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for Education

Prevent referrals in higher education: approaches and practices

Research report

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**Government
Social Research**

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Glossary

Term	Description
Alternative provider (AP)	RHEBs with at least 250 higher education students which are not universities, formerly managed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).
Centralised campus	A HEI where the buildings are all located primarily in one main location.
Channel	Police and local authority led process that uses a multi-agency approach to identify and assess individuals vulnerable to radicalisation.
External exchange	Informal or formal discussions between RHEBs and external parties that are not a Prevent referral. Instead, these exchanges inform the referral process.
Higher Education Institution (HEI)	Universities or other bodies that offer degree-level qualifications.
Internal exchange	Informal or formal discussions within RHEBs which support information gathering and reviews supporting Prevent activity.
Plate Glass	Universities that gained university status in the 1960s.
Post-92	Universities that gained university status since 1992.
Prevent Coordinator	A role funded by the Home Office based in local authorities to give additional support and expertise for Prevent projects and activities.
Prevent Regional HEFE Coordinator	A role funded by the Department of Education to support higher and further education providers in each region of England.
Prevent Lead	The individual(s) within an institution with specific senior/leadership responsibilities for Prevent.
Prevent referral	The decision to escalate a concern to the police in order to protect people at risk from radicalisation.
Relevant Higher Education Body (RHEBs)	Higher education institutions, such as universities which fall under the purview of The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Russell Group	A group of 24 research-intensive UK universities.
Specialist	HEIs or APs that deliver a tailored or focused curriculum.
Spread campus	A HEI where the buildings are in several different locations, usually throughout a city.

Executive Summary

Background

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 requires Relevant Higher Education Bodies (RHEBs) to have due regard to the need to protect people from being drawn into terrorism: the 'Prevent Duty'. Prevent covers all forms of radicalisation that could draw people into terrorism. The two main areas of concern are Extreme Right-Wing and neo-Nazi groups, and the influence of non-UK based Islamist groups such as Daesh and Al-Qaida. The policy also monitors other areas of potential threat, or groups whose threat level may increase over time.

Data from the Home Office shows that the education sector accounted for around a third of the 6,287 Prevent referrals made in 2019-20¹. The Office for Students (OfS) 2018-19 data show 122 higher education student cases required advice from external Prevent partners.² A similar number of annual referrals have been made from RHEBs over the past few years.

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned CFE Research to undertake this research in the autumn of 2019 to explore the Prevent decision-making processes used by relevant Higher Education Bodies (RHEBs or institutions) and whether approaches lead to consistent, high quality referrals and appropriate responses to risk.

Interviews were conducted between November 2020 and April 2021. Twenty-five Prevent/Safeguarding leads were interviewed across 25 RHEBs and 12 other staff across five RHEBs within the 25.

How changes to proposed fieldwork affected the study

The advent of Coronavirus (COVID-19) led to a delay in the fieldwork for this study and a reduction in the type and volume of fieldwork possible. This report primarily uses data drawn from qualitative telephone interviews with Prevent Leads, plus interviews and mini focus groups academic and non-academic staff in five institutions. The scale of fieldwork is less than originally proposed which places limits on the possible analysis.

¹ [Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2019 to March 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/531211/individuals-referred-to-and-supported-through-the-prevent-programme-april-2019-to-march-2020-gov-uk.pdf)

² [Prevent monitoring accountability and data returns 2017-18: Evaluation report \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/prevent-monitoring-accountability-and-data-returns-2017-18-evaluation-report/)

Key findings

The overall design of Prevent processes in RHEBs usually follow an identify-review-decide model

Identify - The identify phase covers how concerns raised by staff or students are collected and managed. These concerns are centrally managed by staff that lead Prevent responses within RHEBs (the Prevent Lead) and, in larger institutions, a supporting team. The concerns arise from observations or material evidence that show an individual may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Observational evidence covers verbal or written behaviour of concern gathered from staff or students within the institution. Material evidence is derived from concerning online and network activity from students (and staff), and/or from academic work submissions such as essays and presentations.

Staff learn what constitutes a Prevent concern during induction and via irregular refresher training. Some RHEBs offer ad hoc events, webinars, or presentations, although staff with some responsibility for Prevent are more frequent recipients of more in-depth and regular professional development activity.

All RHEBs we consulted publish Prevent policy documentation, presentation, talks and other materials on their internal network. In most cases, such documentation exists for staff with Prevent responsibilities to signpost to other staff as required. There is no compulsion for all staff to review policies or documentation at regular intervals.

It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which academic and support staff can differentiate a Prevent and general safeguarding concern because of the limited number of interviews with these audiences. However, our research suggests that the Prevent policy usually sits alongside the safeguarding policy. Prevent teams or staff were members of a larger student safeguarding team in 22 of the 25 RHEBs consulted. This wider, more knowledgeable team will triage all safeguarding concerns raised throughout the institution and make judgements as to which concerns warrant more exploration relating to Prevent. Based on the interviews, these wider safeguarding teams are typically responsible for making Prevent decisions.

Review - Prevent Leads and teams will explore any concerns they receive internally and may seek advice from external partners. Several review processes are used to assess concerns. Internally these include scrutiny applied using the observational and material methods described under the identify stage. Pastoral or academic staff may be asked to focus on a student's behaviour or work. IT staff may look more deeply into a student's use of the institution's IT network (although it is not usually possible to monitor activity beyond their internal IT network).

The research suggests that Prevent Leads and teams also rely on partnerships with external bodies such as their HEFE Prevent Coordinator, the police, the local authority, and organisations that specialise in understanding and addressing extremism. These partners may provide complementary evidence (supporting data on local activities and concern, generalised advice about processes, etc.) which can support or refute the identified concern.

Decide - The review phase **informs a decision to make a referral**. All evidence is triangulated internally. Generalised advice is also sought through external exchanges with partner organisations and any potential actions are usually discussed internally with the RHEB's HEFE Prevent Coordinator³. Most Prevent Leads we spoke to say they value the relationship with their Coordinator as they can generally advise whether or not an issue relates to Prevent. Some Prevent Leads report that their Coordinators and other external partners such as the police and local authority have access to more information about relevant threats in the local area to inform the decision-making process.

All Prevent Leads participating in this study say few Prevent referrals are made. Most initial Prevent concerns turn into wellbeing or mental health interventions from the RHEB with the help of partners where needed. A smaller number of cases lead to non-Prevent-related criminal proceedings for the police such as criminal damage or fraud.

Some RHEB staff have a poor perception of Prevent

Combining the administration of Prevent with safeguarding activity reduces negative perceptions of the policy. The increasing association with safety and wellbeing removes some of the past antipathy expressed towards Prevent.

Coordinating with safeguarding also ensures that cases surrounding risks of radicalisation are treated in a standardised or coordinated way. Prevent Leads usually feel adapting existing safeguarding policies to incorporate Prevent duty requirements is a sensible method of operationalising Prevent quickly and efficiently.

RHEB staff can also be more favourable towards safeguarding as a concept compared to Prevent. Many of the HEFE Prevent Leads report that staff are more willing to accept Prevent when viewed as an aspect of safeguarding. Safeguarding covers factors like student wellbeing and mental health. Current Prevent policy now follows this alignment with safeguarding.

For many interviewees, safeguarding issues are much more likely to show in students compared to Prevent concerns. Safeguarding policies and practices have also been

³ A role funded by the Department of Education to support higher and further education providers in each region of England.

present in higher education for longer than for Prevent. Prevent policies and processes are a subset of safeguarding for most Leads.

The concept of free speech offers a strong philosophical resistance to Prevent amongst some RHEB staff. The higher education environment encourages broader, deeper thinking on sometimes challenging issues; several Prevent leads discussed tensions between their institution's Prevent and freedom of speech policies. A couple of interviewees said their student union refused to implement Prevent policy in relation to external speakers because the union felt the policy was Islamophobic. Prevent Leads and staff noted that the border between free speech and extremism is not always clear-cut. Undertaking Prevent within this environment presents different challenges compared with other phases of education.

The perceived likelihood of a Prevent incident or referral is low

Leads recognise the consequences of extremism are potentially severe and that Prevent's conceptual framework fulfils a necessary role in keeping students and staff safe. **All interviewees think the risk of serious event occurring is low. Most also think it unlikely that they will need to make a Prevent referral.** This view is based on experience. Most had not made a referral before and those with experience were usually drawing from a single referral.

Most concerns which Leads experience resolve into a broader safeguarding issue. This observation is based on past outcomes of the review process described earlier. Evidence gathering and exchanges within and external to the institution nearly always result in a safeguarding, welfare or criminal intervention with a student or staff member. Past experiences therefore influence perceptions of low risk.

Conclusions and policy considerations

What approaches are RHEBs using to decide the need for, and to make, Prevent referrals?

The approaches taken across the sector are broadly the same because they follow a mandated process to fulfil their legal Prevent duties. For example, a template⁴ exists which lists the information required to support a referral.

The decision tree adopted by RHEBs requires elements of information gathering from the same sources of staff and students. Whilst there is some variation in the way Prevent teams are structured (as described above), the main outcomes remain the same across

⁴ This is the Kent Constabulary example. Accessed 19th July 2021:
https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/word_doc/0009/59472/Prevent-Referral-Form.docx

institutions: most Prevent concerns do not result in a referral but instead resolve into a mental health or wellbeing concern.

Do these approaches lead to consistent, high quality referrals and appropriate responses to risk?

“High quality” is difficult to define in this context. Referral data from the education sectors shows that RHEBs make few referrals compared to organisations in other parts of the education sector. The Prevent Lead interviews show participating RHEBs possess robust process designs to fulfil their Prevent duties. They all sought informal and generalised advice from external partners when considering internal exchanges of information. All were able to explain the mechanism they had in place to manage, explore and act on any information received.

