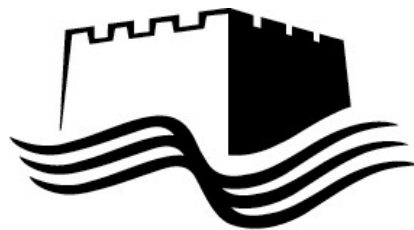


## **APPENDIX 1**

# **Delivering the Prevent Duty; Promoting Safeguarding in Tower Hamlets**

## **Scrutiny Review Report**



**TOWER HAMLETS**

**September 2016**

## **Chair's Foreword**

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In 2015, the Government's Counter-Terrorism and Security Act introduced a duty on councils to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism or violent extremism. It's rare that our scrutiny committee looks at an issue of such local, national and international significance. This is the case for the 'Prevent Duty' and its implementation in Tower Hamlets, which can and has had international significance.

Right-wing or left-wing, religious or secular, nationalist or internationalist, all forms of terrorism or violent extremism come under the 'Prevent Duty' as they all seek to challenge our way of life and undermine cohesion in our communities.

Tower Hamlets is a priority area under the duty and so it's right that scrutiny members, on behalf of local residents, understand what the Council and our partners are doing to deter people away from terrorism and violent extremism.

Tower Hamlets Council has strong reputation for its work in this area, particularly in the way it has embedded the required safeguarding mechanism under the duty into its existing safeguarding arrangements. The evidence we saw supports this view. And yet there is always more that can be done to ensure that we are greater than the sum of our parts and that we empower our local communities and their elected representatives to be at the heart of what we do.

This report makes 13 recommendations on how the Council and our partners can add value to what is already happening under the 'Prevent Duty'. Our recommendations cover three themes of:

- Safeguarding young people
- Promoting cohesion in Tower Hamlets
- Developing leadership around Prevent

Our recommendations were developed following discussions over five sessions. Three additional co-opted members, Sarah Castro, Rob Faure-Walker and Dr Farid Panjwani, participated in our review bringing their academic knowledge, hands on experience of working with communities on cohesion and understanding of the impact of counter-terrorism policies on communities to our discussions. I would like to thank them, our elected members and all of the participants in this review. In particular Birmingham City Council who hosted us for a joint scrutiny session and to the young people from our local schools who participated in a facilitated discussion on the impact of the prevent agenda.

**Councillor John Pierce**

## **Summary of Recommendations**

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### **Safeguarding Young People**

#### **Recommendation 1:**

The Community Safety Service should continue to work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector to expand their work on promoting a better understanding of safeguarding risks presented by online and social media, and how to stay safe online, through the use of digital champions embedded across the voluntary and community sector.

#### **Recommendation 2:**

The council should consider imposing requirements on MSG and other grant funded and commissioned organisations working with young people to obtain relevant safeguarding training.

#### **Recommendation 3:**

The Youth Service should;

- Build on their current work to develop a curriculum to provide a structured programme of development for young people;
- Explore ways to support young people at risk of isolation;
- Develop, in partnership with Community Safety, a peer education programme to develop young leaders capable of promoting safeguarding and cohesion within their peer groups.

#### **Recommendation 4:**

The Learning & Achievement Service should work with schools and commissioned providers of interfaith work in schools to support the creation of safe spaces for young people to promote debate and critical discourse.

#### **Recommendation 5:**

The council should continue to engage local citizens, in particular young people in the shaping of plans and commissioning of services aimed at promoting safeguarding and undermining the risks of people being drawn in to terrorism, the support of terrorism or violent extremism.

### **Promoting Cohesion in Tower Hamlets**

#### **Recommendation 6:**

The Learning & Achievement Service should build on existing work to support schools in promoting equality and diversity, cohesion and critical thinking skills through the school curriculum and help them explore further opportunities to do this outside the curriculum.

#### **Recommendation 7:**

The council should exploit all commissioning opportunities to;

- Develop greater community leadership to promote and celebrate diversity; and to build resilience to challenges to community cohesion
- Ensure its approach to the commissioning of cohesion activities strengthens engagement across all communities in the borough and provides a platform for sustained interaction between communities.

**Recommendation 8:**

The Learning & Achievement Service should continue to promote the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award to improve uptake across schools in the borough.

**Recommendation 9:**

The council should ensure the use of language across services and commissioned partners is consistent and compliant with the objective to promote community cohesion. This should include appropriate use; distinguishing between faith and ideology, avoiding objectification of groups or communities and greater clarity in describing risks/threats i.e. *“people being drawn into terrorism, the support of terrorism or violent extremism”* or *“increasing risk of travel to conflict zones including Syria and Iraq”* as opposed to using more general terms such as ‘radicalisation’.

