



# Security, Safeguarding and the Curriculum

Recommendations for effective  
multi-agency *Prevent* work in schools

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## Executive Summary

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on all public bodies, including schools, to engage with the *Prevent* strategy, one of four strands of the Home Office *Contest* counter-terrorism policy. As a minimum, the professionals engaging in this study were familiar with the ‘Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent’ (WRAP) training format, though all of them supplemented these materials with other aspects, recognising that schools have unique demands, which are not addressed by WRAP alone.

Interviews with 14 professionals engaging with schools in two sites of enquiry to support *Prevent* work with young people uncovered:

- A range of professionals from diverse backgrounds, including current and retired police, former teachers and local government advisers, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and faith based providers, the majority operating on a private consultancy basis.
- Extensive informal networks, with schools offered diminishing central support in identifying and accessing appropriate professional support.
- At times divergent advice being offered from the Home Office and Department for Education; schools’ understandings of the *Prevent* policy was heavily influenced by the professional backgrounds and values of the consultants involved.

Key recommendations:

- A broad and balanced curriculum provides important opportunities to discuss controversial issues and help young people understand and

deliberate on the origins of their values, develop critical thinking and digital literacy. Safeguarding leads, Channel co-ordinators and *Prevent* trainers should take great care to ensure these spaces are not closed down by fear of surveillance.

- The framing of the *Prevent* agenda is essential to its success. Approaches which foreground a universal entitlement for all students to develop dispositions of critical enquiry, intercultural encounter and digital media literacy provide a more positive framing than approaches which focus on singling out at risk students for referral.
- A shared language has yet to develop between teachers, law enforcement and other agencies involved in *Prevent* work. Shared definitions are needed, and the concept of ‘non-violent extremism’ is particularly problematic.
- More needs to be done to communicate successful experiences with *Prevent*, to represent the experiences of young people in the classroom and in the *Prevent* referral process, in order to counteract a reactive media narrative and address community suspicions.

## 1. The State of the Sector

### - The security, safeguarding and curriculum study

Employing a snowball sampling technique in two sites of enquiry in the North West and South West of England, the research study sought to understand the professional social networks which schools draw upon to access training and develop their understanding of the *Prevent* strategy. Both the sites had similar features in being low priority areas for *Prevent*, mid-size cities facing a range of challenges from different communities. Attempts were made, without success, to access a high priority area for *Prevent*. Participants were interviewed between July 2016 and February 2017, around 1 year after the *Prevent* duty came into force for schools in July 2015.

A further layer of the study involved engagement with a range of figures on a national level. These included former ministers in the Home Office and Department for Education, and representatives of teachers' and governors' professional organisations.

In total, the study engaged 14 professionals, all of whom were engaged in mediating *Prevent* policy into practice with schools and young people; 5 in each site of enquiry and 4 at the national level. All of these professionals operated at a level above individual school governance, and many held, or had held multiple roles in relation to the sector. The largest group identified by the snowball sample were independent consultants or representatives of voluntary or 3<sup>rd</sup> sector bodies (7 participants), followed by civil service and local government personnel (4 participants). Other participants included politicians, police, university teacher educators and school inspectors.

Participants were asked about their roles, their understanding of schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and the sources of their professional understanding. Participants were also asked about their professional networks, and the practice of multi-agency working around *Prevent*. A conference was held at Plymouth Marjon University in July 2017, bringing together the participants from both sites of enquiry. Making use of the Delphi method (Baumfield et al. 2012) participants were presented with draft findings and asked to comment on contested areas of understanding, explore connections between recurring themes, and make recommendations for practice. A review was also undertaken of the multitude of reports and guidance on *Prevent* published during the 2015-17 period.

#### - Multi-agency partnership

The police participants noted that changes to policy guidance and training capacity meant that they were no longer able to directly engage in training school personnel on the *Prevent* duty in the same way as they had in 2015. This meant that schools were reliant on other accredited trainers, or on online or DVD resources, to deliver the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP). The locus of *Prevent* partnership within police forces also varies. In both of the sites of enquiry, school *Prevent* partnership was located within community liaison, as with other school-policing co-operation (drug awareness, traffic safety, etc.) The research had originally aimed to access a high priority site of enquiry, but *Prevent* partnership in that city was located within police counter-terrorism command, and this proved to be a barrier to access. Police may wish to consider whether this also creates barriers to effective communication of the purpose of *Prevent* work with schools.

WRAP II, the Home Office accredited workshop resource, is aimed at the full range of ‘specified authorities’ who have a public duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015; this includes schools, the health sector, childcare providers, social services, prisons and probation. All of the accredited WRAP trainers in the study supplemented their materials with specialist work aimed at schools, recognising that there are particular challenges and opportunities which the school environment provides. In particular, participants highlighted two challenges:

- WRAP trainers from an educational background highlighted the relationship between Prevent and the curriculum. In particular, Citizenship, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Religious Education offered opportunities to address challenging topics and to develop young people’s critical reasoning skills, but there are opportunities across the whole of a broad and balanced curriculum. While the duty itself relates more to safeguarding policies in schools, many participants stressed that safeguarding as a whole is inseparable from the curriculum. The relationship between Prevent and the duty on schools to promote fundamental British values (Ofsted 2015) was also contested. Unlike other specified authorities, schools have a duty to teach about extremism and radicalisation, and arguably to teach about *Prevent*, not only to report on it.
- WRAP trainers from a policing and security background further highlighted the challenges of integrating an approach based on the Peelian principle of policing by consent (Home Office



2012) into a context of compulsory schooling. Whereas in other settings, *Prevent* work may be limited to identifying a narrow subset at risk of being drawn into criminality, all pupils and teachers in schools may feel compelled to discuss controversial topics or comment upon extremism and radicalisation. This requires a more sensitive approach. While police and security professionals reflected on the conceptual challenges of *Prevent* in a compulsory setting, some educators expressed unease with the concept of a ‘pre-criminal’ surveillance space. There does not appear to be a current space for professional dialogue on the intersection of these two problematic concepts. Further reflection is needed on the appropriate role of the state in the formation and surveillance of young people’s values and opinions.

The importance of trainers’ professional backgrounds was key to their understanding of the *Prevent* duty, and in turn to the way it will be framed when presented to schools. Responsibility for oversight of *Prevent* rests with community safety officers at the local level, but Local Authority participants commented on the challenges which academisation can bring to resourcing and building effective links with schools. Many of the private consultants in the study had begun their work with schools either as Local Authority advisers or in national NGOs such as the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) which ceased to exist in the 2011-12 ‘bonfire of quangos’. In other areas, faith groups and voluntary organisations dedicated to inter-faith and inter-community dialogue were active in supporting the work of the education sector. This decentralisation and privatisation of provision may lead to

significant variation in quality of *Prevent* advice and training available to schools. Due to the elective sampling approach taken in this study, with participants asked to identify other sources of quality professional knowledge, all of the participants offered schools original insights grounded in professional experience alongside the generic WRAP training. It is not possible to determine whether this is representative of all *Prevent* training currently accessed by schools in England.

- Guidance on engagement

While the WRAP training ensures that all schools are aware of the base-line legal requirement to engage with the *Prevent* agenda, there is a need for schools, Local Authorities, police and communities to engage together in meaningful multi-agency work. At present, evidence suggests that there are many examples of good practice, but these are dependent on the professional networks and prior connections existing in each area. An early goal of the study was to make use of Actor Network Theory to develop a sociogram (Wolfgang 2001) which would map all of the professional connections operative within each site of enquiry. Very quickly, however, it became apparent that none of the professionals engaged in multi-agency *Prevent* work could name all of their contacts, or all of the schools they were employed by, let alone represent these visually. As I have written elsewhere (Lundie *forthcoming*), this suggests a post-institutional and post-regulatory space, in which connections have become too numerous to meaningfully map and in which a new vocabulary of multi-agency working is being negotiated. For this reason, this formative period, and the influences on it, is crucial to establishing a new institutional logic (Pierson 2000) for school-police multi-professional working practices. In this environment, it is essential that community safety officers make information on quality *Prevent*

training and support providers widely and openly available to school leaders, and that there are clear channels of communication, not limited to schools under Local Authority control.

While the relationship between *Prevent* and the curriculum was stressed by all participants, the locus of *Prevent* work remains contested. Those in the policing and security sector often wished to locate *Prevent* as a safeguarding concern, with a focus on identifying and referring the small number of young people who may become drawn into violent extremism. While this is clearly the stated goal of the policy, it may be legitimate to question whether such sweeping curricular and legislative remedies are required across the country, if the goal is only to address a numerically tiny group on the threshold of criminality. On the other hand, many participants were keen to stress curricular justifications for successful *Prevent* work, pointing to critical dispositions, inquiry skills, opportunities for intercultural encounter and heightened social, emotional, political and digital literacy which effective *Prevent* work *in the curriculum* could deliver for all students (see figure 1).