Some Prevent Leads noted staff and student union concerns about Prevent’s reputation may make staff reticent to report Prevent concerns. Leads address this by emphasising connections with safeguarding and student wellbeing. The RHEBs participating in this study all had functional processes in place to manage Prevent risks.

Most leads also ask for advice and guidance from external partners during their decision-making processes. This advice helps Prevent Leads assess whether or not a concern had a Prevent dimension prior to any referral decision. A similar study in the further education sector found fewer instances of FE Leads seeking general advice prior to referral decisions⁵.

Communications

A common responsibility of Prevent Leads is ensuring training on Prevent duty is delivered. Training for staff and students usually forms part of induction processes. Most Prevent Leads admitted that they could not guarantee everyone would remember their training or engage fully, despite high take up. Similar findings are presented in other education-focused Prevent studies^{6,7}.

There are variations in the way written information, advice and guidance are disseminated to RHEB staff, and the volume of material they receive. It is also likely that

⁵ By comparison, further education colleges were less likely to report the same level of informal external advice from external bodies.

See Highton, J., Patel, R., Mulla, I., Francis, N., Choudhoury, A., Wilkinson, B., Baginsky., M. and van Rij, A. (2018) Prevent and Counter-Extremism in General Further Education Colleges. DfE. London. p.10.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/916008/Prevent_and_counter-extremism_in_general_further_education_colleges.pdf

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Langdon-Shreeve, S. and Nickson, H. (2021) Safeguarding and radicalisation: learning from children’s social care. DfE. London.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/994789/DfE_Safeguarding_in_CSC.pdf

staff will skim or not engage with written advice about Prevent which may risk staff missing changes in policy or procedure, or safeguarding issues (as again found in other research). Curated refresher training contextualised for each RHEB may increase the likelihood that key facts are accurately retained. Many Leads adapt standard training materials such as those created by the Home Office to improve take up and increase its relevance to staff.

Perceptions of risks

Smaller institutions (500 or fewer HE students) and those focussing on specific professions or occupations describe themselves as low risk on Prevent concerns or incidents more often than larger institutions. They reason that building relationships with a smaller student body is simpler and that people tend to know one another. Smaller institutions think closer relationships between staff and students lowers the likelihood of concerning behaviour going unnoticed. The staff interviewed in such institutions believe they would easily spot any issues before anything became serious.

RHEBs with large numbers of local students also describe challenges identifying Prevent concerns. They say they have fewer opportunities to observe concerning behaviour as local students spend less time on campus. They also think local students also have fewer chances or lower inclination to form strong academic relationships with staff compared to students living away from home.

1. Introduction

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 requires RHEBs to have due regard to the need to protect people from being drawn into terrorism: the ‘Prevent Duty’. This places a specific set of responsibilities on higher education (HE), further education (FE) and skills providers. The government published guidance for the HE sector in 2015⁸ outlining how RHEBs are expected to effectively comply with the Duty, centred on ensuring there are appropriate procedures and policies in place.

Data at the time this research was commissioned (November 2019) raised some questions about the extent to which Prevent duties were implemented in RHEBs. Home Office data on Prevent referrals for the 2017/18 reporting year showed an overall increase year on year, with 7,318 made that year⁹. Although referrals from the education sector comprised around a third of these referrals, a report published in the same year by the Office for Students (OfS) queried whether the referrals are lower than might be expected.¹⁰

The Channel programme sits under the ‘working in partnership’ aspect of Prevent duty guidance for HE providers. The programme is led by the police and local authorities. Consent from individuals should be given to enter the Channel process. Channel uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by:

- identifying individuals vulnerable to radicalisation;
- assessing the nature and extent of the vulnerability; and,
- developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

For HE providers, the Channel programme provides a way to refer consenting individuals who are at risk of radicalisation and of being drawn into terrorism and develop the most appropriate support programme for the individual concerned.

Prevent covers all forms of radicalisation that could draw people into terrorism¹¹. The Home Office identifies priority areas based on an unpublished risk assessment method. The local authorities (LA) classed as priority areas receive funding to support Prevent

⁸https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445916/Prevent_Duty_Guidance_For_Higher_Education_England_Wales_.pdf

⁹ Home Office (2018) Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2017 to March 2018. Home Office website. Accessed 19/7 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/individuals-referred-to-and-supported-through-the-prevent-programme-april-2017-to-march-2018>

¹⁰ OfS report the “number of Prevent-related welfare cases which lead to external advice being sought from local Prevent multi-agency partners” as 122. Office for Students (2019) “Prevent monitoring accountability and data returns, 2017-18”. OfS. P.9 https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/860e26e2-63e7-47eb-84e0-49100788009c/ofs2019_22.pdf

¹¹ HM Government (2015) “Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales.” London.

activity (OSCT, 2015¹²). The CONTEST strategy¹³ identifies the most significant current threats as the influence of non-UK groups including Daesh and Al-Qaida organisations on UK residents and those posed by UK- and international-based Extreme Right-Wing and neo-Nazi groups.

This research was designed to better understand how the Prevent Duty processes are implemented in different contexts within the higher education sector. Relevant Higher Education Bodies (RHEBs or “institutions”) vary in size and governance structure. Some operate devolved models that afford individual faculties a high degree of autonomy, including in relation to the implementation of Prevent, others will operate more centralised structures.

Furthermore, the composition of the student body differs across RHEBs. Some universities enrol large numbers of international students; others have national reach and the majority of their students relocate to study. Other providers attract the majority of their students from the local area, and as such, many of their students remain living at home while they study. Some students will originate from Home Office Prevent priority areas¹⁴, while others will relocate to priority areas during their studies. All these factors can influence social networks and levels of exposure to risk of radicalisation. Despite these differences, the research finds little variation in the overall method of meeting Prevent duties across institutions.

Aims and objectives of the research

The main research questions of this study are:

- What approaches are RHEBs using to decide the need for, and to make, Prevent referrals?
- Do these approaches lead to consistent, high quality referrals and appropriate responses to risk?

The subsidiary questions of this study are varied. Changes to the methodology resulting from the pandemic mean the evidence base available for addressing these questions is limited:

- Do RHEB staff understand how and when to make a Prevent related concern?

¹² Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (2015) “Annex A – New Burden Assessment - analysis of the impact of the new Prevent Duty on Local Authorities.”

¹³ HM Government (2018) “The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism.” London.

¹⁴ If a local authority area has Prevent-priority status, this means they have received funding from the Home Office for Prevent activity, based upon risk assessments of their locality conducted by the police and government partners.

- What information sources do RHEB staff and Prevent/Safeguarding Leads use to:
 - decide whether to raise a concern with a Prevent/Safeguarding Lead?
 - make a Prevent referral?
- Have RHEB staff ever raised a concern, or thought about doing so?
- What criteria and thresholds do Prevent/Safeguarding Leads apply when a concern has been raised, in order to decide whether to make a Prevent referral?
- Are the approaches taken by RHEBs' staff and Prevent/Safeguarding Leads in different HE providers consistent with one another?
- How, if at all, do approaches differ across RHEBs and how do any differences affect outcomes of the process?
- Are there any barriers for RHEB staff to raising prevent-related concerns with their Prevent/Safeguarding Leads?
- What factors influence whether or not a Prevent referrals translate into Channel cases?
- To what extent are practices surrounding Prevent referrals influenced by:
 - RHEBs' relationships and information sharing with other institutions (HE, Government, other i.e. police)
 - RHEBs' own risk assessment practices?

Methodology

Originally, the study planned to incorporate ten one-day visits to RHEB institutions. Each visit would include interviews with Prevent/Safeguarding leads on a one-to-one or group basis and focus groups with wider staff (within and beyond Prevent/Safeguarding teams). It was envisaged that this would be followed by a further 15 telephone/online interviews with Prevent/Safeguarding leads. These interviews would inform the development of a survey, which would be distributed online to staff at the total twenty-five institutions engaged. Due to the pandemic and the challenges this presented to the institutions and their staff at the time of fieldwork, the scope of the project changed, meaning the planned face-to-face visits and all-staff survey were no longer feasible. Therefore, this report is based upon:

- Twenty-five online interviews with Prevent/Safeguarding leads between November 2020 and January 2021 and,
- Twelve online interviews with other academic (five) and non-academic (seven) staff across five RHEBs in March and April 2021.

Semi-structured interviews with Prevent/Safeguarding Leads centred on their understanding of the Prevent duty, the referral process, including thresholds, information used to inform decisions and risk assessments, and barriers, enablers to enacting the Prevent duty. Interviews with non-specialist staff followed a similar structure, focusing on their role and decision-making during internal exchanges with a Prevent duty Lead and their wider understanding of the Prevent duty.

Prevent Lead refers to the individual interviewed with specific senior/leadership responsibilities within their institution.

Staff refers to other employees of an institution. This group are sometimes further divided into **academic staff** such as lecturers, researchers, etc., and **non-academic staff** such as those offering student-facing support or filling administrative roles.

Use of scenarios

Interviews with Prevent Leads and staff included a section on three hypothetical scenarios. Each scenario had two variations with differing levels of severity. The scenarios offered an opportunity for interviewees to discuss how they would respond, including whether there would be a Prevent referral or other institutional response, as well as discuss how their institution responds generally to the issues each of the scenarios touched upon. These scenarios are presented in Appendix A. A summary table of the main findings from the scenarios is also provided on pages 26 to 27.

