


<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>General Purposes Committee</p> <p>9 December 2015</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Debbie Jones, Interim Corporate Director for Children's Services</p>	<p>Classification: [Unrestricted or Exempt]</p>
<p>PREVENT WORK WITH CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Terry Parkin and Liz Vickerie
Wards affected	[All wards]

1. SUMMARY

This report provides information on the range of work undertaken with schools through the curriculum to challenge radical and extreme views and to promote community cohesion and positive values. It also describes the range of safeguarding work undertaken with children and young people identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation or extremist views.

It also highlights some of the challenges facing this work and issues arising.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The General Purposes Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the information in this Report.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

LBTH Prevent Work with Children and Schools

3.1 Context and Approach

The Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) places Tower Hamlets as a high risk area. We have needed to respond to a number of arrests under the Terrorism Act, increasing concern about radicalisation and the implementation of the “Prevent Duty” July 2015. The Tower Hamlets work on preventing violent extremism has developed out of existing partnerships, approaches and programmes and this enables us to tackle complex issues.

The exposure of children to extremist ideology can hinder their social development, educational attainment and pose a real risk that they could support/partake in violence. We adopt the principle that “Safeguarding vulnerable people from radicalisation is no different from safeguarding them from other forms of harm.” (Home Office – The Prevent Strategy) but we deliver it through a multi-agency “Triangle of Intervention” which provides 3 tiers of intervention: that span preventative teaching approaches, targeted early interventions and specialist responses.

3.2 Universal Work - curriculum development with schools.

Work on community cohesion and “No Place for Hate” has been a long standing strength of local schools. Building on this Children’s Services has developed a range of teaching resources and support materials as part of its ongoing commitment to all schools. A Home Office funded Education Officer set up a curriculum working party to trial and develop curriculum resources. Programmes of work have been provided for targeted schools and the officer is available to team teach and coach others in the use of the materials. They have been well received by schools because they reflect the local context. A mapping tool has also been designed to support schools in identifying which aspects of the curriculum can support PREVENT and Community Cohesion aims in each year group.

The importance of this universal approach through the curriculum is that

- Vulnerable cases are not easy to identify so we need to assume all pupils could be at risk and support all children
- There is a discontinuity between what they know and their parents know about the internet and social media, so we can’t leave it to the home to ensure their protection
- Children today have open and unrestricted access to extensive information so we need to teach skills of **critical thinking, discrimination and questioning the validity of sources** (a healthy scepticism)
- This approach is not about closing down debate but enabling discussion of controversial issues in a safe environment with staff who feel confident to do so.

- All this work improves children's analytic and reasoning and debating skills
- Mapping across all age ranges and all subjects ensures values and counter narratives and safety work are embedded and support the broader curriculum delivery
- E-safety work has relevance to other risks as well e.g. sexual grooming and online scams

3.3 Universal Work - guidance and training for schools

Guidance has been provided for schools on their role in preventing extremism, amending their safeguarding policies and highlighting vulnerable young people. This has been supported by a poster for display in staff rooms, listing key messages and the actions school staff should undertake if they are worried about a pupil.

The guidance included sections on:

- Safeguarding policy
- Staff training and awareness raising
- Reporting
- Interventions with individuals
- Prevention through the curriculum and pastoral work
- Visitors policies and use of school premises
- Commissioning practice
- Responsibilities, including governors
- Internet security
- Triangle of intervention

There is also been an ongoing programme of central training for school safeguarding governors and designated Child Protection leads and tailor made training is available for all schools including independent schools. This includes the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent programme (WRAP) and sessions on policy guidance and referral. These types of training sessions have created opportunities for 'real discussion' leading to practical solutions to difficult issues. One example would be the dangers of online radicalisation which has resulted in schools running assemblies highlighting the risks of on-line grooming.

