



## 1. Name and outline of policy proposal, guidance or operational activity

### Prevent Channel Duty Guidance Refresh 2023

Channel is a multi-agency panel convened at local authority level, to support individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism. There are 175 local authorities with responsibility for holding Channel panels covering England and Wales.

Channel was placed on a statutory footing under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. A second update of this initial guidance is being progressed to reflect policy and legislative changes, practice requirements in response to national learning and required changes arising from the Independent Review of Prevent. Prevent has three objectives within the government's Contest Strategy<sup>1</sup>:

- to tackle the ideological causes of terrorism;
- to intervene early to support people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism; and
- to rehabilitate those who have engaged in terrorist activity.

The guidance update will provide a strengthened framework for practitioners and direct operational practice of Channel panels across England and Wales. Individuals provide their consent to access support provided through Channel panels. Extract from the guidance (v6):

1. This revised guidance replaces the guidance issued on 2 November 2020. It is issued under sections 36(7) and 38(6) of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ("CTSA 2015") to support panel members and partners of local panels in England and Wales in the exercise of their functions; panel members and partners of local panels in England and Wales must have regard to this guidance. Separate guidance is in place for Scotland.
2. Section 36 CTSA 2015 sets out the duty for local authorities to ensure that there is a local panel in place to assess, and to provide support for, people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this guidance, the term 'Channel' refers to the local authority-led support and the duty as set out in CTSA 2015. In England and Wales, this duty is met through 'Channel panels'. Individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism are referred by the police to Channel panels.

---

<sup>1</sup> Contest 2023 is the UK government's national Counter terrorism strategy.

3. Section 38 CTSA 2015 sets out the duty of cooperation for partners of Channel panels. Such partners are listed at Schedule 7 CTSA 2015.<sup>2</sup>
4. This guidance is specifically directed to members and partners of Channel panels involved in the Channel process. The requirements of Channel are statutory duties and it is recommended that they should be reflected in relevant local policy and guidance.
5. The purpose of this document is to:
  - provide guidance for Channel panels
  - provide guidance for panel partners on Channel delivery (that is, those authorities listed in Schedule 7 CTSA 2015 who are required to co-operate with Channel panels and the police in the carrying out of their respective functions under section 36 CTSA 2015)
  - explain why people may be susceptible to being radicalised into terrorism, committing acts of terrorism or supporting terrorism, and describe indicators that suggest this
  - provide guidance on the support that can be provided to safeguard those at risk of being drawn into terrorism
  - explain how a Prevent referral is assessed to ensure only those meeting the Prevent threshold are progressed for support through Channel

## **2. Summary of the evidence considered in demonstrating due regard to the Public-Sector Equality Duty.**

Published annual Prevent referral data covering April 2021 to March 2022 for England and Wales has been reviewed in light of the protected characteristics of individuals receiving support from Channel, where this information is held.

The data capture relating to Channel cases is considered experimental and requires further refinement by the Office of National Statistics; consequently, not all protected characteristics data is captured from the Channel cohort but, where it is available, trends are analysed. Channel support is tailored to the needs of individuals. An evaluation of Channel is underway and options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope. This is scheduled to conclude in 2025.

More recently, the analysis of a survey of 144 Channel practitioners concluding in 2021-22 found that most respondents (76%) reported that the Channel guidance has had a positive impact on Channel delivery in their area.

- This has in turn improved engagement with practitioners and improved attendance at Channel panels. This has also facilitated improved trust amongst Channel partners.
- The guidance has enabled areas to review their existing procedures and structures to improve their own standards of delivery against specified benchmarks.
- This has fostered better multi-agency relationships between partners.