Sampling

The target sample consisted of 25 RHEBs. The Office for Students (OfS) provided a longlist of institutions applicable for the study from which a shortlist was purposively selected by CFE Research based on the location, size and composition of the student body. Due to the sensitive subject matter of the research DfE made the approach to the Vice Chancellors and Prevent Leads (where possible) within the shortlisted RHEBs. This was to provide additional assurance that their participation in the research was not a formal inspection, that responses would be anonymised and would not prejudice them or their institution in anyway. A briefing document was attached to the email which outlined the study's aims and what their participation involved. After the initial contact from DfE, the independent contractor, CFE Research, assumed responsibility for all subsequent recruitment activity.

The sample included institutions which varied across a range of key characteristics: size (number of students), region, type (pre- and post-92 institutions, and alternative providers) and campus structure (whether centralised or not). Data about the number of

Prevent referrals was not readily available so was not factored in.

Table 1: Achieved Sample for Prevent Lead Interviews

Sampling criteria	Number of RHEBs	Sampling criteria	Number of RHEBs
Size		Region	
499 or fewer	6	North East	4
500 to 999	1	North West	1
1,000 to 4,999	3	East	2
5,000 to 9,999	3	East Midlands	2
10,000 to 19,999	5	West Midlands	1
20,000+	5	London	7
Unknown	2	South East	6
		South West	2
Campus structure		Type	
Centralised	14	Russell group	2
Spread	8	Plate glass	2
No campus ¹⁵	3	Post-92	14
		Specialist	7

Limitations/challenges

Due to the impact of the pandemic the scope of the research was reduced to avoid creating additional burden on HE providers. This resulted in a reduced sample size for qualitative interviews and meant that it became unfeasible for all providers involved to distribute the planned survey of all staff.

Due to the qualitative nature of the research and the reduced scope of the sample, findings cannot be generalised to all RHEBs. However, qualitative transferability can apply, i.e., relating to Bassey's (1998) concept of 'fuzzy generalisations' where findings demonstrate instances of a broader set of recognisable features that have emerged in other educational research. Prevent Leads from a range of RHEBs were interviewed, capturing the breadth of higher education institutions that exist in England. A significant

¹⁵ Distance learning or short, infrequent face-to-face offer

limitation was the range of staff interviewed. Although a wide variety of RHEBs were sourced, most of the interviews were with Prevent/Safeguarding leads with only a small pool of non-specialist staff. This constitutes a sizable gap in the range of perspectives, and of staff whose relationship to Prevent is less direct. Consequently, the sample and potentially the findings are weighted towards the perspectives of those who are more knowledgeable about the Prevent duty.

Furthermore, most Prevent Lead interviews expressed favourable perceptions of HEFE Coordinators and generally described positive working relationships with regional and local partners. It is unclear whether this introduces bias into the findings as the overall quality of relationships between Prevent Leads and external partners is unknown.

Similar to other studies of Prevent in education^{16,17}, most RHEBs made a connection between Prevent and general safeguarding policies and processes. Therefore, the authors note that some of the practices described in the report are not specific to Prevent duties but can inform the RHEB's Prevent-related activities.

¹⁶ Higton, J., Patel, R., Mulla, I., Francis, N., Choudhoury, A., Wilkinson, B., Baginsky., M. and van Rij, A. (2018) Prevent and Counter-Extremism in General Further Education Colleges. DfE. London.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/916008/Prevent_and_counter-extremism_in_general_further_education_colleges.pdf

¹⁷ Langdon-Shreeve, S. and Nickson, H. (2021) Safeguarding and radicalisation: learning from children's social care. DfE. London.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/994789/DfE_Safeguarding_in_CSC.pdf

2. Understanding and undertaking Prevent duties

Contextualising the Prevent duty and responsibilities

Definitions of Prevent closely align with central government policy

Prevent Leads commonly defined their Prevent duty as a focus on protecting students and staff from becoming radicalised, preventing terrorism and ensuring appropriate processes and procedures are in place to effectively and accurately refer concerns.

“Ensuring that we have processes in place that are protecting ourselves and the community from radicalisation and terrorism, and that we have a duty as part of that community to ensure that we are managing our own process and our students and our population, to ensure that there's a wider communication with partners to counter terrorism.”

HEFE Prevent Lead, Small HEI, Post 92, Campus

Prevent in relation to wider student and staff welfare

Identifying vulnerable students is a central element of safeguarding and Prevent policy

Most Prevent Leads emphasised the importance of identifying and protecting the most vulnerable and marginalised of students, who, they suggest, are at increased risk of radicalisation. This duty is a key element of Prevent requirements set out by the Home Office and aligns with institutions' wider safeguarding policies and procedures.

Providing mental health and wellbeing support was widely considered to be a key element to safeguarding and Prevent practice, particularly in the traditional non-specialist institutions where the student population is mainly young and living away from home for the first time. According to many of the Prevent Leads, living away from home can increase feelings of isolation and expose vulnerabilities.

“You're more likely to suffer your first episode of mental [ill-]health between the ages of 14 and 25. We know that [youth, first time living away from home and mental health] are key factors in vulnerability around being manipulated into terrorism. The youthfulness of our population links to some of those common vulnerabilities that already exist.”

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Russell Group, Centralised

Specialist institutions have a mainly professional and/or postgraduate student body. Prevent Leads implied that vulnerabilities related to younger students were less relevant compared to RHEBs with a wider curriculum. The vocational focus of students within specialist institutions meant students' non-academic activities were fewer. Specialist institutions take similar approaches to fulfilling Prevent duties within their specific contexts.

“The university itself is considered [by regional advisors such as the police and HEFE Coordinator] to be low-risk. So, it's partly to do with the way the campus works. [our] Student union is not political. It doesn't have an affiliation. It's a quiet association of professionals. So, we have very few events. The events and speakers - we don't have a large volume of them.”

Prevent Lead, Small HEI, Specialist, Centralised

Prevent policy is intertwined with student safeguarding

Prevent Leads describe the Prevent duty as naturally dovetailing with safeguarding and welfare provision. Furthermore, it is not always simple for Prevent teams to identify whether a concern is related to Prevent or wider safeguarding at the point the concern is raised.

[We have a] SAM policy, which is Student Attendance Monitoring, [which tracks attendance] ... When you're looking at something like safeguarding, the concerns that might get raised there might be to do with isolation within students' accommodation that they wouldn't have been attending classes, that they might be presenting in an unkept way. But there are aspects of that, when you look at it and say, 'Well, actually there are quite a few students that might be isolating in their rooms, have been gaming, don't come out very often,' particularly with Covid ... you have to take a look at these things in the round.

Prevent Lead, Small HEI, Post 92, Spread

A sifting process is required to class concerns and hence respond appropriately. Staff/Prevent Leads reported that placing Prevent duties within safeguarding can lead to an increased chance of accurately identifying internal exchanges because the institution's expertise in all related areas sits in the same internal team.

Many of the Prevent Leads explained that they have a wide variety of roles to manage with the Prevent duty often a later addition to their portfolio. This may be another reason for bringing the Prevent duty within safeguarding making it more easily managed alongside a wide range of roles and responsibilities.

“My portfolio picks up both Prevent, some aspects of safeguarding, business continuity, insurance, and then the sort of general health and safety, which includes biological safety, radiation safety and business and incident management. Also, within our procedures, things like the external speaker and events policy sits under my portfolio as well.”

Prevent Lead, Medium HEI, Post 92, Centralised

The alignment between safeguarding and Prevent policies was also a common feature of policy within FE providers in an earlier DfE study conducted by CFE Research in 2018¹⁸. Within FE colleges, processes were typically hierarchical and designed to feed concerns from learners and front-line staff into central safeguarding teams, who dealt with Prevent referrals. Aligning Prevent duties to safeguarding procedures was considered to be an effective way to address policy concerns.

Communicating Prevent policies and duties effectively can be challenging

Some interviewees in larger institutions noted that students and staff receive many forms of communication on numerous processes and procedures. These interviewees felt that messages about Prevent (and other internal policies) may not reach their target audiences due to the volume of information provided. The authors infer that refresher training rather than written advice and guidance about Prevent may be necessary to increase the likelihood that key facts are accurately retained and counter the volume of information transmitted.

“New staff and students get bombarded with information when they first join. [Training is] effective in having that light in the back of your head, something you need to be aware of. But necessarily whether they act on it day to day, that’s hard for me to judge.”

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Plate Glass, Centralised

Negative perceptions of Prevent are changing for some

Negative sentiment towards Prevent as a policy is present in some institutions. Some Prevent Leads say staff feel the policy is divisive, unfairly stigmatises Muslims and is counter-productive to its own purpose. Consequently, some Prevent Leads face

¹⁸ Higton, J., Patel, R., Mulla, I., Francis, N., Choudhoury, A., Wilkinson, B., Baginsky., M. and van Rij, A. (2018) Prevent and Counter-Extremism in General Further Education Colleges. DfE. London. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/916008/Prevent_and_counter-extremism_in_general_further_education_colleges.pdf

difficulties asking some staff to share radicalisation and extremism concerns because of negative views of the policy.

“The big thing with Prevent when it first came out was that concern that you're condemning somebody to being prosecuted or criminalised for their thoughts, even if they're very vulnerable. [Our policies try] to get across that that isn't the case and to give some scenarios and examples to get people to feel, 'Actually, that does make sense, I can do that.' ”

Prevent Lead, Medium HEI, Post 92, Spread campus

However, a couple of Prevent Leads reported that perceptions of Prevent are changing in their institution. One Prevent Lead explained that their institution altered their approach to training to reduce the length and complexity of materials used. They also spread communication over a longer period of time to introduce a few key concepts over time. This reduced the time required to complete individual training sessions and concentrated content on the key messages about reporting a concern. This Lead saw changes in the way academics communicated with them, with more citing the training when discussing potential Prevent concerns.

“One of the things I did with Prevent early on is say we want something that's short, sharp, to the point. We did a 15-minute video, 'This is what you need to know. This is who you need to talk to. Find out more information here. This is your taster session.' We built it into new staff well-being comms, new staff inductions.”

Prevent Lead, Medium HEI, Post 92, Centralised campus

Prevent concepts can jar with philosophical concepts such as freedom of speech

Most Prevent Leads we spoke to reported that they balance Prevent concerns with values related to freedom of speech and academic freedom (as required in the Prevent duty guidance). For some Prevent Leads, such concepts are embedded in the life of their institution. They see a tension between such freedoms and the perceived staff and student monitoring and evidence-gathering aspects of Prevent policy. The perception is the important part of this concern, regardless of whether the view is based on direct experiences.

I think that the main barrier for any university is that balance of trying to allow people to research, use the internet freely, have open conversations, and not feel persecuted or monitored, and I think there is a lot of concern around at the moment because of the massive amount of government control over our lives on a day-to-day

basis that has changed dramatically in the last year. I think in relation to that context there is a barrier for any university, and potentially other organisations, to implement or impose rules and activities around Prevent, because we're all very conscious of the tension with freedom of speech and with freedom of movement.

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Post 92, Spread campus

Perceptions of risk

Most Prevent Leads view a Prevent incident as unlikely but serious

Over two thirds of Prevent Leads participating in this study say the likelihood of a Prevent concern occurring is low. They cite the low number of referrals they make compared to the high number of safeguarding and wellbeing issues they face. Many also note that most Prevent concerns resolve into mental health, wellbeing or general safeguarding issues. Many describe themselves as vigilant and said that wellbeing and safeguarding concerns are raised much more often compared to Prevent.

Prevent Leads recognise that Prevent concerns can have severe consequences even though the likelihood of their occurrence is low.

“One [student] was undoubtedly radicalised ... He was more attracted to some right-wing propaganda things. Undoubtedly [dangerous situations] can happen. But I think ... [such situations are] still a very, very rare event [like] spotting needles in haystacks.”

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Russell Group, Centralised Campus

Even so, Prevent Leads acknowledged risks associated with Prevent can be present and Prevent Leads understand the serious repercussions of inadequate Prevent processes (one cited the Manchester bombing at the Ariana Grande concert as an example). These Prevent Leads recognised the importance of maintaining effective processes to mitigate substantial risks because the consequences could be severe.

“There is always the potential with an individual student. [We have] got a large population. We [must not] be complacent, and we [must] have the right methods in place. Each time we get a case, we [must] deal with it promptly and properly, not make assumptions,

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Post 92, Spread campus

In one paired staff interview, the balance between risk and likelihood in terms of managing a case of concern for Prevent was compared to that for mental illness. One interviewee reported that the onus placed on Prevent is too great because they did not think a Prevent issue would occur in their institution. The interviewee felt the processes associated with Prevent are too great for the level of risk, especially when the consequences of poor mental health were seen as being equally as serious.

“... Every year, a number of students will take their own lives because of poor mental health. [In comparison] no student is going to get radicalised, in reality. It doesn't happen, or not that we're aware of, yet we have compulsory training [for Prevent]. Why not for mental health, because that is going to happen? That has a massive impact on campus and societies, yet radicalisation is so miniscule. The process [of identifying Prevent and mental illness issues] might be the same. The signs are the same, being withdrawn, not coping, not engaging, saying weird stuff.”

Non-academic staff member, Large HEI, Plate Glass, Centralised Campus

Smaller institutions and alternative providers have the lowest perception of risk

Smaller institutions and those focussing on specific professions or occupations describe themselves as low risk more often than larger institutions. Prevent Leads from small institutions (with fewer than 500 students) describe close staff and student relations where people tend to know each other. These leads feel closer relations are less likely in institutions with larger numbers of students. Smaller institutions think closer relationships lower the likelihood of concerning behaviour going unnoticed. The staff interviewed in such institutions believe they would easily spot any issues before anything became serious.

Some specialist institutions with an occupational focus and/or a large postgraduate student body feel their older, professional cohort places them at a lower risk. These interviewees say the narrower academic environment attracts students with specific career or academic goals who they feel are less prone to radicalisation.

“Our age profile is a bit higher than average, a bit more professionally focused. As well as being postgraduate [it is] pretty, professionally focused as well. A lot of students have got industrial sponsors. A lot of them are working with industry while [they are] here. So, the feel on campus, it feels a bit more business-like”

Prevent Lead, Small HEI, Specialist, Centralised campus

Prevent Leads think older, career-minded students are on a clear occupational path with industry sponsors. They are also more likely to have families and responsibilities. Some also felt that socio-economic circumstances may reduce the chances of radicalisation. This chimes with the government's 2011 Prevent strategy which notes that approval of violent extremism is higher amongst young people and for people from lower income and socio-economic groups¹⁹.

Prevent Leads use external information to assess local risks

Prevent Leads in general place faith in their HEFE Prevent Coordinators and other external agencies such as police to keep them informed of levels of risk within their wider community. Some Prevent Leads explained how they use general guidance in their own risk assessments.

“[There are] risks of Extreme Right-Wing terrorism. That matches our local counter-terrorism plan and some of the local risks in northern England ... The other piece is around Islamist terrorism and Islamist radicalisation. You've got other issues with environmental groups and others, but I suspect they're much lower in likelihood and smaller in number”.

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Post 92, Multi campus

Prevent Leads in larger institutions tended to equate the risks apparent within the wider local catchment population as an indicator of risks to the institution. When Prevent Leads 'suspect' or 'feel' there is a lower risk of an aspect of extremism (as expressed in the comment above), it implies some assessments may be based on instincts rather than evidence.

Evidence from the scenarios found external speakers and societies are assessed for factors that could risk drawing individuals into terrorism. Most interviewees (Prevent Leads and Staff) said their institution had processes for selecting and managing external events. For many of these interviewees, this process would either not allow the scheduling of such an event, or actions would be taken to monitor or balance the event. Such actions included placing staff members in the audience or including balanced panels to increase the number of viewpoints from which topics are discussed.

¹⁹ HM Government (2011) Prevent Strategy. Citing the 2010 Citizenship Survey. Point 5.18. p.16. Accessed 19/7/2021.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

An institution's location can affect perception of risk

Prevent Leads of institutions based in the north east or south west of England reported the Extreme Right-Wing poses their biggest risk regarding radicalisation and extremism²⁰. This perception is based on the guidance of external agencies and their HEFE Prevent Coordinator.

Prevent Leads think open communication which increases awareness of Prevent and what to do when staff have a concern is the best method for mitigating Extreme Right-Wing terrorism. Many reported that they are sensitive to any Extreme Right-Wing tendencies which may be present in the local population and how that might affect the student body.

“Our population is predominantly white [and] we are acutely aware that we can get far right tendencies, as well as other elements that would impact upon Prevent, and so ... we hope [we take a] very open view to discussing Prevent, and where the sources of Prevent ... issues might come from.”

Prevent Lead, Small HEI, Post 92, Spread Campus

Prevent Leads in some Midlands-based institutions see a wider range of potential risks compared to Prevent Leads based elsewhere. One Prevent Lead says risks differ between different areas within their multicultural city. One area is viewed as potentially more susceptible to extreme Islamist ideologies because a higher proportion of the population were Muslim; Extreme Right-Wing influences are more prevalent in what was termed as 'left-behind' suburbs mostly populated by white people. This perception suggests a relationship in the minds of Prevent Leads between the socio-demographic composition of an area and the type of risk from extremism. Home Office data shows the proportion of referrals for different areas of concerns differs by region²¹.

Active groups using direct action offer the potential for risk

Most Prevent Leads and staff see active membership of certain groups or societies has an important and specific indicator of potential risk. Evidence from Scenario C and Scenario A discussions (see Appendix 1) identify “overt activism” with risks from student societies related to Hong Kong activists through to animal and environmental rights. A few other institutions highlighted issues external to the institution such as gang affiliation

²⁰ As per Table 1 earlier, interviews were conducted in each English Government Office Region.

²¹ See Table 13: Type of concern and region of those referred, discussed at a Channel panel and adopted as a Channel case, 2015/16 to 2019/20. Home Office (2020) Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2019 to March 2020. Accessed 20/7/2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/individuals-referred-to-and-supported-through-the-prevent-programme-april-2019-to-march-2020>

and links to drug trafficking. In these cases, Prevent Leads recognise a strong potential for inciting and escalating violence that need classifying to reach a resolution. Whether or not a risk relates to Prevent is part of their decision-making process. Extreme activity acts as a trigger for a wider safeguarding decision-making process of which Prevent is part.

“That incitement, I think, or the potential for incitement or radicalisation... that is one of the areas that we have to be most mindful and vigilant about.”

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Post 92, Spread Campus

These risks were often described as ‘hidden’ implying Prevent Leads may not have direct evidence linking concerns to the activities of societies, official reports or documentation, or other reported overt actions. It is also harder for them to gain any information if the behaviour is covert and students who may have more information are afraid of repercussions if they provide information to Leads about a person or persons of concern which requires further exploration.

Evidence from scenarios

The scenarios proved useful for contextualising Prevent concerns

Illustrative scenarios were used during interviews to help explain institutions’ Prevent processes and policies. The text of these scenarios is provided in Appendix 1. This report uses the evidence from the scenario discussion throughout to answer the research questions. Table 2 summarises the main points arising from these discussions across all interviews. Several boxes outlining specific points from scenarios are also used throughout the report to support the narrative.