Head teachers are briefed regularly about PREVENT issues through Heads Bulletin and in the Director's meetings and in the Spring the Director met with 15 independent school heads as a group. Follow up support has been provided. A checklist has been issued for all schools to support them ensure their safeguarding policies now meet the Prevent guidance and the new "Prevent Duty" (July 1st 2015)

3.4 Targeted Work with Individuals and Schools

The borough resisted setting up a separate Channel Panel as we felt it would be counter-productive in the local context and lead to negative labelling of young people. The Social Inclusion Panel (SIP) already existed as a senior level multi-

agency panel to support vulnerable children and families requiring early intervention, therefore SIP was given the role of overseeing referrals of young people under the age of 18, and families thought to be at risk of radicalisation and extremism. This includes those being managed through Social Care interventions as well as those managed through a “Team Around the Child” approach. Referrals from both schools and health services have increased by 800% in the last 2 years showing confidence in the process and schools have reported they are very pleased with the advice and guidance they receive. The benefit of incorporating PREVENT casework into an existing multi-agency panel is that it provides access to a wide range of different interventions to meet what are sometimes very complex and inter-related needs.

Targeted work has also been undertaken with schools where concerns have been raised. For example, following the flight of three girls to Syria in February, a multi-agency action plan was designed with the school where the girls attended, which included social mapping and risk assessment to identify those children thought to be most at risk of flight, and those vulnerable in other ways. Different tiers of intervention were put in place including assemblies, Question and Answer sessions, group discussions and individual support programmes, with input from Children’s Social Care, the Police and Channel religious intervention providers where appropriate. This has created opportunities to develop innovative work such as widening the remit of Channel intervention providers to facilitate group sessions in targeted schools and working with staff to help them discuss ‘difficult questions’ and contentious issues. This initiative is empowering staff to handle situations rather than rely on outside interventions.

3.5 A Multi-Agency, Partnership Approach and work with Parents

The strategy is enabling partners such as schools, mosques, health services, the police, social care and other agencies to work collaboratively and provide a swift response to the challenges encountered by PREVENT work. For example:

- A pamphlet was issued through schools and by the mosques at Friday Prayers, providing coherent safeguarding messages to parents. It was well received locally and has been picked up by police and other boroughs as a model of good practice.
- Parent support sessions including cyber safety and the risks of radicalisation are available to all schools from the Parental Engagement Team (PET). PREVENT messages have been embedded into the parenting courses with training for Parent Support Partners and school based Parent / Family Support Practitioners (The Home Office recently agreed to extend funding for parenting work.)
- Over the summer holidays PET provided a helpline for parents seeking support and Targeted Youth Support offered to provide case work with young people vulnerable to radicalisation on leaving school.
- Given that those who leave to travel to Syria show few signs of vulnerability and that the online grooming process is thought to be effective, the importance of promoting an alternative narrative and resilience through the curriculum is key. An education conference was provided showcasing good practice and specific work has been developed with 6th form students for their age group. A further conference to share the results of the curriculum working party is planned for March 2016.

- The Humanities Education Centre has provided guidance on British Values and how these can be approached from a Global Learning perspective.
- The Attendance Welfare Service provides packs to all the Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Free Schools annually, containing all the national and local guidance and procedures on safeguarding and referral procedures /contacts for non-attendance and for children missing from education.
- There is close work with police officers from PREVENT, Channel and Counter Terrorism who are involved in both training and interventions. Channel intervention providers have undertaken creative and high quality de-radicalisation work, working with individuals and groups.
- The SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) lead has raised awareness of the Prevent agenda and explored how spirituality and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Development can support the Prevent agenda;
- Phase two of the Troubled Families programme (2015-20) also has an emphasis on radicalisation and extremism. Prevent work is also now linked into the council's first partnership strategy on Ending Groups, Gangs and Serious Youth Violence: a three year strategy reporting to the Community Safety Partnership Board.

PREVENT work is reported to the PREVENT Programme Board which is a cross borough multi-agency group looking at work within both adults and children's services and the LSCB provides the challenge to all our work with children.

3.6 Home Office Support

The Home Office provides project support funding for Prevent to work on the core objectives of the national Prevent Strategy 2011. These objectives are:

- 1) Undermining extremist ideology
- 2) Supporting vulnerable individuals
- 3) Strengthening institutions

Initially the funding was predominantly for youth projects but more recently the Home Office have provided funding for more school focussed initiatives as described above. Since 2012 the London Tiger's 'Building Community Resilience Project' has provided counter radicalisation workshops for 300 young people.