---

<sup>2</sup> [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

Further clarity was sought on the Channel process, training and questions raised about the appropriateness of the vulnerability assessment framework. The following provides a summary of key responses received:

- Further clarification on the nature and extent of the threat from reported ideologies should be given to practitioners to help understand what should be classified as a Prevent concern and what should be signposted to other services.
- One respondent requested greater clarity on what is meant by 'Mixed, Unstable or Unclear', 'incel' and 'school massacre' cases. Further clarification of whether misogyny is relevant for Prevent was also requested.
- One participant requested further detail around how Channel panels can support family members throughout the Channel process.
- One participant felt that the responsibilities of the police and the panel members should be more clearly explained in relation to how the vulnerabilities of individuals are managed and supported.
- Several respondents suggested a review of the VAF to streamline the number of risk factors included. The focus should remain on an individuals vulnerability to radicalisation as it was reported that sometimes partners talk about risk factors generally (and not within a CT context). One participant requested a condensed assessment tool, similar to the PGA.
- More guidance on the level of detail required within each VAF may be beneficial as respondents reported that they are often too light touch, and more information is required at panel meetings.
- Some participants felt the VAF is not well tailored to particular groups such as young people and lone actors who do not associate with one particular group.
- One participant reported that paragraph 60 could define what is meant by a vulnerability, as it currently feels like a subjective judgement.
- Some expressed a need for further clarity on individuals exiting the process and aftercare.
- Further clarity to understand how to engage families in cases and how to handle cases that are closely linked (e.g. cases of family members) was wanted by some. One participant felt that the CDG could better explain the parameters of engaging family members of adult referrals (where they may not wish to engage their family) and the data protection arrangements surrounding this.
- Some felt training should be provided to partners regularly in order to understand the latest extremist narratives and threats.
- Additionally, another participant suggested training should also focus on emerging topics such as autism and radicalisation training.
- When cases are closed, some opined that it is important to clarify who is responsible for providing further support to ensure wraparound care has been provided.
- One participant felt that the CDG should include the contact details for the Home Office to inform them of findings in relation to reviews conducted, as they are not currently provided.

- Some respondents felt that further clarity was required on the panel monitoring process and what the national monitoring framework entails. Details of how (and how often) the panel will be monitored should be included within the guidance. Participants suggested that when monitoring uncovers differences between areas, there should be resulting advice that is shared at a national level to ensure consistency in the delivery of Channel.

As a direct consequence of these responses, the following actions were taken as part of the 2023 guidance refresh:

- A strengthened training offer has been made available to Channel panels to understand the changing risk and threat. This will include briefing panels on recent research covering Mixed Unstable or Unclear ideologies, along with training on autism and antisemitism.
- We have extended requirements to strengthen the role of families both during the provision of Channel support and post Channel closure.
- Extensive work is underway to replace the VAF with an improved tool which will remain live from the point of assessment, during the period of receiving support until panel closure. This improved tool will better cater for individual client needs, especially young people, who make up a significant proportion of the Channel cohort.
- Descriptions of vulnerability and susceptibility are now included within the guidance following recommendations from the Independent Review of Prevent.
- Additional requirements have been included to strengthen Channel exit pathways.
- The guidance will be simultaneously published in English and Welsh
- Work to strengthen client exit pathways, post-Channel closure will actively seek client feedback on the support offered, through which panel improvements can be identified and implemented.
- strengthening data capture of the cohort through introducing client-assessed ethnic data recording

The Channel Duty guidance provides a strengthened framework within which all panels will be required to operate and introduces a monitoring function to assess compliance, reducing the likelihood of discriminatory practice. The guidance emphasises practitioner responsibilities under the public sector equality duty.

### **3a. Consideration of limb 1 of the duty: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.**

The following inclusion has been made within the guidance to emphasise the requirements of the PSED.

*‘Panel members should also have due regard to their Public Sector Equality Duty and be sensitive in their considerations. The panel must fully consider all the information available to them to make an objective decision on the support to be offered, without discriminating against the individual on the basis of their*

*protected characteristics and to make any reasonable adjustments to meet client need.*' Refers to page 39, Section 6: The Channel Panel (para 128).

The guidance highlights the difficulties associated with identifying people at risk of radicalisation. It states:

*There is no single way of identifying who is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism or supporting terrorism. Factors may include:*

- *peer or family pressure*
- *influence to support an ideology from other people or via the internet*
- *bullying*
- *being a victim or perpetrator of crime*
- *anti-social behaviour*
- *family tensions*
- *hate crime*
- *lack of self-esteem or identity*
- *personal or political grievances*

## **Age**

Direct Discrimination – None known, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available

Indirect Discrimination – There is no age restriction for accessing Channel support. As a higher proportion (74%) of individuals accessing Channel support are under the age of 20 years, (primarily due to education providers accounting for approximately a third of all Prevent referrals) panel membership must include practitioners who are experts in catering for the needs of children and young people. Where Channel panel chairs have highlighted gaps in the provision of some local services, the guidance requires these to be reported to local commissioners.