One common theme is present in discussions regarding these scenarios: Prevent and safeguarding teams collate evidence by exchanging information internally and externally to guide decision-making processes. Concerns are not presumed as Prevent-related. Context, background and supporting data are all used to understand more about a concern or issue. For many, this is the core rationale for placing Prevent with student welfare and safeguarding (pp. 17 to 19). The desire to contextualise concerns explains the efforts put into the Identify and Review stages of the decision-making process (Chapter 3, pp. 32 to 37).

Table 2: Summary findings from scenario discussions

Scenario	Variation 1	Variation 2
External speakers	<i>Social media influencer justifying attacks by right-wing extremists, shares material and online links with three students.</i>	<i>Same, but staff member talks to speaker and subsequently justifies attacks by right-wing extremists to students three weeks later.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events usually include prior booking and planning with some institutional body (Student's Union, student services, etc.) in which pre-vetting of speakers would occur. • Most Leads suggest the scenario would prompt internal reviews and exchanges of the students involved concerning their wider activity and whether other safeguarding concerns had been raised. • A few Leads and some staff cited freedom of speech and the importance of censorship / balance for events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to than Variation 1 to prompt exchanges with external partners. • Many Leads state involvement with HR for the staff aspects and a review of the staff record. • Same suggestions as Variation 1 about internal review and exchanges to gather data. • Would lead to a referral if the data justified such a concern. However, Leads would seek confirmatory advice before referring.
IT and online behaviour	<i>IT centre staff concerned about a student's anti-social behaviour and online activity who displays antipathy towards females.</i>	<i>Same, but the centre user also notices the student of concern viewing Incel social media page.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense from Leads and staff that this scenario is most likely a mental health or welfare issue with respect to the student. • Review and internal exchanges need to understand more on the background of the student including any background documentation flagging health or support needs. • Review of sites visited versus lists of flagged sites and/or external Prevent lists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much different to Variation 1 except Leads have more detail to work with for review and exchanges. • Some targeted IT reviews mentioned by some Leads including contextual website visits to compare with the Incel site. • Some Leads feel they would need specific evidence of extremist activity to make this a Prevent referral. • Some comments reveal uncertainty regarding Prevent and Leads would welcome advice from external bodies / experts.
	<i>Student recounting stories of direct action taken by a far-left</i>	<i>Same, apart from the scenario includes planned escalation to</i>

Scenario	Variation 1	Variation 2
Student union & societies	<i>society including property damage. Suggestion of future escalation.</i>	<i>break into corporate offices and incite violence towards employees.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some differences in responses between interviewees in this scenario. • Some Leads and staff consider this scenario a criminal issue and would contact the police on that basis. • Others discussed the coercive element and felt there was a welfare issue to consider. • Most Leads said they would talk with the student about the incident; several cited student codes of conduct for behaviour in their reasoning. • As with the other scenarios, reviewing wider data and discussion with internal and external parties is viewed as important for context. • Most Leads and staff felt a stronger need to act quickly because of the criminal damage element of the scenario. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a broader discussion with some as to whether the planned activity against a corporation and its employees counts as terrorism. Several Leads felt this was a greyer area than the other scenarios. • Some Leads would sound out the HEFE Prevent Coordinator to get their view. This would direct any subsequent activity. • Only a couple of Leads felt there was enough information here to decide on a referral. They made connections between extreme behaviour and that of the scenario. They also felt there were definite parallels with Prevent concerns to warrant clarification on policy with the HEFE Coordinator. • However, more Leads and some staff felt the escalation still warranted police involvement due to criminality over Prevent.

Developing and disseminating internal Prevent policy

Risk assessments and policies are often developed collaboratively

The feedback indicated that institutions develop their risk assessment and subsequent policies based on advice from local authorities, the HEFE Prevent Coordinator and the police. Most of the Prevent Leads reported they chair an institutional steering group where different members of the safeguarding team meet with other departments within the institution such as the accommodation and IT departments. Steering groups discuss ongoing risks and concerns and evidence from student attendance monitoring and

concerning work (such as essays, presentations, etc.) are reviewed. Sometimes other external stakeholders like the police or mental health specialists participate.

“Our police Prevent advisors, we have a number of them, actually, and we have the regional higher education Coordinator. They come to our Prevent steering group. The group meets twice a year. It reviews all the policies each year. We have a risk assessment. We have action plans. We have agendas, they come to the meetings, they see it all, they contribute.”

Prevent Lead, Medium HEI, Post 92, Centralised campus

Prevent Training and communications

The Prevent Lead is typically responsible for ensuring training on the Prevent duty takes place. This training is usually given during staff and student inductions. Most Prevent Leads admitted that they could not guarantee everyone would remember their training or engage fully, even when initial take up is high. In response, many Prevent Leads use refresher training, using different approaches to try and make the message clearer for staff, preferring to run sessions on a more regular basis rather than just as a one-off mandatory training session. Several Prevent Leads say they adapted Home Office Training materials to refocus them and make them more balanced to staff.

“The [Home Office] training materials had an obvious visual focus on extremists, threats of a certain type that wasn't fair [they felt materials were unbalanced towards Islamist threats]... Other than that, the training seemed fine, the training would be a 2-hour staff workshop or a module you could do online in your own time. It covered a lot of ground.”

Staff Interview, Large HEI, Post 92, Spread campus

One Prevent Lead introduced extra Prevent training via video, to communicate the message about Prevent and the internal exchange process. This implies the communication and training present is not always sufficient in reaching out to everyone in the institution. This suggests the scope of extremist behaviour is not widely known or understood, impacting on the number of referrals being made.

“People don't understand the different sides of radicalisation. So, [I would] like to see more on that, personally. Even with my staff, I don't think they understand what it all means, the far left, far right”.

Non-academic staff member, Large HEI, Plate Glass, Centralised Campus

Training for most staff is infrequent but targeted towards need

Most Prevent Leads say staff receive Prevent refresher training at least every three years across all institutions and all said new staff receive Prevent training as part of their induction. Prevent Leads feel this amount of training is adequate for most staff as their main role is to raise a concern if they see one.

We do have online training on Prevent. We have a module and most of the university does it on a three-year cycle. So, anyone who's got any kind of student-facing role will do that and have a vague awareness about it, but I suppose they need to know-, who the welfare person is, they would then know to take it to the student advice centre, and again, if it's a student case.

Prevent Lead, Small HEI, Specialist, Centralised campus

Staff with Prevent responsibilities receive more training

Staff with Prevent responsibilities usually receive training annually. Prevent Leads and other staff with Prevent responsibilities receive more structured training from the HEFE Prevent Coordinator and nearly all Prevent Leads say this training is useful.

Structured training helps staff with Prevent responsibilities to deal with concerns confidently and take necessary steps to explore the concern. One Prevent Lead involves staff members from across the institution with Prevent training so they can share learning and discuss relevant issues and ideas with others. This helps the institution to operationalise training and develop working practices.

[The HEFE Prevent Coordinator] will often provide us with online training or online resources which we'll discuss as a group. But we do make sure it's not just 2 people in Student Support and me [the Prevent Lead]... engaging in these events. We encourage other [staff] within the prevent working group, particularly IT, to meet up with their sector contemporaries ... for various meetings to discuss monitoring of websites and various options, incidents that come off."

Prevent Lead, Small HEI, Post 92, Centralised campus

Home Office training resources are widely used

“Home Office training”²² is structured to help staff identify warning signs, changes in people’s behaviour, activity or behaviours that go against student code of conduct. Staff are tested on their ability and knowledge of Prevent through scenarios during these sessions. The scenarios presented in later refresher training are always different so that it is impactful. One Prevent Lead discussed that the Home Office training has improved as the focus on Extreme Right-Wing activity has increased to better balance content on Islamist extremism.

Internal policy changes will also prompt staff training

Staff need to be updated with any policy changes. For example, two institutions said they have had to update their Prevent policy due to COVID-19 since there is limited physical interaction. All institutions outlined that staff and students can access prevent policies online.

So, the Prevent one, for example, in light of Covid, we just went through the risk assessment. We went through the policy to make sure it was still appropriate because we've moved to online

Prevent Lead, Small Alternative Provider, Specialist, No campus

Staff and those working in Prevent or safeguarding teams recognise they can only spot as much as a student allows them to see. A couple of staff said their training covered some of the challenges young people face when living away from home for the first time.

“{Young people are] more likely to be going through those natural developmental stages of individualisation, seeking their own identity. They're certainly isolated from what [we call] a common frame of reference ... students coming away to university for the first time, they're not surrounded by ... people they know who would ask, 'Why are you saying that? Why are you doing that?'.

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Russell Group, Centralised campus

Training and guidance for students

All Prevent Leads say students receive information and guidance on how to report a Prevent concern during their induction. In one case, students on the institution’s student board committee also receive Prevent training. One specialist institution offers Prevent

²² Interviewees mostly used generic references to “Home Office training” rather than specifying between e-learning and Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training, although both were specifically mentioned within interviews.

training to all their students; counselling and safeguarding are important elements of their curriculum.

Prevent Leads are not always confident that communication reaches staff

Generally, all Prevent duty policies and procedures are reviewed on an annual or biannual basis. Policies and procedures are usually accessible via the institutions intranet. However, some Prevent Leads do not regularly disseminate new information on Prevent as they think staff may be disinclined to read the policies on Prevent if they are presented in isolation. Messaging about Prevent policies is integrated into that of other policies e.g., behaviours at work.

“I think there's always a danger, isn't there, when something exists in abstract that people won't read it, but we try and make a point of referencing other policies and procedures within the Prevent policy. [It will] refer to Behaviours at Work.... we try and dovetail it with other existing policies, so it doesn't exist in isolation.”