**Recommendation 10:**

The Communications Service should adopt a more proactive approach to promoting cohesion through a borough wide campaign which celebrates our history, diversity and resilience to adversity. This should include opportunities for resident involvement to promote the borough and a greater role within the Prevent Delivery Plan.

**Developing Leadership around Prevent****Recommendation 11:**

Elected Members should be further supported to understand and comply with Sections C and E of the 2015 Prevent Duty Guidance, including:

- Dissemination of intelligence information to designated elected members in line with section C of the Prevent Duty Guidance;
- Guidance and training tailored for elected Members to enable them to understand their role in the Duty;
- Further consideration to the role of elected Members in the management of consequences following any local incidences.

**Recommendation 12:**

The council should progress work to promote greater collaborative working on Prevent and Safeguarding across the East London region. This should include work to promote greater consistency across the delivery of the Prevent Duty and sharing of appropriate intelligence across officers and elected Members.

**Recommendation 13:**

The council should take steps to promote an organisational culture which includes a focus on safeguarding and civic responsibility. This should also include consideration for rolling out appropriate e-learning modules for all staff to promote an understanding of the risks of being drawn into the support of terrorism.

## 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has one of the fastest growing populations in London and is expected to be one of the fastest growing local authorities in England over the next ten years.
- 1.2 The borough is home to an ethnically diverse population and, based on the 2015 mid-year population estimates from the Office for National Statistics, has a high proportion of young people with 48% aged 20-39. Figures from the 2011 Census showed only 31% of residents identified themselves as 'White British' and Islam was identified as the largest faith within the borough.
- 1.3 Although the borough has seen significant growth the 2015 Indices of Deprivation suggest that despite some improvements, the borough continues to be within the top 10 most deprived areas in England.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.4 The 2015/16 Annual Residents Survey showed that views about cohesion in the borough remain positive, with 87% of residents surveyed agreeing that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- 1.5 The Home Office has designated Tower Hamlets as a Tier 1 borough, representing the highest perceived risks of extremism. To ensure all Tier 1 boroughs are adequately supported, the Home Office provides additional funding to challenge extremist narratives and support communities to develop resilience through funded projects as well as to support staffing arrangements.
- 1.6 In addition to drawing the attention of radical Islamist groups, since 2010 the borough has attracted the attention of far right organisations such as the English Defence League (EDL) and Britain First who seek to cause disruption in the borough.
- 1.7 Groups such as Britain First have organised unannounced visits to the borough to demonstrate outside landmarks such as the East London Mosque and actively incite negative reactions for promotional purposes. In March 2016, the borough received three visits from Britain First. Their attempts to cause disruption in the borough have been managed through the positive partnership working led through the council, police, Tower Hamlets Interfaith Forum and the East London Mosque; however the inability to predict future visits presents an ongoing challenge.
- 1.8 The youthful composition of the borough, coupled with the increasingly sophisticated deployment of the web and social media by organisations such as Daesh<sup>2</sup>, has presented new challenges for the borough. In February 2015, the borough drew national attention when three students from the Bethnal Green Academy fled the country to travel to Syria. The event which shook communities in the borough was swiftly surrounded by a flurry of information revealing that a student from the same school had previously travelled to

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Rank measure, *Indices of Deprivation*, Department for Communities, Localities and Government, September 2015

<sup>2</sup> In December 2015, the UK Government committed to referring to the organisation also known as ISIL, Islamic State, or ISIS as Daesh. The term, an abbreviation of the formal name in Arabic of the 'Islamic State in Iraq and Shaam (Syria)', is also a play on words in that language and is considered offensive by members of the organisation.

Syria in 2014. A further five teenage girls had travel bans imposed by the courts in March 2015 at the request of the council in response to this event.

- 1.9 The events in the borough coincided with national developments -the enacting of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Act places a Duty on local authorities and other responsible authorities (including schools) to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.10 The Act has been met with vocal opposition from the education sector with organisations such as the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the National Union of Students (NUS) criticising the implications for freedom of speech and the impact on cohesion. Opposition groups have expressed concerns over the impact on young people, in particular the risk for disproportionately targeting Muslim youth and the implications for free speech. These concerns have been exacerbated by a range of stories covered in the media suggesting that guidance around the Duty is inadequate and the impact on young people is harmful.
- 1.11 Recognising the national and local context, the aim of the review was to explore the approach taken by the council to deliver the Prevent Duty and influence its delivery by other responsible authorities and its impact on young people.
- 1.12 The review was underpinned by three core questions:
  - a) How does our approach to delivering the Prevent Duty impact on young people?
  - b) Does our approach appropriately reflect the priorities in Tower Hamlets?
  - c) What have been the challenges in meeting our obligations under the Duty?
- 1.13 The review was chaired by Cllr John Pierce, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, over the course of six sessions throughout March and April 2016. The sessions were held across a number of sites including the Town Hall, Morpeth Secondary School and Birmingham City Council.
- 1.14 Other members of the review panel included;