In 2013, we commissioned the Peace Project to undertake a young Muslim Leaders Project. This project enabled 20 young people to acquire Level 2 qualification in leadership and they were trained as No Place for Hate Champions too. Their responsibility included facilitating No Place for Hate workshops within youth clubs and schools.

The Home Office also funds a number of workshop opportunities for schools from an approved menu of providers and they are currently funding the following posts: Education Officer, Parental Engagement Officer, Community Engagement Officer and Project Manager. This funding is currently secure to March 2016.

3.7 Referrals and Casework

Throughout this period the SIP has continued to oversee referrals and work with young people under the age of 18 thought to be at risk of radicalisation and extremism. It has also monitored a number of families in which the views of the parents are the source of concern for the children, for example families where a parent has already been convicted of terrorist offences. Two years ago Prevent referrals to this panel were low and the Police data suggested that there should be more referrals than we were receiving: this was largely thought to be lack of awareness amongst referring agencies. There has subsequently been an increase in referrals for early intervention casework to support children who may be vulnerable to extremist messages. Two years ago there used to be around 4-5 active cases under active monitoring at any one time. Now this figure is 40+. Referrals have come predominantly from schools but also from Social Care and Health Services. In addition schools feel sufficiently confident to regularly run concerns past officers for advice and guidance.

Referrals have included those at risk from radicalisation from far right groups or white supremacist views but predominantly current referrals related to extreme Islamist views and the risk of flight to Syria. The latter is a real and present threat so in training we make no apologies for highlighting that risk in particular but stress that extremist threats come from all quarters and give examples of these. A significant proportion of those referred are children or young people who, because of their special needs, are extremely vulnerable to manipulation and require protective programmes. A growing proportion are children of convicted TACT offenders who may have been subjected to ongoing radicalisation throughout their upbringing.

A wide variety of agencies now actively support the plans: schools, parenting services, youth support, information technology advisor, Special Educational Needs and Behaviour Support services, anti-bullying advisor, police teams (Channel and Prevent), CAMHS, school health, Youth Offending, Social Care. Outcomes for individuals are monitored until the cases are no longer a concern. Where more active engagement is required we have not hesitated to put child protection plans in place or children have been made wards of court to ensure their protection. Overall a robust approach has been taken at all tiers of intervention with open and frank discussions with parent groups about the safeguarding issues.

3.8 CSC response

Within CSC we have a number of cases where extremism and radicalisation are features and on occasions as the sole presenting safeguarding concern. Statutory casework practice in this area is emerging and not without challenge. The key challenges are that they may not be the usual vulnerabilities which are our usual drivers for intervention; consent can be strained as families may view our intervention as a risk to their rights to exercise their views or professionals stigmatising their children without sufficient evidence, there may be unwarranted police involvement, the evidence may be soft intelligence or may not be able to be

shared on the direction of the Police or Courts, the probability of extremism may be low but the impact on children and others is extremely high.

Although these features can exist in other safeguarding work it is less likely to be the normative features. Our assessment and intervention models need adaption. We are aware that our current assessment, intervention transfer model has not sufficiently 'held' the knowledge, the professional network and possibly the risk we need to for our case management, learning and analysis for this area.

In some of cases it has been necessary to intervene through the court arena resulting in the local authority obtaining court orders i.e. 'wardship', Interim Care Orders and Supervision Orders to secure the safety and well-being of the child/ren. We are pioneering practice in this area and are being approached by government and others to share our learning.

On 13 November 2015, Tower Hamlets' legal department organised a national conference, 'Radicalisation: safeguarding and the family courts' which was sponsored by the Home Office and attended by over 60 local authorities, as well as police, CAFCASS officers and other agencies from around the country, to share good practice. This included well received presentations from Tower Hamlets' CSC, education and legal teams.

3.9 Tower Hamlets Children's Social Care Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Team

The Tower Hamlets PVE team has been set up from already stretched core funding to respond to the above need and offer *a tailored and specialist social work response* to this new and growing area of practice. The dedicated team will be in place for a year that will take on all new PVE cases (where following CSC enquiries a credible risk in relation to PVE has been established) as well as work with the high profile existing cases. The team will sit within one of the existing FSP teams and will consist of 1 Team Manager and two dedicated social workers who will report directly to the Team Manager. The other main output of this team will be to gather the learning from the cases to add to our knowledge base, training and new assessment approaches going forward.