Prevent Lead, Medium HEI, Post 92, Centralised

Wider staff who do filter information on Prevent to their departments do seem to have a positive view of communication. The dovetailing of the Prevent duty with other policies reflects the Prevent duty approach more widely.

3. Administering Prevent duties

Prevent decision-making processes

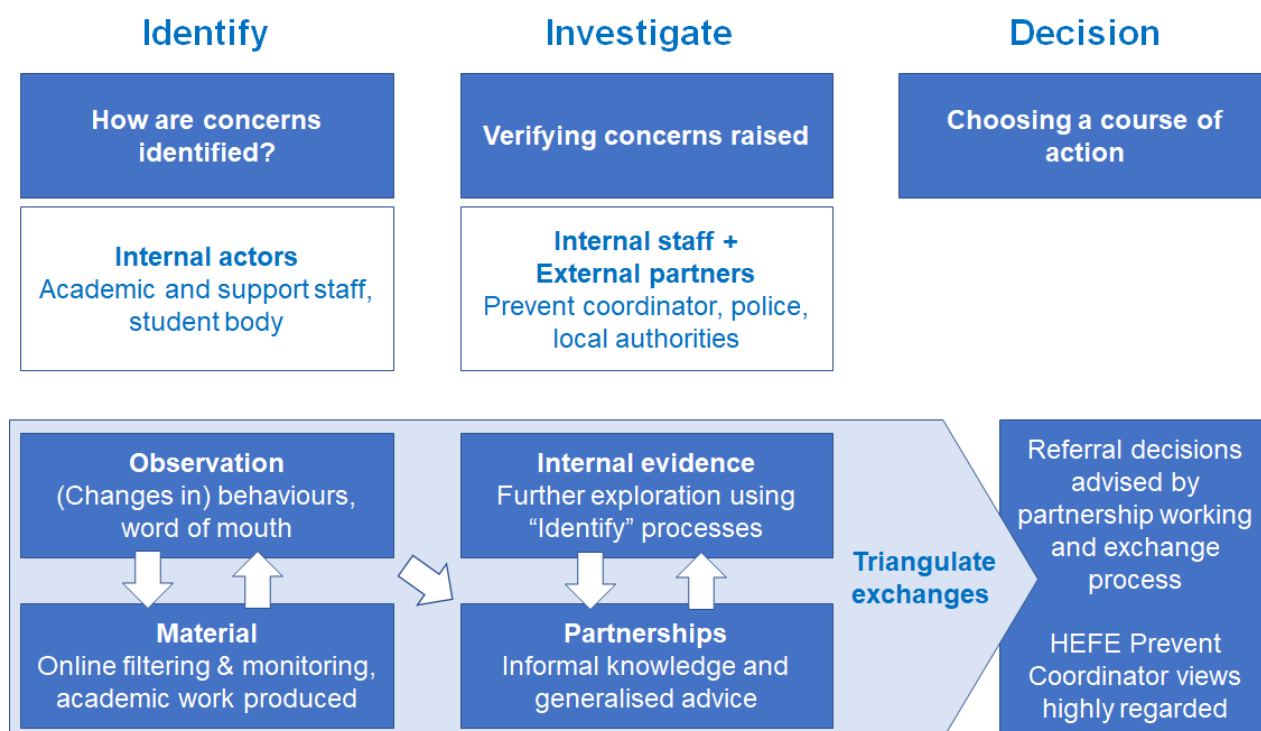
Role of the Prevent Lead

Prevent Leads reported they are responsible for ensuring all staff and students understand enough about Prevent to raise a relevant concern. Prevent Leads also communicate how and to whom to raise a concern. Prevent Leads are the key experts and hub for wider information regarding Prevent issues for the institution and lead decisions about making referrals.

The internal Prevent decision-making process

The internal procedures adopted by all RHEBs when considering making a referral follow the same broad principles as summarised in Figure 1 and described below.

Figure 1: The usual internal Prevent decision-making process



This model was sense-checked to processes published by some RHEBs and guidance documentation published by DfE and OfS. The model conforms with this secondary review albeit without the thematic headings used. References are made in this section to

external documentation. The model concerns the process used to inform an RHEB's decision to make a referral. A full version of the whole Prevent pathway is illustrated in the Channel Duty Guidance (HM Government, 2020, p.21²³).

The model has three stages which are explored in more detail throughout the next two chapters:

1. Initial concerns are **identified** through observation and professional judgement, IT search terms or algorithms or student's academic work or outputs. Many of the policies and procedures covered in staff training relate to providing guidance on the institutions preferred actions when reporting concerning behaviour.
2. Further **explorations** are then completed which may use one or all the "identify" activities, plus liaison with external partnership organisations. Partnerships include HEFE Prevent Coordinators, the police, local authorities and specialist organisations. They also cover informal networks and inter-agency networks
3. The outcome is a **decision** to seek advice from the HEFE Prevent Coordinator or refer directly to Prevent. Significant evidence is gathered and discussed by this point. Prevent Leads rely on the advice and guidance of HEFE Prevent Coordinators when making referral decisions, especially where a positive stated relationship exists between the two parties²⁴. This is because Prevent Leads feel referral decisions may have consequences to the individual referred and therefore seek reassurance that the concern is relevant to Prevent.

Referrals

The term "referral" is used in relation to several processes by interviewees. This report reserves "referral" for the official Prevent process whereby a Prevent Lead or another person associated with the RHEB refers an individual to an appropriate body (the police, the local authority, etc.) using an appropriate form. Many bodies use a standardised form²⁵.

Other methods of communication and correspondence about Prevent are used by staff and Leads when exploring concerns prior to a referral. These are named "exchanges" and can either be internal i.e. conversations and sharing information between staff, departments or other individuals or groups within the RHEB, or external guidance on whether the nature of an incident falls under Prevent policy with the police, LA

²³ HM Government (2020) Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964567/6.6271_HO_HMG_Channel_Duty_Guidance_v14_Web.pdf

²⁴ Few interviews were completed with Prevent Leads who reported a poor relationship with the HEFE Coordinator.

²⁵ This is the Kent Constabulary example. Accessed 19th July 2021:

https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/word_doc/0009/59472/Prevent-Referral-Form.docx

coordinators, HEFE Prevent Coordinators, Prevent groups or other agencies. External conversations are informal and generalised. They do not include discussion on individuals or specific details of incidents.

Note that Prevent Leads and staff may be reflecting language used by the Office for Students (OfS) in the use of “referral”. For example, OfS uses “internal and external Prevent referrals” in its own reporting²⁶.

The identify stage

Recognising behaviours

A lot of staff and student training focuses on recognising concerning behaviours and how to report them

Internal policies and guidance typically advise students to report observations to their personal tutor or a supervisor. Dealing with students’ concerns and recognising concerning behaviours is a principal component of staff training. Most Prevent Leads have systems in place that allow staff and students to report any incidents anonymously if they feel uncomfortable reporting concerns in person.

Staff would forward a student concern or any behaviours they directly observe to either the head of their department, the Prevent Lead or the safeguarding team within which the Prevent Lead usually sits. The same points of contact are also available if staff observe something concerning.

However, staff and those working on the safeguarding team can only spot as much as the student allows them to see. A few Prevent Leads and staff say training reminds them to be mindful as students being drawn into radicalisation or extremism can be deceitful or good actors.

The overriding concern for staff is student welfare

Most of the Prevent Leads reported “suspicious” behaviour from students is normally a presenting mental health issue (see also discussion of safeguarding and welfare issues in Chapter 2, p.17). The welfare department will work closely with the student to get them the right level of support. In some of these cases, the identified vulnerability can lead to a Prevent concern.

Prevent Leads say mental ill-health is more common than genuine Prevent concerns which is one of the reasons why Prevent teams are typically part of larger safeguarding and student welfare teams. A high level of interaction between staff responsible for

²⁶ See OfS (2018) Monitoring of the Prevent duty: 2016-17 progress report and future development. OfS. https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/160fe2df-d737-419c-8071-19fa2dab0ee4/ofs2018__27.pdf p.12

safeguarding, welfare and Prevent make it easier to identify the cause of unusual student behaviour, and to apply to correct intervention.

Some of the signals used to raise a Prevent concern are the same as those for safeguarding which is another reason for combining teams. These signals include behavioural changes such as increasing isolation, switching friendship groups and challenges adapting to life in higher education. Some Prevent Leads house identification processes in one team because they think it simplifies the process of managing all students concerns.

However, a few staff and Prevent Leads think reporting an incident through the welfare service may result in a delay or that the concern gets missed entirely. The option to report directly to the Prevent Lead or team is often available for such circumstances.

Gathering evidence from student activity or work

Evidence from online activity can be valuable in identifying potential issues

IT departments typically monitor activity on servers and keep risk logs of specific websites. Flags are raised on multiple use of listed websites²⁷ and such lists are frequently updated. Sites of concern are typically blocked on the institution's server.

A detailed discussion on IT Team activity formed part of one Staff interview. They explained how they collect data daily and automate reports on network activity to signify potential risks based on website usage by individual student accounts. The data is aggregated on a weekly basis, and statistics are forwarded to the Prevent team.

In general, institutions create algorithms that allow the IT team to flag concerns. For example, an algorithm may ignore a single visit to a website from a student account but flag multiple visits, or clusters of visits to sites with similar content or focus. The IT team will monitor the number of times the student goes on a risk flag site and if they go above a certain number, the team will inform the Prevent Lead and start exploring further.

We have a category of sites which are essentially counted as potential terrorist-related or extremist-related activity. Some of those are very clear-cut, some of them not quite so clear-cut. We just monitor those. We don't bother with anything else. We're not interested in anything else. It's purely those sites which might give us some indication that something's not right.