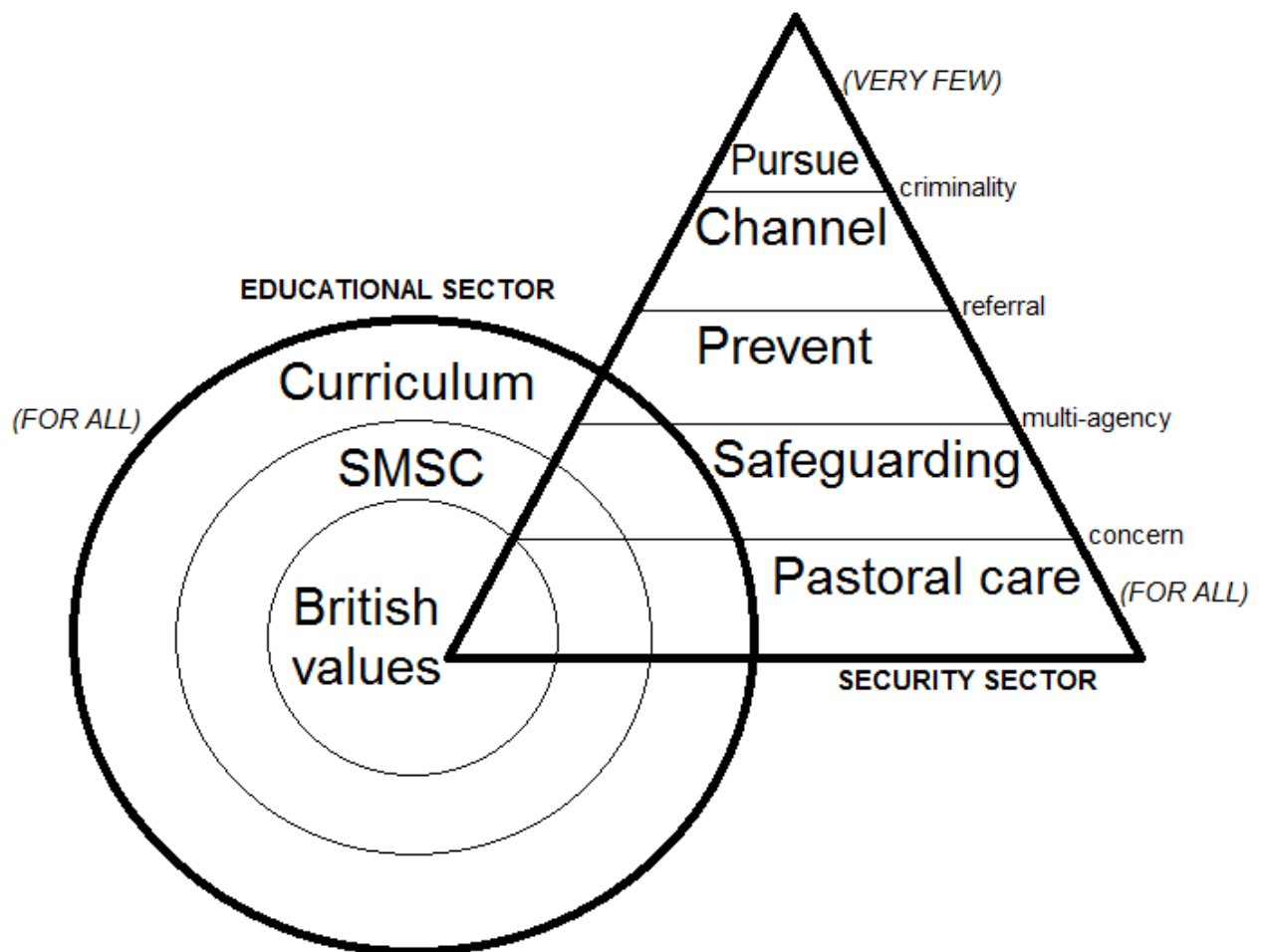


Figure 1. Curricular and security models of Prevent work in schools.

While more work is clearly needed to demonstrate the claim that whole-school cross-curricular anti-radicalisation education is effective in reducing pathways to violent extremism, the whole curriculum focus has much to commend it. Firstly, such an approach helps to challenge the perception that *Prevent* is aimed disproportionately at one section of the community. Further, the cultivation of the dispositions and competences listed above can be justified in pedagogical terms, rather than being viewed as an intrusion by the security apparatus of the state into the curriculum, values and ethos of every school. Attention needs to be given to the intersection of these two

priorities. As several participants in the Delphi conference noted, **safeguarding is a curriculum issue.**

#### - Critical Incidents

In outlining the development of their thinking on Prevent, the professionals in this study highlighted a series of critical incidents which changed their understandings and/or practice. The ‘Trojan Horse’ allegations in Birmingham schools in 2014 provide something of a model of the way these incidents influence practice. Beginning with important policy blind-spots around values and governance in schools, the media attention focused on the allegations generated a political response, which was in turn framed by the professional backgrounds of the respondents (in the case of the Trojan Horse, the difference in focus between Sir Peter Clarke, from a policing background, and Ian Kershaw, from an education background led to contested conclusions which became the focus of subsequent parliamentary enquiries). Following the political response, guidance to practitioners was revised, in this case the re-authoring of the Ofsted handbook to include a renewed focus on fundamental British values (Ofsted 2015) and the introduction of the *Prevent* duty for schools, and this guidance shifts the perceptions of the professionals involved. Several of the participants in the study shifted professional emphasis toward advising schools on *Prevent* following this critical incident.

Subsequent critical incidents fall into a similar pattern. Among these, the high profile case of three girls from Bethnal Green who travelled to Syria (Barrett 2015) and the far right National Action ‘White Man March’ (Hughes 2015) were significant for some practitioners in drawing attention to previously overlooked demographics. While these incidents drew public attention to failings of existing multi-professional partnerships

to prevent violent extremism, two further incidents draw attention to potential negative consequences of misunderstanding or misapplying *Prevent*. In one high profile incident, a childcare provider engaged the referral process over a child who mispronounced ‘cucumber’ as ‘cooker bomb’ (Quinn 2016); and in another a 6 year old child was allegedly questioned by police after writing about living in a ‘terrorist house’ instead of a ‘terraced house’ (BBC 2016). While there were more nuances to these stories than the media coverage initially suggested, many professionals cited them as critical junctures for the practice and public understanding of *Prevent* work. Professionals who were familiar with the Channel programme in particular highlighted the difficulty of communicating successful *Prevent* referrals to the public, due to the confidential nature of the work.

These recurring critical incidents point to a reactive pattern of understanding *Prevent*, with different professional backgrounds slowly converging in their understanding in response to policy responses in the aftermath of high profile failures or media interest. Several participants also pointed to spikes in *Prevent* referrals around such critical incidents, suggesting that this reactive pattern reverberates at the level of individual schools and teachers.

