



Preventing Prevent

Handbook 2017

Acknowledgements

Editors

Ilyas Nagdee

NUS Black Students' Officer

Hareem Ghani

NUS Women's Officer

Zamzam Ibrahim

NUS National Executive Council

Acknowledgements

Malia Bouattia

Hajera Begum

Samayya Afzal

Saffa Mir



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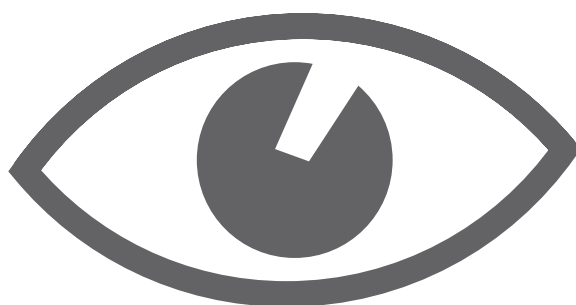
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Foreword

Two years have passed since the Prevent duty of the Counter-Terrorism & Security Act came into effect, amidst heavy opposition from the student movement and civil society at large. Since then, thousands of children have been put through the ordeal of referral and interrogation, an army of educators have been trained to spy on their students, and the space for dissent on campus and in civil society is being suffocated out.

An atmosphere thick with anxiety hangs over Muslim communities, whilst the chilling effect of Prevent is felt throughout academia and organising spaces alike. With Prevent, there is no space spared from the spectre of state surveillance. Under the guise of 'countering extremism', it has been embedded across society, spanning our nurseries, schools and colleges, through to GPs and prisons – seeping into the immigration system and even the home. Prevent emerged in, fed off, and in turn nourished an expansion in anti-Muslim racism to strengthen the state's hand and amass more powers of repression.

With the far-right mobilising and seizing power across the West, the urgency of combatting racist and repressive programmes like Prevent are underlined further. The unfiltered racism of Donald Trump only echoes the rhetoric deployed around Prevent and countering 'extremism' by British governments over the past decade and a half.

Yet, despite the scale of the threat facing us, students have blazed the trail in opposition to Prevent – against a backdrop of repression, resistance has bloomed. With over 50 student unions securing anti-Prevent policy, and daring actions carried out across the country – our campaigns have emboldened national unions, civil liberties groups, political parties and more into vocally rejecting the strategy.

In major part through the strength of student campaigning, the space has even been forced open on the national stage, to challenge Prevent in Parliament – fracturing the echo chamber of support for it the government once enjoyed in the echelons of power.

Now, it falls upon us to take hold of the narrative and articulate both our opposition and our vision for a fairer future. Now is the time to lay the ground for the abolition Prevent, its sister systems of surveillance and the architecture of oppression they have constructed since the turn of the century.

In doing so we must connect our campaigning beyond the student sphere, forging solidarity with civil liberties group, faith groups and working class Muslim communities on the sharpest edge of Prevent.

We can be under no illusions – we may be vocal, but our campaigning will need to be reflexive and adaptive in the face of shifting resistance. We cannot fall for promises to 'diversify' Prevent to non-Muslim communities, or attempts to rebrand and manufacture 'community' support for it.

A fundamentally unjust strategy, applied broadly, is no less unjust – we do not seek an equality of oppression, we seek to end it.

Continued,

Preventing Prevent

As we speak the government is marketing Prevent internationally – exporting its failed strategy to states across the world. Through our work here, we truly have the potential to turn the tide, globally.

This handbook will provide the tools to begin that work, and develop your own anti-Prevent campaign on your campus. Covering the history of Prevent, the Prevent duty in colleges and universities, and a roadmap to begin your campaign, I hope this will be a useful resource for students, organisers and officers alike.

The strength of our movement is – and always has been – in local campaigns, with students, educators and workers united in principled coalitions. Innovative and powerful organising against Prevent on the ground is where the national campaign draws its power, and through which the narrative will continue to shift.

Whilst the challenges ahead may run deep, I look forward to building that movement with you in the year ahead.

In solidarity,

Ilyas Nagdee

NUS Black Students' Officer



Timeline of UK Counter-Terrorism



Preventing Prevent



KEY:

Blue: Key events

Red: CONTEST/Prevent-related

Orange: Legislation

Green: Other



Section 1: The Prevent agenda

What is Prevent

'**Prevent**' is one strand of the British Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) which was introduced by the Labour government during the 2000s.

CONTEST consists of the '4 Ps': **P**ursue/**P**revent/**P**rotect/**P**repare

It is the Prevent strand of CONTEST which has received the most attention. This is because it most directly affects everyday life in Britain – being integrated into education, healthcare, immigration systems and more – whilst also being the most controversial.

Prevent is a policy strand outlined in the CONTEST strategy.

The *Prevent duty* is a statutory requirement to implement Prevent measures, from the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act.

On campuses, it has manifested in staff being trained to spot and report on 'vulnerable' students to the police, the cancellation of student-organised speaker events, and Muslim students being approached to be informants on their peers.

Whilst CONTEST on the whole preceded the London 7/7 bombing attacks in 2005, it became 'mainstreamed' and the Prevent strand was introduced following the attacks. The 2006 version of CONTEST set the framework of today's counter-terrorism strategy.

CONTEST:

PURSUE

Stopping terrorist attacks "in this country and against our interests overseas" through co-ordinating security services to gather intelligence and disrupt terrorist plans.

Prevent

Responding to "the ideological challenge of terrorism" and Preventing people being radicalised towards terrorism. 'Defuse' terrorism at its apparent root.

Channel: Those identified as 'vulnerable' to being drawn towards terrorism referred to panels to be 'supported' through de-radicalisation plan.

PROTECT

To "strengthen [the UK's] protection against a terrorist attack" by fortifying its infrastructure, borders and transport system.

PREPARE

To "mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack where that attack cannot be stopped". Damage control and recovery from an attack.

Prevent claims to offset the risk of terrorism by challenging its apparent root – which the government claims is an 'extremist ideology'. By challenging this ideology, and Preventing the process by which people come to adopt this ideology and become progressively 'radicalised' towards violence, the government claims it can defeat the threat of 'homegrown' terrorism.

This model of understanding extremism – analogised as a 'conveyor belt' or an 'iceberg' – has been roundly discredited by a wide range of figures and experts in the field as being reductionist and simplistic (see page 46 for more critiques). Prevent on the whole has been slammed as a failed exercise in counter-terrorism.

Prevent exists in the so-called 'pre-criminal space' – dealing with cases that aren't criminal, but that are supposedly on their way to becoming.

The history of Prevent

The Prevent strategy has gone through a number of changes since its introduction in 2006.

These changes reflect the shifting focuses of whichever government was in power, and also to quell the many criticisms it has received.

For more in-depth details about each version of Prevent see pages 13-17.

Earlier versions dealt exclusively with so-called 'Islamist extremism' and were accused of targeting Muslims communities and forcing individuals to spy and inform on fellow Muslims.

Public funding was poorly spent in the early strategies, with the allocation for Prevent funding being based on the proportion of Muslims within a particular region.

Latter iterations of Prevent addressed these concerns in part, but came with a new set of issues. The strategy continues to focus disproportionately on Muslims and is heavily funded by government.



Preventing Prevent

Later versions have also focused more explicitly on combatting the 'ideology' of terrorism (including recently "non-violent extremism") as well as making some references to right-wing extremism. Under the Coalition and Conservative governments, Prevent moved from a community-embedded approach to become more top-down, interventionist and policing-led.

In recent years Prevent has become more aggressively promoted and pervasive throughout society.

In 2015, Prevent was finally put on a legal basis through the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (see page 21). Despite Prevent's extensive history, large holes remain in the strategy.

Most noticeably, no government has yet been able legally define 'extremism'. The definition used for Prevent is a subjective government definition, not a legal one.

Very recently, the government have begun talking up the use of Prevent in countering far-right extremism, to quell concerns that it is only targeting Muslims. In doing so it points to increased referral rates for individuals being radicalised to far-right extremism – and at points even referred to Islamophobia itself as a type of extremism.

This turn is clearly in reaction to waves of campaign and opposition against Prevent – so we must be adaptive and principled in articulating our opposition to it.

Prevent must be abolished not only because of the racism built into it, but on the basis that it is inherently repressive, and fuels suspicion and state surveillance. There is no 'fair way' of doing Prevent – an unjust strategy, broadly applied, is no less unjust. We cannot accept the scope of surveillance and being widened to other communities, like working class whites.

We must oppose Prevent in form – as being Islamophobic – as well as in function – as being anti-democratic and repressive.

Ilyas Nagdee

NUS Black Students' Officer

For a short video on why we should oppose Prevent see:

bit.ly/2xWtL9X

Prevent 2006

(As outlined in CONTEST 2006)

- Concerned itself singularly with the threat of "Islamist terrorism"
- Aimed to tackle 'radicalisation' through "engaging in the battle of ideas" and challenging the ideologies of extremists
- Muslim communities were to lead on this battle of ideas. Government funds were made available through the 'Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Pathfinder Fund', for local community projects with the aim of countering extremism and/or building 'community cohesion'
- Identified a need to address grievances within Muslim communities, including through tackling social disadvantage
- Expressed a desire to counter negative perceptions of UK foreign policy
- Outlined the framework within which Prevent would henceforth operate: an intelligence-exchange system spanning the public and private sectors.

Criticisms:

- The singular and disproportionate focus on Muslim communities as the main threat constructed them as a suspect community
 - Established the flawed principle that 'ideology' is the key factor motivating violence. But terrorism is a methodology, not an ideology
 - Conflated countering social deprivation with countering extremism, blurring the lines between two government functions
 - 'Dirty money' – projects funded through PVE Pathfinder Fund were often expected to support intelligence gathering by the state. This objective remained covert
 - The role of UK foreign policy in fuelling violence both in the UK and abroad is vastly underplayed and dismissed
- The strategy engaged with these grievances to improve perceptions of foreign policy, not influence policy.

Prevent 2009

(as outlined in CONTEST 2009)

- Continued to deal solely with 'Islamist extremism' namely Al-Qaida and Al-Qaida-related/inspired movements and individuals
- 'Domestic extremism' (for e.g. animal rights extremism, North of Ireland-related extremism) is explicitly excluded from this programme
- First version of Prevent to acknowledge that UK foreign policy contributes towards grievances that motivate violence in the UK
- Focus of Prevent remained, however, misguided on tackling 'ideology' of violent extremism, and radicalisation
- Continued to expand Prevent wider – through increased funding and cross-sector integration of Prevent
- Leaked (then retracted) draft version expanded the definition of 'extremist' to cover those who for example 'promote Sharia law', 'fail to condemn the killing of British soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan' or 'believe in jihad, or armed resistance, anywhere in the world'.

Criticisms:

- Did too little to address the criticism of previous Prevent model
- Retained singular, discriminatory focus on Muslims despite this being controversial
- Retained misguided focus on so-called 'ideology of extremism'
- Recognition of the role of foreign policy in radicalisation, whilst a 'step forward' remained a lesser focus; a secondary objective to tackling ideology
- Proposals in the leaked draft indicated the direction that PREVENT was to take in moving the goalposts of what is considered 'extremism' They would have effectively branded almost every Muslim an extremist for holding Islamically-sanctioned (and entirely legal) opinions
- Although these were dropped, it still revealed the government's appetite for abusing the definition of extremism.

Prevent 2011

- First version of Prevent developed under a non-Labour government
- First version to concern itself with non-Muslim terrorism, with a few references to extreme right-wing terrorism (priority remained Muslims)
- The focus remained on combatting the “ideology” of terrorism
- Marked a move to a more ‘top-down’, sector-driven implementation of Prevent
- “No ungoverned spaces” – strategy identified mosques, universities and other such spaces as in need of infiltration by Prevent
- Mentioned using other, non-ministerial bodies for Prevent purposes (e.g. Charity Commission)
- Signalled a vast expansion of Prevent, embedding it within other sectors.

- “Safeguarding” – strategy referred to the closer co-operation between the welfare scheme of safeguarding and Prevent

- The strategy also reflected a more hardline stance on what/who constitute ‘extremists’

Groups who had previously received funding and support under PVE before were now labelled extremist by this strategy

- “British values” now introduced as the litmus test in deciding which groups were ‘acceptable’ to engage with

- Responded to some of the concerns of previous versions of Prevent: in particular the merging of the cohesion agenda with counter-terrorism (which is dropped), the explicit targeting of Muslim communities in funding allocation for Prevent projects and the secretive nature of past Prevent projects.

Criticisms:

- The inclusion of non-Muslim extremism is generally accepted as being mostly tokenistic.
- Retained the fundamentally flawed approach of “ideology” being the cause of terrorism, and stubbornly refused to reconsider this.
- There is almost no mention of the role of UK foreign policy in radicalising individuals; a step back from the 2009 strategy.
- The secretive nature of past Prevent projects was replaced with a more open approach – but also a more confrontational approach, demanding compliance from a wider range of actors and stakeholders, not least Muslim communities.
- The widened scope of the strategy (e.g. alluding to non-violent extremism) reflected the more intolerant, extreme neoconservative approach of the new government.
- Also foreshadowed them casting the net of Prevent even wider (as is the case today)

- Conflating ‘safeguarding’ with counter-terrorism policy repeated the issues of conflating ‘community cohesion’ with the policy; i.e. hijacking a welfare-oriented role and turning it into a soft entry-point for national security measures
- Despite accepting in the report that it was not the place of the government to intervene in theological debates within Islam, it later does that by committing to supporting and promoting certain ideological strands of Islam.
- The manipulation of the Charity Commission and such bodies securitised other sectors outside the traditional governmental departments
- In bringing the scope to universities, mosques and so on, the government brought the climate of suspicion and surveillance further than before
- The strategy is contradictory and messy in places – reflecting internal contradictions in the Coalition government when writing it.

Key terminology of Prevent

Except the definition of 'Terrorism', which is defined in the Terrorism Act 2000, none of the terms below which have been adopted by Prevent have a legal definition.

Placing Prevent on a statutory footing has effectively made these legally operable, however.

"Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas."

'Non-violent extremism'

"Extremism which isn't accompanied by violence and which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit."

'Radicalisation'

"Refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism."

'Radicaliser'

"An individual who encourages others to develop or adopt beliefs and views supportive of terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism."

'De-radicalisation'

"[Activity] aimed at a person who supports terrorism and in some cases has engaged in terrorist related activity, which is intended to effect cognitive and/or behavioural change leading to a new outlook on terrorism and/or disengagement from it"

'British values'

"Democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs"

'Terrorism'

"An action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause."



Channel

The Channel programme was introduced in 2007, as Prevent's 'early detection system'.

It is often the main path through which students come in to direct contact with Prevent, and generally deals with young people aged around 15-24.

Channel involves multi-agency panels (spanning police, youth workers, healthcare and education providers) to which those who are identified as being 'vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism' are referred.

If referred individuals are deemed 'at-risk' by the screening process, Channel panels provide 'support plans' to 'deradicalise' them, such as behavioural plans and "ideological/theological support".

Attending Channel is voluntary, but many cases have been reported of youths being essentially forced to comply and their families harassed into consent by police.

Setting up Channel has been made statutory for specified authorities under the CTSA.

Channel guidance including a set of indicators and behaviours that frontline staff (teachers, lecturers etc.) are expected to look out for when dealing with students – the 'Vulnerability Assessment Framework' – which has three interlinking categories of indicators.

What's the problem with Channel?

This list of indicators (see the next page) is very loose, broad, and open to misinterpretation.

This, coupled with the pressure to report 'problematic' behaviours, a false sense of expertise instilled by Prevent training, and the climate of fear and heightened biases whipped up surrounding 'extremism', has led to massive over-referrals to Channel – the vast majority (at times levelling over 80%) of referrals are deemed unworthy of any follow-up.

Indicators like 'relevant mental health issues' or 'a desire for political or moral change' can be used to problematise those suffering from mental health issues, or politically active individuals.

Channel is presented as the 'friendly face' of Prevent, and as being a natural extension of 'safeguarding' welfare duties .

But safeguarding is meant to concern itself with the welfare of the child, not mark them out as security threats to the state!

The fact that Channel is voluntary 'ignores the significant psychological pressure put on the individuals and their families when referred, and the coercive influence of the police/authority. Cases have spoken of living in constant anxiety.

Preventing Prevent

The framework is based off the "ERG 22+" (Extremism Risk Guidance) tool.

The studies from which the ERG22+ were formed were themselves of questionable scientific quality and remained un-scrutinised by peers. The studies themselves recommended only trained professionals should utilise these tools.

Through Prevent, the findings have been stretched far beyond their initial context and intentions.