The higher caseload of young people in Channel reflects that approximately one third of Prevent referrals are made by schools.

The Prevent Assessment Framework under development to replace the VAF will provide an enhanced assessment of client needs and risk, especially young people who make up the significant proportion of the Channel cohort.

Following the Independent Review of Prevent recommendations, the guidance aims to clarify what is meant by vulnerability and a Prevent susceptibility. It states that:

*A person's susceptibility to radicalisation may be linked to their specific vulnerabilities. A person can be vulnerable if they are in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, risk of abuse or neglect. In many cases, these factors or characteristics are relevant to their susceptibility to radicalisation and to the early intervention approach that is required to divert them away from radicalisation.*

*In other cases, such specific vulnerabilities may not be present or be relevant to their general vulnerability, or susceptibility, to being drawn into terrorism or to the early intervention approach required. Not all people susceptible to*

*radicalisation will be a vulnerable person as a result of such factors, and there are other circumstances, needs, or other underlying factors that may make a person susceptible to radicalisation.*

## **Disability**

Direct Discrimination – where mental health is identified as a presenting feature, clients may be referred to the Vulnerability Assessment Hubs to clarify if they are already known to mental health service and to undertake an assessment of any immediate care needs.

Indirect Discrimination – None known. There is no restriction on individuals accessing Channel support based upon disability. Provision has been made for Channel panels to access specialist advice and services from Vulnerability Support Hubs to assist them in supporting clients where mental health is a presenting feature. Further information is provided on Vulnerability Support Hubs in the guidance:

*Vulnerability support hubs are in place to support the CTCOs. The hubs use a formulation-based approach to jointly triage referrals (police and health) to rate the concern and urgency of each case based on the referral information and clarify whether people are known to mental health services. The hub provides early assessment of a person's mental health and psychological needs, which may impact on levels of risk, inform the Prevent assessment, and aid the development of Channel support plans. Vulnerability support hub services are accessed through the CTCO who will consult with Channel panels on their use within Channel case management. Whilst CTP retain final decision-making responsibility for VSH referrals, CTCOs will always seek to do so with agreement of Channel Panels, and use of the service outside of this agreement should only be considered in exceptional cases.*

Where Channel panel chairs have highlighted gaps in the provision of some local services, the guidance requires these to be reported to local commissioners.

Reasonable Adjustments – Channel panels are expected to make reasonable adjustments to cater for the needs of individuals with a disability.

Recent research to understand the prevalence of autism within those accessing Channel support will drive improvements in future provision.

The IRP highlighted a perception that some people see Prevent and Channel as a route to access mental health services more swiftly. While there is no evidence to suggest this is happening, we will keep this under review and re-assess as data becomes available.

## **Gender Reassignment**

Direct Discrimination – None known, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available

Indirect Discrimination – None known. Channel will challenge negative views based on sexual orientation which are identified within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support. These negative views often feature within the Islamist Extremism and Extreme Right-Wing ideologies.

### **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

Direct Discrimination - None known, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available

Indirect Discrimination – None known, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

Direct Discrimination – None known, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available.

Indirect Discrimination – None known, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available.

### **Race**

Direct Discrimination – None known, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available.

Indirect Discrimination – None known.

There is no restriction on individuals accessing Channel support based upon race. Channel panels are expected to provide translation services if required and to ensure consent is explained appropriately for the service offer to be understood.

Provision has been made for the guidance to be simultaneously published in English and Welsh, to cater for the needs of Welsh practitioners.

In an attempt to strengthen our insight and core offer, panels are asked to capture client-assessed ethnicity data within consent forms for those accessing support. This will build our database and identify if there are trends in those from particular backgrounds being referred for support, enabling us to investigate the presence of bias or discriminatory practice.

Racial hatred features predominantly within extreme right-wing views; these are directly challenged through Channel interventions.

Where Channel panel chairs have highlighted gaps in the provision of some local services. The guidance requires these to be reported to local commissioners.

### **Religion or Belief**

Direct Discrimination - There is no restriction on individuals accessing Channel support based upon religion or belief.