## - Recommendations

- 1.1 Professional understandings the Prevent agenda depend a great deal on the examples and experiences from professionals’ different backgrounds. More emphasis needs to be given in WRAP training, and trainer training, to how to understand the terminology in practice.
- 1.2 Safeguarding is a curriculum issue. Materials for schools which introduce the themes of radicalisation and

extremism in age-appropriate ways should be developed, drawing on existing examples of good practice. Further recommendations on this are made in Chapter 2.

- 1.3 Drawing on this theme, more emphasis needs to be given to the role of positive, whole curriculum materials on critical thinking, digital and media literacy, and intercultural encounter, rather than on the surveillance and referral of an ‘at risk’ few.
- 1.4 Policy-makers at a local and national level should be less reactive to high profile media cases involving Prevent. A more proactive approach would communicate the successes of the policy, and refocus attention on the wider educational dispositions discussed above.
- 1.5 Given the differences in emphasis between the Home Office statutory guidance and Department for Education guidance on *Prevent* in schools, the two departments may wish to consider publishing a single set of shared guidance to schools.

## 2. Communicating *Prevent*

### - *Prevent* and the curriculum

The observation that safeguarding is a curriculum issue, however, raises profound concerns about both the politicising and surveilling of the classroom. The National Curriculum entitlement for all young people to have an education which takes account of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development should be viewed as a whole school commitment, not something which can be reduced to RE, PSHE or Collective Worship. The recognition that all teachers and all subjects have a role to play in the *Prevent* duty is to be welcomed. However, it is also clear that, in teaching about issues such as radicalisation and extremism, young people will be exposed to very challenging material and ideas. The study saw extremely thoughtful age-appropriate examples of curricula developed by schools, local authorities and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations. Beyond curriculum content, however, any approach to teaching about values has to be open to authentic challenge in order to engage authentically with young people (Lundie & Conroy 2015). The fears which have been expressed (c.f. Grove 2016) about the possible chilling effects of *Prevent* on this kind of authentic classroom debate are worthy of consideration. Materials and pedagogies which enable critical evaluation are more likely to be effective than didactic teaching, and less likely to be viewed as an undue politicisation of the curriculum.

While some of these materials were inspired by professionals' genuine concerns to address themes of relevance to parents, communities and young people, others were a response to concerns about the inspection framework. In Key Stage 1 in particular, participants expressed concerns that Ofsted inspectors would find fault with a curriculum unless children



could articulate the meaning of extremism and radicalisation. At times, this may lead schools to spend time addressing issues that are not appropriate or relevant to the age group. At their most positive, resources aimed at very young children were aimed at encouraging skills of respectful discussion and critical thinking. Materials aimed at older children could address specific issues from across the Safeguarding agenda, such as extremism and radicalisation, sexual exploitation, neglect, in ways that enabled young people to approach controversial topics sensitively, while acknowledging that peers may be personally affected. Once again, the origins of curriculum materials had the ability to significantly reframe the policy, with organisations as diverse as *Inspire* - a Muslim community organisation engaging women in theological literacy - and the *UK Military School* engaging with the agenda in very different ways.

In addition to the problem of schools engaging in curriculum development because of concerns about inspection, there are concerns that teachers may be viewed as surveillance agents in the classroom. Most of the professionals engaged in *Prevent* training did not report a widespread concern about this. Understanding the difference between the expression of opinion and patterns of behaviour which may indicate a risk of radicalisation is key to addressing this concern. While there is a role for the whole school curriculum to address some of the issues raised by *Prevent*, there are particular skills which Citizenship, PSHE and RE teachers possess which can help to facilitate meaningful discussion. Many of the professionals in the study had begun their careers as teachers of RE and/or Citizenship. In particular, a disposition of 'committed openness' (Conroy et al. 2013) in which the teacher welcomes difficult and discordant voices, working to uncover the origins of students' views, sometimes through Socratic questioning, or

through posing controversial topics for debate, without ever equivocating between positions or reducing them to a common denominator. Teachers require resources, experience and reassurance that teaching about controversial topics in this way does not amount to undermining fundamental British values, or to equivocating between those who accept and reject them.

Given the now discredited methodology used for determining extremism risk (Armstrong et al. 2016), which depends on a narrow dataset of identified dangerous extremists, any approach to *Prevent* in schools should be grounded in high quality pedagogical research into effective strategies for the whole school. Further research into appropriate resources and pedagogies is needed.

Within this context, providing a working definition of extremism also proves problematic. In particular, the concept of ‘non-violent extremism’ presents itself as contradictory to the rest of the *Prevent* policy, which requires a judgment as to whether an at risk individual possesses capability and intent. Without a violent intent, it is unclear how engagement with extremism can translate into capability to do harm, and therefore become a safeguarding concern. Without underplaying the psychological and ideological harms which extremist patterns of thought and action can cause to young people, it is important that the referral threshold for *Prevent* is clear and transparent. Schools have pastoral provision in place to address other issues of young people’s mental health, wellbeing and safeguarding internally. Unlike many other areas of teachers’ work, there are unlikely to be many occasions for teachers to habituate to good practice in making judgments about *Prevent* referrals. Teachers’ understanding of this threshold should not depend on a chance encounter with an experienced trainer or colleague, or exposure to media narratives about *Prevent*. For this reason,

the concept of ‘non-violent extremism’ is too problematic to introduce into policy at this time.