<b>Nozul Mustafa</b>	Co-opted members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>Victoria Ekubia</b>	
<b>Rob Faure-Walker</b>	Co-opted member of the Review Panel Head of Geography, Morpeth Secondary School
<b>Sarah Castro</b>	Co-opted member of the Review Panel Programme Manager, Poplar Harca

- 1.15 The review was supported by;

<b>Gulam Hussain</b>	Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
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<sup>3</sup> Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

- 1.16 The panel received evidence from members of the Executive, a range of officers and experts including;

**London Borough of Tower Hamlets:**

<b>Cllr Rachael Saunders</b>	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services
<b>Stephen Halsey</b>	Corporate Director, Communities, Localities & Culture
<b>Debbie Jones</b>	Corporate Director, Children's Services
<b>Nasima Patel</b>	Service Head, Children's Social Care
<b>Andy Bamber</b>	Service Head, Safer Communities
<b>Shazia Ghani</b>	Head of Community Safety
<b>Liz Vickerie</b>	Head of Support for Learning and Lead Officer for Social Inclusion
<b>Emily Fieran-Reed</b>	Service Manager, Cohesion, Engagement & Commissioning
<b>Moksuda Uddin</b>	Head of Family Support and Protection
<b>Percy Aggett</b>	Psychological Therapies & Clinical Team Lead, (CAHMS)
<b>Bill Williams</b>	Project Lead, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies
<b>Kelly Powell</b>	Head of Media, Communications Service
<b>Thomas Llewellyn-Jones</b>	Prevent Education Officer

**Metropolitan Police:**

<b>Sue Williams</b>	Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police
<b>Helen Lewis</b>	Partnerships Lead, Metropolitan Police

**SO15 Counter-terrorism Police:**

<b>Scott Pullen</b>	SO15 Local Ops Supervisor, North East (London)
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**Home Office:**

<b>Abu Ahmed</b>	Head of Training and Engagement, Home Office
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**Birmingham City Council:**

<b>Cllr Shafique Shah</b>	Cabinet Member for Inclusion & Community Safety, Birmingham City Council
<b>Cllr Zafar Iqbal</b>	Chair, Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Committee, Birmingham City Council
<b>Dr Mashuq Ally</b>	Head of Equality and Diversity, Birmingham City Council
<b>Waqar Ahmed</b>	Prevent Manager, Birmingham City Council
<b>Razia Butt</b>	Schools Resilience Advisor, Birmingham City Council

**External experts:**

<b>Sarah Soyei</b>	Head of Partnerships, Equali-teach
<b>Mike Jervis</b>	Active Change Foundation
<b>Dr Farid Panjwani</b>	Director, Centre For Research And Evaluation In Muslim Education



## 2. National Context

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- 2.1 Over the course of the last 15 years, counter-terrorism and security has played an increasingly prominent role in domestic and foreign policy considerations both in the UK and abroad.
- 2.2 Since 2003, CONTEST has been at the heart of the UK Government's approach to counter-terrorism. The CONTEST strategy incorporates four key strands, also known as the 4 P's. These are;
- Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks;
  - Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism;
  - Protect: to strengthen protection against a terrorist attack, and
  - Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.
- 2.3 The Prevent strand of the strategy focuses on three key areas which are:
- a) 'To respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat from those who promote it;
  - b) To prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support;
  - c) To work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.'<sup>4</sup>
- 2.4 In 2011, the Coalition Government released a revised Prevent Strategy responding to feedback from the Carlile review. The review commissioned by the Home Secretary concluded that there was also 'serious work to be done' in relation to right-wing and Northern Ireland related extremism. Incorporating feedback from the review, the revised strategy included greater recognition of all forms of terrorism and non-violent extremism, which could create environments conducive to drawing people in to terrorism or the support of terrorism.
- 2.5 "Channel" forms a key part of the Prevent strategy. The programme, first piloted in 2007 and rolled out across England and Wales in 2012, focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by:
- a) Identifying individuals at risk;
  - b) Assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and
  - c) Developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.
- 2.6 As part of ongoing measures to strengthen counter-terrorism, in March 2015 the Government enacted the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act. This placed a new Duty on local authorities, schools and other specified authorities to prevent people being drawn into terrorism and extremism<sup>5</sup>. The Act also places a Duty on local authorities to have panels in place to support vulnerable people deemed to be at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Prevent Strategy 2011*, HM Government, pg.7

<sup>5</sup> "Extremism" can be violent or non-violent in nature and is defined as: "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values" and "calls for death for members of our armed forces" (Prevent Duty Guidance, 2015).

- 2.7 The “Prevent Duty” which came in to force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015, does not confer new functions on specified authorities, but does introduce the need to pay due regard to the Duty.
- 2.8 The associated Prevent Duty Guidance, revised in July 2015, highlights the importance of effective leadership, working in partnership and development of staff capabilities around Prevent within specified authorities. This requires elected members in addition to senior officers to be aware of and involved in risk assessment.

### **3. Delivering the Prevent Strategy in Tower Hamlets**

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- 3.1 The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is a Tier 1 Local Authority, one of seven designated priority areas identified by the Home Office within England and Wales.
- 3.2 Since 2014, the council's Community Safety team, part of the Communities Localities and Culture (CLC) directorate, has led on the strategic oversight of the prevent agenda across the organisation. This has been closely supported by the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) team within Children's Social Care, and the lead Social Inclusion Officer and the Prevent Education Officer within the Children's Services directorate, providing specialist support to schools and services working with young people in the borough.
- 3.3 The national Prevent Strategy is embedded in safeguarding practices and procedures across a wide range of council services. This is captured through Tower Hamlets' annual Prevent Delivery plan, which provides a framework for the full breadth of work being undertaken by both internal and external partners. These partners include Community Safety, which leads on work around Preventing Violent Extremism, Parental Engagement, Early Years Learning, Communications as well as the Police, SO15 Counter-terrorism Command and the Home Office.
- 3.4 The Home Office acts as a crucial stakeholder in negotiating and agreeing the Home Office Prevent grant allocation, which facilitates a range of community based services aimed at developing resilience, leadership and confidence within the community to challenge radical and extremist narratives. In 2015/16, the council commissioned eight projects through the grant and has secured further funding for a range of programmes for the 2016/17 financial year.
- 3.5 In addition to providing grant funding to commission work within the community, the Home Office currently funds 3.5 posts to support the delivery of Prevent work across the council. This facilitates delivery of bespoke training opportunities, including access to the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) for organisations and individuals as well as dedicated support for maintained and independent schools to access curriculum resources and training for Safeguarding Leads and Governors in line with Ofsted and Prevent Duty requirements. The long term commitment of the Home Office to continue funding all four posts remains uncertain placing the continued delivery of all services currently being offered at risk.
- 3.6 As part of the Prevent Delivery Plan the council also integrates the raising of awareness of the risks of being drawn into terrorism or travel to Syria and Iraq across existing platforms. This includes initiatives such as the No Place for Hate Campaign, which aims to promote a co-ordinated response to hate crime, support victims and challenge prejudices; and through awareness campaigns and training aimed at tackling Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). The council also provides training for parents as part of its Strengthening Families and Strengthening Communities programme to support parents to understand the risks and opportunities for young people to be drawn into terrorism or travel to a conflict zone as part of broader safeguarding programme.

## **Managing Referrals**

- 3.7 The delivery of the Prevent Strategy is underpinned by the Channel programme which offers a platform for multi-agency intervention for those deemed to be at risk of being drawn in to extremism. The role of the Channel programme is reinforced through the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which sets out the duty on local authorities to have panels in place to manage referrals for interventions.
- 3.8 The London Borough of Tower Hamlets in partnership with the Home Office has developed a tailored solution which reflects the principle of 'One Tower Hamlets' found in the Council's Community Plan. This principle which emphasises the importance of promoting equality, cohesion and community leadership has informed the decision to utilise existing safeguarding structures to manage referrals rather than a separate Channel Panel. As a result Prevent casework is handled through the Safeguarding Adults Panel (SAP) and Social Inclusion Panel (SIP) which include the SO15 Counter-terrorism Police as members.
- 3.9 The work of the Safeguarding Adults Panel (SAP) and Social Inclusion Panel (SIP) also ties in with other safeguarding platforms such as the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment-Conference (MARAC), Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the London Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to facilitate integrated working and facilitate referrals and specialist interventions across a range of partners.
- 3.10 As Tower Hamlets is home to a diverse community with varied views on the Government's counter-terrorism policies, the use of existing mechanisms within the broader safeguarding context has allowed for a more sensitive implementation of the Prevent Strategy and has drawn on the existing strengths of safeguarding arrangements within the borough.

## **Governance Arrangements**

- 3.11 The Prevent Programme Board, chaired by the Corporate Director for Communities, Localities & Culture (CLC) operates as a distinct board with responsibility for overseeing the delivery of Prevent work and monitoring the threat from extremist organisations and groups.
- 3.12 The board meets on a bi-monthly basis and aims to:
- a) Bring together key stakeholders to contribute to the mapping and development of the local Prevent Strategy and oversee the delivery of the local Prevent Delivery Plan;
  - b) Inform development and delivery of innovative approaches to Prevent engagement;
  - c) Embed the Prevent Duty across council services and raise awareness of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act and Prevent Duty 2015 amongst statutory, non-statutory and community organisations;
  - d) Ensure relevant staff/teams are appropriately trained and offered opportunities for continuous development;
  - e) Identify gaps in Prevent delivery and focus resources where it is needed most; and

- f) Monitor all funded Prevent projects and ensure accountability of the local Prevent budget and performance delivery.
- 3.13 Membership of the board is comprised of directors and senior officers from the council's CLC, Children's Service, Public Health and Adults Service directorates. It also includes local health partners, the Police Borough Commander and SO15 Counter-Terrorism Command, the Borough Commander for the London Fire Brigade, Probation, Chairs of the Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards and representatives from the Home Office.
- 3.14 In addition to its membership, the board is informed by a number of bodies and steering groups which includes the Social Inclusion Panel and Safeguarding Adults Board, Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Steering Group, Domestic Violence Forum, London Prevent Network and the Prevent Coordinators Forum.
- 3.15 The work of the Prevent Programme Board feeds into the Community Safety Partnership Board<sup>6</sup> and the Community Safety Partnership Plan, which brings together a number of local agencies to work collaboratively to reduce crime across a partnership area (see Appendix 1).

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<sup>6</sup> The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, places a duty on key bodies to work together to reduce crime. The Act recognises that partnership working is likely to have a greater impact on crime and specifies that responsible bodies must work together.

## **4. Safeguarding Young People**

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### **Combating online radicalisation**

- 4.1 Tower Hamlets is designated as a Tier 1 authority in England and, according to the National Counter-terrorism Police (NCTP) generates one of the highest number of referrals to the police. The extensive use of a wide range of communication platforms in the English language by extremists to radicalise others, underpinned by sophisticated marketing (in particular the use of social media) presents a new and difficult challenge locally and nationally. The reach and power of social media was exemplified by the events of February 2015 which saw three students from the Bethnal Green Academy depart for Syria. However, a number of other students in Tower Hamlets have been prevented from doing so following interventions led by the council and supported by partners including local schools, the police and courts.
- 4.2 The students from the Bethnal Green Academy reflected a national trend of increasing numbers of young females attempting to travel to Syria and Iraq. However, focusing on young people outside of the usual domain of vulnerability makes detection and intervention harder for the responsible authorities. The Metropolitan Police's Internet Referral Unit suggests that on average 1,000 websites promoting extremist content are removed on a weekly basis, with approximately 800 originating in or linked to Syria.
- 4.3 Progress has been made to develop a strategic response to the risks of online encouragement to support or participate in terrorism. This includes positive work being led by the council's Parental Engagement Team, working with parents, to raise awareness and a number of projects delivered using Home Office funded grants to work across this area within schools. Work led by both the Home Office grant funded providers and the Parental Engagement Team is expected to continue throughout 2016/17. This has been supported by cyber safety work delivered by the Anti-bullying Advisor. Despite the positive initiatives, members of the panel recognise that much of the existing work has been centred on schools and parents and does not go far enough to reach out to harder to reach communities and those not engaged with formal structures such as schools, libraries and other council services. More work is needed to promote awareness across the council, the voluntary and community sector and the wider community to broaden the reach of this area of work.
- 4.4 The review panel noted the opportunity to further develop capacity within the voluntary and community sector and support the work of council services around promoting digital inclusion and online safeguarding. Members of the review panel believe the Digital Champions model, employed widely across the public and private sectors, would provide a cost effective model to support an increased awareness of online safeguarding, particularly in relation to the risk of young people being drawn in to support terrorism. The model which relies on volunteers being trained to act as Digital Champions to support people in learning basic ICT skills and understanding online safety would build on the existing groundwork laid down by the council with a range of partners including the voluntary and community sector as part of its Digital Inclusion Strategy.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1:**

The Community Safety Service should continue to work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector to expand their work on promoting a better understanding of safeguarding risks presented by online and social media, and how to stay safe online, through the use of digital champions embedded across the voluntary and community sector.

### **Supporting Schools**

- 4.5 The approach of the council in providing support packages to schools is underpinned by promoting community cohesion and the Prevent Duty as part of a wider safeguarding agenda.
- 4.6 As part of its support package, the council offers the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training for Safeguarding Leads and Governors in all schools as well as policy guidance and checklists to support the development of effective internal processes. Whilst this has been rolled out across all maintained secondary schools and most schools in the free and independent school sector, more work is required to cover all primary and early years settings in the borough.
- 4.7 In addition to training and policy guidance, through the post of the Prevent Education Officer, the council has also developed a range of curriculum resources and mapping tools to support schools in ensuring their curriculum reflects Ofsted requirements, particularly in relation to promoting 'British Values'. Schools also have access to tailored assemblies tackling issues around cohesion and extremism as well as support for peer education programmes to develop student led narratives on the risks of being drawn into the support of terrorism.
- 4.8 Support for schools accelerated throughout 2015 following a series of Ofsted inspections in October 2014. The inspections affected six independent Muslim faith schools and a Church of England School and followed a wider review of school governance in Birmingham<sup>7</sup>. The findings published in November 2014 concluded that all the schools were 'inadequate' citing failures around safeguarding primarily in relation to the risks of young people potentially being drawn into terrorism or the support of terrorism or potentially seeking to travel abroad to conflict zones.
- 4.9 The programme of support offered by the council has seen schools in Tower Hamlets develop their confidence and ability to effectively identify and handle concerns through internal processes, seeking advice as appropriate without requiring a formal referral to the Social Inclusion Panel (SIP). An evaluation of the support offered to schools has shown that services are well received with most areas of support being scored four out of five (on a scale of 1 = poor and 5 = excellent.).

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<sup>7</sup> In March 2014, the Secretary of State for Education directed Ofsted and the Education Funding Agency to launch an investigation into 21 schools in Birmingham. This was in response to allegations of an attempted Islamist takeover and imposition of an Islamic ethos which included gender segregation and failure of the council to recognise this over a number of years. Commonly referred to as Operation Trojan Horse or 'Trojan Horse' in the media, in March 2016 the Education Commissioner for Birmingham, Sir Mike Tomlinson, announced a ban on its use within the city citing the term to be 'unhelpful' to schools and the city.

- 4.10 Whilst the support offered to schools has delivered positive results, this needs to be sustained to ensure schools maintain effective processes and demonstrate robustness to external inspection. Maintaining this level of support however is challenging due to the lack of additional funding from the Home Office to cover the existing support arrangements and no immediate prospect of extending capacity to accelerate progress. At present the post of the Prevent Education Officer is funded by the Home Office with the council allocating additional resources from the Cohesion and Special Educational Needs (SEN) budgets.
- 4.11 Uncertainty over the long term commitment of the Home Office to continue funding this area of work, coupled with the financial pressures faced by local government, could result in this area of work being scaled back in the future. Recognising the uncertainties over resourcing and the importance of this area of work, members of the panel were keen to ensure that the council should continue supporting schools to develop safeguarding systems and processes, and promote cohesion.

### **Promoting Safeguarding in the Community**

- 4.12 Since its introduction, the Prevent Strategy has sparked intense debate over its contribution to the UK's security and its impact on communities. In April 2016 the strategy drew criticism from the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association suggesting the policy risked promoting extremism rather than countering it. The strategy was criticised for creating "unease and uncertainty around what can be legitimately discussed in public" and "risked dividing, stigmatising and alienating segments of the population."<sup>8</sup>
- 4.13 Recognising the contentious nature of the policy, implementation of the Prevent Strategy in Tower Hamlets has been tailored to recognise the local context and deliver a robust response within the framework of promoting community cohesion. This approach recognises concerns around the limited focus of the initial iterations of the Prevent Strategy which were centred on tackling Islamist extremism, the status of the borough as home to one of the largest Muslim populations in the UK and the potential implications for cohesion and resilience the borough.
- 4.14 As part of this process the council has utilised the national guidance regarding the formation of a Channel Panel to integrate with existing safeguarding mechanisms such as the Social Inclusion Panel (SIP) and the Safeguarding Adults Panel (SAP) to manage Prevent referrals. This approach, instituted with agreement from the Home Office, has facilitated Prevent concerns to be addressed in the context of wider social, physiological and safety factors whilst also enabling greater reach within the community.
- 4.15 Despite implementing the Prevent Strategy within the wider safeguarding context, there can be a challenge of promoting an understanding of preventing people from being drawn into terrorism, or the support of terrorism, as a safeguarding issue that cuts across all ages, organisations and communities. Although the council has developed guidance for parents and carers delivered through the Parental Engagement Team, more work is

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<sup>8</sup> Gayle, D., 'Prevent strategy 'could end up promoting extremism'', The Guardian, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016



necessary to challenge misconceptions and promote awareness of how to safeguard against young people seeking to travel abroad for the purposes of terrorism and their exposure to extremist narratives.