All individuals who are referred to Prevent, and subsequently for Channel support, are assessed in the same way and are given a tailored package of



support designed to meet their individual circumstances. This may include mentoring support from Home Office approved Intervention Providers who provide structured sessions to assess ideological, theological or fixated thinking and work with individuals over a period to challenge those drivers/beliefs where they have potential for drawing them towards terrorism. This includes where the ideology is unclear or where there is a grievance-led violence fixation.

Where Channel panel chairs have highlighted gaps in the provision of some local services. The guidance requires these to be reported to local commissioners.

There are longstanding concerns by some commentators that Prevent unfairly targets Muslims. However, Prevent does not concentrate on specific religions or beliefs and adherence to a faith is not grounds for taking any action under the Prevent duty or the Channel Duty Guidance. The religious composition of a geographic area is not a consideration in identifying which areas to prioritise for Prevent action. Rather, Prevent focuses on tackling radicalisation risks that are often drawn from extreme ideologies, which may or may not be rooted in religious belief (e.g. Islamist terrorism and extreme right-wing terrorism). Adherence to a particular religion or belief, including a particular subset of a religious belief, should not be considered in isolation as evidence of radicalisation.

There have also been misperceptions that Prevent referrals should be made if somebody holds strong political views or takes part in political activism. Lawful, non-violent protest or activism does not meet the threshold for Prevent referrals.

Indirect Discrimination – Of the 804 cases that Channel managed in 2021-22, 42% were supported for concerns related to extreme right-wing radicalisation, and 19% were supported for concerns related to Islamist ideology. This representation differs for initial Prevent referrals in 2021-22, where there is a high percentage of referrals related to Islamist extremist ideology. Based on these figures, it is possible to infer that people of Muslim faith are overrepresented within Prevent, in comparison to the general population (6.5% of people described themselves as Muslim in the 2021 Census). While this means that Prevent may indirectly impact Muslims more than people of other religions and beliefs, the number and type of referrals received by Prevent in 2021-22 reflects the threat from Islamist terrorism and the associated risk of radicalisation. To be clear, the ideology held by Islamist extremists, and the crimes committed by Islamist terrorists, are completely distinct from Islam and are overwhelmingly rejected by Muslims around the world. Prevent activity should align with the risk of radicalisation to terrorism, and in recent years the threat has primarily come from Islamist terrorism. Should the threat shift, Prevent activity will shift accordingly.

The government response to the Independent Review of Prevent clearly highlights the need to take a balanced and proportionate approach across the full range of extremist ideologies we see.



Channel is a supportive programme that aims to stop people, whatever their religion or beliefs, from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. There is no criminal sanction and it is intended to protect them from activity that could result in them obtaining a criminal record, causing harm to communities or to society, or suffering from the harmful impact of terrorism and radicalisation themselves. By intervening early, Prevent aims to reduce the potential negative outcomes for individuals who are at risk of being radicalised. Prevent legislation and Channel guidance and practice do not directly discriminate individuals due to their religion or belief but assess the situation objectively.

Assessments of the Channel caseload are identifying the prevalence of antisemitism (often a feature of both extreme right-wing ideology and Islamist extremism) and are working to actively strengthen the specialist response provided through intervention providers as part of Channel support.

### **Sex**

Direct Discrimination – There is no restriction on individuals accessing Channel support based upon sex. Most individuals accessing Channel support (93%) are male, though Channel panels cater for the needs of all individuals regardless of sex. This high percentage reflects the high percentage of Prevent referrals which are made concerning males. Where the needs of a specific sex are identified, Channel panels can draw on the expertise of panel members or invite specialist advisors to inform Channel panel decision making on the provision of support for individuals. Where Channel panel chairs have highlighted gaps in the provision of some local services. The guidance requires these to be reported to local commissioners.

Indirect Discrimination – None known. Channel will work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation by challenging negative sex-based and misogynistic views identified within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support. These negative views are known to feature within Islamist Extremism, Extreme Right-Wing and Incel ideologies.

### **Sexual Orientation**

Direct Discrimination – None known, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available

Indirect Discrimination – None known. Channel interventions will challenge negative views based on sexual orientation which are identified within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support. These negative views often feature within Islamist Extremism and Extreme Right-Wing ideologies.