- **Community partnerships**

The challenge of developing a shared professional vocabulary between teachers, social workers, community safety officers, police and other professionals engaged in *Prevent* panels is not to be underestimated. This ‘Tower of Babel’ is the product of several factors. For schools, *Prevent* is not their core purpose, and the number of referrals are likely to be too few for any one teacher to learn from experience. For that reason, it is important for experienced professionals to share their personal experiences. Challenges over professional vocabulary are also challenges over control of the process - framing the *Prevent* agenda using policing and security terminology lends support and easy coherence to arguments for law enforcement solutions, while framing problems in terms of curriculum and personal development lends the same advantages to educational solutions. The professionals in this study recognised the uniqueness of educational settings in their fulfilment of the *Prevent* duty. Agency and sector specific terminology can lead to misunderstandings of the policy, which are particularly problematic given the reactive media narrative presented in the previous chapter.

It was reported that there are often spikes in referrals around critical incidents such as a terrorist attack, highlighting the reactive nature of much *Prevent* work, and the importance of good proactive communication with communities. At the same time as fuelling reflection and policy refinement, this reactive approach fuels the mutually reinforcing extremist discourses of Islamophobia and Islamism, which together make up the vast majority of *Prevent* referrals. This cycle of media attention,

perceived Islamist terror and far right Islamophobic reaction can toxify the narrative in which *Prevent* is framed. In particular, relations with some sections of the Muslim community have been strained with regard to *Prevent*. Schools' relationships to their communities, and to their pupils' families in particular, are one of the most important formative components of the capacity of schools to robustly and thoughtfully enact their values (Bamber et al. forthcoming), and the change from community-led to policing and security led agendas has profound consequences for that relationship. While some have argued that *Prevent* has become a 'toxic brand' (BBC 2015), most professionals in the study were keen to advance nuanced or critical models of good *Prevent* practice, which resisted the media caricature. These models involved close working partnerships with communities and community leaders, pragmatism when dealing with internal and multi-professional politics, and an acknowledgement that not every student who expresses an unpleasant ideological statement is a potential extremist. Nonetheless, there are significant challenges in communicating effective *Prevent* work with the public and communities. One of these challenges arises due to the confidential nature of the work:

[The Home Office] say we don't target Muslim students, but we're not willing to disclose the figures, for example... I think we will see a change in the strategy... [the Home Office may become more] open and transparent, show them some of the figures, talk about some case studies.

Many of the professionals remarked on the challenges of communicating successful *Prevent* cases; both confidentiality and security concerns made success stories less forthcoming than the high profile perceived public failings of early *Prevent* work in schools. In many of the professionals' discourse, there

was a presumption that ‘communities’ and community leaders could be easily identified, which may suggest that there is still a religious enframing to their thinking about the policy.

#### - **Media literacy**

The complex relationship between professionals, policy and the media which the critical incidents in the previous chapter illustrated is itself a fruitful topic for classroom discussion. There has been significant interest already in providing young people with the skills to be discerning and critical ‘pro-sumers’ (producers and consumers) of digital social media. More work is needed to work with educators to increase community resilience and ability to safely explore difficult issues relating to extreme views online through dialogue and enquiry.

#### - **Recommendations**

**2.1** Excellent age-appropriate materials already exist to address the topics of extremism and radicalisation. These should be gathered and shared more widely. The inspectorate should be clear about what an age-appropriate understanding looks like, particularly in Key Stage 1. There are roles for all curriculum subjects to address skills of critical thinking and respectful encounter, but there are particular skills and dispositions which RE, Citizenship and PSHE teachers can lend to the task. More important than teaching about extremism, schools should focus on cultivating habits of thought which equip students to challenge extremist narratives.

**2.2** Teachers and teacher educators should be provided with clear guidance, based on rigorous research in the classroom, on how to differentiate between children at risk of violent radicalisation who should be referred via

the school's *Prevent* lead, and the expression of dissenting or unorthodox opinions. The concept of 'non-violent extremism' is problematic for this. The Home Office catalogue of *Prevent* training should highlight examples of specific educational expertise.

- 2.3 Curriculum materials on digital and media literacy should be embedded throughout the curriculum. Initiatives such as the Digital Counter-Narratives project run by Liverpool World Centre and the Foundation for Art and Creative Technologies, which aims to create a resource kit in early 2018, are to be commended.
- 2.4 Multi-agency partnership working should be a focus of professional education across all of the sectors engaging the *Prevent* duty. Challenges of vocabulary and discourse can be more easily resolved by recognising the uniqueness of *Prevent* in educational settings. As with many areas of the governance, ethos and values of schools, it is essential that good relations with parents and the local community are not compromised by misunderstandings of the *Prevent* agenda. More publishable, public-domain research is needed into the experiences of children and young people in the *Channel* programme.