Channel

'Vulnerability Assessment Framework'

1. Engagement –

With a group cause or ideology

- Feelings of grievance and injustice
- Feeling under threat
- A need for identity, meaning and belonging
- A desire for status
- A desire for excitement and adventure
- A need to dominate and control others
- Susceptibility to indoctrination
- A desire for political or moral change
- Opportunistic involvement
- Family or friend's involvement in extremism
- Being at a transitional time of life
- Being influenced or controlled by a group
- Relevant mental health issues.

2. Intent –

To cause harm

- Over-identification with a group or ideology
- 'Them and Us' thinking
- Dehumanisation of the enemy
- Attitudes that justify offending
- Harmful means to an end
- Harmful objectives.

3. Capability –

To cause harm

- Individual knowledge, skills and competencies
- Access to networks, funding or equipment
- Criminal Capability

For further reading on the topic:

The 'science' of pre-crime: The secret 'radicalisation' study underpinning Prevent

CAGE, 2016

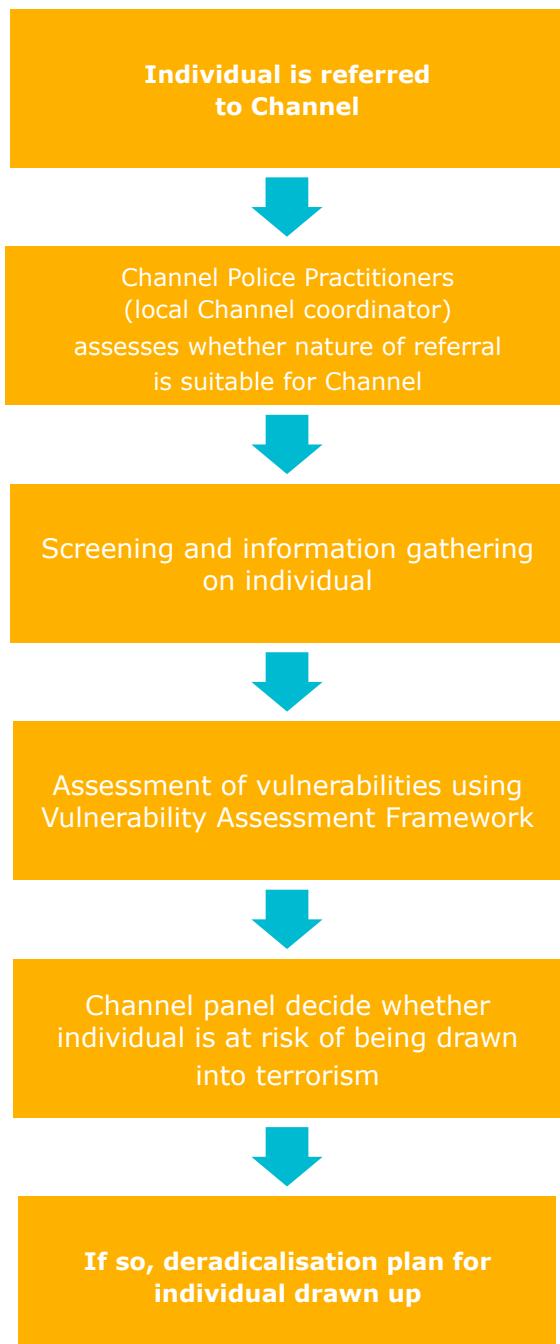
Preventing Prevent

What happens once someone is referred?

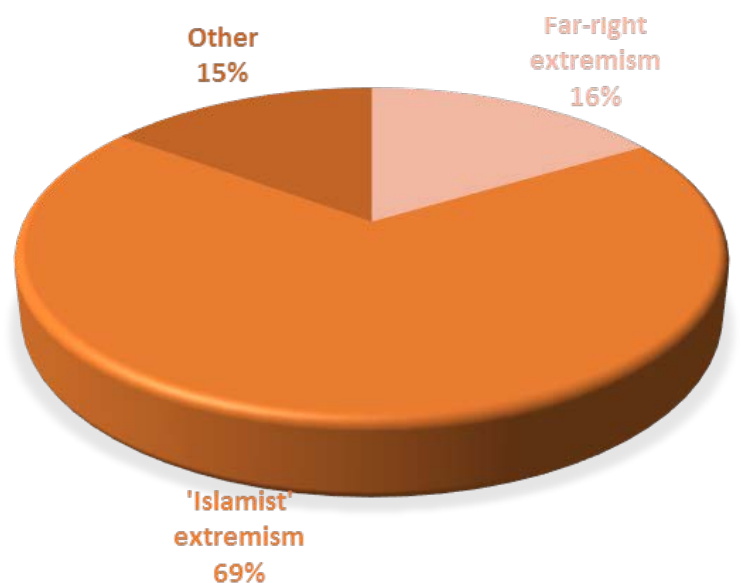
When making a referral to Channel, signs from all 3 categories of the Vulnerability Assessment Framework should be observed to justify it. In practice this threshold isn't necessarily applied.

Prevent training often extends further to identify other 'warning signs' to watch out for – often very vague behavioural signs.

Annual Channel referral figures are available via the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).



Year (financial)	Referrals to Channel
2007-08	87
2008-09	179
2009-10	463
2010-11	584
2011-12	508
2012-13	748
2013-14	1292
2014-15	2183
2015-16	4117



Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

The Counter-Terrorism and Security (CTS) Bill was introduced to Parliament in November 2014. The Bill was fast-tracked through Parliament following a very short consultation process. With cross-party support, the Bill passed into law as an Act, achieving royal assent on February 12th 2015.

Most noticeably, the Act placed Prevent on a statutory footing for the first time, placing a legal duty on 'specified authorities' to exercise the 'Prevent duty' i.e. to implement Prevent.

Schedule 6 of the Act outlines these specified authorities as including local government councils, prison governors, NHS Trusts and Foundations, and governing boards of educational bodies (from nurseries, to schools, to FE colleges and Higher Education Institutions).

Failure to comply with the Prevent duty can lead to fines and court orders for Specified Authorities – and direct interventions by government. Specified Authorities can be changed by the Secretary of State.

The Prevent duty

"A specified authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism."

*Section 26 (1)
Counter-Terrorism and
Security Act 2015*

Specified Authorities in Schedule 6 can include individuals, governing bodies, forces, authorities and institutions.

For the purposes of most colleges and universities, the Specified Authorities would be their governing bodies – it falls upon them to enact the duty.

'Due regard' is defined as "an appropriate amount of weight on the need to Prevent people being drawn into terrorism when they (schools and colleges) consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions."

Differences in Scotland

Separate guidance for the Prevent duty has been issued in Scotland from England/Wales.

The duties of the Act remain broadly the same in all regions.

The Scotland guidance reflects the different governance structures for Prevent in Scotland, and the powers devolved to Scottish authorities to implement the Act.

- Prevent activity in Scotland is overseen by the Prevent sub-group of the Multi-Agency Strategic CONTEST Board (MASCB) for Scotland.
- Local multi-agency CONTEST groups oversee the implementation of Prevent.
- The Prevent Professional Concerns process (PPC) is the equivalent of Channel

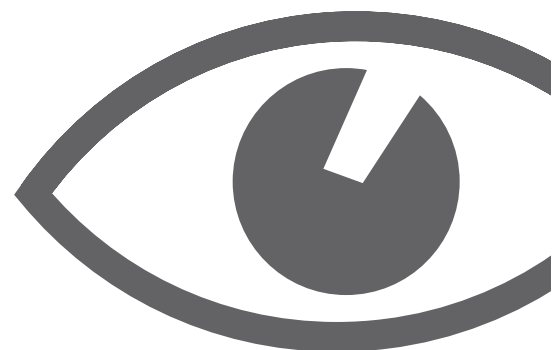
The explicit mentions of exemplifying 'British values' for FE institutions are absent from Scottish guidance.

However it extends to cover incidences relating to the situation in the North of Ireland, including dissident republic and loyalist activity, and sectarian violence.

The legal duty on universities to secure Freedom of Speech under the Education Act 2 (1986) doesn't apply to Scottish institutions.

But the CTSA still specifies the duty for Scottish institutions to ensure this, so practically this has no effect.

**For support campaigning
against Prevent in Scotland:
Scotland Against Criminalising
Communities (SACC)
www.sacc.org.uk**



Summary of CTSA 2015 schedules

Prevent duty

To exercise due regard to Prevent people being drawn into terrorism.

Channel

Local Channel de-radicalisation panels to be established for people vulnerable of being drawn into terrorism.

Seizure of passports and travel documents

Barring travel abroad for persons 'suspected of involvement in terrorism'.

Temporary exclusion orders

Exile from returning to the UK for up to 2 years and invalidating their British passports, when reasonably suspected of having been 'involved in terrorism-related activity' abroad.

TPIMs (Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures)

Placing individuals under electronic tagging, tight restrictions on travel and who they can meet, and requiring them to report regularly with the police.

Data Retention

Requiring communications service providers (e.g. internet service providers – ISPs) to retain information which can identify individual using service at any given time.

Authority-to-carry schemes

Carriers (aircraft, ships, trains) taking passengers to/from the UK must seek government authorisation for type of people 'classes' that it can carry, and possibly pass on passenger details to government. Classes can be barred from authorisation (e.g. whole nationalities of people).

Power to examine goods

Expands power of officers to board vehicles, ships, aircraft and designated premises to examine goods for transport to determine 'whether they have been used in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism'.

Powers can be exercised without any basis of suspicion.

Includes power to intercept and examine goods being transported within the UK – including postal mail.

Fundamental British Values defined under Prevent:

- **Democracy**
- **The rule of law**
- **Individual liberty**
- **Mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs**

British Values

In the Prevent 2011 strategy, the new Coalition government stated its definition of British Values, which would become a key instrument in determining 'extremist' ideologies.

Extremism was defined in the strategy as vocal or active opposition to British Values (as well as calling for the deaths of British armed forces).

The Prevent duty now explicitly places a responsibility to promote British Values in Further Education.

This new drive to construct a national set of values marked a shift in the approach of Prevent under the new government.

This approach was outlined by then-PM David Cameron's speech in Munich in 2011, with a call to enforce 'muscular liberalism' and a stronger 'British' identity.

The shift to 'muscular liberalism' signalled a move from the state-multiculturalist approach to society of the previous Labour government.

It can also be seen as a dog whistle to the far-right in Britain who had begun growing and mobilising against discontent with social integration approaches.

None of these values are unique or exclusive to Britain, and are practised – or at least purported – in countries worldwide.

The actual value of British Values to the state is as part an attempt to manufacture an exceptionalised national identity to enforce. Championing 'British Values' allows the government to tap into populist xenophobia running through Britain.

Tying security measures to the language of nationalism and state identity is also another way that Prevent has bled into the remit of immigration.

"Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and a much more active, muscular liberalism.

A passively tolerant society says to its citizens, as long as you obey the law we will just leave you alone."

ex-PM David Cameron, 2011

Prevent training

Prevent training is delivered to frontline staff – those who engage most directly with the public. This includes teachers, lecturers, GPs, and in cases cleaners, catering staff and more.

Prevent training is developed and provided by government or third party and private companies. They vary in length and depth. Sometimes they take the form of videos, workshops or even conferences.

Training sessions have been criticised as being shallow and low-quality, often relying on stereotypes and caricatures of 'extremist' behaviour – as well as making crude equivocations between Muslim and far-right extremism. The warning signs for radicalisation given in the training can be even more generic than those in Prevent, problematising ordinary behaviour.

The opportunity in sessions to respond to the training can also be limited. Trainees, for e.g. teachers, are left with a false impression that they are in any way equipped to 'spot radicalisation'. This low quality understanding heightens anti-Muslim biases, encouraging profiling and strengthening a reflex to read students' activities as 'suspicious'.

This fundamentally redefines the relationship between staff and educators, and those they are meant to serve and care for.

As of July 2016, over half a million public sector workers had undertaken Prevent training.

"[The training] was very basic. Changing behaviour, changing patterns of speaking, becoming more religious, withdrawing from family, people isolating themselves – these were identified as possible indicators of being drawn into terrorism."

in *Eroding Trust*,
Open Society Justice Initiative

Rather than break down the complex science in understanding what draws people towards political violence, Prevent training often offers a simplified, 'fast food'-analysis of extremism.

In the current context it is almost inevitable that teachers will over-refer to Prevent, when considering:

- The false sense of expertise instilled by the training.
- The pressure to comply from senior staff above.
- The threat of compliance monitoring from outside.

The background of the slide is a dark grey color with a repeating pattern of stylized eyes. Each eye is composed of a light grey outline, a dark grey iris, and a black pupil. The eyes are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with some eyes partially cut off by the edges of the frame.

Section 2:

The case against Prevent

10 reasons to oppose Prevent

- 1.** Definitions of key terms of the strategy remain vague and open to abuse for political ends. In controlling the language around 'extremism' the government effectively controls the terms of the debate, and can classify more and more behaviours as being 'extremist'.
- 2.** It has steadily scaled back civil liberties for all in society. Successive laws passed alongside CONTEST have afforded ever-greater powers to the state to outlaw new actions and thoughts, and problematise more activities.
- 3.** Integrating Prevent across sectors and departments has embedded a monitoring system everywhere, creating a surveillance state.
- 4.** Prevent cannot be taken in isolation from the Islamophobia rising in British society and globally: the massively disproportionate focus on Muslim communities feeds Islamophobia against Muslims.
- 5.** The intelligence-gathering aspect of Prevent has bred deep, lingering suspicion and distrust both within Muslim communities, and between them and the state.
- 6.** In conflating issues such as safeguarding, education and healthcare with 'counter-terrorism', Prevent has blurred the line between welfare and national security.
- 7.** Prevent has further securitised all sectors of British society, adding a layer of Islamophobic profiling to already-racialised sectors like immigration control and policing.
- 8.** Prevent training for frontline staff (teachers, lecturers, GPs) fundamentally alters the relationship between them and their students/patients to one based on suspicion: we are students, not suspects.
- 9.** Prevent has consistently diverted focus away from the government's own deep complicity in nurturing political violence – due to its recent foreign policy decisions, relationships as well its many neo-colonial exploits. Instead it redirects attention to the consequences of its actions and sets Muslims up to blame.
- 10.** The 'science' and model of radicalisation used by Prevent lacks empirical support and is reductionist: inherently it cannot reliably determine what factors lead to political violence or how to stop this happening.



What's the word on Prevent?

It's important to remember that we are not alone in opposing Prevent – organisations across the education sector, civil society and beyond have come out to challenge Prevent, the Prevent duty and/or the counter-terrorism complex at large.

Despite desperate attempts by pro-Prevent practitioners and the government to manufacture support for their failed strategy, the consensus among independent sectors is in opposition to Prevent.



"Any expectation by the state for academic staff to be involved in monitoring their students is deeply worrying, and could have a chilling effect on relations between staff and students. We fundamentally believe that universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance."



"There is a danger that implementation of Prevent could worsen relationships between teachers and learners, close down space for open discussion in a safe and secure environment and smother the legitimate expression of political opinion."



"Liberal Democrats would scrap Prevent in its entirety. Prevent and Channel are discredited amongst those communities where their success is most important."



"Prevent, and the government's approach to fighting extremism, risks stifling our right to question and challenge ideas with which we disagree. We do not believe that draconian crackdowns on the rights to debate controversial issues will achieve the ends the government says it seeks."



"...The Prevent strategy [has] led Muslim students to feel 'under siege'; FOSIS fears [the Prevent duty] will disproportionately target Muslim students, leading only to further stigmatisation and alienation, perhaps most ironically doing little to Prevent the appeal of extremist narratives."



"[We condemn] the escalating incursions by the government into professional life in the name of security and immigration controls... Workers are being asked to engage in ill-defined and racist processes of ethnic profiling, often with little or no training or guidance on the support that they themselves have in the workplace with regard to these practices. [TUC] condemns these racist laws and the attempt to change our jobs through the workplace responsibilities imposed by these Acts and Prevent."



"Since its inception [the Prevent duty] has left a trail of discrimination and distrust in its wake. By forcing teachers and lecturers to police their classrooms using clumsy definitions of the "extreme", it has undermined not only trust, but also the free and frank exchange of ideas in schools and universities. Liberty is calling for repeal of the Prevent duty and for an independent review of the broader [Prevent] strategy."



"The UK government's Prevent programme is a manipulative, discriminatory and Islamophobic programme to suppress political dissent in the name of Preventing people from turning to terrorism. It provides cover for intelligence-gathering by police and the intelligence and security services, and puts people at risk of abuse by UK intelligence and security services, and by agencies and authorities overseas. SACC will continue... to campaign for the Prevent programme to be scrapped; and to urge people in Scotland not to cooperate with Prevent."