Non-Academic Staff, Large HEI, Plate Glass, Centralised Campus

Another staff interviewee explained that spikes in activity around certain types of websites are sometimes found. They gave the example of a student in a residential block

²⁷ IT departments typically keep lists of flagged sites for monitoring purposes.

finding a site they then shared with friends. One institution saw a marked rise in Extreme Right-Wing affiliated sites displaying different levels of extremism during the American elections. These ranged from extremist content to mainstream news outlets. The interviewee said such situations were difficult to manage because there is no clear connection to a Prevent concern. However, such data may provide useful context if a subsequent Prevent concern is raised.

Reviewing students' activities

A few Prevent Leads said they also monitor some student groups and societies, sometimes based on information from others within the institution. A couple of larger RHEBs said their Student Union offers training to the individual leading a society that includes a small section on Prevent. For example, one Prevent Lead received a complaint about a university society relating to an independence movement within another country, they worked closely with the student union to find out the objective of the society to understand if students were at risk of radicalisation.

“[The complaint] ... was related to an independence movement for a geographical area. Because it's part of a wider international situation, we had to find out if there were organisations and if they were proscribed or not. ... So, first of all we had to check the legal and social information that we'd got, and then talk very closely with the student union to find out what the objectives of this group were. What are their aims, what are they saying? And then keeping a vigilant eye on them, but not aggressively, making sure that they were following [the rules].”

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Plate Glass, Centralised Campus

Some smaller institutions and alternative provision operate much smaller class and tutorial sizes compared to larger universities. This allows staff to form closer relationship with students which, in their view, makes it easier to identify potential safeguarding and Prevent issues.

“We have small class sizes so unlike other universities, our lecture theatre holds a maximum of 40 students. Most of the classes are twelve. So there are very few places for students to hide in that kind of space and because of the nature of their studies, song writing, they're very open about their own personal feelings ... their song lyrics ... are very telling.”

Prevent Lead, Small Alternative Provision, Specialist, Centralised campus

Conversely, safeguarding students can be relatively challenging in other contexts. For example, one Prevent Lead noted the composition of their student body included a lot of local students who still lived at home. This offered fewer opportunities to recognise concerning behaviours on campus or to form deeper academic relationships with students who only came on campus for lectures.

“A chunk of our students are commuter students, they come in for their lessons, they do their lessons, they go home again ... we're not having those in-depth conversations [or] ... tutorial discussions where people might raise matters of philosophical concern about how they view the world.”

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Post 92, Multiple campus

Institutions typically manage and vet external speakers and organisations

Prevent Leads say their institutions use processes to vet external speakers/organisations that hold views that may be considered extreme. Individuals and societies organising seminars or talks with students are usually expected to submit a form or go through an events management process explaining the nature of the event and information about the guest speaker and the organisation they represent. The events team may ask the Prevent team to research the proposed speaker/organisation prior to the event, or policies exist that determine what data should be collected before an event can go ahead with or without mitigations.

Reviewing and assessing risk

Prevent Leads and teams review further prior to acting

Prevent Leads usually stressed the importance of fully exploring information when collecting all data and facts. Prevent Leads (and wider safeguarding teams) consider the duty of care the institution has for individual students. The review procedure centres on ensuring the welfare of the student and the causes of observed behaviour or documented activities. Prevent referrals (and wider exchanges regarding Prevent concerns) are part of safeguarding because they are outcomes of varied safeguarding and welfare procedures.

One Prevent Lead gave an example of a student whose behaviour was flagged. By speaking with the student, the Prevent Lead found that student's behaviour was related to learning difficulties and hence the response was to put in place support for the student. Most Prevent Leads say speaking to students provides context and a sense of what the student thinks about the concern.

So, you've got to find out exactly what's going on because then you hopefully know what you're dealing with. Because you're getting rid of all the things that you might worry about so that you're honing down on what you need to know.

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Plate Glass, Centralised campus

In the case of IT flags, several staff interviewees monitor and interpret server usage data and look for patterns. For safeguarding concerns, IT staff monitor students who have presented concerning behaviour, design reporting outputs and maintain dialogue with the Prevent Lead responsible for safeguarding. This process looks to contextualise online usage with other observation or documentary data of concern. In one example, members of the Prevent team compared network usage data with academic performance, behavioural observations from academic staff and tutors, reported involvement in any incidents on campus and membership to groups and societies.

“Obviously, investigation is always crucial because you hear things which are hearsay. Generally speaking, investigation helps to provide context and a sense of what the student thinks about the issue, rather than what you're hearing about it, unless the issue, is so serious that actually you may want to involve the external agency even before you started to have any conversation with the student.”

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Post 92, Spread Campus

Staff reviews involve Human Resources

Most Prevent Leads say the evidence – review process is broadly the same for both students and staff. However, staff concerns involve Human Resources and may not necessarily involve consultation with the staff member. The context in which the concern was raised would dictate whether staff were consulted early in the evidence gathering process.

Referrals [including internal and external exchanges] would be exactly the same. I wouldn't necessarily check in with the member of staff, because if there was a concern that they were a danger to students or anyone else in the building, I might just escalate it straight to the Coordinators and say, 'What do we do?' Get their advice on going forward. I would talk to their line manager to see if they noticed anything and just get a bit more contextual information.

Prevent Lead, Small Alternative Provider, Specialist, No Campus

RHEBs form partnerships with external organisations to understand local risks

Institutions are often part of committees or working groups in their local area where they work closely with external partners to discuss wider local Prevent concerns. From these meetings, institutions receive information on what is happening in their area, including potential Prevent risks.

4. External support and referrals

Referrals to external bodies are based on evidence

The decision on whether a Prevent related concern warranted a referral is typically made after an internal review and often from general policy advice from the HEFE Prevent Coordinator, whose expertise and guidance is valued concerning anonymised questions.

Most Prevent Leads prioritise concerns based on their perceived severity. Institutions assess risk using all the evidence gathered to determine if a) a concern is relevant to Prevent and b) the severity of a concern. In the case of advice being sought from the HEFE Prevent Coordinator, the coordinator often advises how and where to make a referral and on the quality of the referral.

The HEFE Prevent Coordinator fulfils an important role in the RHEB's referral process

The HEFE Prevent Coordinator links the institution to other external Prevent related groups and expertise. For Prevent Leads, the HEFE Coordinator increases the accuracy and efficiency of the process by applying their knowledge and experience. The HEFE Coordinator does not know details of the individual student or staff member when providing advice and guidance. They do comment on whether that type of concern falls under Prevent policy and the wider contextual circumstances.

“For ourselves at the University of [...] before we did any Prevent related referrals [or exchanges] external to the institution, [we would involve our] Prevent Coordinator first, primarily for two reasons. One, because [of their] actual role and expertise in dealing and guiding and supporting the institution on this. Also, the fact that the Prevent Coordinator is a member of our Prevent oversight group. So, is an integral part of our internal process anyway.”

Prevent Lead, Small HEI, Post 92, Centralised campus

As Prevent Leads typically perceived any Prevent related concern as a rare occurrence, they felt reassured by the support they received by the HEFE Prevent Coordinator due to their own lack of experience in dealing with cases.

Most Prevent Leads say exchanges involving the HEFE Prevent Coordinator provide policy context to any Prevent-related concern and ultimately improve decision-making. Prevent Leads say this is an appropriate approach to undertake when determining whether Prevent applies to the concern raised prior to making a referral. All Prevent Leads suggest they place weight on the advice and guidance from the HEFE Prevent

Coordinator when deciding whether to escalate a Prevent concern or take alternative action.

The HEFE Prevent Coordinator adds policy expertise to improve the quality of decisions

The Coordinator's input informs the context around individual cases including decisions on referral. Prevent Leads valued the open and trusting relationship that they had with their local coordinator. The local coordinator is often a useful sounding board that the Prevent Lead can consult about whether a concern falls under Prevent policy. Some non-Prevent welfare concerns can be identified prior to any formal referral.

“The support from our regional coordinator has been absolutely second to none, really helpful and responsive and unfailingly helpful, even to the point of them providing training when we've had training gaps that we've identified.”

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Post 92, Spread campus

Other external agencies also improve the quality of decision-making

Some Prevent Leads also emphasise the importance of building positive relationships with their local authority and police force. These external organisations provide important contextual information on any local or national Prevent issues.

Many Prevent Leads say their institutions have data-sharing agreements²⁸ with their local police force and council to enable an open dialogue and deal with Prevent concerns more efficiently. Examples given in interviews include the use of the police and mental health support to deal with various incidents including criminal activity outside of Prevent's scope.

“We've got the [support of the] local authority in terms of the local Prevent team [and police force]. So, we keep in touch with regular meetings from them. They share all the data with us from any reporting activities locally. So, for example, where the UK classification's just been raised for Prevent because of the concerns that have been happening in Europe, then we'll get that information and I'll disseminate that with my staff just to make sure that people know there's an alert going on.”

²⁸ Permissible via General Data Protection Regulation where specific safeguarding concerns exist. Information Commissioner Office direction on data processing relating to law enforcement can be found here. Accessed 19/7/2021: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-sharing-a-code-of-practice/law-enforcement-processing/>

Prevent Lead, Small Alternative Provider, Specialist, no campus

Unsurprisingly, Prevent Leads yet to make a referral offer limited insight in their institutions' role and responsibilities once a referral has been made. Despite this, Prevent Leads usually express confidence in the overall post-referral process.

Other agencies offer breadth to support

Partners' input allows Prevent Leads to draw on different areas of expertise and knowledge during the decision-making process. Partnership working with external agencies delivers a coordinated, efficient and accurate approach.

