staffing levels, capacity, floor area, and trading activity. "Amount of time" can refer to opening hours, days of operation, and seasonal activity, based on the individual circumstances of the premises. The principal use assessment should be reviewed if circumstances change, such as following refurbishment, a change to a licence, a change in how the premises is used or the activity that takes place there.

11. Once a determination has been made in relation to the principal use of the premises, you may wish to keep a record of the determination and the reasoning for this.

Illustrative examples of principal use

Example 2: A sports stadium is used to host sports events every week throughout the year. It is also used to host meetings and small conferences on many days throughout the year and provides tours for small groups of visitors. The premises consist of a single sports stadium. The various Schedule 1 uses are as a sports ground, a hall and a visitor attraction.

In determining the principal use, the purpose and nature of the premises need to be considered by taking account of the relevant factors in Figure 1. The premises were built and continue to be used as a sports stadium. The physical characteristics of the stadium, including the pitch, spectator stands and associated facilities, are consistent with use as a sports ground. The premises are also treated as a sports stadium by the local authority.

use." The definition of "local authority" and "National Park authority" for the purpose of these Regulations can be found in Paragraphs 4 and 5 of The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) (Principal Use of Premises) Regulations 2026.

Taking account of those factors, the principal use is therefore as a sports ground. The responsible person will be the individual, organisation or company with control of the premises in connection with its use as a sports ground. As the premises are in the enhanced tier, the responsible person must comply with the relevant requirements of the Act, including ensuring that appropriate public protection procedures and public protection measures are in place, so far as is reasonably practicable, in relation to all the activities that take place at the premises.

Example 3: A large hotel contains a restaurant that operates as part of the same qualifying premises. The restaurant is not separate premises and is instead part of the hotel. The premises therefore have more than one Schedule 1 use: “hotels etc” and “food and drink”.

In determining the principal use, the purpose and nature of the premises need to be considered by taking account of the relevant factors in Figure 1. The premises were built and continue to be used primarily to provide accommodation to guests. The physical characteristics of the premises, including guest bedrooms, reception facilities and other accommodation-related areas, are consistent with use as a hotel. The premises are also treated as a hotel by the local authority.

Consideration of the purpose and nature of the premises is sufficient to identify the principal use as a hotel. The responsible person will therefore be the individual, organisation or company with control of the premises in connection with their use as a hotel. As the premises are in the standard tier, the responsible person must comply with the relevant requirements of the Act, including ensuring that appropriate public protection procedures are in place, so far as is reasonably practicable, in relation to all the activities that take place at the premises.

Example 4: A place of worship reasonably expects more than 200 individuals to be present at the premises at its weekly services. The premises are also used as a concert venue and hosts regular concerts which are expected to have 800 or more individuals present each time. The premises therefore have more than one Schedule 1 use: “places of worship” and “entertainment and leisure activities”.

In determining the principal use, the purpose and nature of the premises need to be considered by taking account of the relevant factors in Figure 1. The premises were built as a place of worship and continue to be used for that purpose. The physical characteristics of the premises are consistent with use as a place of worship, and the premises are treated as a place of worship by the local authority.

Based on these considerations, the principal use is therefore as a place of worship. The responsible person will be the individual, organisation or company with control of the premises in connection with its use as a place of worship. Due to the different thresholds on the number of individuals present at the same time that apply to places of worship, the premises are subject only to the standard tier requirements of the Act, even when 800 or more individuals may be present from time to time.

As the premises are in the standard tier, the responsible person must comply with the relevant requirements of the Act, including ensuring that appropriate public protection procedures are in place, so far as is reasonably practicable, in relation to all the activities that take place at the premises.

Example 5:[6] A university campus contains teaching buildings, lecture theatres, a library, student accommodation, cafés and a sports centre. Some of the cafés and the sports centre are operated by different operators under contractual arrangements with the university. However, these facilities form part of the same individual qualifying premises as a group of buildings and are therefore not separate premises or premises within other premises.

The premises are used for a range of Schedule 1 uses, including "higher education", "food and drink", and "entertainment and leisure". Although several Schedule 1 uses take place on the site, the principal use of the premises is higher education, taking account of the factors at Figure 1 on the purpose and nature of the premises.

Therefore, the responsible person will be the individual, organisation or company with control of the premises in connection with their use for higher education. As the premises are in the enhanced tier, the responsible person must comply with the relevant requirements of the Act, including ensuring that appropriate public protection procedures and public protection measures are in place, so far as is reasonably practicable, in relation to all the activities that take place on the premises.