### 3. *Prevent* and its place in a civic curriculum

#### - Fundamental British Values

The link between the *Prevent* strategy and the enumeration of the four ‘fundamental British values’ of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (DfE 2011) was a controversial point for professionals engaged in *Prevent* work. On the one hand, the origin of these values is to be found in the *Prevent* policy, pointing to a necessary connection in the minds of many teachers. On the other hand, concerns were raised that too close a connection with security and surveillance could stultify and silence teaching about values, which is necessarily dialogic. Particular attention needs to be paid to the value of democracy - recognising the benefits of teaching democratically (Dewey 2008) and the contradiction of teaching about democracy didactically. During the Delphi conference, participants illustrated this confusion:

... that’s exactly what teachers are being encouraged to do: open up the space of [asking] why have democracy? Why should we listen to other points of view? What’s the intrinsic value in doing that? Wouldn’t it be simpler if everyone just did what they were told?

Isn’t that contradicted by the requirements [of the fundamental British values component in the Teachers’ Standards] to not be vocally opposed to democracy?

No, it’s not vocally opposed to democracy, it’s vocal opposition to... calling for the death of military personnel, vocal or active opposition and funding [as a definition of extremism in *Prevent*].

These easily conflated definitions, even among experienced professionals, highlight the problem of a too-close association between fundamental British values as a dialogical approach to values education, and *Prevent* as concerned with violent extremism and radicalisation.

Non-violent extremism is a particularly contentious concept. Effective *Prevent* work requires assessment of risk, recognising the difference between vocal extremist views, active engagement and the likelihood to engage in acts of violence. Professionals engaged in *Prevent* work in the classroom, in a safeguarding role, or in training and supporting schools, need to be able to recognise the difference between vocally challenging norms, values and beliefs, and a young person at risk of violent radicalisation.

Several of the critical incidents addressed earlier expose the challenges of the curriculum becoming a surveillance space. While the study attempted to engage with some of the vocal public critics of the *Prevent* agenda, these were difficult to identify, and few professionals reported encountering such views commonly in their practice. Many professionals held nuanced and critical views about aspects of the current policy settlement, but none disagreed with the basic premise that schools had a duty to safeguard young people from the risks of being drawn into violent extremism.

One of the challenges faced by schools in the shift from earlier approaches to Community Cohesion to the focus on British values is that it represents a shift from a predominantly religious and cultural framing of societal problems to a political framing (Lundie 2017). Given the relatively recent origins of Citizenship education, and the deliberate disinvestment in initiatives in Citizenship, RE and PSHE in the early years of the



Coalition government, schools in England are less well equipped to deal with controversy in the politics and Citizenship classroom, with RE frequently having served as the vehicle for Community Cohesion (Conroy et al. 2013; Miller 2013). Teachers and teacher educators would do well to consider some of the insights from European (Kerr & Huddleston 2015) and American (Hess & McAvoy 2015) civic education in this regard.

#### - Community Cohesion

Many of the professionals involved in the research referred back to the Community Cohesion agenda, which remains a duty on all schools, though it is no longer a focus of inspection. A significant difference between Community Cohesion and *Prevent* was that schools were encouraged, through the Department for Education 'REsilience' programme, which ran until 2012 (Miller 2013) to engage with local community mentors, who were often faith group representatives. Engagement was primarily through self-evaluation, in contrast to the more securitised focus of *Prevent*, and the more prescriptive focus of fundamental British values (Lundie 2017). While the move away from defining communities primarily by their religion, and using RE as the primary vehicle for cohesion is to be welcomed, the focus on religion in professional discourse and practice remains.

Many participants were keen to stress that the focus of *Prevent* policy is not solely the Muslim community. Among those responses, the dominant non-Muslim group raising concern was the far right:

Round about two-thirds of all Channel referrals [locally, South West site of enquiry] were around the far right.

A quarter of the referrals here [multi-cultural city] are far right. In fact, there are so many we've employed a far right dedicated worker to deal with them.

Again, the inclusion of the far right, as well as extreme environmental and animal rights groups, raises the challenge for schools of engaging in long neglected political education, which is problematic where this is framed solely as the response to the threat of violent extremism.

Some education professionals in the study reported a strong sense of continuity between their current work on *Prevent* and the Community Cohesion agenda. Beginning with the Cattle report, which pointed to a problem of 'community fragmentation' leading to the riots in Oldham and Bradford in 2001, the Community Cohesion agenda aimed to tackle the problem of young people living parallel lives. A significant difference between Community Cohesion work and fundamental British values is in the relationship between schools and families, with many of the cases referred under the *Prevent* duty being concerns about family members, rather than directly concerning a young person's own views or actions. A fundamental continuity could be observed in the ways education professionals in the study continued to enact the values of Community Cohesion through their *Prevent* work. While these values were in some way reframed and refocused by the policy, and by the critical media incidents discussed in Chapter 1, there was no sense of a clean break from Community Cohesion, or an 'attack on multiculturalism' (Kundnani 2015) from the professionals' discourse. Three points remain to be clarified about the relationship between Community Cohesion and *Prevent*:

- What force, if any, the duty on maintained schools to promote Community Cohesion, as stated in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (DCSF 2007), retains?
- Whether any of the structures which supported Community Cohesion work with schools can be meaningfully retained and repurposed to support the *Prevent* agenda?
- Whether schools and multi-agency professionals have received sufficient clarity on the difference in focus between *Prevent* and its predecessor programmes?