### **3b. Consideration of limb 2: Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.**

A repository of supporting templates and documentation will be made available to local Channel panels. This will include materials which emphasise there are no barriers of access for Channel support based upon protected characteristics,

and that reasonable adjustments will be made to cater for needs relating to disability. Channel panels provide bespoke support to cater for individual needs, including where intersectional needs are identified. As well as access to public sector provision, Channel panels are required to build up knowledge of the local service offer from across the voluntary, community and faith sector, and to draw on these services.

Existing Prevent and Channel data does not allow for a comprehensive analysis of all protected characteristics for individuals accessing Channel support. Consequently, not all protected characteristics data is captured from the Channel cohort but, where it is available, trends are analysed. Channel support is tailored to the needs of individuals. An evaluation of Channel is underway and is set to conclude and report in 2025; options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope.

**Age** – Of the 804 individuals receiving support during 2021-22, 74% (594) were under the age of 20 years, primarily due to education providers accounting for approximately a third of all Prevent referrals and the extensive contact schools have with young people. Channel panels are required to have panel members in attendance who can cater for the needs of children, young people and adults.

**Disability** – Individuals accessing Channel support may have a range of vulnerabilities identified in the assessment of need. Channel panels can draw on the expertise of panel members or invite specialist advisors to attend to inform panel decision-making on the provision of support for individuals.

Recent research to understand the prevalence of autism within those accessing Channel support will drive improvements in future provision.

An evaluation of Channel is underway and is set to conclude and report in 2025; options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope.

**Gender Reassignment** – Channel will challenge negative views based on sexual orientation which are identified within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support. These negative views often feature within the Islamist Extremism and Extreme Right-Wing ideologies.

**Marriage and Civil Partnerships** – Not known, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available.

**Maternity and Pregnancy** – Not known, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available.

**Race** – Channel panels provide consent-based bespoke support catering for the needs of referred individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, colour or language. The guidance is to be published in English and Welsh to cater for the identified needs of practitioners in Wales.

Channel panels are expected to access local provision for translation services and to ensure Channel information material and consent to receive support is

explained in appropriate formats (e.g. community languages) for the service offer to be understood, and to mitigate barriers of access due to language.

Racial hatred features predominantly within extreme right-wing views; these are directly challenged through Channel interventions.

An evaluation of Channel is underway and is set to conclude and report in 2025; options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope.

**Religion or Belief** – Prevent and Channel focuses on tackling radicalisation risks that are often drawn from extreme ideologies, which can be linked to religion or belief. The Prevent Duty and Channel Duty Guidance applies equally across the full range of extremism risks, and individuals referred into Prevent are assessed in the same way. The recently published government response to the Independent Review of Prevent<sup>3</sup> clearly highlights the need to take a balanced and proportionate approach across the range of extremist ideologies we see.

Almost half of the cases (42%) supported through Channel during 2021-22 related to extreme right-wing concerns, which was more than those referred for Islamist-related extremism (20%). Recent analysis has shown that there was no evidence of significant disparity in panel decision-making between extreme right wing and Islamist extremist cases. To ensure equality in the support package we provide to individuals adopted into Channel, Home Office approved Intervention Providers are trained and equipped to assess ideological, theological or fixated thinking and work with individuals over a period to challenge those drivers/beliefs where they have potential for drawing them towards terrorism. This includes where the ideology is unclear or where there is a grievance-led violence fixation.

The Channel Quality Assurance Framework is being updated to monitor and respond to any identified disparities in Channel practice.

Assessments of the Channel caseload are identifying the prevalence of antisemitism (often a feature of both extreme right-wing ideology and Islamist extremism) and are working to actively strengthen the specialist response provided through intervention providers as part of Channel support.

The IRP has highlighted Islamist extremism as the greatest terrorist threat to the UK (the govt accepted the rec). This may heighten the perception amongst Muslims that they are being unfairly targeted. The current risk and threat assessment is captured in the updated Channel guidance as follows:

*Prevent states that the most significant of these threats is currently from terrorist activity associated with Islamist extremism. Extreme right-wing ideology is resurgent.*

---

<sup>3</sup> [The response to the Independent Review of Prevent \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-response-to-the-independent-review-of-prevent)

In mitigation, proactive communications are being developed in readiness for the launch of the updated Prevent duty guidance and Channel duty guidance to address these concerns and provide additional assurance to Muslim communities that they will not be unfairly targeted as a result of these guidance updates.