"[The] Prevent strategy is not fit for purpose, and its effect on education and students' human rights raises serious concerns. [The] Prevent strategy is leaving a generation of young Britons fearful of exercising their rights to freedom of expression and belief and risks being counter-productive."



"Prevent is built upon a foundation of Islamophobia and racism, a reliance on stereotypes which can be seen in the fact Muslim communities are often regarded as collectively suspect, whilst far-right extremism is downplayed. Prevent has contributed to a climate of fear and self-censorship primarily but not exclusively among Muslims. ... [It should be] immediately withdrawn in order to Prevent further human rights abuses."



"[Prevent] has mushroomed from an intrusive surveillance programme into an invasive social engineering exercise that critics say directly attacks the Muslim community and strikes at the heart of long established civil liberties. The purported logic governing 'Prevent Violent Extremism' is to deny terrorists space in which to operate and encourage 'violent extremism'. However, its application has involved the erosion of many fundamental freedoms and rights, particularly in relation to the Muslim community."



"Prevent is a politically motivated programme that seeks to control belief and behaviour, limit debate and discussion in academia, and dilute civil society into a force that is no longer able to question and challenge the government. This has to be opposed no matter who delivers it."

Proposals for a "grassroots-led" counter-terrorism programme are unfortunate attempts to rescue the government narrative, which reinforces the idea that terrorism is a Muslim problem when statistics show that this is not the case. It is also an attempt to get Muslims to take ownership of what is the result of wider societal problems and ongoing aggressive foreign policy, while the government remains blameless.

CAGE will continue for the total repeal of Prevent with partners in wider civil society and a reversal and an undoing of the ideas that have been embedded amongst professional practice, regardless of who is implementing it."

Prevent in practice

There are many, many stories and anecdotes to be shared about Prevent and its victims – but many more remain unspoken. Here are just a few examples:

We know there are many student stories of experiences with Prevent out there that aren't publicised – from students referred to Channel to events being cancelled following pressure from Prevent officers. Documenting cases can help in combatting Prevent and exposing the programme for what it is.

**If you have any experiences to share please get in touch:
black@nus.org.uk**

The President of a college student union was asked to pass on the names of all members of the college Islamic Society to the police – and no other society on campus. (The President refused)

A college student was hounded by Prevent officers and his college for his Palestine activism.

Police officers told him that by wearing a 'Free Palestine' badge he was expressing extremist views, and when organising a charity fundraiser for Palestinians was questioned by his principal on whether the money raised would be going to ISIS, before being told that publicity for the fundraiser could not include quotes from Muslim figures, but Christians were acceptable.

For practical support on what to do if affected by Prevent, contact Prevent Watch:

**www.Preventwatch.org
contact@Preventwatch.org
033 33 44 33 96**

A high school student who took out books from his school library – including one on terrorism – had them taken off him by a school librarian and referred to Prevent, who visited him at his home.



Preventing Prevent

A young anti-fracking activist's home was visited by counter-terrorism police after he took part in a demonstration at a shale gas well.

Prevent officers arrived unannounced at the activist's family home asking to speak with his mum about his involvement with the protests – she refused and asked them not to return.

Later, officers again turned up without notice asking the mother when she had last seen her son. When asked why they wanted to see him they said that they “just wanted to make sure he knew what kind of people he was involved with as they are extremists.”

A 14 year-old boy at a London school was referred to child protection officer in an ‘inclusion centre’ of the school and questioned about affiliations with ISIS after using the term *L'ecoterrorisme* (‘eco-terrorism’) in a French class discussion about the use of violence in eco-activism. The experience left the boy “scared and nervous” and “visibly distressed”, and reluctant to engage in future school discussions.

Teachers from schools in Yorkshire received Prevent training where they were warned by a policeman about environmental ‘extremists’ – where Green Party MP Caroline Lucas was used as an example for her arrest at an anti-fracking demo.

A nursery pupil in Luton had made drawings in class that concerned his teachers – including one of a man holding a large knife.

When questioned about it he said that it was a knife for cutting cucumbers – which he pronounced similar to “cooker bomb”.

When his mother was called in and explained this as a common mispronunciation to the nursery management, they flat out ignored this and kept pressuring and bullying her to sign consent form for his referral to Channel.

Eventually they ended up referring him without her consent, only backing down after the mother received legal support.



Why are colleges and universities a focus for Prevent?

The targeting of universities and colleges was introduced in Prevent 2011.

This came as part of the government's self-described move to ensure that there were "no ungoverned spaces" for 'extremism' to flourish, and where Prevent wasn't active.

It was a move which in hindsight marks the turning point of Prevent into a totalitarian programme.

Coming off the back of some recent acts of political violence by ex-students from Britain, education institutions were targeted partly due to their high contact with young people – identified as an apparent higher risk demographic for radicalisation – as well as the claim that:

'More than 30% of people convicted of Al Qa'ida associated terrorist offences in the UK between 1999 and 2009 are known to have attended university or a higher education institution. Another 15% studied or achieved a vocational or further education qualification.'

Prevent Strategy, 2011

This in and of itself is clearly a non-point. According to figures by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England), in 2011-12 nearly 40% of the population attended universities in the UK. Statistically this puts universities as a lower-risk environment if anything.

Besides this, the logic that some people convicted of terrorism had attended university makes them targets for counter-terrorism is no more well thought-out than the idea that:

99% of terrorists buy groceries from supermarkets, therefore Tesco must be a radicalising hotspot.

Even at the time, there was not a consensus within the Coalition government about the connection between perpetrators' university experience and later committing acts of political violence:

"Do we know that this person was radicalised as a result of being at a British university? ...It is quite hard to pinpoint whether the university experience was the specific trigger."

David Willetts, former Universities Minister

Preventing Prevent

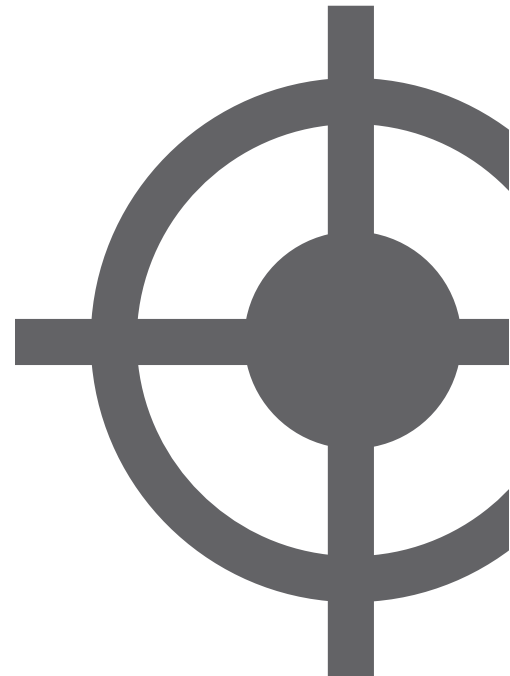
Unfortunately, universities and colleges have over the years taken it upon themselves to implement Prevent as a matter of standard practice in the sector.

The CTSA places legal duties to do so, which will be expanded upon in the next section, but for many institutions Prevent is embedded within their day-to-day running already.

So the challenge we are facing isn't entirely new – instead what we need now are new tactics, new ways of articulating our opposition, and renewed energy in fighting Prevent!

As the new Prevent regime took form, the government engaged Universities with Prevent through the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) by:

- **Issuing guidance on external speakers to universities and SUs (many SU speaker request processes now reflect this; forms and requests are vetted by university staff before approval)**
- **Supporting local police forces to work with 'high risk' institutions, and linking HE institutions to regional Prevent co-ordinators (often campus police officers were 'installed' for primarily this function)**
- **Working with the Charity Commission and HEFCE to enact Prevent and regulate across the sector**
- **Funding a (former) staff position at NUS to "build a better knowledge base and to develop training materials for staff working within student unions."**



Prevent and Islamophobia

Islamophobia, or anti-Muslim racism, is a form of structural racism directed against Muslims and those perceived to be of a 'Muslim background' or otherwise racialised as Muslim.

Whilst Islamophobia is far from a new type of racism, it has taken on a different character in recent decades, particularly since the dawn of the 'War on Terror'.

Modern Islamophobia is maintained at all levels of society, globally.

From individual acts of bigotry through to venomous media and political scapegoating, to legally enshrined discrimination – including attacks on Muslim faith and cultural practices to oppressive counter-terrorism legislation – Islamophobia is cross-pollinated and nourished from above and below.

States and governments have institutionalised Islamophobia to attack and weaken civil liberties, dismantle social systems and warmonger, often under the pretext of 'security'.

Islamophobia is used as a tool of state power, whipped up through fearmongering to shore up support for repressive laws and measures that begin by attacking Muslims, but ultimately hurt all in society.

Prevent both operates off of Islamophobic ideas and stereotypes, and in turn legitimises these same ideas.

Therefore campaigning effectively against Prevent necessarily entails uprooting the Islamophobia underpinning it – challenging it in society, the media, politics, as well as our own organising spaces.

In the most basic sense, Prevent is Islamophobic for its overwhelming targeting of Muslims – leveraging the might of the British state on a tiny community in Britain. This fact is hardwired into Prevent – born of the desire to monitor Muslim communities.

It also renders Muslims a suspect community in Britain, 'among us but not of us', the same ideology of the EDL and such.

Prevent is rooted in a hard right-wing/neoconservative perception of the world and Islam. This recycles old, damaging Orientalist ideas about Muslims: as inherently violent and illogical.

In turn, far-right groups have now adopted the language of 'anti-extremism' to mask their racism.

Prevent thus provides a state-sanctioned, intellectual veneer to the blunt racism of the far-right.

Preventing Prevent

Prevent also attacks tenets of Islam as a faith. Ordinary Islamic beliefs are designated as fundamentally incompatible with life in Britain.

In practice, Prevent falsely conflates the level of 'conservative' Islam with the likelihood of extremism. This is despite evidence linking strong faith identity with reduced vulnerability to being drawn towards violence.

Adopting markers of 'Muslim-ness' – such as beards, hijab and niqab – are also used as proxy measures of a drift towards radicalisation.

The government's insistence on pushing a particular "British Muslim" identity and expression, whilst only listening to a selective circle of Muslim organisations has also been perceived as social engineering: manufacturing a compliant, 'state-sponsored version of Islam', stepping far beyond their remit.

"There is the sense [amongst some] that there exists a proactive and deliberate demonisation of the Muslim community by the government. The imposition of 'British values' and the 'us v. them' narrative is central to this as what makes a 'good Muslim' is defined by what is 'palatable'."

Rethinking Prevent: A Case for an Alternative Approach
JUST Yorkshire

As successive versions of Prevent sought to root themselves within Muslim communities further, and field support for it, it came to be seen that the government would only engage Muslims through the lens of counter-terrorism – rather than as equal citizens of intrinsic value. Prevent is an exercise in policing Muslim and Islamic expression.

It constructs the divisive notion of a so-called 'good', 'moderate Muslim' (which is contrasted with and played off against the 'bad Muslim'); one who is willing to compromise their faith and assimilate to appease the state.

In combatting Islamophobic laws and policies, it is crucial to tackle both the anti-Muslim discrimination they reproduce, as well as the repressive function at their core.

We do not seek to diversify repression: we seek to end it.

Rethinking Prevent: A Case for an Alternative Approach
JUST Yorkshire, 2017

*Good Muslim, Bad Muslim:
A response to the revised Prevent strategy*
Cageprisoners, 2011

Whose Hearts and Minds? Contest 2 in Context
Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2009

Prevent and Civil Liberties

Prevent is an assault on civil liberties for all, leveraging Islamophobia to institute repressive measures and securitise society.

It redefines the nature of social relations between people in Britain – turning them from bonds of trust and co-operation into suspicion and paranoia.

In the ensuing atmosphere of fear and frenzy, the government can institute further measures cracking down on civil freedoms and eroding legal safeguards.

As the state's elastic definition of 'extremism' grows wider, it can target more forms of dissent – the threshold of 'extremism' falls lower and lower. This is exemplified by the move towards confronting 'non-violent extremism'; effectively creating a category of 'thought crimes' – ideas that we aren't allowed to have.

'Extremism' still has no clear legal definition in the UK – Prevent operates off a government definition. In February 2017, Home Secretary Amber Rudd admitted that the problem of defining extremism was "[an issue] that my department continues to consider"

Prevent has the effect of narrowing and stifling civil society.

This should be the space in society for driving new ideas, organising for change, and for challenging the government and its policies. But Prevent chills both that free flow of ideas, and has been used to physically shut down spaces where they can be discussed.

Defending Freedom of Speech is often invoked in campaigns against Prevent – rightfully so.

But in our campaigning we should also expand our scope to defending those rights under fire at the sharpest end of Prevent.

This includes the freedoms to peacefully associate (without having gatherings monitored), to enjoy equal access to public services (without being discriminated for one's faith), and freedom to practice faith (without being rendered suspect).

"Subjection to consistent stereotypes, structural Islamophobia and the erosion of civil liberties has had a disconcerting impact on [young Muslims], who appear in some cases to have internalised the terrorism narrative. This is manifest in terms of self-policing and an apparent acceptance that they...should be policed more than other British citizens."

Rethinking Prevent: A Case for an Alternative Approach
JUST Yorkshire

Preventing Prevent

The 2011 Prevent strategy included the statement that there should be “no ungoverned spaces” for extremism to flourish. With it, the comparatively ‘soft-touch’ approach of early Prevent made way for the strong-arming of the state into all spheres of society and life – including bringing it to education for the first time.

Prevent interacts with and bolsters other repressive state mechanisms, creating greater precariousness for already-marginalised groups of students within our movement.

For example, International students, already facing the brunt of xenophobic and racist laws by the government, face an even greater risk by speaking out against their oppression. This is because Prevent is bound up with immigration control services that can detain, deport and exclude them for ‘extremism’.

Prevent polices expression – colleges and universities should be a place to discuss and debate new and subversive ideas, not mark them out as ‘extremist’. Ideas on the fringe of society have regularly become accepted as mainstream. For example even the idea of universal voting rights.

If Prevent isn’t confronted and dismantled now, the government is free to subjugate anyone who challenges their domestic or foreign policy line.

Having new and subversive ideas branded as extremist will only have a censorious and stifling effect on democracy.

How many of our campaigns challenging the government can be branded ‘extremist’ – fighting for free education, or against police brutality and immigration laws?

Is criticising British military intervention, or state racism, an example of ‘non-violent extremism’ because this may be exploited to “popularise views which terrorists” can then use?

What effect will this have on the student movement as a place for personal development and for championing social justice?

Prevent doesn’t deal with crimes or criminality, but operates in the ‘pre-criminal space’.

However, it is intimately connected to Britain’s broader policing and surveillance systems, which can criminalise individuals caught in Prevent’s web – whilst also eroding the safeguards in those systems and opening them up for abuse.

Preventing Prevent

Each version of Prevent has arrived with a far-reaching raft of sister legislation. This host of laws have securitised government sectors – including already fraught and racialised ones such as immigration and the prison system – drawing them into a network of security. And they have served to embed Prevent and counter-terrorism in all aspects of public, private and civil life, forming a matrix of surveillance.

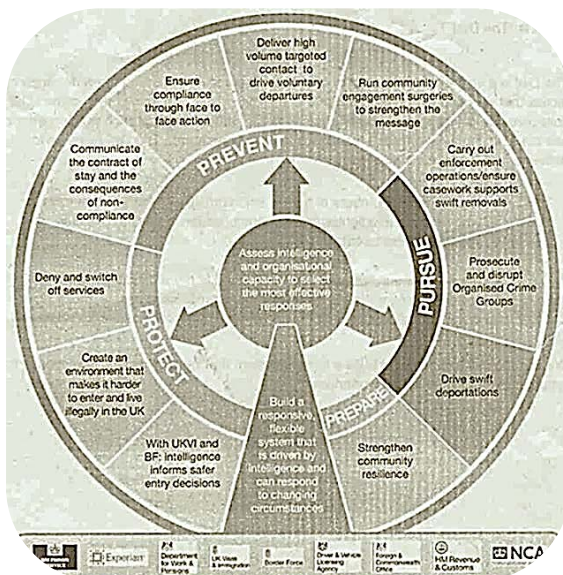
So, it's often difficult to trace where Prevent begins and where it ends – it does not exist in isolation or in silo. What may commonly be referred to as examples of Prevent in practice may actually fall under another strategy or strand of CONTEST

- Examples include the Nottingham Two, who were arrested after being found to own copies of the Al-Qaida training manual (for academic purposes): Prevent generally doesn't involve arrests

And on the other hand, actual cases of Prevent in action may be disguised, and go by another name!

