

PREVENT ON A PAGE: WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- **Prevent** is a key strand of the government's counter terrorism strategy – **CONTEST** – alongside **Pursue, Protect and Prepare**
- Prevent dates from **2003**; the revised strategy was published in **June 2011**.
- The purpose of the strategy is to **"prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"**.
- The 2011 strategy addresses **all forms of terrorism** but mentions specifically: international terrorism; Northern Ireland-related terrorism; and extreme right wing-related terrorism as the greatest current threats
- The 2011 strategy was explicitly changed to include non-violent extremism which **"can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit"**.
- Prevent became a statutory duty for **seven specified authorities** under the **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015**. Higher education was one of the seven authorities (alongside further education, schools, local authorities, health, prisons and probation, the police).
- The government issued **general guidance** in June 2015, and **higher education-specific guidance for England and Wales** in September 2015. For higher education the statutory duty has been in force since **18th September 2015**. There is separate guidance for Scotland and for further education.
- The duty applies to **all providers of higher education**, publicly funded and others, with more than 250 students (not including those on distance education courses).
- The **legal responsibility** for compliance resides with the **governing body/proprietor**.
- The **monitoring authority for relevant higher education bodies (RHEBs) in England** (excluding further education colleges which are monitored by Ofsted) is **Hefce**. (Monitoring responsibility will transfer to the Office for Students from April 2018). Governing bodies/proprietors are required to report annually to provide assurance that the institution **"has had due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"**.
- Institutions must maintain a **current risk assessment** to identify the risks of vulnerable individuals being drawn into terrorism, and **an appropriate action and training plan** to address and mitigate those risks.
- Policies and procedures must match the expectations in the statutory guidance and must be **actively implemented and reviewed appropriately**.
- Prevent is **essentially about safeguarding**, and policies on student and staff welfare should incorporate the duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. There should be **well-publicised and understood arrangements for staff and students to report concerns and to provide appropriate support to individuals**.
- **Other policies** and procedures should also incorporate the duty – freedom of speech, visiting speakers and external events, use of computers, information sharing, use of faith facilities.
- The Prevent duty should be implemented alongside and **with due regard to other statutory duties** – on academic freedom, freedom of speech, equality and diversity, data protection and confidentiality.
- Institutions should identify a **Prevent Lead**, one of whose responsibilities will be to decide when an individual might be referred to **Channel**, a multi-agency approach to provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism.