

The University's "Prevent" Duty- A Briefing for All Staff

The Universities Scotland HE Prevent Group has produced generic briefing material aimed at raising awareness of the Prevent Duty generally among university staff in the Scottish HE sector.

Staff Groups for whom this Briefing is intended

The information contained in this leaflet is appropriate to a wide range of staff who support students. The material should be particularly relevant for staff working in the following areas:

- Student Support Services
- Campus Security
- Residential Accommodation
- Library
- Information Services
- Academic advising
- Communications
- Students' Association

General Introduction to Prevent

The University's 'Prevent' Duty

What is Prevent?

UK universities have a statutory duty, along with all other public bodies in the UK, in terms of the Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015, 'to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

Within universities, the term 'Prevent' refers to measures taken to safeguard members of the university community who might be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

What does this mean for the University?

The University has established a Prevent working group, with responsibility in this area. The members of the Prevent Group are:

Composition	Membership 2023
Chair	Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice-Principal Governance
Representative from Student Life	Jackie Main, Director of Student Life *
A suitably experienced academic member from each of the Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professor Helen Gallagher, Vice Dean, SHLS• Professor Bruce Wood, Department of Applied Computer Games, SCEBE• Professor John Harris, ADR, GSBS
GCU London Representative	Stefan Hollins, Student Life and Campus Professional Services Manager
Senior Manager Responsible for Campus Security	David Halliday, Head of Security and Resilience
Information Services Representative	Tahir Yousaf, Director of Information Technology
Registry Representative	Stephen Lopez, Academic Registrar
Students' Association	David Carse, Chief Executive
Students' Association	Chidozie Nwaigwe, Student President
People Services Representative	Kathleen Cleary, Director of People Services
Equality & Diversity Representative	Adrian Lui, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Advisor
Information Compliance Representative	Hazel Lauder, Head of Information Compliance
Communications and Public Affairs Representative	Val Morgan, Head of Communications and Public Affairs

*Joint representatives on the Higher Education Prevent Working Group

In attendance:-

Member of a recognised Trade Union – Douglas Chalmers

Representative from Department of Governance & Legal Services (Secretary to the PSG) – Debbie Donnet

The Prevent Group's role is to ensure that the University addresses its statutory duty. It does this with reference to a Good Practice Guide that has been prepared by the Scottish universities.

Important elements of the Group's work are:

- providing information and training to staff engaged in the provision of student safeguarding, welfare and pastoral support;
- producing and overseeing a protocol on the management of speakers and events; and
- maintaining an effective dialogue with the Students' Association to manage the process among the student community.

Where, in relation to the Counter-Terrorism & Security Act, members of staff and/or students raise concerns regarding the wellbeing of students, or the invitation of potentially controversial speakers, or the staging of potentially controversial events, the Prevent Group will provide advice and ultimately will make decisions on the University's behalf.

What does it mean for me?

Many members of staff contribute to the provision of welfare and pastoral support to students. In cases where students are experiencing difficulties at university, a range of advice and support is available. This includes Student Services teams, wardens in halls of residence, Academic Advisors and the Students' Association Advice Centre: These teams are here to provide advice and guidance to all members of staff who engage with students and you are encouraged to make use of them in providing student support. Senior staff who have responsibility for student facing services will receive training and briefings in relation to the Prevent duty.

If you have concerns that a member of the University community might be at risk of being drawn into terrorism, you should seek advice from your Head of Department. Advice can also be sought from. Advice and guidance is also available from Jackie Main, Head of Student Life or David Halliday, Head of Security and Resilience

Where you are concerned about the wellbeing of a student, it is reasonable for you to share personal information about the student with a colleague whose role is to provide support. Should you have concerns regarding sharing personal information, you should take advice from the University's Head of Information Compliance, Hazel Lauder (Hazel.Lauder@gcu.ac.uk)

Further Information

Sources of relevant information in relation to Prevent are:

1. The Good Practice Guide for Scottish HEIs, which includes information on the University's statutory duty
https://www.gcu.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/36129/statutory20guidance20may20202020web.pdf
2. Guidance on Understanding Radicalism
See link 2 below
3. Guidance on Identifying students at Risk
See link 3 below
4. The University's protocol for managing speakers and events
https://www.gcu.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/125444/Protocol-for-Managing-Events-and-External-Speakers.pdf

LINK 2 - Understanding Radicalisation

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INTRODUCTION

There is no single profile of a person who is likely to become involved in terrorist-related activity, or single indicator of when a person might move to support extremism. Also, there is no universally accepted view of why individuals might become involved in such activities.

An increasing body of information indicates that factors thought to relate to personal experiences affect the way in which people relate to their personal environment and may make them vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation by those seeking to radicalise, potentially leading to their supporting terrorist activities.

Individuals who may be vulnerable and susceptible to radicalisation could be students or staff. Recent case studies of incidents highlight that factors such as a negative change in a person's behaviour or circumstances may indicate increased vulnerability.

RADICALISATION

Radicalisation is a process. It has no single route or pathway.

It is generally more common for susceptible individuals to become involved in terrorist-related activity through the influence of others. Vulnerable individuals may be exploited in many ways by radicalisers who target their vulnerability.

Radicalisers often use a persuasive rationale or narrative and are usually charismatic individuals who are able to attract people to their cause based on a particular interpretation or distortion of history, politics or religion. Initial contact may be via:

- Peers, siblings, other family members or acquaintances with the process of radicalisation often being a social one;
- A range of unsupervised environments, such as gyms or cafés;
- In private in individual's homes; and
- The Internet and Social Media.

Contact with radicalisers is also variable and may be direct i.e. face-to-face, or indirect through the Internet, social networking or other forms of media. More commonly it will be through a combination of the above.

Use of extremist rationale or 'narrative'

Radicalisers usually attract people to their cause through a persuasive rationale contained within a single narrative that has the potential to influence views. Inspiring new recruits, embedding the beliefs of those with established extreme views and/or persuading others of the legitimacy of their cause is the primary objective of those who seek to radicalise vulnerable individuals

EXPLOITATION

The factors surrounding vulnerability are many and they are unique to each person.

Susceptibility to exploitation

In terms of personal vulnerability, various factors may make individuals susceptible to exploitation. None of these are conclusive in themselves, or exclusive of each other. Therefore, they should not be

considered in isolation but in conjunction with the particular circumstances of the individual and any other signs of radicalisation.

Identity crisis

Young adults exploring issues of identity can feel distant from their parents/family, cultural and religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in society around them. Radicalisers exploit this by providing a sense of purpose or feelings of belonging. Where this occurs, it can often manifest itself in a change in a person's behaviour, their circle of friends, the way they interact with others and the way they spend their time.

Personal crisis

This may for example, include significant tensions within the family that produce a sense of injustice within the vulnerable individual and alienation from what may have been the traditional or familiar certainties of family life.

Personal circumstances

The experience of migration, local tensions or events affecting families in countries of origin may contribute to alienation from UK values and a decision to cause harm to symbols of the community or state.

Adults at risk

Adults who may be at risk, as defined by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 and who are:

- Unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests, and
- At risk of harm, and
- Affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, and / or are
- More vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is defined as:

an act that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people and/or damage to property; or seriously interferes with or disrupts an electronic system.

There are various forms of terrorist activity ranging from 'lone actors' to organised groups. In addition to physical forms of attack, terrorists may also try to access information that may be of use to them, for example by infiltrating an organisation or securing the assistance of an "insider".

There is no typical profile for a UK-based terrorist. On-going research is contributing to the body of knowledge about how and why individuals become involved with terrorist-related activity; it highlights that the radicalisation process or path to engagement with terrorist-related activity is neither linear nor predictable and the length of time involved can differ greatly, ranging from a few weeks to a number of years.

The following factors have been found to contribute to vulnerable people joining certain groups that support terrorist-related activity:

- Need to express or act on feelings of anger, grievance or injustice;
- Desire for excitement, comradeship or adventure;
- Fascination with violence, weapons and uniforms;

- Them-and-us thinking;
- Need for identity, meaning and belonging; and
- Need for status

LINK 3 - GUIDANCE ON IDENTIFYING STUDENTS AT RISK

Taken from Channel guidance, HM Government, October 2012

There is no single route to terrorism nor is there a simple profile of those who become involved. For this reason any attempt to derive a profile can be misleading. It should not be assumed that the characteristics and experiences set out below necessarily indicate, or lead to, individuals being either committed to terrorism or becoming a terrorist.

Neither are these indicators the only source of information required to make an appropriate assessment about vulnerability. Prevent is about early intervention to protect people from the risk they may face before illegality relating to terrorism occurs and as such is a safeguarding measure.

VULNERABILITY INDICATORS

Identifying vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism is built around three dimensions:

- **Engagement** with an extremist group, cause or ideology
- **Intent** to cause harm; and
- **Capability** to cause harm

Each dimension should be considered separately as experience has shown that it is possible to be engaged without intention to cause harm and that it is possible to intend to cause harm without being particularly engaged. Experience has also shown that it is possible to stop intending to cause harm while remaining sympathetic to a cause.

Examples of Indicators

Engagement:

- Spending increasing time in the company of suspected or known extremists
- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group
- Day to day behaviour increasingly centred around an extremist group, ideology or cause
- Loss of interest in friends and activities that are not associated with the group, ideology or cause
- Possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause/proscribed group¹
- Attempts to recruit others to the group/ cause
- Communications with others that suggest identification with a group, cause or ideology

Intent:

- clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social or political ills;
- using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group;

¹ A proscribed group is one that is outlawed in the UK and it is illegal for it to operate. It is a criminal offence to belong to, support or display support for a proscribed organisation. A list of proscribed groups can be found at:

- speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group and the importance of action now;
- expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group, cause or ideology;
- condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others; or
- plotting or conspiring with others.

Capability:

- having a history of violence;
- Criminal capability and access to criminal networks to support extremist goals;
- having occupational skills that can enable acts of terrorism (such as civil engineering, pharmacology or construction);
- having technical expertise that can be deployed (e.g. IT skills, knowledge of chemicals, military training or survival skills).