- 4.16 In 2015/16, of 2,500 children known to the Children's Social Care Service, approximately 70 cases included issues of extremism. This is an area of growth, driven in part by a better understanding on the part of the local authority in identifying those at risk. Nationally the borough has received recognition for its pioneering use of the courts to safeguard those deemed at risk.
- 4.17 Amongst the challenges faced by the local authority, increasing numbers of young people being home educated is an emerging area. With limited powers of intervention when a child is home schooled, safeguarding young people who do not otherwise trigger social care processes and who may be sometimes be exposed to extremist narratives requires the development of more specialist understanding around interventions and the use of the court system in appropriate cases. Steps have already been taken to develop a specialist team within the Children's Social Care Service.
- 4.18 The extensive network of voluntary and community sector providers offering supplementary education and recreational activities for young people, often grant funded through the council, were acknowledged as important partners for promoting greater awareness of the risks of young people being drawn in to the support of terrorism. As well as playing a key role in promoting awareness within the community, the sector could play an important role in identifying young people at risk, particularly those operating outside of formal areas of interaction. As much of the existing work pursued by the council relates to schools, there is potential benefit from delivering more training and developing safeguarding systems across voluntary and community sector providers within the borough.
- 4.19 Existing arrangements for the award of Mainstream Grants to organisations working with young people require organisations to have up to date child protection policies and staff to have DBS clearances and be properly qualified and competent in relation to delivering the services in question. The requirements however do not stipulate minimum levels of safeguarding training required for all members of staff or require organisations to have a Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) with higher levels of training to serve as points of contact for staff within an organisation when concerned about the welfare of a child.
- 4.20 As part of the process of embedding the Prevent Duty across the council and the voluntary and community sector, work is being progressed to ensure the council's corporate safeguarding policy encompasses Prevent and that this is reflected across all grant and commissioning processes. The WRAP training is currently publicised and has been made available to a number of commissioned providers; however grant organisations are not currently required to undertake this training.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2:**

The council should consider imposing requirements on MSG and other grant funded and commissioned organisations working with young people to obtain relevant safeguarding training.

- 4.21 The Tower Hamlets Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) currently offers safeguarding training opportunities to council partners and independent organisations with costs for sessions ranging from £50-110. This is supplemented by the WRAP training programme delivered through the Community Safety Service, the costs of which are currently met through Home Office funding. Recognising the challenges to local government finances and the existing levels of resources provided by the Home Office, members of the review panel stressed the importance of continuing to offer training for free or where necessary at an appropriately subsidised rate to ensure the costs of accessing training does not limit access for voluntary and community sector organisations.

### **Empowering young people**

- 4.22 When exploring research on pathways and developing resilience, the panel heard evidence that suggests access to a strong humanities curriculum plays an important role in developing resilience within young people. Research which involved men and women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin living in the UK also suggested there was a correlation between extremist sympathies and those who were young, in full time education, relatively socially isolated and with a tendency towards depressive symptoms.<sup>9</sup>
- 4.23 Reflecting on the evidence, members of the review panel agreed that the Youth Service, through an effective universal offer, has an important role in promoting the development of resilience and critical thinking skills whilst also tackling isolation. This is best achieved through access to a structured curriculum embedded within the recreational programmes offered by the Youth Service.
- 4.24 Recognising the shortcomings within the previous Youth Service approach, the council has already taken steps to adopt an interim model due to come in to effect as of summer 2016 paving the way for a more permanent redesign. The interim model, which maintains existing levels of staffing and funding, expects to offer a wider range of services for young people whilst continuing to provide the Duke of Edinburgh Awards programme to support young people in their development.
- 4.25 As part of its examination of the impact of the Prevent Duty on young people, the review commissioned a workshop involving students from three secondary schools across the borough. Findings from the workshop indicate that young people recognise the need for work to raise awareness of risks of being drawn into terrorism or the support of terrorism. They also view many of the initiatives driven by the council positively. This included positive feedback

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<sup>9</sup> Bhui, K., 'Extremism's False Trail', New Scientist, April 2015

on school assemblies and some of the small-scale peer education work supported through the post of the Prevent Education Officer.