While the Community Cohesion agenda was presaged by civil unrest, the focus of the agenda was not solely on preventing criminality. A further question remains as to whether the prevention of violent extremism is the most important factor to foreground in driving an agenda which influences the breadth of the curriculum in all schools, particularly if this agenda can also be linked more positively to the promotion of fundamental values, critical enquiry skills, and preparation for life in modern Britain.

During the Delphi discussions, some participants noted the confusion caused by recent political attempts in some regions, most notably in Manchester (Slater 2017) to rebrand or replace *Prevent*. While a return to more co-operative approaches to community relations may be welcome, these run the risk of further exacerbating the communication difficulties raised in the previous chapter, leaving schools and communities unclear about lines of accountability, overlapping duties, and relations between the educational and security sectors. Some consistent national-level refocusing of a specifically *educational Prevent* policy, drawing on and disseminating many of the examples of

good practice enumerated above, may help to alleviate the pressure at a local level to remediate perceived policy shortcomings.

#### - Recommendations

- 3.1 While the statement that Prevent should not limit topics of discussion in schools (Home Office 2015) and the development of curriculum materials on fundamental British values (Whittaker 2017) are both to be welcomed, the Department for Education should take care that this guidance is pedagogically appropriate - teaching tolerance and respect through respectful dialogue, and teaching democratically, not just teaching about the processes and institutions of our democracy.
- 3.2 In practice, the inspection framework sets the core agenda for schools across the UK. Ofsted should consider creating a checklist of all duties on schools, to avoid the perception that previous legislative duties, such as the Community Cohesion duty, have lapsed or been superseded.
- 3.3 Teachers, school safeguarding leads, Prevent trainers and teacher educators need to clearly define the threshold at which open debate in the classroom becomes a cause for concern about a child at risk of violent radicalisation. In considering this threshold, it must be remembered that Channel exists at a threshold prior to criminality, but that Channel referrals are only appropriate in cases where there may be intent and capacity for violent or criminal acts. The concept of 'non-violent extremism' is unhelpful and ill-defined, and may lead to the perception that communities or opinions are being criminalised.

3.4 The civic curriculum remains a deeply fragmented element of the school system. Alongside the development of new materials to support the teaching of fundamental British values, the UK Youth Parliament's *Curriculum for Life* proposals (UKYP 2016) for Citizenship Education, and the status of statutory PSHE are currently under discussion, and the RE Council Commission is due to report its recommendations for the future of the subject in 2018. Alongside these welcome developments, the professional associations of teachers of RE, PSHE and Citizenship would do well to work together to develop a joint understanding of their contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of young people.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Prevent is one of many areas where cuts to Local Authorities and other non-frontline support services have led to considerable variability in the delivery of provision. While investment in support services may not be as politically expedient as direct investment at the frontline, the succession of critical incidents in this area, from the Trojan Horse allegations onwards, suggests that some consideration is necessary to halt a pattern of reactive policy adaptation.

The recommendations above are itemised again for the various agencies involved in Prevent work. Many of these recommendations follow from the core observation of the study that **safeguarding is a curriculum issue**:

**National and local government should consider:**

- 1.1 Giving more emphasis in WRAP training to how to understand the terminology of *Prevent* in educational practice;
- 1.4 Taking more proactive approach to communicating the success of *Prevent* in schools, refocusing attention on the wider educational dispositions of critical thinking, intercultural encounter and digital media literacy would help to refocus attention away from reactive media narratives;
- 1.5 Given the differences in emphasis between the Home Office statutory guidance and the Department for Education guidance on *Prevent* in schools, the two departments may wish to consider publishing a single set of shared guidance to schools. This may further help to clarify terminology for multi-professional practice;

- 2.2 Highlighting in the Home Office catalogue of *Prevent* training specialist examples of educational expertise. The concept of ‘non-violent extremism’ is problematic in educational settings, and should not be advanced at this time;
- 2.3 Further investment in digital media literacy in the curriculum is to be commended;
- 2.4 Guidance which recognises the uniqueness of *Prevent* in educational settings. This can help to resolve challenges of vocabulary and discourse in multi-agency partnership. More publishable, public domain research is needed into the experiences of children and young people in the *Channel* programme;
- 3.1 While the statement that Prevent should not limit topics of discussion in schools (Home Office 2015) and the development of new curriculum materials for fundamental British values (Whittaker 2017) are both to be welcomed, the Department for Education should take care that this guidance is pedagogically appropriate - teaching tolerance and respect through respectful dialogue, for example, and teaching democratically, not just teaching about the processes and institutions of our democracy;
- 3.3 The concept of ‘non-violent extremism’ is unhelpful and ill-defined, and may lead to the perception that communities or opinions are being criminalised;
- 3.4 The civic curriculum remains a deeply fragmented element of the school system. Alongside the development of new materials to support the teaching of fundamental British values, the UK Youth Parliament’s *Curriculum for Life* proposals (UKYP 2016) for Citizenship education, and the status of statutory PSHE are currently under

discussion, and the RE Council Commission is due to report its recommendations for the future of the subject in 2018. All of these developments are welcome, and central and local government should work closely with the professional associations to recognise the unique strengths of each, while maintaining oversight of the joint contribution of schooling as a whole to young people's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

