

Tower Hamlets Council:

Safeguarding and Violent Extremism –

Summary of our Prevent Programme and Issues for Schools.

Leadership and commitment

Our Prevent programme has support at the highest level of the council. In 2011, launching our 2011-15 Prevent Delivery Programme, the Mayor stated his commitment saying:

“Preventing violent extremism will always be complex and challenging but I firmly believe that our vision of One Tower Hamlets – tackling inequality, strengthening cohesion and building community leadership - fosters our local partnership to find the right answers for our borough.The cohesiveness of our borough was demonstrated by the way we did not shy away from this controversial agenda – recognising the detrimental effect that violent extremism can have on people and communities. At same time, we have always challenged the Islamophobia and prejudice that can surround this issue.”

One Tower Hamlets

The borough’s Prevent programme has operated in the context of the council’s One Tower Hamlets vision and reputation for leading on cohesion and the wider diversity and equality agenda. Earlier this year, we were the first local authority to be re-assessed as excellent under the Equality Framework for Local Government.

In our latest annual resident survey 81% of residents stated that the ‘local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together’.

Governance and management

Our work on Prevent is managed through a Council-led Prevent Board, regularly attended by representatives from the police and the Home Office, who oversee an annual Prevent Delivery Plan. Our Prevent work is closely embedded within the council’s approach to safeguarding: cases of young people at risk of extremism and radicalisation are reviewed by our multi-agency Social Inclusion Panel and adult cases by our Safeguarding Adults Panel. SO15 counter-terrorism police are directly involved in these forums. We are also a key partner of the London Prevent Network and have engaged in pan London region Prevent activities.

Prevent delivery

Our Prevent activity has the following objectives:

- Targeting support and advice to individuals identified as at risk of involvement in extremist activity and violence
- Strengthening community leadership, social networks and institutions to enable key individuals and organisations to challenge extremist ideology
- Mainstreaming Prevent across all Council services in order to increase Prevent awareness and enhance referrals for those that are vulnerable to extremism

We have recognised that young people are particularly at risk and much of our work targets these groups, directly or through schools, parents or other institutions.

Prevent key projects

The council has a range of work underway to achieve our Prevent objectives. Key current projects include:

- Building Community Resilience project providing one to one mentoring, support and advice to individuals considered at risk of involvement in extremism
- Engagement Programme specifically targeted at Somali young men to support integration and build resilience to extremist ideologies
- Supporting madrassahs through accredited training to madrassah teaching staff, health checks on madrassahs and embedding a Madrassah Management System.
- Embedding Prevent in schools through development of curriculum materials and support for teaching staff to work with students in all secondary schools in the borough to develop critical thinking in relation to extremism and radicalisation
- Embedding Prevent within parental engagement programmes to help parents deal with challenging behaviour and protect those children and young people who might be vulnerable to a range of risks including extremism
- Awareness raising workshops on Prevent to a range of Council front line services to enable them to recognise and deal appropriately with individuals at risk of extremism.

Update of work with schools (October 2014)

- A referral Poster was sent out to all schools in March 2014 for display in staffrooms
- Guidance was updated and re-circulated to schools in summer term 2014 (the original guidance was published December 2012)
- We have a list of the Prevent leads for each maintained secondary school in the borough and the secondary Academy.
- Workshops Raising Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) have been offered to schools in the borough
- Draft materials have been produced by the Resilience Curriculum Advisor (Thomas Llewellyn-Jones) and will be trialled in some primary and secondary schools by December and then shared more broadly. Thomas is going to the Home Office this month to present the materials prior to the trials. He will then be working closely with the Prevent leads in schools to ensure that the materials deliver what schools need.
- There is a presentation to the secondary Behaviour and Attendance Leads Forum on the 6th November.
- A briefing to Governors is planned for this term (date to be negotiated)
- An open briefing evening is planned for school staff and other professionals this term.
- Requests for briefing and training in schools are already being responded on demand by the Resilience Advisor (Thomas Llewellyn- Jones), the Prevent Officer (Nojmul Hussain), The Parental Engagement Prevent lead (Assan Ali), a local Prevent Officer from the Police (Graham Nash).
- An Officer Resilience Group is now meeting comprising the PVE lead from the Parental Engagement Team, the Advisory Teacher for ICT/SEN, the Resilience Curriculum Advisor, a manager from the Behaviour Support Team, the VAWG Strategy manager and the VAWG training and awareness officer.
- The Parental Engagement Team deliver parenting courses that include addressing parental concerns about extremism. They are also running a new training programme which aims to raise awareness of extremism amongst family practitioners and are developing a “one off” session for parents to be delivered in schools.