- Prevent may be enacted under Safeguarding policies, anti-Hate Crime initiatives, or Equality & Diversity schemes.

Therefore combatting Prevent necessarily involves combatting the increasing encroachment of counter-terrorism in all areas of our society, and the counter-terror regime built up over successive governments.



'The Dial': Part of a leaflet handed out by Home Office agents as part of their drive to crack down on "immigration crime" – using the 4 P's of CONTEST

Counter-Terrorism Local Profiles (CTLP)

CTLPs are confidential documents custom-prepared for local authorities to assess local 'radicalisation'/'extremism' risks.

Extremism 'risks' factored in the course of developing CTLPs have included Anti-fracking, Animal Rights, Anti-war, Pro-Palestine and Anti-austerity activism!

With this forming the backbone of Prevent implementation, it is little surprise that Prevent in practice stretches far beyond its remit.

Prevent in society

Whilst this handbook concerns itself chiefly with Prevent in the context of education, we must necessarily connect our campaigning to the reality of Prevent in wider society.

Ultimately we don't seek just to insulate our sector from Prevent – we aim to abolish Prevent across society.

The core function of Prevent within communities is to dismantle them as spaces for political organisation, and firmly assert the authority of the state in their place.

Prevent served a desire to police and crush growing political consciousness and organisation in Muslim communities since the anti-war movement of the early 2000s.

The effects of Prevent are most devastating in the heart of working class Muslim communities. It is here, shielded from the gaze of public scrutiny, that the worst excesses of Prevent can flourish.

The impacts of Prevent and counter-extremism initiatives on Muslim communities are manifold.

"I got texts [from Prevent officers] asking for meetings, early in the morning, at night... they were trying to pressure me, to manipulate me so that I could work with them ...They had also been texting my mum asking how I was, they took down my passport number, my facebook and twitter details, what mosque I went ...how many countries I visited, when ...was the last time I went abroad."

in **Preventing Education?**, Rights Watch UK, 2016

Community relations

Prevent has broken down trust both within Muslim communities, and between Muslim communities and the state.

Initially, Muslim organisations accepted Prevent funding for projects in good faith and the true nature of the strategy was not immediately clear. Once it emerged that Prevent-funded projects were being used to collect data on Muslims, monitor communities and bolster counter-terrorism efforts, trust between Muslim communities and those organisations collapsed. This helped set into motion a vicious cycle of separation and surveillance.

Muslim communities, battered by Islamophobia and state violence, were isolated and Othered from the rest of society. And in turn, 'segregation' and 'refusal to integrate' were used as justification to enact more surveillance and securitisation of Muslim communities.

Spooked! How not to Prevent violent extremism
Arun Kundnani, Institute of Race Relations, 2009

Preventing Prevent

Infiltration

Prevent and counter-terrorism forces have infiltrated Muslim communities in a number of ways. Sometimes non-Muslim counter-terrorism police have gone undercover posing as new converts to Islam, to gain access to individuals and Muslim spaces. Parents (usually mothers) have been pressured to monitor/report their children for signs of extremism, and children are also used to monitor parents for signs that they are radicalising them – essentially pitting family members against each other! This has all shattered the idea of the community as a 'safe space', and led to self-censorship even within the most private domain, of the family home.

Stifling self-organisation

Prevent funding and manipulation of, for example, women's and minority empowerment projects have had the effect of undermining, stalling and rolling back important efforts, rendering them suspect within their respective communities. On the other hand, independent or anti-Prevent Muslim organisations have been attacked and scrutinised under counter-terrorism laws which have clamped down on Muslim self-organisation and silenced politically active Muslims.

Poverty and Prevent

Prevent should be viewed in the context of austerity also. Whilst funding for vital projects and initiatives in communities has been shut off under spending cutbacks, government money is poured into Prevent and counter-extremism initiatives. In many cases, the only form of state funding that cash-starved community projects can receive comes under funding earmarked for Prevent /counter-extremism.

Therefore, public funding is withdrawn from working class communities by austerity, then brought back packaged through Prevent – bringing with it the shadow of state surveillance. Crucial community spaces like youth centres, sports projects, education initiatives and even anti-racist programmes have been transformed from lifelines of empowerment and development into extension of the security state.





The chilling effect

Prevent is often described as having a “chilling effect” – on rights, debate, academic freedom. Given that Prevent doesn’t actually deal with crimes, per se, this point of its chilling effect is important, and deeply psychological.

Whilst surveillance as part of counter-terrorism measures in Britain are already vast, Prevent turns that surveillance inwards. Suspensions are fuelled between groups and individuals in society who grow ever wary of one another. Individuals self-police and avoid speaking their mind out of fear of who might be listening.

Prevent has infiltrated every sphere and space – from work, leisure, welfare, politics and more. And with it, it has brought suspicion and paranoia to each, shattering even the confines of the home. By occupying ill-defined ‘grey areas’ – hazy realms like ‘extremism’ instead of terrorism, thoughts over of action – Prevent is designed to instil apprehension and uncertainty. Prevent thrives on confusion and is driven by paranoia – ambiguity and anxiety are its greatest assets in evading accountability.

The real impact of Prevent therefore exists beyond the legislation, to the trauma it inflicts on individuals every day, often out of the public gaze. Muslim children interrogated by Prevent officers are transformed from spirited, inquisitive youths to withdrawn recluses.

Conversations within the family home are changed from effortless free-flow discussions to carefully worded and controlled subjects. And the anxiety and apprehension brought on by Prevent lingers long after contact with officers

Maybe the most perverse facet of Prevent is how it takes communities battered by racism, poverty, exclusion and state violence – and punishes them for challenging this. Under Prevent, Muslim communities have been systematically stripped of the ability and means to speak out or organise against their oppression without grave consequences.

The roots of Prevent run deep – and this is why it’s crucial that we fight back against Prevent until its abolition.

Zamzam Ibrahim

NUS NEC, 2017-18

Prevent and women

Prevent, and counter-extremism more broadly, have often attacked Muslim men at their 'sharp end'. But whilst the effect it has on Muslim women is often invisibilised, it is just as devastating.

The government have taken shifting, at-times contradictory approaches to Muslim women through their counter-extremism measures over time.

These approaches reflect the contradictory ways that Muslim women are constructed under Islamophobia, as well as the agenda of successive governments.

On one hand, stereotypically 'meek, passive' Muslim women are seen as inherently more 'moderate' than Muslim men and inclined to support counter-terrorism measures. Women have therefore been targeted as a gateway by the state to Muslim communities and vehicles to embed Prevent within them.

This is reflected in the way early Prevent strategies – under the 'community cohesion' framework – funded/founded Muslim women's empowerment programmes.

These sought to amplify the 'moderate voice' of Muslim women – making it out as their duty to police and clean up their communities, whilst the state simultaneously collected intelligence on Muslims and divided up Muslim communities. On the other hand, Prevent has now moved into the framework of 'safeguarding', and Muslim mothers are seen as contributing to the problem of radicalisation of their children by 'refusing to integrate'.

Thus Muslim women, once used to inform on their children and families, are now being spied on through their families and children, from the bottom-up.

And the consequences of this can be tragic, with children being taken away by social services, families being ostracised and torn apart under accusations of 'extremism'.

This intersects with the fact that Muslim women are the most economically deprived in Britain – the dismantling of family and support units impacts them further.

Muslim women are viewed by the government as both "traditionally submissive", in the words of David Cameron, and 'the enemy within' – continually pathologised.

In the process of co-opting Muslim women into counter-extremist narratives their agency is downplayed and their specific struggles are weaponised.



The gendered impact of UK counter-extremism

The UK government's conflation of counter-terrorism and integration initiatives has only served to exacerbate the social and economic inequalities experienced by Muslim women. Muslim women also experience a "triple penalty" in the workplace – on account of being Muslim, women and (often) racialised as non-white. Yet, efforts intended to tackle issues of integration, discrimination and attitudes from within the Muslim community have almost always been tied to counter-terrorism work.

For International Women's Day 2017, for example, UK Counter-Terror Police released a video on their Twitter account emphasising the important role Muslim women (mothers) played in helping to defeat terrorism. Once again, issues relating to gender inequality and liberation were addressed through the lens of counter-extremism.

Rarely do we see the government invest in opportunities and programmes for Muslim women addressing issues of gender disparity and sexism in their own right.

In early 2016, the then-UK Prime Minister David Cameron introduced ESOL classes for Muslim mothers to Prevent young Muslim boys from turning to extremism (it even sounds absurd!). This exemplified the crux of the issue(s) facing Muslim women in the UK: Muslim women continue to be seen as vessels for counter-extremism measures, they only exist in relation to Muslim men (e.g. their sons, brothers and husbands).

This, in turn, helped demonstrate the dual oppression faced by Muslim women from within their own communities (because of prevailing sexist attitudes), and from broader society as a whole (that fail to afford them agency). Playing Muslim women off against Muslim men and their families has undermined trust within communities.

And using the language of 'women's empowerment' to push Prevent has helped discredit and roll back such conversations and initiatives led genuinely independently by Muslim women in their communities.

Hareem Ghani

NUS Women's Officer, 2016-18

To find out more about the NUS Women's Campaign work on Gendered Islamophobia contact Hareem at **women@nus.org.uk**

Evaluating Prevent

In terms of evaluating Prevent, it is difficult to actually measure or quantify its effectiveness.

This is because it essentially deals with something that has not happened yet – dealing with ‘extremism’ before it develops into something tangible – and because it concerns itself, basically, with managing the thoughts of people.

‘How can we then calculate the success rate of Prevent – by how many people stop thinking ‘extremist things’, by how many people were deterred from doing something they didn’t yet know they were going to do?’

Trying to credit any decrease in incidents of political violence as an indicator of success for Prevent (or vice versa) would also be a false indicator: ‘extremism’ and violence are not reliable determinants of one another.

These two can only be correlated. And correlation does not equal causation!

Despite Prevent being unproven in practice and toxically controversial in implementation, the government decided that the only viable and sensible option left was to place it on a statutory basis.

As the officially-cited purpose of Prevent has changed over time, the goalposts used to measure its ‘success’ also change. This is clearly bad science: the government can continue to change the terms on which it judges its policies to fit their own agenda!

Increased referral rates to Prevent and/or Channel are often touted by officials as a measure of success – either to show public consent for Prevent, or a claim to have successfully deterred extremism.

But the vast majority of referrals to Prevent are dismissed – sign of a ‘trigger happy’ referral culture, not success.

The government have conducted private internal reviews of Prevent but refuse to share their procedure with the public. Unsurprisingly, these reviews ignore the mass criticism of Prevent and only call for its strengthening.

Parliamentary reviews often go as far as correctly identifying the perception of Prevent as toxic, but fail to articulate the corrosive reality of life under Prevent – or critique the fundamentally repressive nature of British counter-terrorism.

Under the guise of ‘counter-extremism’ Prevent has further legitimised racial profiling and Islamophobia, and allowed the state to construct an intrusive, wide-ranging system of surveillance, whilst operating a fundamentally flawed model of understanding political violence.

Tackling the Prevent narrative of violence

Prevent relies on a linear, causational model of political violence with identifiable markers. According to it, there is a linear progression from 'extremist ideology' to violent extremism or political violence – that must be disrupted by Prevent.

This model is analogised as a 'conveyor belt' of radicalisation, or an 'iceberg' or 'escalator'. The conveyor belt analogy has been widely discredited as misguided and reductionist. The conveyor belt analogy proposes that individuals who adopt 'extremist' beliefs (even if initially non-violent) are vulnerable to becoming 'radicalised' through contact with 'radicalisers' – and some move towards supporting/committing violence.

For example, listening to incendiary speakers, or accessing 'extremist material' online can apparently impel someone with extremist beliefs to carry out violence. Effectively, 'extremist' beliefs in any form are made out to be a gateway drug to terrorism. (Prevent strategy makes explicit comparisons between radicalisation and drug addiction).

The model is highly unreliable: there is a strong disassociation between 'extreme beliefs' and violence; the former cannot reliably predict the latter. Experts in the field generally agree that terrorism/political violence, and why people come to support it, is a complex phenomenon – but certainly not one that can be reduced to 'extremist beliefs'.

Much of the literature on the causes of political violence points to a multi-level, adapting interplay between:

- **Individual beliefs and motivations**
- **The perceived strategic 'value' of terrorist methods**
- **The political context within which terrorists operate.**

Essentially it is not the belief that motivates them towards violence, but the perceived usefulness of terrorism in relation to the political situation at hand:

'Will adopting violence bring us any closer to achieving our goals than non-violence?'

'Is our opponent likely to use violence to achieve their goals?'

'Does that make our use of violence legitimate?'

Preventing Prevent

This more functional approach to understanding political violence is also more useful in addressing it. This is because it leads the discussion towards addressing the material conditions from which violence arises, rather than towards the vague realm of 'extremist thoughts'. This also analyses so-called 'Islamist-inspired terrorism' in terms of the material, political motivations in which all political violence is fomented.

Hence 'modern' terrorism of the 21st Century resembles 'old' terrorism (whether secular, sectarian, racially or otherwise inspired) just with updated methods and new 'branding'. It is not really an 'unprecedented' threat, as the government claims in order to justify repressive new mechanisms like Prevent.

***A Decade Lost: Rethinking
Radicalisation and Extremism***
Arun Kundnani, Claystone, 2015

***The Prevent Strategy:
A cradle to grave police-state***
CAGE UK, 2014

As Prevent has progressed it has conflated more issues to draw within its jurisdiction of 'countering extremism'. From community cohesion through to gender segregation to safeguarding and hate crimes – Prevent has moved far away from its initial premise of combatting violent extremism.

This raises questions about what Prevent's actual purpose is, and why it needs to co-opt so many varied issues to maintain its legitimacy. The loose, catch-all charge of 'Extremism' does nothing to shed light on the specific causes, motivations, methods, strategies or solutions to those issues – including that of political violence. Rather, it only weakens our analysis and hinders the possibility of formulating resolutions to them.

"Overall, it appears that Prevent is having the opposite of its intended effect: by dividing, stigmatizing and alienating segments of the population, Prevent could end up promoting extremism, rather than countering it."

UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association report, 2017

Why does the government continue with Prevent?

Prevent has lost the confidence of even those who once supported it, and has become a toxic initiative. The decision by the government then to double down, and place it on a statutory basis in the face of mounting criticism, should be seen as a desperate attempt to 'save' the programme. Prevent failed to earn consent of communities, so now it coaxes compliance. Clearly, the government is very precious about Prevent.

'As a counter-terrorism programme, Prevent is a failure. But as a political project, Prevent has served the government well: it can easily clampdown on dissent, and in this climate of fear and Islamophobia it can go unchallenged.'

It should be reiterated that Prevent is not just 'a Muslim problem', but one that threatens everyone's civil liberties; it will take a unified effort to defeat it. The only supporters of the poor science underpinning Prevent are the neoconservatives with whom the government share their ideology. Those groups who stray from this neoconservative line are rejected, or even branded as 'extremists' (or apologists for extremism) themselves.

So the government only listens to those who agree with and validate them. Years of engagement with Prevent have legitimised it. Including by those who want to work with it to 'reform' it, or those who think it's a way to *'use bad money to do good things'*.

We can no longer afford to be complicit with Prevent and pretend that we can 'reform it from the inside' – what we need now is to boycott it and organise for its abolition!

Pro-Prevent advocates

The past few sections have highlighted the deep flaws at the heart of Prevent. However there still remains a concerted effort by the government and hardened advocates to promote Prevent as successful and positive.

Often, this advocacy comes hand-in-hand with deriding campaigners against Prevent's abuses as a "far-left lobby" or an "Islamist agenda".

This has regularly taken a malicious turn, with campaigners branded as "extremists" or "terrorist apologists" in the media – especially Muslim organisations seeking to challenge the Islamophobia of Prevent. For certain groups there is both political and financial incentive to promote Prevent.

There is a close-knit network comprising government officials, Prevent practitioners and recipients, media outlets and other interested parties that aim to create an echo chamber of support for Prevent – and often to brand opposition as 'extremists'.

Political

Prevent is a tool to build up the state's power to determine what is politically illegitimate. Prevent thus allows interest groups to push their political agenda through the government, and clamp down on progressive ideals they oppose by branding them 'extremist'. It also affords other groups an opportunity to get 'in' with the government and influence them – this has been the case with many pro-Prevent groups who market themselves as from the 'community', but who have little clout in Muslim communities.