An evaluation of Channel is underway and is set to conclude and report in 2025; options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope.

**Sex** – Of the 804 individuals receiving support during 2021-22, 93% (594) were male. Channel panels provide bespoke support for clients, regardless of sex. Where the needs of a specific sex are identified, Channel panels can draw on the expertise of panel members or invite specialist advisors to inform Channel panel decision making on the provision of support for individuals.

Channel will contribute towards advancements in equality of opportunity by challenging negative sex-based and misogynistic views identified within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support. These negative views are known to feature within Islamist Extremism, Extreme Right-Wing and Incel ideologies.

An evaluation of Channel is underway and is set to conclude and report in 2025; options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope.

**Sexual Orientation** – Channel interventions will challenge negative views based on sexual orientation which are identified within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support. These negative views often feature within Islamist Extremism and Extreme Right-Wing ideologies.

### **3c. Consideration of limb 3: Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it**

Channel provision provides confidential support for individuals identified as being at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Where an assessment identifies that an individual holds extremist views or negative beliefs against persons who share a particular protected characteristic, the support plan is bespoke in addressing this. It will make provision for an Intervention Provider to be commissioned to work with the individual on challenging those beliefs, and in doing so, help to foster tolerance by challenging negative misconceptions and promoting good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

**Age** – Channel support will foster good relations by challenging negative age-based views identified within the Prevent assessment process of individuals accessing support.

**Disability** – Channel support will foster good relations by challenging negative disability-based views identified within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support.

Recent research to understand the prevalence of autism within those accessing Channel support will drive improvements in future provision.

**Gender Reassignment** – Channel support will foster good relations by challenging negative gender reassignment-based views identified within the Prevent assessment within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support. These negative views often feature within Islamist Extremism and Extreme Right-Wing ideologies.

**Marriage and Civil Partnerships** – No potential impact identified, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available.

**Maternity and Pregnancy** – No potential impact identified, however, this will be kept under review as new analysis and data becomes available.

**Race** – Channel support will foster good relations by challenging negative views held regarding race, ethnicity, nationality, colour or language identified within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support. Racial hatred features predominantly within extreme right-wing views; these are directly challenged through Channel interventions.

**Religion or Belief** – Channel support will foster good relations by challenging negative views held against those with differing religions and/or beliefs which are identified within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support.

There are some misconceptions that Prevent disproportionately targets Muslims. However, Prevent does not target specific religions or beliefs. Rather, it focuses on radicalisation risks that are often drawn from a range of extremist ideologies.

The government response to the Independent Review of Prevent committed to implementing a consistent threshold for referrals across the full range of ideologies that might be present where an individual is at risk of radicalisation, which is included in the updated Prevent Duty Guidance. This will help to ensure that a consistent, proportionate and robust threshold is met before a case is accepted into Prevent and Channel, regardless of an individual's religion or belief. Improving assurance in this way will tackle the misconception regarding Prevent, it is hoped.

Assessments of the Channel caseload are identifying the prevalence of antisemitism (often a feature of both extreme right-wing ideology and Islamist extremism) and are working to actively strengthen the specialist response provided through intervention providers as part of Channel support.

**Sex** – Channel support will foster good relations by challenging negative sex-based and misogynistic views identified within the Prevent assessment of

individuals accessing support. These negative views are known to feature within Islamist Extremism, Extreme Right-Wing and Incel ideologies.

**Sexual Orientation** – Channel support will foster good relations by challenging negative views based on sexual orientation which are identified within the Prevent assessment of individuals accessing support. These negative views often feature within the Islamist Extremism and Extreme Right-Wing ideologies.

#### 4. Summary of foreseeable impacts of policy proposal, guidance or operational activity on people who share protected characteristics

- The vulnerability of being drawn into terrorism is threat-agnostic and is not impacted by any of the protected characteristics.
- It is recognised however, that some groups, such as men and young people are more likely to be referred to Channel and therefore are more likely to access support through Channel panels.
- The Channel guidance provides a more defined framework for providing that support, which will enhance the quality of service for recipients.
- There are recognised gaps in the data capture of individuals referred and accessing support through Channel. An evaluation of Channel is underway and options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope. This is set to conclude and report in 2025.
- Compliance with the PSED will feature within mandatory training developed for Channel chairs which will follow the guidance launch.
- Analysis of the Channel caseload is ongoing and subsequent learning will inform and direct future Channel improvements

Protected Characteristic Group	Potential for Positive or Negative Impact?	Explanation	Action to address negative impact
<b>Age</b>	Positive	74% (594) accessing Channel support during 2021-22 were under the age of 20 years; an increase of 13% on the previous year. Will draw on practitioner expertise to cater for specific client needs. Promoting accessibility of support.	
<b>Disability</b>	Positive	Individuals accessing Channel support can often present with a range of vulnerabilities. Channel panels have access to the expertise of a range of specialist services when considering appropriate support for individuals. Emphasises need to make reasonable adjustments for individuals with a disability accessing support. Will draw on practitioner expertise to cater for specific client needs. Promoting accessibility of support. Channel panels have access to Vulnerability Support Hubs as an additional resource provided by Counter Terrorism Policing HQ to assist with assessments and advice for panels supporting individuals with a range of assessed needs. Increased insight into clients with ASC accessing Channel support.	A review of Channel data collection with recommendations for improvement will be a feature of the Channel evaluation.



<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	Positive	Using Intervention Providers will challenge negative views of individuals to help foster tolerance between communities and between people who share this protected characteristic. Will draw on practitioner expertise to cater for specific client needs. Promoting accessibility of support.	
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	Positive	Using Intervention Providers will challenge negative views of individuals to help foster tolerance between communities and between people who share this protected characteristic Will draw on practitioner expertise to cater for specific client needs Promoting accessibility of support	
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	Positive	Using Intervention Providers will challenge negative views of individuals to help foster tolerance between communities and between people who share this protected characteristic Will draw on practitioner expertise to cater for specific client needs Promoting accessibility of support	
<b>Race</b>	Positive	Using Intervention Providers will challenge negative views of individuals to help foster tolerance between communities and between people who share this protected characteristic. Will draw on practitioner expertise to cater for specific client needs. Promoting accessibility of support. Requirement for Channel panels to introduce client-assessed ethnic data capture within consent form.	A review of Channel data collection with recommendations for improvement will be a feature of the Channel evaluation.
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	Positive, although perceptions of Prevent still exist.	A longstanding misperception in some communities that Prevent unfairly targets Muslim communities, despite almost half of the cases (42%) supported through Channel during 2021-22 related to extreme right-wing concerns compared to those supported due to Islamist-related extremism (20%). Using Intervention Providers will challenge negative views of individuals to help foster tolerance between communities and between people who share this protected characteristic. Will draw on practitioner expertise to cater for specific client needs. Promoting accessibility of support.	Channel panels provide support for individuals influenced by all forms of extremism, as reflected in published data. However, public perception in some quarters suggests Prevent unfairly targets Muslims. Whilst the Channel Duty Guidance is an aid for professionals and its launch will be directed at practitioners with responsibilities for delivering Channel operational practice, it will be available in the public domain, on the Gov.UK website. This is in addition to the existing webpage outlining the Channel programme and the Channel Data Protection Information Notice

			(DPIN). Any communications surrounding its launch will therefore place a strong emphasis on the balanced nature of extremism cases managed by Channel panels. Channel panels have access to Home Office approved Intervention Providers who provide structured sessions to assess ideological, theological or fixated thinking and work with individuals over a period to challenge those drivers/beliefs where they have potential for drawing them towards terrorism.
<b>Sex</b>	Positive	Of the 804 individuals receiving support during 2021-22, 93% (746) were male. Using Intervention Providers will challenge negative views of individuals to help foster tolerance between communities and between people who share this protected characteristic. Will draw on practitioner expertise to cater for specific client needs. Promoting accessibility of support.	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Positive	Access to Intervention Providers, will challenge negative views of individuals to help foster tolerance between communities and between people who share this protected characteristic. Will draw on practitioner expertise to cater for specific client needs. Promoting accessibility of support.	

