
Handout – Explanation of the Prevent Strategy

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on schools, in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

The term 'due regard' is important here. It 'means that the authorities should place an appropriate amount of weight on the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism when they consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions.'

In its Prevent Strategy (June 2011), the government defines extremism as the:

'... vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces.'

The Prevent Strategy

The Prevent Strategy has three strategic objectives:

- respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.

Terrorist groups often draw on extremist ideology, developed by extremist organisations.

Some people who join terrorist groups have previously been members of extremist organisations and have been radicalised by them.

Non-violent extremism can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit.

Preventing people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism requires challenge to extremist ideas where they are used to legitimise terrorism and are shared by terrorist groups.

The strategy also means intervening to stop people moving from extremist (legal) groups into terrorist-related activity.

Islamic extremists

The most significant threat is currently posed by Islamist extremists. They see Western intervention in Muslim-majority countries as a 'war with Islam'. They have an uncompromising belief that people cannot be both Muslim and British and that Muslims living in Britain should not participate in the democracy.

These extremists identify grievances for which terrorist organisations claim to have a solution.