Financial

There is much funding to be tapped into with Prevent and the counter-extremism agenda – it has ballooned into an 'industry'. Since 2011 Prevent funding by government has been around £40million annually, reaching over £100million before. Prevent co-ordinators salaried by Prevent are often most active in defending Prevent online. Private providers also have been able to profiteer off Prevent by delivering Prevent training or other exercises.

Pro-Prevent groups to watch out for when campaigning

Student Rights

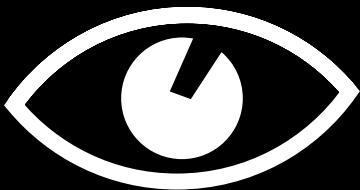
- Claim to protect students from the threat of 'extremism' on campus — which according to their literature applies almost solely to Muslim speakers
- Disproportionately target Muslim speakers and those invited by ISocs — to the point of being described as a 'witch-hunt' by Muslim students
- Have privately lobbied Universities to cancel student events
- Have been influential on government counter-extremism policy
- Had staff in common with both the UK Independence Party and far right media outlets
- Are a project of the 'Henry Jackson Society' right-wing thinktank
- Formally condemned by over 10 SUs, the NUS Black Students' Campaign and NUS NEC.

Henry Jackson Society (HJS)

- A neoconservative thinktank whose membership includes a number of MPs
- Have had a significant influence on government's counter-extremism position through their political membership and role in Parliament
- HJS established Student Rights as a project to expose 'extremism' on campuses — yet for many years denied their relationship with the group
- Former policy members have described it as a "right-wing forum with an anti-Muslim tinge, churning out polemic and superficial pieces"
- Their Associate Director Douglas Murray has said that "conditions for Muslims in Europe must be made harder across the board"
- The Chair of the Charity Commission previously served on their board.

Quilliam Foundation

- A 'counter-extremism' thinktank run by self-proclaimed 'ex-Islamists'
- Have received heavy Prevent funding
- Are frequently described as having "no grassroots support" and being "loathed" by Muslim communities
- Despite being heavily criticised by Muslim communities, the government has continued to seek guidance on issues affecting Muslims from them
- Controversially sent a secret list to a British security official smearing a wide range of Muslim organisations as sharing 'extremist ideology', which was branded 'McCarthyist'
- Have begun trying to start up student societies at universities.



What should we do with Prevent?

When campaigning against Prevent we will often encounter the question: “What would you replace it with?”

The social and political issues from which political violence emerge are complex. So any meaningful solution must consider these issues in all their depth – not ‘dumb down’ or use them as political footballs.

On all fronts, Prevent fails to address these issues, and has failed to heed the experts in the field. We cannot hope to replace a failure like PREVENT with a like-for-like plan and expect better results. Nor can we settle for rebranding or rewinding to better days that did not exist – Prevent has been repressive and racist from birth.

Abolition of Prevent is part of a wider process of reconfiguring the way the state engages with its citizens, and how the people in society engage with one another. It is as much about building as it is about dismantling.

This will entail systematically grappling with the social and political issues that have long been pointed to as the roots of political violence – both by experts, and by perpetrators themselves.

This includes working towards combatting social deprivation and poverty, a more ethical foreign policy, and instituting proper equality among citizens in Britain and civil space to critique and challenge government.

The Abolition of Prevent is part of a process, not an event.

Ultimately, it would include:

Engaging in an open, honest and transparent way with communities about their concerns and issues – on the basis of equality, not just the pretence of countering extremism.

Securing equal civil rights for all citizens, and enabling meaningful participation in democracy.

Disentangling social and welfare services from security services.

Ending a foreign policy based on warfare, and relationships with human rights abusers.

Divestment from bloated systems of counter-extremism and overpolicing

And

Reinvestment into society to reverse cuts and austerity, and for a well-supported, robust civil society.

Dismantling the vast apparatus of counter-terrorism laws. Crimes of violence should be dealt with as such, the net of criminalisation should not spread to thoughts, ideas and non-violence.

And

Uprooting the culture of antagonism, paranoia and policing in society.

The background of the entire page is a dark gray color, overlaid with a repeating pattern of stylized eyes. Each eye is composed of a light gray outline, a darker gray iris, and a small black pupil. The eyes are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some partially cut off by the edges of the frame.

Section 3:

Prevent on our campuses

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act on our campuses

Section 26(1) of the CTSA 2015 outlined the Prevent duty that 'Specified authorities' were legally bound to.

The Prevent duty states that

"A specified authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism."

Since 2011, prior to the introduction of the Prevent duty, colleges and universities had already begun implementing Prevent within their policies.

So in cases, the introduction of the Prevent duty meant either further cementing or augmenting their Prevent strategies, rather than starting from scratch.

**Further Education
specified authorities
include FE Colleges,
Sixth Form colleges
and Independent
training providers**

**Higher Education
specified authorities
include public universities,
and privately funded
higher education
institutions**

**Key aspects of how education institutions
operate and manage Prevent**

**Partnership
with local/regional Prevent
co-ordinators and police**

**Staff training
in Prevent awareness
(usually WRAP training)**

**Risk assessments
on the risk of radicalisation within
their institutions**

**Welfare support/safeguarding
Welfare services are often a key point in
identifying Channel referrals**

**IT policies
The use of filtering and/or
monitoring software on institution
computers/networks**

**Student Unions and Societies
Agreements usually established with
SUs and institutions over procedures for
managing external speakers and events
held by societies**

Enacting the Prevent duty

The statutory guidance on implementing the Prevent duty within colleges and universities was approved in September 2015.

The guidance outlines core aspects of implementing the Prevent duty.

It is not an exhaustive list, so each educational institution will implement it their own ways.

However, as it sets a baseline but not any 'upper limit' and leaves this to interpretation, it is very possible that institutions will overcompensate in implementation.

This possibility is intensified by the threat of having their compliance investigated, and the desire to be seen to comply.

In Further Education, compliance with the Prevent duty is monitored by Ofsted.

In Higher Education, compliance is monitored by HEFCE. In 2018 this is due to move into the remit of the new Office for Students (OfS).

'Due regard' is defined as "an appropriate amount of weight on the need to Prevent people being drawn into terrorism when they (schools and colleges) consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions."

Colleges and universities now need to weight the statutory guidance against various duties in the act – for example to honour their duty to secure freedom of speech. These conflicting requirements demonstrate that Prevent cannot be made to work.

Prevent duty guidance: for higher education institutions in England and Wales/Scotland
HM Government, 2015

Prevent duty guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales/Scotland
HM Government, 2015

Further Education

(Including FE Colleges, Sixth Form colleges and Independent training providers)

The Prevent duty for FE includes

- Co-operation with Prevent structures
 - Clear engagement by senior management with police and BIS (or appropriate Prevent sub-group in Scotland) for purposes of supporting Prevent
 - Often a single person in the college will serve as primary contact.
- Risk Assessments
 - Carry out risk assessment into where and how students and staff may be at risk of being drawn in terrorism
 - Incorporating this into college policies on equality & diversity, safety and welfare of staff/students, and physical management of the campus estate.
- Faith facilities/prayer rooms
 - Develop and publish plans for management of prayer room facilities (e.g. establishing oversight committees)
- Staff Training
 - Ensure staff are trained to understand Prevent, the terms used by the strategy, and how to identify those at risk of radicalisation
 - Would usually involve WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) training of staff.
- British Values
 - Promotion of British values are expected to be integrated into training and subsequent delivery of teaching.
- Information sharing
 - Establishing processes to share information within the college (and outside) on 'at-risk individuals'.
- IT policies
 - Develop policies on use of IT facilities/networks
 - May include filtration software to block 'terrorist-related' material on the internet and monitoring use.
- Monitoring compliance
 - Ofsted* monitor sufficient compliance with the Prevent duty
 - Institutions face having funding pulled/being shut down for not complying satisfactorily. (*In Wales this function is served by Estyn, in Scotland it is Education Scotland alongside local multi-agency Prevent boards).
- Channel
 - Staff will be expected to identify students who are 'vulnerable' to radicalisation and refer them to Channel de-radicalisation panels (or to utilise the Prevent Professional Concerns process for Scotland).

Key differences from HE

- Academic Freedom
 - The duties to maintain Academic Freedom placed upon HE institutions, and to balance this with the Prevent duty, do not apply to FE.
- Student Unions
 - Unlike the guidance for HE institutions, the role of FE student unions are not explicitly outlined
 - SUs in HE institutions are generally autonomous bodies independent of their institution (as registered charities)
 - In FE, Unions may be constituent parts of their colleges (existing as a 'department' or division of the college) and in this case, the Prevent duty may apply to them.

Examples of Prevent in practice in FE

Risk Assessment:

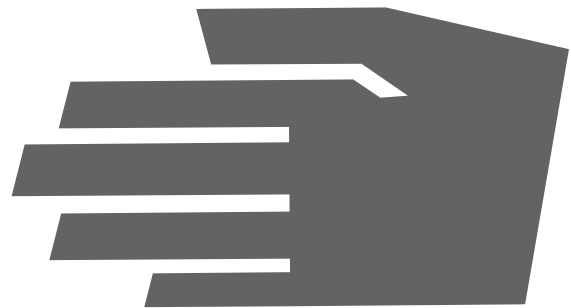
Vulnerable learners – identified as ESOL (English for Speaker of Other Languages) and Learning Difficulty and Disability (LDD) – targeted for observation

Staff training:

Youth workers in SUs trained in Prevent – serving as 'informal engagement with learners' to build up relationships with students and monitor and/or report them to Channel

IT policies:

Software programs exist that flag up students who search online for 'extremism'-related keywords.



Higher Education

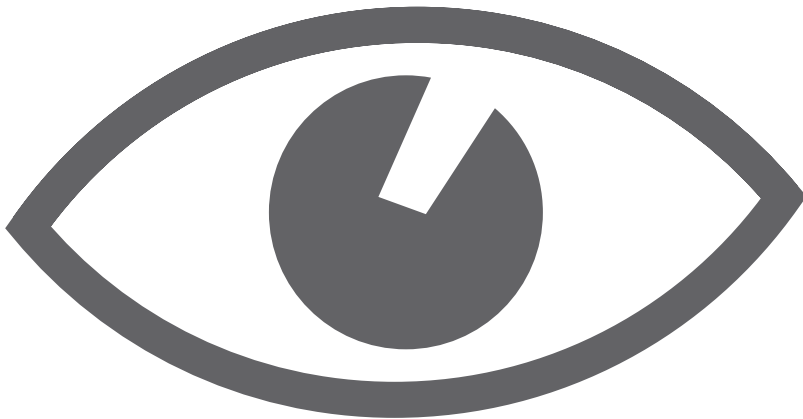
(Including public universities, and privately funded higher education institutions – HEIs)

The guidance for HEIs generally reiterates that guidance for FE institutions.

The main differences are:

- An explicit mention of HEIs' need to balance the demands of academic freedom, alongside the Prevent duty
- Specific mentions of the role of external speakers and student unions/societies.

Guidance for HE requires more complex consideration than within FE, though both can be challenged on how they are applied.



Preventing Prevent

- Student Unions
 - Institutions are expected to develop agreements with SUs with regards to their activities and those of student societies
 - This would involve agreeing on which activities are acceptable (these include on-campus, online activity related to the university, and off-campus activity done under the name/affiliation of the university)
 - It is also suggested that SU officers and staff undertake Prevent awareness training, but this is not made out as compulsory in the guidance.
- External speakers
 - Universities should create systems to assess and manage the risk of hosting external speakers for events (through the SU or a student society)
 - It proposes a hardline approach to potentially controversial speakers/those who may express 'extremist views' (see below).
- Monitoring Compliance
 - HEFCE monitor sufficient compliance with the Prevent duty amongst Higher Education Institutions (in England). This is due to move over to the OfS.

"[Universities] should consider carefully whether the views being expressed, or likely to be expressed, constitute extremist views that risk drawing people into terrorism or are shared by terrorist groups.

In these circumstances the event should not be allowed to proceed except where [Universities] are entirely convinced that such risk can be fully mitigated without cancellation of the event.

This includes ensuring that, where any event is being allowed to proceed, speakers with extremist views that could draw people into terrorism are challenged with opposing views as part of that same event, rather than in a separate forum.

Where [Universities] are in any doubt that the risk cannot be fully mitigated they should exercise caution and not allow the event to proceed."

Prevent duty guidance for higher education institutions, 2015

Institutions must consider freedom of speech and academic freedom when enacting the Prevent duty. We believe these are incompatible with the duty and guidance and demonstrate that Prevent cannot be made to work.

What does the Prevent duty look like in practice?

Upon implementation of the Prevent duty we would expect to see:

- Stricter procedures for hosting external speakers and events – more bureaucracy
- Prayer room oversight, possibly including monitoring of prayer rooms and vetting of sermons
- Prevent training for academics and staff (WRAP training), creating an 'army' of informants within the sector
- Drawing academic, welfare and social services away towards 'Preventing students being drawn into terrorism'
- Updated risk assessments.

Examples of implementation:

Kings College London: Notified email system users that activity may monitored and recorded

London Met: Installed web monitoring and filtering – repeated attempts to access blocked sites would be flagged up

Sunderland: Introduced website blocking, with authorised access of blocked sites logged and recorded

London South Bank: Trained cleaning, catering and security staff on spotting radicalisation

How could speaker events be affected?

One of the main ways that 'day-to-day' life as a student will be affected by the Prevent duty is through rules around external speaker events and mitigating 'extremist speakers'.

As mentioned earlier, the HE Prevent duty guidance singles out external speaker events with the demand that for events where speakers may possibly express 'extremist views'

"... the event should not be allowed to proceed except where [Universities] are entirely convinced that such risk can be fully mitigated without cancellation."

This sets an impossible standard – how can any speaker risk ever be *fully* mitigated?

Often further layers of bureaucracy will be added to the process of hosting events, and tighter monitoring of their content.

Aside from cancelling events outright, institutions will add so much bureaucracy and conditions to make them possible, that events are rendered all but neutralised.

And of course, students will be so wary of speaking on 'contentious' topics that the events are stunted affairs.

Below is a (non-exhaustive) list of ways that universities could manage external speaker events.

- **Approving a request on the condition that a particular individual chairs the event, or in a particular format (e.g. a debate)**
- **Making the event ticketed/for ID card holders only**
- **Opening the event to the general public (and not allowing private meetings)**
- **Imposing conditions on how the event is advertised (e.g. promotional material to contain translations if in a language not understood by university staff)**
- **Placing restrictions on the numbers able to attend or restricting the event to university staff and students only**

- **Requesting a script or summary from the speaker outlining what they intend to say and forcing to adhere to this**

- **Restricting what materials are available at the event (e.g. CDs, DVDs, leaflets, memory sticks)**
- **Host a speaker with a countering viewpoint to challenge the speaker (for example for a pro-choice talk there must be an anti-abortion speaker; for an anti-war event there must be a pro-war speaker!)**

The ruling for the case *Butt vs Secretary of State for the Home Department* (2017) advised that the Prevent duty guidance is “guidance and not direction, let alone free-standing ones... Institutions are responsible for their own decisions, including those related to external speakers on campus.”

Institutions need to ensure academic freedom and freedom of speech, while implementing the Prevent duty guidance – and should not apply the guidance without considering these factors. This case is under appeal.

What does all this mean for students on campus?

Overreporting

- Since the Prevent duty was introduced, referrals to Prevent in education have rocketed. Educators will be quicker to refer for fear of being sanctioned themselves, or due to a false sense of being 'experts'
- It is in this environment that unconscious bias against Black and Muslim people is heightened.

Self censorship

- Ultimately Prevent does suppress critical inquiry and free expression on campus, no matter what small safeguards the government puts in place to balance this
- Students, who as a group have historically challenged oppression and wrongs from the government, will either be scared into silence or harassed into staying quiet.

Inadequate academic support

- Due to the racialised nature of the agenda, Black and Muslim students may come to distrust their personal tutors or academics. This will affect their contribution in class, the topics and subjects they engage in or even asking for help
- Research has shown Black students are already more likely to drop-out of courses due to inadequate support and this will only aggravate problems.

Cancellation of speaker events

- Institutions will likely become a lot more risk averse when dealing with external speakers on campus, and in line with the Prevent duty guidance will become more 'trigger-happy' with cancellations or impose stifling conditions on events – such as vetting speeches and rigidly maintaining event formats.

Inadequate mental health provisions

- PREVENT undermines the relationship between patients and practitioners, taking it from one based on trust and confidentiality to one of suspicion
- Students with poor mental health may not seek help or be willing to disclose mental health issues, especially with "relevant mental health issues" being interpreted as a risk factor for radicalisation.