**5. In light of the overall policy objective, are there any ways to avoid or mitigate any of the negative impacts that you have identified above?**

The guidance refresh will emphasise Channel panel requirements of:

**Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation by -**

- emphasising the public sector equality duty of panel members and the need to make reasonable adjustments explicitly within the guidance
- catering for the needs of individuals who share particular protected characteristics by drawing on specialist advice available through its panel membership or through local cross-sector service provision
- removing identified barriers of access and highlight gaps in services to local commissioners
- promoting support available through Vulnerability Support Hubs providing specialist assistance for supporting clients with a range of assessed needs
- strengthening data capture of the cohort through introducing client-assessed ethnic data recording
- Actively challenging extremist ideologies which promote discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- An evaluation of Channel is underway and options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope. This is set to conclude and report in 2025.
- Analysis of the Channel caseload is ongoing and will provide direction for future Channel improvements

**Advancing equality of opportunity by -**

- Providing a tailored package of support to meet the specific needs of all individuals supported through Channel
- Developing an in depth understanding of the local service offer and drawing on the specialist advice and services through its local public, voluntary, community and faith sector organisations
- Emphasising there are no barriers of access for Channel support based upon protected characteristics, or for those with intersectional characteristics within Channel public facing documentation
- Extending future data capture by including options within the scope of the forthcoming evaluation of Channel
- Ensuring potential barriers to access are identified and addressed – e.g translation of the guidance into Welsh, emphasising the expectation for relevant public facing documentation to be made available in accessible formats including community languages, accessibility formats and drawing on available translation services
- Actively challenging extremist ideologies to promote equality of opportunity
- An evaluation of Channel is underway and options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope. This is set to conclude and report in 2025.
- Analysis of the Channel caseload is ongoing and will provide direction for future Channel improvements

### **Fostering good relations by –**

- Putting in place Intervention Provider support to challenge prejudice where these pertain to protected characteristics, identified within the vulnerability assessment of individuals accessing Channel support, and promoting understanding between people from different groups
- Challenging beliefs and misconceptions between communities and between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This includes promoting good relations and fostering tolerance
- Actively challenging extremist ideologies and promoting good relations between people from different groups and backgrounds
- An evaluation of Channel is underway and options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope. This is set to conclude and report in 2025.
- Analysis of the Channel caseload is ongoing and will provide direction for future Channel improvements

The guidance development has been receptive to the gaps and equality considerations identified during stakeholder consultations held in 2021. Additional clarifications and references have been provided to address the requests made.

There are no negative impacts identified from updating the Channel Duty guidance. The refreshed guidance will strengthen practitioner delivery, address inconsistencies in practice and promote equality. Compliance with the PSED features within mandatory training developed for Channel chairs. Due to existing perceptions of Prevent, additional consideration will be given to communications when launching the guidance update; this will place strong emphasis that the susceptibility to being drawn into terrorism is agnostic and draws on evidence showing the balance of extremism managed through Channel panels. We have extended requirements to strengthen the role of families both during the provision of Channel support and to actively invite client feedback post-Channel closure.

Improved communications to tackle negative perceptions of Prevent and to actively rebut false claims are in development. These communications are being developed in readiness for the launch of the updated Prevent duty guidance and Channel duty guidance and will include messages tackling concerns that Muslim communities may be unfairly targeted as a result of these updates.

Strengthened data quality, quality assurance monitoring and oversight will provide the opportunity to analyse trends and identify disparity within operational practice through which to take corrective action.

An evaluation of Channel is underway and options for strengthening Channel data capture will be considered within its scope. This is scheduled to conclude in 2025.

## **6. Review date**

The Channel Duty guidance is scheduled for launch during the autumn 2023. A review of this equality impact will be undertaken following completion of the Channel evaluation in 2025 to reflect any resulting recommendations.

## **7. Declaration**

I have read the available evidence and I am satisfied that this demonstrates compliance, where relevant, with Section 149 of the Equality Act and that due regard has been made to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations.

**SCS sign off: Cathryn Ellsmore, DD Prevent**

**Name/Title: Channel duty guidance refresh 2023**

**Directorate/Unit: Prevent, Homeland Security Group**

**Lead contact:** [REDACTED]

**Date: 26 July 2023**

For monitoring purposes all completed EIA documents **must** be sent to the [REDACTED]

**Date sent to PSED Team: 26 July 2023**