The café and sports centre are operated by separate operators. Effective compliance with the Act is likely to require appropriate co-operation between the responsible person and the operators of the café and the sports centre, so that appropriate public protection procedures and measures can be implemented effectively across the premises.

Example 6: A country house was originally built as a private residence. Part of the building retains that purpose. However, another part of the building is now open to the public and operates as a visitor attraction. That part of the premises also contains a café and a shop. Therefore, the Schedule 1 uses that apply to this part of the premises are "visitor attractions", "food and drink" and "shops etc". The café and shop are operated by separate operators but are part of the wider visitor attraction and are not separate qualifying premises in their own right.

In determining the principal use of the part of the premises open to the public, the purpose and nature of the premises need to be considered by taking account of the relevant factors in Figure 1. The entire premises were originally built as a private residence, and the premises have not been substantially modified for any of the Schedule 1 uses currently taking place there (for example, food and drink). The physical characteristics of the premises do not clearly identify a principal use. The premises are not treated as having a particular use by the local authority. As a result, consideration of the purpose and nature of the premises alone is not sufficient to determine the principal use.

The relevant parties therefore must consider all the relevant circumstances, including the factors in Figure 2, in addition to those already considered in Figure 1. The visitor attraction occupies most of the premises and accounts for most of the time during which

[6] This example only applies where the campus forms one premises and the different facilities are not separate premises or premises within premises.

members of the public are present. The café and shop occupy smaller areas of the premises and operate primarily to support visits to the attraction.

Taking all the relevant circumstances into account, the principal use of the premises is identified as a visitor attraction. The responsible person will therefore be the individual, organisation or company with control of the premises in connection with their use as a visitor attraction.

As the premises are in the standard tier, they must comply with the relevant requirements of the Act, including ensuring that appropriate public protection procedures are in place, so far as is reasonably practicable, in relation to all the activities that take place at the premises.

Example 7: A former warehouse has been converted into a community hub operated by a local council. The building contains a public library, a customer service centre where members of the public access council services, and a café. These facilities operate within the same premises and are not separate qualifying premises in their own right. The premises therefore have more than one Schedule 1 use: “public authorities”, “libraries, museums and galleries etc” and “food and drink”.

In determining the principal use, the purpose and nature of the premises need to be considered by taking account of the factors in Figure 1. Although the building was originally constructed as a warehouse, it has been substantially modified for its current uses. The physical characteristics of the premises, including customer service areas, meeting rooms and registration facilities, are consistent with use for “public authorities” functions. The premises are treated by the local authority as premises used for local council functions.

Taking account of these factors, the principal use of the premises is identified as use by a public authority. The responsible person will therefore be the individual, organisation or company with control of the premises in connection with that principal use. As the premises are in the standard tier, the responsible person must comply with the relevant requirements of the Act, including ensuring that appropriate public protection procedures are in place, so far as reasonably practicable.

Example 8: A community rugby club occupies a village hall in the standard tier which is used as the clubhouse. The premises contain a main hall, a function room, changing facilities, a kitchen and a small café. The premises are used by the rugby club for meetings, social events and post-match gatherings. They are also used by local community groups for live entertainment events throughout the year. The premises therefore have more than one Schedule 1 use: “halls etc”, “food and drink” and “entertainment and leisure”.

In determining the principal use, the purpose and nature of the premises need to be considered by taking account of the factors in Figure 1. The premises were built and continue to be used as a village hall. The physical characteristics of the premises, including the main hall and community facilities, are consistent with use as a hall. The premises are recognised as a hall by the local authority. Consideration of the purpose and nature of the premises is sufficient to identify the principal use as a hall.

The responsible person will therefore be the individual, organisation or company with control of the premises in connection with their use as a hall. As the premises are in the standard tier, the responsible person must comply with the relevant requirements of the Act, including ensuring that appropriate public protection procedures are in place, so far as reasonably practicable.

Annex A: Specified uses in Schedule 1 to the Act

This Annex is largely reproduced here from Figure 3 in the Home Office statutory guidance for ease of reference. This guidance is intended to help readers understand and comply with the requirements of the Act; **the Act itself is the definitive source of the legal duties, criteria and tests that apply.** References throughout this guidance are provided to signpost readers to further explanation and supporting information.