Race to the bottom

- Ultimately, the Prevent duty guidance is very loose and unhelpful – even for institutions who want to enact it
- It sets no upper limit to how far institutions should go in implementing it
- Some institutions, eager to either protect themselves or to 'prove' their compliance to the government, may go above and beyond in implementing the duty and set some dangerous new precedents in the process.

Preventing Prevent

Reduced engagement with the SU

- Students often 'find themselves' through the further and higher education experience, especially through their unions
- Students that are part of certain clubs or societies – such as Islamic Societies or Palestine Societies or Free Education groups – face a particularly high risk of being monitored or tracked for much of their political activism from Fossil Free Campaigns to BDS campaigns
- All in all, many students may be cut out from student union activities.

Reducing diversity within leadership roles

- In the climate of Islamophobia and suspicion whipped by Prevent, certain students – particularly Muslims – may not go for leadership positions within the union for fear that once in these roles they will come under attack and scrutiny.

SUs under pressure

- Whilst in most cases the Prevent duty does not apply to student unions, their parent institutions will most likely put pressure on them to comply with or facilitate it – or at least to stop campaigning against it
- For the sake of your members and to preserve the political nature of SUs, Sabbatical Officers must resist this pressure!



If you or another student, are approached by Prevent officers or referred to Prevent, it is best to get in touch with a legal expert.

Recommended contacts:

Islamic Human Rights Commission:

020 8904 4222

Prevent Watch:

033 3344 3396

CAGE:

0300 030 2243

Also see the *Know Your Rights* section on page 91

Student Unions: What are your obligations?

Colleges and universities are legally required to enact the Prevent duty.

Most student unions are charities. Therefore they are not required. (Exceptions may include FE unions that do not exist as autonomous entities from their colleges).

Charities are bound to their own obligations as outlined by the Charity Commission in their Compliance Toolkit.

These obligations cover the use of charities for promoting terrorism.

Nonetheless: *this will not stop external pressure to help enact the Prevent duty, including from the Charity Commission and perhaps from your own institutions.*

These may include pressures to accept funds to implement “interfaith activities”, extra monitoring of certain clubs and societies and changes to your unions’ external speaker approval system, as well as the threat of investigation by the Charity Commission.

‘The obligation to ensure that your SU is adhering to the Charity Commission’s governance framework falls on the Trustee Board.’

In the vast majority of cases where an SU is physically located as part of the institution’s property, it may be binding on them to honour their parent institutions’ policies on use of their grounds (including policy on hosting speakers and events).

This extends insofar as the requirement to honour those institutions’ processes for organising and approving events and other such use of their grounds. (This means that an SU cannot ‘go renegade’ and ignore their university’s speaker approval policy implemented as part of the Prevent duty, for example.)

Actively blocking your institution from exercising due regard under the Prevent duty may also be against the law.

Compliance Toolkit:
Protecting Charities from Harm
Charity Commission, 2013

How might your institution try to impose the Prevent duty with regards to the SU?

Whilst in most cases the Prevent duty does not apply to student unions, parent institutions will most likely put try to 'pass on' the Prevent duty to SUs via some of the following means:

- Provisions in the student union's constitution requiring the trustees of the union to comply with university ordinances and governance frameworks, including its Freedom of Speech code of practice (and thus, complying with whatever Prevent measures are imposed through those).
- Indirectly, via regulations and ordinances governing the conduct of students, which may regulate the conduct of student union members.
- Agreements between the parent institution and student union, such as a Memorandum of Understanding, or conditions attaching to the unions block funding grant or conditions in any lease or licence agreement for the use of premises by the union.

- Employment contracts and related employment policies and procedures applying to any staff employed both by the parent institution and the student union (or employed by the parent institution and seconded to the union).

- Where student union staff are employed both by the parent institution and the students' union (or employed by the parent institution and seconded to the union) they may be required under the terms of their employment contract to assist the institution in implementing the Prevent duty.

(Source: Bates Wells Braithwaite solicitors)

If your institution tries to impose the Prevent duty on your SU and tells you this is compulsory, or threatens you please contact:

Ilyas.Nagdee@nus.org.uk
and
Ali.Milani@nus.org.uk

Charity Commission

The Charity Commission regulates charities including most SUs.

As charities, SUs are bound by Charity Law and regulated by the Charity Commission. They are subject to existing laws concerning terrorism, such as the Terrorism Acts 2000 and 2006; and the Charity Commission has also issued a 'compliance toolkit' with guidance for charities relating to their obligations around Preventing terrorism. The majority of this guidance concerns Preventing the abuse of charity funds/assets/activities to support terrorist groups.

Whilst the Prevent duty does not apply directly to most SUs, this may not stop the Charity Commission intervening. It is also possible that the Charity Commission could take regulatory action if a college or university were to argue that their student union had blocked them from exercising due regard under the Prevent duty.

This may be viewed by the Commission as indicative of non-compliance with the Commission's guidance on extremism and demonstrative of unlawful activity (which would also comprise a breach of trust for charity law purposes). Seeking regulatory action by the Charity Commission is likely to be a last resort for an institution.

The Charity Commission's role is supposed to be ensuring that charities are being run efficiently and that trustees are being responsible and law-abiding – so, a 'supportive' body. However in recent years the Charity Commission has taken on a more aggressive position, actively investigating charities, including SUs undertaking political activity.

Under the Coalition government the Commission came to reflect the government's political agenda, and especially their obsession with 'extremism', with millions of pounds being allocated to them to counter 'extremism' in charities. The Commission's move to a more 'executive' and politicised body has been noted with concern by organisations throughout the charity sector, including the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. Student union officers have reported encountering lengthy, intimidating meetings from the Commission who asked probing questions about the Islamic society as well as Palestine societies, even 'Save our NHS' societies.

Student unions are political organisations, fighting to defend your members is a 'political' activity – so in attacking SUs for this, the Commission is attacking the capacity of the student movement to affect change.

"Europe and Islam is one of the greatest most terrifying problems of our future I think, all European countries have vastly... growing Islamic populations."

**William Shawcross,
Chair, Charity Commission**

The background of the slide features a repeating pattern of stylized, grey hands with fingers spread, set against a dark grey background. The hands are positioned in various orientations, creating a sense of movement and collective action.

Section 4:

Students not suspects:
Building a campaign
against Prevent

The counter-campaign against Prevent

The government policing thought, opinions and expression is a very slippery trajectory that students should firmly oppose.

The student movement has historically been a breeding ground for radical and progressive politics and organising – pushing boundaries and changing society.

Be it Free Education or Free Palestine, the campaign against Prevent is the fight to preserve our right to organise, challenge and change the world for the better – and to ensure that our colleges and universities remain more than mere qualification factories.

The national battle against Prevent will be enriched and empowered by local campaigns and struggles – campaigning on the ground is the machinery of this movement!

Every campaign and every campus is different, but this section should give you some ideas to get you started.

Please note that this section generally refers to campaigning in the context of Higher Education.

What are we up against?

Our main aims are, essentially, to get a national law repealed – and this is no small feat! But we also have local objectives and the national campaign will draw its strength from local campaigns showing principled and vibrant resistance against Prevent.

The campaign against Prevent can and should be carried out on multiple fronts – from challenging it on every campus, to lobbying nationally, to legal action. The student-led campaign against Prevent and the Prevent duty thus forms one important strand of a wider strategy. It is testament to the work of student organisers that student campaigns against Prevent are consistently in the headlines and putting pressure on the government.

**Remember that you are not alone in this campaign!
See page 28 for just some of the wide range of
organisations also opposing Prevent and the Prevent duty.**



Building a campaign

Now we will outline ways that you can set up a campaign against Prevent.

It is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive but rather a general template – you will know the context of your campus best.

The campaign against Prevent will be a long-term one.

It is crucial to work to build a sustainable campaign that can carry forward the work of organising even after its founding cohort may have moved on from the institution.

Recruiting to your campaign

- To start, it is important to find like-minded people willing to campaign alongside you.

Campaigns are built, not discovered – so this needn't be a huge number. It could even start off being a small group of concerned friends.

- Look into student groups/societies where you could find others who might be interested in joining you.

Alternatively the society may wish to back the campaign as a whole – this is good for showing wide support.

Key to a sustainable campaign is balancing Organising and Mobilising

Organising includes the everyday, often time-consuming tasks of researching, recruiting, forging connections between groups and building capacity and reach of your campaign.

Mobilising includes carrying out actions and escalating – the 'highs' of your campaigning, and bringing your power out into the open.

Organising for the sake of organising feels aimless. Mobilising without organising first will fizzle out quickly!

It is important that our campaigning is responsive to, and inclusive of, those most sharply affected by Prevent.

Do you have an Islamic society on campus? Make sure to speak to them about getting their members involved, and about their needs from such a campaign.

Political campaigning societies should also be natural allies and often impacted disproportionately by Prevent. Do you have a Palestine/Anti-austerity/Environmental society etc. to work with?

Preventing Prevent

- Every student at your institution is affected by the Prevent in some sense – and so every one is invested in getting it repealed! So it might just be a case of explaining why it's in their interest to campaign against it.
- Look into your student union's policies if there is any anti-Prevent policy and which student union officer is responsible for this.

What do you aim to achieve?

- Establish your starting Strategy: Principles, Goals and Tactics

Dealing with risk

We should always be honest with those we seek to recruit (and to ourselves!) about the possible risks of getting involved with campaigns like these – given the political climate we're in, it can be intimidating.

This is especially true for those most at risk in organising against PREVENT – e.g. Muslim students and those racialised as non-white.

Being transparent about risks and allowing them to make an informed decision is important.

Mitigating risk: Maybe discuss dividing responsibilities so that those who don't wish to be visible in your campaigning can work on the behind-the-scenes tasks?

Principles

Underpin all campaigning with clear commitments i.e. 'We are antiracist', 'We oppose Prevent and collaboration with Prevent'.

Goals

Orient tactics, in the short and long term. Can shift over time, i.e. 'We will get the student union to commit to boycotting Prevent'.

Tactics

Levers to help achieve aims. Diversity of tactics is better than repetition – the usefulness of a tactic changes relative to goals. Should be reviewed regularly, i.e. Passing policy, a protest, lobbying.

Preventing Prevent

Smart campaigning

- Good campaigns will be reflexive, and able to quickly respond to changes in the situation both locally and nationally.
- The student calendar often produces rises and dips in activity – with activities often dipping during exam season and holidays.
- Make sure to develop a timeline for your campaign strategy to account for this, and use low-work tactics that can keep your campaign visible in dip periods.

Warning

For campaigns of this nature there will inevitably be some who get involved to undermine them.

Undercover police or even 'undercover' university staff may try and 'infiltrate' meetings to gather information on your plans.

Be careful with what is discussed, how any sensitive/contact data is stored/protected about individuals involved and make sure not to openly discuss unlawful activity. (Challenging Prevent is not in itself an illegal activity, but inciting people to break the law is, even if justified.)

See the *Know Your Rights* section on page 91

Given the political climate we are operating in, we should also be prepared for possible opposition and backlash!

Unfortunately students campaigning against Prevent and for students' rights have found themselves smeared in the media or online, or have their motives twisted.

To limit the chances of having your motivations distorted, make sure to release statements whenever you do any public actions – to make sure they are reported on your terms.

Also have your set of Principles well written and easily accessible is important.

If you do find your campaign targeted in the media, first seek support from your SU.

NUS Black Students' may also be able to help and connect you to our network of supporters and experts.

Contact: Black@nus.org.uk

Preventing Prevent

- Develop your long-term and short-term goals: what do you aim to have achieved by the end of this month/term/year? And: can you communicate these concisely?
- Consider what levels of your institution you have access to in which to push your campaign message, and build power to enact your demands.
 - Is there a student officer inside that can take your campaign demands to a university board?
 - An academic that can do the same?
 - A trade union representative on campus that can get supportive anti-Prevent policy in their branch?
- If not – what will it take to get that access, and who do you need to get on board to make that possible?

In deciding your aims it is good to know what the specific situation is with Prevent on your campus so that you can tailor your activities around your reality.

This may involve research – see page 82

Questions to think about when building strategy:

- What do you want?
- When do you want it by?
- Who holds the power to give you what you want?
- How can you make those holding power listen to you?
- Who else agrees with you?
- How can you connect with those that agree with you?
- How can they help you make those holding power listen to you?
- What tactics can you use to make those holding power concede to your demands?



Preventing Prevent

Building power to achieve your goals will involve:

- Gaining the support of the student population
 - Gaining the support of student unions
 - Gaining the support of educators
 - Gaining the support of staff
- When campaigning against Prevent on our campuses we will naturally need to be responsive to the concrete effect of Prevent in action.
- So whilst pushing for its eventual abolition, we will also naturally want to limit the impact and damage it can have in the meantime, i.e. managing its effects.
- However it is important to consider the difference between managing Prevent in such a way that limits Prevent, and managing in such a way that inadvertently reinforces it.

So how can you gain these levels of support?

Broadly speaking this can be broken down into three strands:

- **Educate, Educate, Educate**
Educating the student and academic body of the Prevent agenda and of their rights
- **Organise, Organise, Organise**
Building connections and principled coalitions between different sections. Supporting one another in challenging and amplifying practical opposition to Prevent.
- **Mobilise, Mobilise, Mobilise**
Utilising a range of actions to gain visibility, draw people towards your campaign and articulate your message about why Prevent must go!

With all goals you develop, consider:

- **Will this limit the effects of Prevent on campus, and is it a step towards weakening its implementation?**

or

- **Does this merely redistribute the effects of Prevent on campus, and reinforce it in future?**

**Imagine: If you achieve your goal, how would it be presented by the university?
As a positive example of 'Prevent implemented fairly' and with student consent or a blow against it?**



Scenario 1:

Prevent training delivered to staff at your institution solely uses crude case studies of Muslims and nothing else, feeding Islamophobic stereotypes. You are worried staff will subsequently be likely to refer more Muslim students.

- A response that reinforces Prevent would be to pressure staff to ensure that referrals to PREVENT are applied equally to Muslim and non-Muslim students.
- A response that limits Prevent would be to minimise the effects of the training by organising a separate, non- Prevent session on countering Islamophobia and unconscious bias, and encourage staff to pursue alternative courses of action other than referring students.

Scenario 2:

Political campaigning societies are being treated discriminately compared to other student societies when hosting events. They are forced to submit speaker request forms well in advance of deadlines, and often have to pass on their event guest lists to the SU and have their events attended by SU staff to "keep an eye".

- A response that reinforces Prevent would be to accept the precedent set with regards to event guest lists and staff attendance, but demand that this be applied to other 'controversial' societies like the Debating society - as they deal with contentious issues.
- A response that limits Prevent would be to get other student groups to stand with political campaigning societies demanding that such restrictions are intrusive, unnecessary and must not be imposed on any society again.

Scenario 3:

Website filtering has been implemented in your institution. It has been noted that Muslim-oriented websites are far more likely to be blocked, including those far removed from terrorism. Meanwhile, websites for far-right groups like the EDL and Britain First are not blocked.

- A response that reinforces Prevent would be to demand that the institution implement web filtering to cover websites of the far-right too.
- A response that limits Prevent would be to highlight the fact that web filtering is being, excessively, to block websites on very tenuous grounds whilst targeting Muslim websites – and that ultimately it serves no purpose other than a political one, and that website filtering should be removed.

Gaining the support of the student population

Once you've got a group of individuals committed to your campaign, work to get the wider student body on side. Educate students on the ground about what Prevent and the Prevent duty is all about, how it affects them, and why they should oppose it.

A launch event for your campaign is a good way to recruit for your campaign, and get it on the agenda. A well-organised event can be a strong boost for your campaign – a poorly organised one can have opposite effect; waste time and energy!

Awareness-raising can take the form of speaker events and workshops on the dangers of Prevent, videos, infographics and social media campaigns. Make sure to make your message relatable to different types of students – Prevent affects everyone, so make sure this resonates with them.

To invite someone from the Black Students' Campaign to your campus to speak on Prevent or for a StudentsNotSuspects event, or for speaker suggestions please contact Black@nus.org.uk

Branding is important!

Use eye-catching designs, badges, posters as well as social media: tweet out **#StudentsNotSuspects**



A role for alumni

Institutions often appeal to alumni for donations and support – and so do their best to promote a positive image of themselves.

Getting alumni involved in your campaign to speak out against the institution for their Prevent policies can be powerful and really impact the institution.

This is also a good way to keep campaigners involved after graduating!

Preventing Prevent



It is important to ensure that those most affected by Prevent can remain involved in campaigns against it, and that campaigns are inclusive to them. Visible actions, like demonstrations or poster days of action can also bring attention to your campaign.

If you organise an action, make sure to contact campus and local media (or cover it yourself through an online blog etc) to highlight that this is happening, why you have called it and what your goals are.