**The Inspectorate (Ofsted) should consider:**

- 1.2 Giving attention to the nexus between safeguarding and the curriculum, encouraging schools to engage with *Prevent* and other aspects of safeguarding policy in age appropriate ways through the curriculum;
- 1.3 Emphasising the importance of positive, whole-curriculum approaches to *Prevent*, focused on critical thinking, intercultural encounter and digital media literacy, rather than a narrow emphasis on surveillance and referral;
- 2.1 Giving clear guidance about what an age appropriate understanding of extremism and radicalisation looks like, particularly in Key Stage 1. Examples of good practice in whole-curriculum approaches to *Prevent* should be highlighted and shared widely;
- 2.3 As and when good materials on digital media literacy are developed, this should be a focus of inspection around school values, SMSC and *Prevent*;
- 3.1 In interpreting the forthcoming curriculum advice on fundamental British values, the inspectorate should take care that its guidance is pedagogically appropriate - teaching tolerance and respect through respectful dialogue, for example, and teaching democratically, not



just teaching about the processes and institutions of our democracy;

- 3.2 In practice, the inspection framework sets the core agenda for schools across the UK. Ofsted should consider creating a checklist of all duties on schools, to avoid the perception that previous legislative duties, such as the Community Cohesion duty, have lapsed or been superseded.

#### Police and Security Services should consider:

- 1.4 Maintaining consistent engagement with school *Prevent* leads in order to avoid a reactive approach to high profile media stories on *Prevent*. Consideration should be given to the locus of school *Prevent* work (in community liaison or counter-terrorism) and the impact this can have on perceptions and community engagement;
- 2.2 Working with schools and teacher education providers to ensure teachers understand the threshold between a child who expresses dissenting or unorthodox opinions and a child at risk of violent radicalisation. Where pedagogical research uncovers meaningful distinctions between the two, police should be willing to learn from educators about this, and incorporate it into operational guidelines;
- 2.4 Multi-agency partnership working should be a focus of professional education across all of the sectors engaging the *Prevent* duty;
- 3.3 Working closely with teachers, school safeguarding leads, *Prevent* trainers and teacher educators to help them clearly define and identify the threshold at which open debate in the classroom becomes a cause for concern about a child at risk of violent radicalisation, recognising

that most teachers' experience of these referrals will be limited.

**School leaders, governors and School Sponsoring Bodies (Local Authorities, Multi-Academy Trusts, Faith Sponsors) should consider:**

- 1.3 Emphasising the importance of positive, whole-curriculum approaches to *Prevent*, focused on critical thinking, intercultural encounter and digital media literacy, rather than a narrow emphasis on surveillance and referral;
- 2.1 School leaders and governors should make themselves aware of the range of materials which already exist to address the topics of extremism and radicalisation. More important than teaching about extremism, schools should focus on a whole-curriculum approach to cultivating habits of thought which equip students to challenge extremist narratives;
- 2.4 As with many areas of the governance, ethos and values of schools, it is essential that good relations with parents and the local community are not compromised by misunderstandings of the *Prevent* agenda;
- 3.3 School leaders and school safeguarding leads need to clearly define the threshold at which open debate in the classroom becomes a cause for concern about a child at risk of violent radicalisation, making clear that school safeguarding policies should not chill or silence robust but respectful debate in the classroom. This definition should be informed by pedagogically appropriate and rigorous research. In considering this threshold, it must be remembered that Channel exists as a threshold prior to criminality, but that Channel referrals are only

appropriate in cases where there may be intent and capacity for violent or criminal acts;

- 3.4 The civic curriculum remains a deeply fragmented element of the school system. School leaders and governors would do well to consider the contribution of the whole curriculum to the full range of duties falling under the rubric of young people's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including *Prevent*, fundamental British values, Community Cohesion and school specific values and ethos.

**Teachers, Teacher Educators and Teacher Professional Associations should consider:**

- 1.1 Giving more emphasis in Teacher training to how to understand the terminology of *Prevent* in the classroom;
- 1.2 Developing materials which introduce the themes of radicalisation and extremism in age appropriate ways, drawing on existing examples of good practice;
- 2.1 Professional associations should seek to gather and share examples of good practice materials which address the topics of radicalisation and extremism in an age appropriate way. There are roles for all curriculum subjects to address skills of critical thinking and respectful encounter, but there are particular skills and dispositions which RE, Citizenship and PSHE teachers can lend to the task;
- 2.2 Teachers and teacher educators should be provided with clear guidance, based on rigorous research in the classroom, on how to differentiate between children at risk of violent radicalisation, and the expression of dissenting or unorthodox opinions, as well as appropriate

pedagogical techniques for sensitively dealing with the latter without silencing difficult discussions;

- 2.4 Multi-agency partnership working should be a focus of professional education across all of the sectors engaging the *Prevent* duty;
- 3.3 Teachers, school safeguarding leads, *Prevent* trainers and teacher educators need to clearly define the threshold at which open debate in the classroom becomes a cause for concern about a child at risk of violent radicalisation. This definition should be informed by pedagogically appropriate and rigorous research. In considering this threshold, it must be remembered that Channel exists as a threshold prior to criminality, but that Channel referrals are only appropriate in cases where there may be intent and capacity for violent or criminal acts;
- 3.4 The civic curriculum remains a deeply fragmented element of the school system. The professional associations of teachers of RE, PSHE and Citizenship would do well to work together to develop a joint understanding of their contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of young people.

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