Ofsted – Extremism and Safeguarding

The Extremism strategy is about to be signed off.

We are expecting more information from DfE / Ofsted about what schools are expected to have in place but probably not until December or January.

The following notes come from a discussion with Geraint Evans, the Ofsted extremism lead. Geraint is likely to have a significant role in determining what Ofsted will be expecting to see in schools but these are informal notes.

- Safeguarding from radicalisation is no different from safeguarding from other forms of harm
- All Staff need to clearly understand the pathways for vulnerable individuals and be aware of how to refer people in the local authority
- Referrals in London are very low - IT WILL NOT BE HELD AGAINST SCHOOLS IF REFERRALS ARE MADE
- The Curriculum needs to reflect work taken to counteract extremism
- One off events are not enough, e.g. drama group coming in to do a play, it needs to be something which is embedded into the curriculum.
- Good practice is emerging e.g. policies that reflecting the schools' approach to extremism and radicalisation including their policy on visitors to schools
- Visitors have to be thoroughly checked and it's not good enough to say 'we vetted what he was going to say'
- In the visitor's policy it needs to say that appropriate checks will take place e.g. Google the person and speak to the organisation they're from
- Speakers should be checked out by whoever books them. It's up to the institution whether they get the speaker in but if there are any concerns the school should engage with the local police or LA Prevent lead to find out about the individual.
- Visitors can be expected to sign an "External Speakers Policy"
- There will be reasonable time given for institutions to get up to speed with this - but no indication of when

Ofsted organisation:

- The 8 Ofsted regions more or less match with police intelligence services
- Each has a regional director and they are fairly autonomous
- Each has a senior HMI with responsibility for the region
- All inspectors will be trained in extremism
- The work is in the safeguarding context as well as DfE extremism

Key messages about Referring in Tower Hamlets:

Don't let a minority threaten our diverse community.

We all have a role to play in building One Tower Hamlets and making the borough a place where people from all backgrounds get on and live safely together.

Recognising Extremism - early indicators may include:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- Glorifying violence
- Evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations such as “Muslims Against Crusades” or other non-proscribed extremist groups such as the English Defence League.

What should staff do?

If we have concerns about a child or group of children being violent, or being drawn into violent extremism, or being vulnerable to this, we should respond as we would to all vulnerable children and follow the procedures below.

1. Talk to the family and other professionals working with the young person about the concerns and get their views.
2. Seek consent to complete a CAF assessment and get a holistic perspective on the situation. Determine if there are additional needs and if so how these could be met.
3. Contact other relevant agencies and engage them in a Team Around the Child (TAC) approach to supporting the young person and their family.
4. If the concerns persist and the TAC approach does not seem to be having a positive impact, or if it appears the young person is already exposed to or involved with extremist organisations, refer the case to the **Social Inclusion Panel (SIP) using the CAF form**. If in doubt: REFER

In Tower Hamlets the SIP is the panel which performs the function of “Channel” for those under 18 (multi-agency discussion and planning re cases requiring Prevent interventions). The Chair of SIP is Liz Vickerie 020 7364 6448.

For Adults, cases should be referred to the **Safeguarding Adults Panel (SAP)**.

If at any stage you are concerned that a child is at imminent risk of harm you should contact the Child Protection Duty Line on 020 7364 3444.

If you suspect someone is actually engaged in terrorist activity, contact the police or the anti-terrorist hotline immediately on 0800 789 321