Make sure to prepare statements from your group, and designate a spokesperson, in advance – so that you can speak on your behalf, not be misrepresented by media.



Student groups that are likely to be targeted by Prevent measures:

- **Islamic societies**
- **Palestine societies**
- **Anti-war societies**
- **Free education groups**
- **Antiracist groups**
- **Environmental justice groups**

Gaining the support of SUs

Getting your student union to formally support your campaign, or goals, can be a big boost to your campaign. Student officers can often access spaces that other students cannot, in which to voice concerns about Prevent. SUs can also put resources and staff support to your campaign.

Securing this support would usually involve passing policy through your student union's democratic forum (Councils, General Meetings, 'Ideas'). When challenging your institution on their Prevent duty implementation, it can be valuable to have SU policy supporting your stance, as the recognised representative of students. The clearer the policy, the more useful it will be for you – a model motion can be found on page 89.

These should outline both the stance of the SU to Prevent and mandate specific actions to officers. For e.g., *the SU to boycott Prevent and for SU officers to not comply with Prevent or attend any Prevent training (as far as legally possible).*

When organising to pass policy, make use of grassroots student support you have built up from among students. Make sure to get student societies to speak out on how Prevent affects them and their members too!

SUs can be useful for the sake of your campaign, but it is advisable not to 'hand over' your campaign to them as this may end up stifling your grassroots nature. Make sure you continue leading to ensure the students you have mobilised are involved.

Securing SU support should be considered as part of a set of tactics to further your goals. In any case, once you have policy in place – make sure to hold mandated officers to account and keep in contact with them to ensure it is acted upon!

If you are a student officer campaigning against Prevent, see page 83.



Gaining support of educators

Being on the 'frontline' of carrying out the Prevent duty, getting support of teachers and lecturers is important as a step to both:

- Limiting the damage of the Prevent duty in practice
- Pressure the institution to change their stance/approach to Prevent – and even come out in opposition.

Many educators are unhappy about being forced to spy on students.

They are also worried about the effects the Prevent duty will have on their research and academic freedom.

Educators will benefit from knowing that they are being supported by the student body in speaking out, given the higher risk they face from doing so.

The first point of contact is academic staff union. This would usually be the UCU branch on campus/locally (UCU is University and College Union).

'We believe that the monitoring of Muslim students will destroy the trust needed for a safe and supportive learning environment and encourage discrimination... We therefore declare our opposition to the Prevent agenda and pledge to work towards its repeal.'

Goldsmiths University UCU branch

Getting union branches to support local policy against Prevent, or adopt UCU's national policy against the CTSA, sends a powerful message.

Building up support with individual lecturers is also important – not every one may be in UCU, but they might still have strong feelings on Prevent.

Educators could also pressure the institution to adopt a 'bare minimum' approach to the Prevent duty. And they could pledge to not pass on any names of students to Channel, or to challenge Prevent training.

Gaining support of staff

As with educators, staff (such as support staff – cleaning, catering and administrative) are often on the frontlines of carrying out the Prevent duty. Staff are spread out along many departments and could have information on specific examples of the implementation of the Prevent duty to share. They may also have specific concerns about the effects the Prevent duty has on their department's work.

For example Welfare teams may be concerned that carrying out the Prevent duty would make students with poor mental health less likely to seek support. The IT department may worry about the scope and implications of IT monitoring schemes, and how to Prevent students getting flagged up without reason.

Support staff may be organised in various trade unions on campus, such as Unison. Getting trade union branches to pass policy against Prevent and pledging minimum possible compliance would also be positive.

Institutions need to feel under pressure from a broad base of opposition against Prevent from students alongside staff and educators.

Collectively, staff, educators and students are the 'machinery' of the university – without them there is no university!

So there is much power 'from below' to pressure the university's policies and practices – as long as you're organised.

To find your local UCU rep:
ucu.org.uk/yourcontacts

Resources for staff from UCU:
ucu.org.uk/counterterrorismact

UK-wide academics have signed an open letter against Prevent:
protectingthought.co.uk

And against the science behind Prevent
bit.ly/2d9JRJ3

Educators Not Informants network
educatorsnotinformants.wordpress.com

twitter.com/notinformants

Case study: Preventing Prevent at Manchester



Preventing Prevent campaign at Manchester was formed when the SU's BME Officer got in touch with the Islamic Society (ISoc) about the idea of campaigning against Prevent.

Joining forces, a campaign was born. We started off by thinking about whom else would be relevant to get on board.

Getting the student union on side was the first priority – we got in touch with our Campaigns and Citizenship Sabbatical Officer who offered her support and resources straight away. With the core team now formed, we had to plan the campaign.

It became obvious that before we could start campaigning against Prevent, we would need to raise the level of understanding among students.

So, the first event we held was an informative one with the core aim being to educate the students about what the Prevent duty is and how it affects them. After a successful first event a working group was set up to discuss next steps. This working group consisted of the ISoc, BME officer, Campaigns and Citizenship Officer, students from other political societies and staff from trade unions (such as UCU).

We decided to write an open letter and get academics to sign the letter. It was supported by senior lecturers across the university and even reported by the local Manchester Evening newspaper. We managed to host an open event in conversation with our local MP to discuss the issues surrounding Prevent. Since then we have also managed to pass policy on non-compliance with Prevent in our student union.

Moving forward the campaign aims to influence and pressure an on-going review into Prevent and how it is being carried out in Greater Manchester, by Mayor Andy Burnham.

Lessons from our campaign

- **Get the ISoc on board; Prevent disproportionately affects the society and its members**
- **Start off with educating – you cannot expect students to organise around a campaign they don't understand!**
- **Get your student union on board, they provide invaluable advice, support and resources.**
- **Utilise social media to spread the campaign, e.g. Twitter hashtags**

Responding to common questions

In the course of campaigning against Prevent you will inevitably encounter questions about what you intend to do and why. Some will be genuinely curious, others will be more hostile. It's good to be prepared with responses in either case.



What is Prevent?

Prevent is one strand of the government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to counter 'extremism' which it claims can lead to acts of terrorism.

What's wrong with Prevent?

Prevent has been used to cast a net of surveillance everywhere from our schools and universities to our GPs – primarily targeting Muslims. On campuses, it has manifested in staff being trained to spot and report on 'vulnerable' students, the cancellation of student-organised speaker events, and students being approached to be informants on their peers.

Surely there is nothing wrong with countering terrorism?

Prevent doesn't deal with terrorism, it deals with 'extremism' – which it says is a pathway to terrorism. Experts say that this model is reductionist, and the studies this model was developed on remains secretive and unscrutinised. There is no evidence that Prevent can or has actually prevented any terrorist acts.

If I'm not guilty of anything I should have nothing to fear though?

By definition Prevent deals with things that aren't crimes. Laws already exist to deal with crimes of violence, but Prevent acts in what's been termed the 'pre-criminal space'. The definition of extremism has no legal basis has been stretched cover more and more non-criminal acts.

Issues of disproportionate referrals of Muslims is down to implementation, not intention. Islamophobia is built in to Prevent – on paper it is explicitly focused on Muslim 'extremism', Prevent trainings use examples of Muslims becoming more religious as warning signs, the language of extremism is used by the government to whip up hysteria around Muslims, and earlier versions of Prevent even allocated funding based on the proportion of Muslims in an area. Disproportionate referrals are therefore an inevitability.

Wouldn't it be ok if Prevent just targeted other types of extremists besides Muslims then?

Prevent is deeply repressive, and whilst targeting primarily Muslims has undermined civil liberties and legal safeguards for all. Broadening Prevent application doesn't address these issues and only strengthens its powers.

Preventing Prevent

What do you think should be done with Prevent?

The Prevent duty making Prevent obligatory on nurseries, colleges, universities, GPs and more should be repealed, and that Prevent itself should be abolished. In its place the government should commit itself to addressing the roots of political violence, which have long been identified as including its foreign policy, disenfranchisement, poverty, racism and deprivation.

Can't you just reform it?

We believe that the racist and discriminatory foundations of Prevent are fundamentally wrong, repressive and beyond reform. Prevent also is tangled up with many other laws and policies affecting immigration, policing and so on which also threaten our civil liberties. As such, Prevent is but one key strand in a 'web' of repressive measures which need to be tackled from the root.

Isn't the anti-PREVENT lobby just run by extremist groups?

Prevent is opposed by a huge range of organisations, unions and civil liberties groups, Muslim and non-Muslim, academics, politicians and even former figures in the UN. This includes NUS, NUT, UCU, Liberty, MEND, the Liberal Democrats and more. The accusations of 'extremism' levelled at campaigners is a smear to tarnish their credibility, and is often targeted at Muslims.

Prevent is about safeguarding not surveillance

Safeguarding is primarily concerned with an individual's welfare, not looking at them as potential threats to national security. If Prevent was truly about safeguarding it would have said so from the start, not 10 years in.

How does Prevent affect me?

Via the Prevent duty, Prevent has been made obligatory on colleges and universities.

It is now embedded in everything from Welfare to IT services to external speaker processes. Teachers and support staff have been trained to spot and report vague signs of 'radicalisation' such as 'becoming more religious', 'changing behaviour', 'changing patterns of speaking'. Some students have been notified that their emails may be monitored and recorded. Universities have added more bureaucracy for hosting speaker events and made the process much harder, in cases pressuring them to cancel or vastly water down events – especially when dealing with political or 'controversial topics'.

All in all – Prevent on campus has altered what a university should fundamentally be for and has turned students into suspects.

Researching for campaigns

When deciding your campaign goals it is important to know how the Prevent duty is enacted specifically on your campus. This way you can tailor your activities and goals around them in a specific sense, not just abstractly. It is good to research this beforehand.

Prevent duty arrangements

Institutions will often publish their arrangements for enacting the Prevent duty. This may be found on their website, possibly in a designated section. They would also likely be listed in their risk assessments.

If this is not the case you could try contacting the staff member designated as leading on implementation on the Prevent duty. (It should be easy to find out who this is by asking staff). Failing that you could ask on-side staff or academics to let you know about the arrangements

Collecting experiences of Prevent

You can 'map out' the impact of the Prevent duty by collecting testimonies and experiences from students, staff and student groups and affected by it.

For e.g. Has a student at your institution been referred to Prevent? Have student groups had speaker events cancelled or interfered with due to issues of 'extremism'? Make sure that there is a safe and secure way that individuals can forward testimonies. With this you can build a local picture of Prevent, and your campaigning could incorporate and respond to these cases (with the consent of the affected).

Narrative 'hooks'

Presenting case studies of Prevent, whether from your institution or the local area, can be powerful hooks in your campaign messaging. Collect testimonies (as above) or highlight local case studies of Prevent circulating in the media.



Prevent Watch documents case studies of Prevent in practice and is a useful resource and advice centre for individuals affected by it.
www.Preventwatch.org

Dealing with the Prevent duty as a student officer

Given the natural variations between institutions – their size, their population and histories – the Prevent duty guidance is not individualised nor uniformly applicable. Therefore, institutions will vary with the changes they implement.

Whilst some of these will be explicitly under Prevent policy, other changes may be more covert or innocuous – or bolster policies in other areas. So, it can be difficult to ensure that you are keeping tabs on all areas where Prevent may be enacted.

This is why it is important to educate your whole officer team about Prevent (and where applicable) about honouring your SU's anti-Prevent policy.

Common changes or policies to look out for include:

- **Changes to external speaker policies**
- **Changes to ICT and internet usage policies – including monitoring and blocking**
- **Changes to access or usage of library facilities**
- **Introduction of stricter 'attendance monitoring' policies**
- **Swipe card access to prayer spaces**
- **Securitisation of prayer spaces generally (e.g. monitoring).**

As an officer you will have access to more spaces within your institution in which to voice concerns with Prevent. However an anti-Prevent campaign that falls solely on the shoulders of an officer or officers will likely be ineffective – and place a large amount of pressure on them.

It is important to aim for a dual approach, with a strong student-led campaign 'on the ground' that officers can channel, support and amplify within their institutions.

Avoiding complicity

Given the often diffused nature of how Prevent is implemented, you should be vigilant of attempts by your institutions to secure your complicity 'by the back door'.

You may be presented with proposals by your institution to take on some new duties, or extend current ones.

- For example you may be asked to share data about students involved in student societies or union activities.
- Ask: What purposes will this information be used for?
 - How this might come under Prevent duty recommendations on information sharing?
 - Who will this information be passed on to outside of the institution?
 - And: are you legally obliged to share this information – under what power?
- What will the impact be on students' willingness to engage with the SU and union activities knowing that the SU is sharing their data with the institution?
- In most cases, requests like these that go beyond legal obligations should be rejected.
- You may at times also be offered funding by local government (or even national) for projects for your SU to take part in.
- Before accepting funding investigate: What department or office is the funding being issued by (is it the Home Office, or OSCT?)
 - What are the aims of the funding proposal (is it anything to do with an anti-extremism agenda)?
 - What obligations will accepting the funding put on you?

Questions to keep in mind

- **What is your institution already doing to comply with Prevent? (Who can you ask to find out?)**
- **Has your union provided Prevent training or worked with Prevent officers before?**
- **Has your institution had any specific incidents that may mean they will be more likely to comply heavily with the Prevent duty (e.g. any past students convicted of terror offences)?**
- **Is your student body proportionally higher in Black, Muslim and/or International students?**

Prevent working groups

Institutions will have convened Prevent working groups, often chaired by the Student Registry or Student Welfare team. They may request to meet with you to discuss aspects of their Prevent duty, training, (and where applicable) your concerns about Prevent.

Institutions will often claim that they are operating the Prevent duty with a “soft touch approach” – be critical about what this actually means for students on the ground being affected by it.

Other times your institution may invite you to actually sit on the working group, with the offer of voicing students’ perspectives on Prevent.

We would recommend not joining your Prevent working group.

If your SU has policy to boycott Prevent, we would recommend honouring that by rejecting such an invite. Often university meetings such as these are used to rubberstamp policies, rather than meaningfully engage the concerns of students or the perspective of officers. Consider if your position on a Prevent working group will truly benefit your campaign and students, or serve as tickbox exercises for your institution.

Alternative channels of voicing discontent with Prevent may well be more effective in altering your university’s policies.

Ensure that prior to any such meeting you affirm in writing that this meeting should not be taken as compliance, collaboration or consent for their implementation of the Prevent duty.

Otherwise, such meetings can be reported in Prevent duty annual reports as examples of the SU being positively engaged with the duty.

In any case, getting ‘a seat at the table’ should never be the end goal of an anti-Prevent campaign.

Make use of a diversity of tactics to channel the concerns of your students and pressure your institutions.

If you choose to attend a Prevent working group meeting:

- The tone of these meetings will vary across institutions
- Some appear to be very inviting of student unions, others have asked officers to “keep their politics at the door”
- Officers may be pressured into justifying your SUs speaker approval system or the discussion may focus on certain student groups or activities. The focus of these meetings should be on the institution itself and not about the union, societies or student officers
- Staff may agree with you on a point or say something that matches the Union’s stance, and it is important to identify possible points of dissatisfaction amongst staff and make use them. For example, Welfare Team may worry “this will make it difficult for students suffering from poor mental health to trust our team and therefore we can’t provide adequate support”
- It is important to check meeting minutes/notes are being taken and made available to ensure these points are recorded – especially the wins and your rebuttals.



Charity Law and Trustee Boards

The CTSA obliges 'specified authorities' to implement the Prevent duty. Student unions are not among those specified.

Trustee boards are the body responsible for making sure that student unions adhere to the law. They are usually made up largely of unelected non-students. Dozens of unions have already passed anti-Prevent motions and not faced issues from their Trustee Boards, despite some staff being apprehensive.

Student unions can campaign on issues relating to Prevent and the Prevent duty that fall within their stated charitable objectives. These objectives usually relate to the education and welfare of students. Due to the adverse impact the Prevent duty will have on students' education and welfare, it is perfectly legitimate for an SU to campaign against it locally, as well as to support NUS' national campaigning against Prevent.

Your Trustee Board may choose (or be pressured to) follow recommendations by the Charity Commission to implement changes and to comply with the Prevent duty – but you should be able to argue against this.

If you are having issues with your Trustee Board in campaigning against Prevent please contact

Ilyas.Nagdee@nus.org.uk
and
Ali.Milani@nus.org.uk

Remember:

Most student unions and/or Officers do not have any legal obligations to comply with the Prevent duty. If you're informed otherwise, seek advice. Usually, student union charitable aims will include aims relating to representing the student voice, advancing education and defending the right to education.

The role of student unions is to represent and defend students, NOT monitor them or act as an extension of the state!