A key challenge in this work is our own professional sensibility and concern that we may be working in ways that may be perceived by certain groups as vilification for genuine faith and ideology. Support for staff and ongoing discussion about the impact and challenge in this work are essential features and must be factored in any resource planning.

3.10 Challenges

Work with the independent schools sector is a challenge because of the legal limitations of the LA remit with such institutions, which are outside LA control. However, the council remains responsible for safeguarding of all children whether they are in the independent or maintained sector. Accordingly, guidance in respect

of Prevent and Safeguarding is now sent to all sectors; independent schools have been included in invitations to training and conferences on Safeguarding and Prevent as well as to participate in the Prevent curriculum development work. The Service Head for Learning and Achievement is the link officer for independent schools. Offers of curriculum support and parenting work in this field are also open to independent schools and requests to visit are followed up promptly. Where safeguarding has been an issue, visits have been made and, where appropriate, planning, health and safety and the Fire Brigade have been alerted.

There are also challenges in the work with families who Home Educate (and tuition agencies that support them) because of the very restrictive legal limitations of the LA remit and powers of intervention in this area. The Home Education Steering group regularly assesses the vulnerability of families and intervenes more proactively with those where we have reason to be concerned. There has been a rigorous approach to intervention when concerns have been identified, including supporting the closure of inappropriate tuition services where necessary. At the same time the Parental Engagement Team have started a support group for Home Educators so we can share good practice with them, for example on cyber safety and curriculum work.

Other challenges come from extremist activities: members from the proscribed group Al-Muhajiroun (and aliases) have organised street activities causing community tensions; the English Defence League regularly attempt to march in the borough and members of Britain First have come into the borough on four occasions. These events are likely to continue and will attract media and political commentary although they do not represent the vast majority of the local community or the degree of cohesion evidenced in our schools.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 The Prevent Duty became statutory in July 2015. The Home office provide a grant for PVE to the Council, however the Home Office funding does not cover statutory or other casework. Consequently resources have been diverted from other statutory or early intervention budgets within the Children's Services directorate in order to comply with this duty.
- 4.2 The resources which are currently being diverted to provide a PVE service are valued at circa £300k.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1. Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ('the Act') placed the Government's existing Prevent strategy on a statutory basis, placing a duty on the Council, and well as schools and childcare providers, in the exercise of their existing functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". The Prevent Strategy Guidance ('the Guidance') was issued on 1 July 2015 under section 29 of the Act, and the Council must have regard to the Guidance when carrying out its Prevent duty. The Guidance sets out that being drawn into terrorism includes not just violent

extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit.

- 5.2. The Guidance sets out that compliance with the Prevent duty requires the Council to engage in multi-agency partnership working, provide training for staff and relevant third party agency and develop a Prevent Action Plan to address risk in its area.
- 5.3. The Council's functions in relation to children include a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to ensure that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 10 of the Act also requires the Council to make arrangements to promote cooperation between its safeguarding partner agencies including schools, the police, probation services and the youth offending team. Further, the Council has a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is likely to suffer significant harm, to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.
- 5.4. Schools have existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues. These duties are imposed on maintained schools by sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996. Additionally, section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on schools to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 5.5. When considering sharing personal information, the Council must comply with its duties under the Human Rights Act 1998, Data Protection Act and the common law duty of confidentiality.
- 5.6. When planning Prevent strategies, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't (the public sector equality duty). Some form of equality analysis will be required which is proportionate to the proposed action.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The activities outlined support "One Tower Hamlets" and community cohesion principles

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This work is funded through a mixture of Home Office grant and Council funding. Much of the work overlaps with existing funding streams on safeguarding and so expenditure reflects these statutory requirements.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

8.1 N/A

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 N/A – report only – no proposals

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The activities outlined are part of the national programme to reduce the risk of radicalisation and extremism

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- LBTH Guidance to schools on amending safeguarding policies to include Prevent.
- The Prevent Duty July 2015 Departmental Guidance to Schools and Child care Providers – DfE

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)
List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

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