“We have very regular meetings and again those meetings and the minutes and everything are done in a very collaborative and supportive way, so that we feel that we are actively involved with our external partners and that's sort of reflected through everything from the enforcement authority, the police, [the local authority] and their welfare arrangements. And other schools and Channel panel referral representatives. So, I think it is a very collaborative approach within [this] area.”

Prevent Lead, Medium HEI, Russell group, Centralised campus

When discussing the relationship with other local agents, Prevent Leads place importance in active information sharing with external stakeholders. For example, many Prevent Leads say working with the local authority and the police provided their institutions with the context on what is happening in the area or borough. This helps the provider consider the potential risks within their institutions and to be mindful of any behaviours of concern. It also means that institutions are aware of the wider context which enables them to make better informed decisions, as incidents are not viewed in isolation.

Prevent Channel referral support

Channel is a voluntary process led by the police and local authorities and uses a multi-agency approach which identifies and assesses individuals vulnerable to radicalisation and developing an appropriate support plan. RHEBs feed information into the Channel process through referrals or, more commonly, via exchanges with HEFE and local authority Prevent coordinators.

No participating institution had connections with a Channel panel. However, a few had made Prevent referrals since 2015 but indicated that these are rare in comparison to other wider safeguarding issues. As a result, most Prevent Leads had a limited

knowledge of the overall Channel process and the support that they would offer and receive. However, those that had made a Prevent referral were generally positive about the overall process. They reported they received all the necessary support, and the institution was kept informed of the outcome of the referral through regular communication.

Although institutions do not have an active role as part of Channel, unless a student from their institution is adopted onto Channel, some Prevent Leads are involved in their local Prevent partnership and meet on a quarterly basis. One Prevent Lead gathers information regarding their local Channel panel through their partnership which increases their awareness of the Channel process within their area.

“We are involved in the local Prevent partnership and we get the [quarterly Prevent bulletin] that they issue for our area, and that includes information about channel places, but we aren't formally involved in it.”

Prevent Lead, Small HEI, Post 92, Centralised campus

Strong evidence of extremism is a pre-requisite for a Prevent referral

Prevent referrals are only made where there is clear evidence of a serious concern relating to extremist activity. Several factors are considered when deciding on a Prevent referral:

- What evidence of interaction with extremist groups external to the institution exists?
- Could the concern result in immediate harm to self or others?
- Has the individual of concern committed criminal behaviour, or at risk of doing so?

The last two bullets are police concerns rather than Prevent unless extremist activity could lead to these outcomes in the future. Prevent Leads say they work with external organisations such as Student Unions, societies, NHS, private landlords, hall wardens, and the police to gather further background information to ensure a Prevent referral is appropriate.

Prevent referrals are rare occurrences

Few Prevent Leads had examples of referrals; more had examples of false alarms or non-Prevent-related criminal behaviours. One Prevent Lead said they had an incident of a student being involved in a scam to make money and the institution would have never known unless it was for police information. Ultimately, this review did not lead to a referral but instead criminal proceedings. However, the example does illustrate the information

sharing processes with other organisations that Prevent teams use in decision-making and to identify genuine concerns.

We had a really unusual case about 6 months ago, where a student had come up with this scheme, where they would send empty iPhone cases in the post with an incendiary device that they'd created, with the idea that before it got to the intended recipient, it would actually catch fire slightly and would burn the labels on the package. The intent behind the scam was to be able to make money. First, we heard about it was from the cash terrorism police [counter-terrorism police]. The police very quickly said, 'Once we'd spoken to the student it was clear that they had no intention to cause terrorism through this.' The point of the story is, it's hard to know how we would've known about it had it not been for the police's information.

Prevent Lead, Large HEI, Post 92, Spread campus

Institutional involvement after making a Prevent referral is limited

The handful of Prevent Leads with some experience of Channel report limited involvement in subsequent decision-making once a case has been referred. One Prevent Lead from a small institution says their involvement in the post referral stage is limited to providing further evidence at the request of those managing the decision making. The student in question was part of another Prevent referral based elsewhere in the country. The interviewee's understanding was the case did get placed into the Channel process under the recommendation of a Channel panel.

"Well, in the one instance we've had [in making a referral], we were invited [to provide evidence]. So, it was my deputy on the students' side, [who was] invited to attend a discussion, for a part of a discussion about a case. So, our experience was that we weren't involved in the decision-making, we were involved as witness statements to a case being dealt with, [involving] aspects that we didn't know about."

Prevent Lead, Small HEI, Specialist, Centralised campus

5. Conclusions

The overall decision-making model relies on the quality of information used to support a Prevent concern amongst staff and students. Issues arising from safeguarding concerns will identify some issues with a Prevent dimension. There is a risk that Prevent concerns without an obvious or immediate safeguarding component, activity conducted off-site or off-network, or students/staff that display no challenging outward behaviours will not be initially identified.

Most Prevent leads reported a need to seek informal advice and guidance from external partners when making referral decisions. This advice helps Prevent Leads assess whether or not a concern was related to Prevent prior to any referral decision. Most RHEBs we spoke to describe the same types of policies and processes used to fulfil their Prevent duties. The similarities may stem from the legal and reporting requirements all institutions must follow including mandated Prevent policies and Prevent accountability and data returns. Some Leads manage negative perceptions of Prevent amongst some staff in RHEBs. Placing Prevent within the sphere of safeguarding is a way to manage this reputation and offer an efficient method of administering policy.

There were few examples provided in interviews where RHEB staff were consulted by the police about ongoing criminal enquiries regarding one of their students. Information flow between the institution and some external partners is not necessarily asymmetric: RHEBs feed all their evidence of concerning behaviour and activity into referrals. If the referral is assessed as not suitable for Prevent but is in the criminal space, the sensitivity of police investigations means they can only share aggregated or anonymised data regarding an RHEB referral back with providers.

Two factors are also inferred by the authors from the interviews and would be worthy of further research. Firstly, higher education students are nearly all adults; students in some other phases of education are children. The central situation prompting this research is the relatively low proportion of referrals from RHEBs relative to organisations in other phases of education. This research cannot discount those cognitive developmental and situational differences between adults and children may account for some of the differences in referral numbers. For example, children are supervised more closely, and their social development is less advanced than adults, resulting in different behavioural traits.

Secondly, the size of the student population taught by many RHEBs exceeds most other education providers. Lecturer contact time for some RHEB courses may also be lower where students are expected to undertake significant self-guided learning. Some RHEBs draw many students from those who chose to live at home rather than on campus or in student accommodation and some Leads said this weakens the strength of staff-student relationships. RHEB staff may have fewer opportunities to understand the personalities

of students in such circumstances compared to staff from other phases of education. This may create challenges for RHEB staff to recognise changes in student behaviour.

Appendix 1: Interview scenarios

Scenario A - External speakers and events

Variation 1

You attend a guest seminar organised by some postgraduate students on the history of extremist attacks on the public since the 1970s. The speaker is a social media influencer whose language offers some justification for attacks by right-wing extremists, especially when compared to his commentary on attacks by Islamist extremists. At the end of the seminar, the speaker appears to provide material and share online links with three students who act as though they have an existing relationship with the speaker.

Variation 2

You attend a guest seminar organised by some postgraduate students on the history of extremist attacks on the public since the 1970s. The speaker is a social media influencer whose language offers some justification for attacks by the Extreme Right-Wing extremists, especially when compared to his commentary on attacks by Islamist extremists. The seminar is also attended by some academic and non-academic staff members. At the end of the seminar you notice one staff member talking to the speaker and exchanging contact details. A few weeks later you overhear this staff member talking to students in a coffee shop and justifying attacks by right-wing extremists and expressing strident views about Islamist extremism.

Scenario B: IT and online behaviour

Variation 1

A member of staff from a learning centre is concerned about a student. He attends the centre alone every evening and does not appear to socialise with other students. The member of staff notices that if a female sits on the same bank of desks, the student immediately appears to be angry and relocates to be alone again. He appears to be quite secretive and the member of staff notices that the student minimises his screen every time someone walks past. The member of staff does manage to catch a glimpse of the student engaging in an unknown chat forum.

Variation 2

A member of staff from a learning centre is concerned about a student. He attends the centre alone every evening. The member of staff notices that if a female sits on the same bank of desks, the student immediately appears to be angry and relocates to be alone

again. The student happens to leave their screen unlocked and as the member of staff walks past they notice that the student was reading a thread on an Incel group's social media page – entitled "Why don't men just enslave women?" When the student returns and sees that the staff member was reading the text on his screen, he quickly shut down his computer and leaves.

Scenario C: Student unions and societies

Variation 1

You overhear a humanities student discussing their membership of student-led far-left society. She is discussing the direct action the society took during attendance to a recent demonstration and how their group had broken windows in a couple of shops. The student also says that she felt uncomfortable about the group having broken windows but felt coerced into participating. The student begins discussing how her society might escalate action to directly target business owners when she realises you are able to hear. The student and her friends then move somewhere else on campus out of earshot.

Variation 2

You overhear a humanities student discussing her membership of student-led far-left society. She is discussing the direct action her society took during attendance to a recent demonstration and how their group had broken windows in a couple of shops. The student begins discussing how the society might escalate action to directly target business owners when she realises you are able to hear. The student and her friends then move somewhere else on campus out of earshot. Later on, another student from that group approaches you to say how the student told him and others that members of the society are planning to break in to large corporations' business premises and are inciting violence against people working for these organisations. The student also says that this other student was encouraging them and others to come along on the day of the planned attacks. You already know from another member of staff that this student told them that they felt that some of the tactics used by this other student to influence students to support the cause were emotional, intimidating, and that they seemed to particularly target fresher's or students that they knew were struggling to make friends.

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