The background is a dark gray field featuring a repeating pattern of light gray geometric shapes. These include circles with crosshairs (resembling target symbols or optical sights) and stylized arrowheads or chevrons pointing in various directions. The shapes are distributed across the entire page, creating a technical or architectural aesthetic.

Section 5: Resources

Students Not Suspects – model motion

This Union Notes:

1. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (CTSA) 2015 placed a statutory requirement on 'specified authorities' – including universities and colleges – to 'Prevent people being drawn into terrorism', and therefore to implement the 'Prevent' strategy – known as the 'Prevent duty'.
2. The Prevent strategy, as part of the government's 'counter-extremism' agenda, has been used to create a vast surveillance system to spy on the public and to police dissent, systematically targeting Black people and Muslims.
3. Under Prevent, lecturers have been known to report students as being 'at risk of radicalisation' for merely taking an interest in political affairs in class, or for observing their religion more closely, whilst politically active students have found themselves visited by counter-terrorism officers.
4. The government's counter-terrorism/security policy is fundamentally flawed in its approach; its operant concepts of 'extremism' and 'radicalism' are ill-defined and open to abuse for political ends.
5. The Act further criminalises Muslims and Black people, and comes amidst a campaign of fear and demonisation from the government.

This Union Believes:

1. Islamophobia is massively on the rise across Europe, is state-sponsored and legitimised by the mainstream media.
2. The government's identified 'warning signs' of "radicalisation" problematise and renders suspect those with mental health difficulties.
3. That the Act could serve to isolate many students who already feel that the only avenue through which the government will engage them is 'anti-radicalisation' initiatives, resulting in further alienation and disaffection. The Act discourages free expression and analysis of ideas.
4. Academics, as well as anyone in a public sector job, should not have to be part of this surveillance. We fundamentally believe that universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance.
5. The implementation of the Prevent strategy on campus will not only isolate Muslim students but undermine the civil liberties of other groups such as environmental, political and humanitarian activists.
6. That the National Union of Students (NUS) and the University and College Union (UCU) have both passed motions at their national conferences opposing the Act and Prevent.
7. As a Charity, we as a Union are not legally bound by the Prevent duty and should seek to boycott it as far as legally possible.

This Union Resolves:

- 1.** To mandate the Officers of this Union to not engage with, or implement any Prevent duty measures to which they are not legally bound, and to boycott it as far as legally possible.
- 2.** To release a statement expressing our opposition to Prevent and the Prevent duty for being racist and a threat to academic freedom and civil liberties.
- 3.** To work with campus trade unions including UCU on combating the Prevent duty and its implementation on campus.
- 4.** To educate students on the dangers of Prevent strategy.
- 5.** To lobby the college/university to be more open and transparent about how they are engaging with Prevent and other similar initiatives.

This involves:

- Demanding publications of how the policy is operating within the university and students' union
 - This includes access to materials used to train staff and students
 - Holding consultations with the student body regarding how this affects students.
- 6.** To lobby university management to institute bare minimum compliance with the Prevent duty on campus.
 - 7.** To lobby the college/university to publicly condemn Prevent and the CTSA and to call for its repeal.



Know your rights

- Whether organising against Prevent or just in everyday life, it is good to know your rights with Prevent.
- You are not under any obligations to speak to a Prevent officer if approached.
- There is no such thing as an 'informal conversation' with Prevent officers.
- Be aware that despite your legal rights, Prevent officers may seek to abuse their powers.
- It is always best to get support from a legal specialist.

Below is a Prevent *Know Your Rights* guide.

1. If you are approached by a Prevent officer you should refuse to speak to them without a solicitor.

- If they approach you in the home, you do not have to let them in.
- If they approach you in the street or at college, you should refuse to speak to them.

2. If a Prevent officer is present at a meeting you are attending:

- Ask them to identify themselves and their reason for attendance
- Refuse to answer questions until you have spoken to a solicitor.

3. If your college or university wishes to discuss a Prevent related issue with you 'informally', make sure you don't go alone – bring a friend, solicitor or someone from your student union.

(All credit due to Islamic Human Rights Commission for the information)

Recommended contacts:

Islamic Human Rights Commission:
020 8904 4222

Prevent Watch: 033 3344 3396

CAGE: 0300 030 2243



Contacts



NUS Black Students' Campaign

@nusbsc

facebook.com/nusbsc

Representing students of African, Asian, Arab, Caribbean and South American descent in Further and Higher Education.



UCU (University & College Union)

ucu.org.uk

@UCU

facebook.com/ucu.campaigns

UK trade union & professional association for academics, lecturers, trainers, researchers & academic-related staff in FE & HE.



National Education Union (formerly NUT)

neu.org.uk

@NUTonline

facebook.com/nationaleducationunion

Largest teachers' union in the UK. Campaigning on behalf of teachers, education, children & young people.



Educators not Informants

educatorsnotinformants.wordpress.com

@notinformants

A group of academics who believe the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act jeopardises the relationship of trust between educators and students.



Together Against Prevent

togetheragainstPrevent.org

Joint initiative between campaigning groups opposing Prevent.



Students Not Suspects

facebook.com/studentsnotsuspects

@StudentsNotSus

Campaign against Prevent and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, focusing on the education context.



Prevent Watch

Preventwatch.org

@PreventwatchUK

A community led initiative which documents and supports people impacted by Prevent.



CAGE (formerly Cageprisoners)

cage.ngo

facebook.com/CageUK

CAGE is a UK-based human-rights NGO, that campaigns against the attacks made against civil liberties as a consequence of the 'War on Terror' and in the name of 'anti-terrorism', with a particular focus on the effect it has had on Muslims, due process and their freedoms in the UK.



Islamic Human Rights Commission

ihrc.org.uk

@ihrc

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is a campaign, research and advocacy organisation that works to counter human rights abuses and discrimination, with an Islamic perspective.



FOSIS (Federation of Student Islamic Societies)

@fosischannel

facebook.com/fosischannel

FOSIS is the representative body for Muslim students in colleges and universities across the UK and Ireland, organised and run by Muslim students.



MEND (formerly iEngage)

mend.org.uk

@mendcommunity

facebook.com/mendcommunity

MEND works to improvement civic participation by Muslims in Britain in order to tackle Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice.



Scotland Against Criminalising Communities

sacc.org.uk

facebook.com/saccRights

SACC stands against human rights abuses carried out in the name of the "war on terror", and other related abuses that limit political freedom and criminalise whole communities.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Prevent?

'Prevent' is one strand of the government's counter-terrorism strategy. Prevent is supposed to prevent individuals from getting 'radicalised' towards violence, which it claims can be done by defusing the 'ideology of extremism'.

What is Channel?

Channel is the 'early-detection system' of Prevent, and consists of local multi-agency panels which individuals (usually youngsters) are referred to if they exhibit signs of apparent vulnerability to 'extremism', and where they can be 'de-radicalised'.

What is the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act?

The CTSA 2015 is a law which, among other things, placed Prevent on a statutory basis for the first time, meaning that 'specified authorities' (including universities, colleges and the NHS) legally had to implement it – this is known as the 'Prevent duty'.

When did Prevent start?

Prevent was first introduced in the 2006 version of CONTEST. Channel was introduced in 2007.

Why does NUS oppose Prevent?

We recognise that Prevent is in its overt targeting of Muslim people, and that it is effective not in combatting terrorism, but ultimately in stifling dissent to the government's policies, and in curtailing our civil liberties under the guise of 'security'. We are joined in our opposition by a wide range of organisations, including UCU, Liberty, FOSIS, Defend the Right to Protest, and many Muslim groups and civil rights organisations.

How is Prevent Islamophobic?

Prevent is explicitly targeted at Muslims, is blatantly discriminatory in its approach and paints them all out to be imminent threats to security. It also falsely conflates increased religiosity with a greater likelihood towards 'extremism'.

But what about terrorism?

There is no evidence that Prevent can or has actually prevented any terrorist acts. Its model of understanding 'extremism' is reductionist, un-nuanced and misleading, as is the science underpinning it.

What do you think should be done with Prevent?

We believe that the Prevent duty needs to be repealed, that Prevent should be abolished, and that the government must take strong measures to address the real roots of violence – including its foreign policy, poverty and disenfranchisement.

Can you not just reform it?

We believe that the racist and repressive foundations of Prevent are fundamentally wrong, and beyond reform. Prevent also is bound up with many other laws and policies affecting immigration, policing and so on which also threaten our civil liberties. As such, Prevent is but one key strand in a 'web' of repressive measures which need to be tackled from the root.

Don't you think safeguarding is important?

Of course, but we believe that safeguarding should be primarily concerned with an individual's welfare, not looking at them as potential threats to national security. Prevent has co-opted the language of safeguarding and blurred the lines.

Surely you should only fear Prevent if you're guilty of something though?

Well, no – by definition Prevent seeks to deal with things that aren't crimes. Laws already exist to deal with crimes of violence, but Prevent extends the hand of the law further into what has been termed the 'pre-criminal space'.

But what about 'No Platform' – isn't that as bad?

'No platform' was a tactic developed to combat fascists from organising, by physically denying them the 'oxygen' they need to spread and normalise their views. There is a key difference between 'bottom-up' approaches like No Platform, which should be democratically-led by communities, vs. 'top-down' approaches like Prevent, imposed by the government against the public for dissent.

Who can I turn to if I've been affected by Prevent?

- Preventwatch: [Preventwatch.org](https://preventwatch.org)
- Islamic Human Rights Commission: ihrc.org.uk
- CAGE: cage.ngo



Recommended reading

A Decade Lost: Rethinking Radicalisation and Extremism

Arun Kundnani, Claystone, 2015

British Muslims – ‘The Suspect Community’?

Louise de Menthon, Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2013

Compliance Toolkit: Protecting Charities from Harm

Charity Commission, 2013

CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism

(a.k.a. CONTEST 2011)

HM Government, 2011

Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom’s Strategy

(a.k.a. CONTEST 2006)

HM Government 2006

Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A response to the revised Prevent strategy

Cageprisoners (CAGE UK), 2011

Prevent duty guidance: For England and Wales

HM Government, 2015

Prevent duty guidance: for Scotland

HM Government, 2015

Prevent Strategy

(a.k.a. Prevent 2011)

HM Government, 2011

Preventing Education? Human Rights and UK Counter-Terrorism Policy in Schools

Rights Watch UK, 2016

Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering International Terrorism

(a.k.a. CONTEST 2009)

HM Government, 2009

Rethinking Prevent: A Case for an Alternative Approach

JUST Yorkshire, 2017

Spooked! How not to Prevent violent extremism

Arun Kundnani, Institute of Race Relations, 2009

Tackling Extremism in the UK: An ideological attack on Muslim communities

CAGE UK, 2013

The Henry Jackson Society and the degeneration of British neoconservatism: liberal interventionism, Islamophobia and the 'war on terror'

Tom Griffin, Hilary Aked, David Miller, Sarah Marusek, Spinwatch, 2015

The impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities

Tufyal Choudhury/Helen Fenwick, Equality & Human Rights Commission, 2011

The Prevent duty: A guide for branches and members

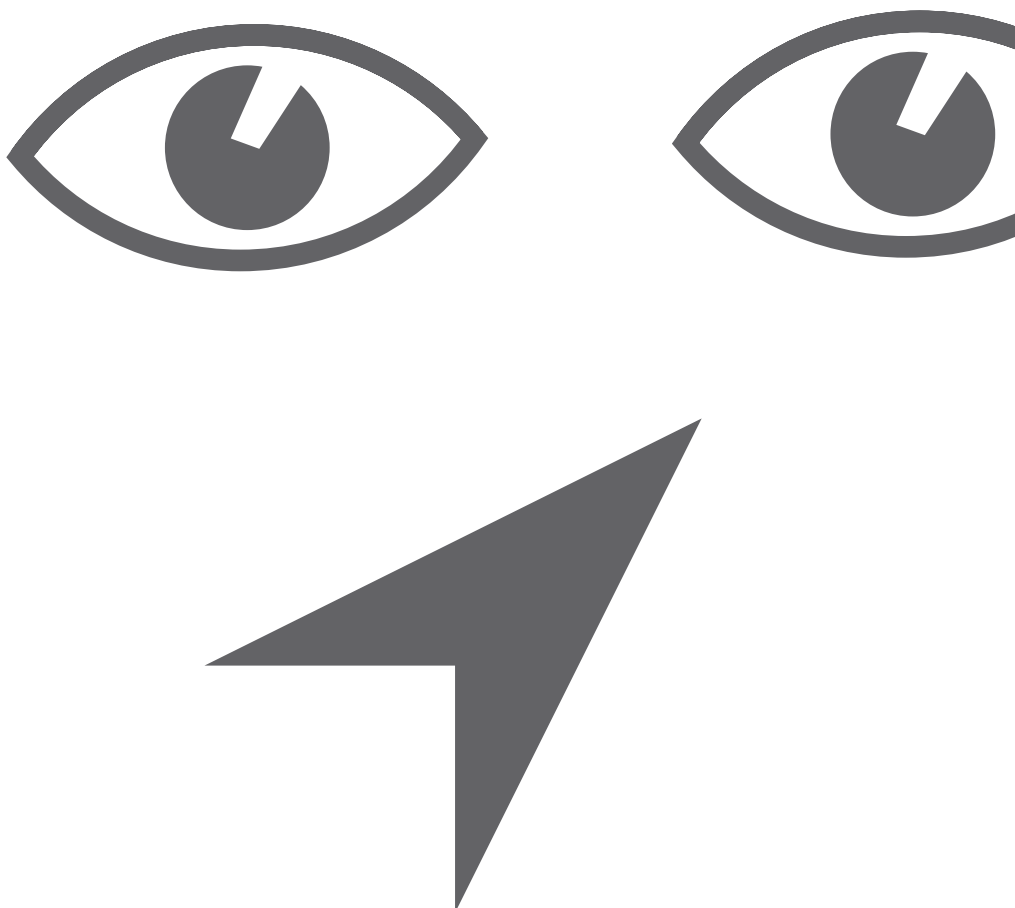
UCU, 2015

The Prevent Strategy: A cradle to grave police-state

CAGE UK, 2014

Whose Hearts and Minds? Contest 2 in Context

Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2009



Glossary

British values

Defined by the government as Democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Channel

Part of Prevent – multi-agency panels where individuals are referred to assess their vulnerability to radicalisation.

Charity Commission

Government body that regulates charities in England and Wales – this includes most student unions.

CONTEST

British Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy. Consist of the 4 P's:

PURSUE, PREVENT, PROTECT, PREPARE

Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015

Law passed that placed the Prevent duty on specified authorities, putting Prevent on statutory basis for first time. Also allows for temporary exile of British nationals, seizure of passports, interception of postal mail and more.

De-radicalisation

"[Activity] aimed at a person who supports terrorism and in some cases has engaged in terrorist related activity, which is intended to effect cognitive and/or behavioural change leading to a new outlook on terrorism and/or disengagement from it."

Due regard

Placing an appropriate amount of weight on the responsibility to Prevent people being drawn into terrorism, into usual functions of an organisation.

Extremism

Defined by the government as:

"Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values", and also calls for the death of members of British armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

Non-violent extremism

"Extremism which isn't accompanied by violence and which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit."

HEFCE/HEFCW

Higher Education Funding Council for England/Wales. Regulates and distributes funding for universities in England and/or Wales – and monitors compliance with the Prevent duty for universities. *Will be replaced as regulator by OfS in 2018.*

Preventing Prevent

OfS

Office for Students.

New regulator for Higher Education sector instituted by Higher Education and Research Act 2017.
Will replace HEFCE as regulator for sector and for Prevent duty in 2018.

Ofsted

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

Regulates schools in England – and monitors compliance with the Prevent duty in nurseries, schools and Further Education.

Prevent

One strand of CONTEST. Concerned with Preventing people being radicalised towards terrorism; to 'defuse' terrorism at its apparent root.

Prevent duty

Legal duty outlined in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 for 'specified authorities' to *"have due regard to the need to Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"*.

Radicalisation

Defined by the government as *"the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism."*

Radicaliser

Defined by the government as *"an individual who encourages others to develop or adopt beliefs and views supportive of terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism."*

Specified Authorities

Bodies identified in the Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015 with responsibility to implement the Prevent duty. Includes local government councils, NHS Trusts and Foundations, and governing boards of educational bodies.

Terrorism

Legally defined as *"An action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause."*

Vulnerability Assessment Framework

Checklist of 22 factors across three categories used to assess vulnerability to extremism of referrals to Channel.

WRAP

Workshop Raising Awareness of Prevent – one type of Prevent training, often delivered to teachers and healthcare staff.