Specified use in Schedule 1 to the Act	Premises that may be used for this specified use Examples are non-exhaustive
Shops etc	This covers premises involved in the sale of both goods and services and the display of goods for sale. This includes shops, retail units, showrooms, post offices, banks, fuel stations and shopping centres.
Food and drink	This includes bars, pubs, restaurants, cafés and food halls.
Entertainment and leisure activities	This includes nightclubs, theatres, cinemas, concert halls, arenas, theme parks, zoos, aquariums, amusement arcades, casinos, gyms, leisure centres, swimming pools and bowling alleys.
Sports grounds[7]	This includes sports arenas or stadia where sports or other competitive activities take place in the open air (or would take place in the open air, but for the closing of any retractable roof) and where accommodation has been provided for spectators.
Libraries, museums and galleries etc	In addition to libraries, museums and galleries, this includes archives or sites where a collection of objects or works (considered to be of scientific, historic, artistic or cultural interest) is exhibited outdoors or partly outdoors.[8]
Halls etc	This includes village halls, community centres, venues for hire for events or activities, exhibition halls and conference centres.

[7] In relation to England, Wales and Scotland, sports grounds are defined in section 17(1) of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 as "any place where sports or other competitive activities take place in the open air and where accommodation has been provided for spectators, consisting of artificial structures or of natural features or of a combination of both". In Northern Ireland, sports grounds are defined by Article 2(2) of the Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 as "any place where — (a) sports or other competitive activities take place in the open air (or would take place in the open air but for the closing of any retractable roof); and (b) accommodation has been provided for spectators, consisting of artificial structures or of natural structures artificially modified for the purpose."

[8] See para. 4.12 of the Home Office statutory guidance on premises that are primarily outdoors but include one or more buildings on site.

Specified use in Schedule 1 to the Act	Premises that may be used for this specified use Examples are non-exhaustive
Visitor attractions	This includes an attraction of cultural, historic, touristic or educational value. This could include heritage railway lines.
Hotels etc	In addition to hotels, this includes hostels and holiday parks.
Places of worship	This includes churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, gurdwaras, cathedrals and other places of worship. Para. 4.27 of the Home Office statutory guidance provides further information on places of worship.
Health care	This includes hospitals, primary care clinics and doctor and dentist surgeries.
Bus stations, railway stations etc	This includes railway, bus and coach stations, tramway stations or any other stations forming part of a transport system which uses a mode of guided transport and is not a trolley vehicle system. Schedule 2 of the Act and para. 4.35 of the Home Office statutory guidance provide further information on the transport premises which are excluded from the Act.[9]
Aerodromes	This includes facilities used for the landing and departure of aircraft. Many aerodromes are excluded, including if they are used exclusively for military purposes or if there is a security plan in force under section 24AE of the Aviation Security Act 1982, as per Schedule 2, para. 4(a) to the Act.[10]
Childcare	This covers premises used for early years provisions. This includes day cares, pre-schools and nurseries. Para. 4.38 of the Home Office statutory guidance provides further information on childcare.
Primary and secondary education	This covers educational institutions and schools for children under the age of 16 years. This includes alternative provision academies and pupil referral units or other institutions, as per Schedule 1, para. 14(2) to the Act. Paras. 4.38 to 4.39 of the Home Office statutory guidance provide further information on primary and secondary education.

[9] Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, Schedule 2, available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/10/schedule/2
[10] Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, Schedule 2, available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/10/schedule/2

Specified use in Schedule 1 to the Act	Premises that may be used for this specified use Examples are non-exhaustive
Further education[11]	This covers premises used for full-time education suitable to the requirements of persons over compulsory school age who have not attained the age of 19 years. This includes colleges and sixth-form colleges, and independent training providers that are (wholly or partly) publicly funded. Paras. 4.38 to 4.39 of the Home Office statutory guidance provide further information on further education.
Higher education	This includes universities and their associated institutions; institutions conducted by a higher education corporation, registered higher education providers, or which provide higher education courses, where this is the principal use; and residential accommodation for students managed by or on behalf of a higher education institution. Para. 4.39 of the Home Office statutory guidance provides further information on further education.
Public authorities	This covers any premises used by a public authority for the provision of facilities or services to members of the public. This includes household waste recycling centres.

[11] As defined by section 91(3) of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. For the avoidance of confusion, further education refers to any study after secondary education that is not part of higher education.

This publication is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/terrorism-protection-of-premises-act-2025#home-office-guidance