- 4.26 Feedback from the workshop indicates that although the council has facilitated peer-led work to promote awareness of the risks of young people being drawn in to the support of terrorism, there is a strong demand for a wider programme. Young people recognised peer led approaches to have a wider reach and stronger influence on thinking. Previous applications of this approach within the Youth Service to promote smoking cessation had shown peer-led programmes to be more effective in shaping attitudes than more traditional campaigns.
- 4.27 The experience of successfully leading peer education programmes, coupled with the ongoing work to redesign the Youth Service offer, presents an opportunity to embed Prevent related work as part of the broader safeguarding agenda and support compliance with the Prevent Duty. This would build on some of the existing work with young people delivered as part of the council's No Place for Hate Campaign and offer an opportunity to develop a mechanism to capture young people who may not be reached, or cannot be accommodated, through the programmes commissioned through Home Office grant funding.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:**

The Youth Service should;

- Build on their current work to develop a curriculum to provide a structured programme of development for young people;
- Explore ways to support young people at risk of isolation;
- Develop in partnership with Community Safety, a peer education programme to develop young leaders capable of promoting safeguarding and cohesion within their peer groups.

- 4.28 Whilst positively receiving the work led by the council, students also highlighted the unease and inconsistencies in approach across schools on issues related to the accommodation of faith. This includes recognising the importance of providing segregated spaces for worship as well as promoting clear 'safe spaces' for debate.
- 4.29 The concerns expressed by young people echoes evidence provided by the independent reviewer of terrorism laws, David Anderson QC, to the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights. He suggests the implementation of the

Prevent Strategy on a national level was felt to be inhibiting free speech and discouraging teachers from tackling issues deemed controversial.<sup>10</sup>

- 4.30 Students from the Sir John Cass Redcoat Foundation School highlighted that access to chaplains within schools allowed young people to explore issues within a clearly designated 'safe space'. Being a Church of England School and one affected by the Ofsted inspections in October 2014, it has been able to draw on learning and its faith-based ethos to widen access to advice and guidance support and provide spaces for exploration. Across other schools however, students emphasised that more work is needed to ensure schools are promoting 'safe spaces' for the exploration of ideas and are better equipped to address faith related issues.
- 4.31 As part of a programme of commissioning for cohesion services, the council has commissioned RE Today to promote religious education and interfaith engagement across young people. As part of its programme of activities, the provider has facilitated a range of school visits to places of worship as well as trained Ambassadors of Faith, aged 16-18, to present to primary classes on issues related to faith and belief.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:**

The Learning & Achievement Service should work with schools and commissioned providers of interfaith work in schools to support the creation of safe spaces for young people to promote debate and critical discourse.

- 4.32 As part of its approach to promote understanding of the Prevent Strategy and encourage greater acceptance, Birmingham City Council has established a formal Prevent Community Reference Group designed to feed community views into the shaping of delivery at a local level. This is supplemented by Community Channel Panels, which together with sample case studies offers communities the opportunity to understand this area of work and the safeguarding challenges. This exercise has often shown community responses to be much firmer and stringent than that of the council and as a result has served as an important mechanism for Birmingham City Council to promote understanding of the Prevent Strategy and the threat of extremism within communities.
- 4.33 In 2015 a report commissioned by the Greater London Assembly (GLA) and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) concluded that local authorities should actively engage with community groups, including those critical of the Prevent Strategy, and incorporate views when planning Prevent projects and shape local intelligence as part of the Counter-terrorism Local Profile (CTLP).<sup>11</sup>
- 4.34 Within Tower Hamlets it is recognised that one of the key challenges for the future is to move towards a more proactive Prevent approach which includes mechanisms for greater community involvement in the shaping of local strategies and informing delivery. Conclusions drawn from the workshop with

<sup>10</sup> Bowcott, O., 'Prevent strategy stifles debate and makes teachers feel vulnerable', The Guardian, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016

<sup>11</sup> Ganesh, B., 'Implementing Prevent: from a community led to a Government centred approach', Faith Matters, June 2015

young people also indicated that there was strong appetite for greater involvement, particularly through established platforms such as the Youth Council, Youth Inspectors and the Young Mayor to shape delivery at a borough level. Incorporating greater engagement could help to promote ownership and ensure approaches adopted by the council better reflect needs.

- 4.35 At present the Community Safety Partnership Board, which brings together a range of stakeholders including key council partners and community and faith representatives, serves as a platform to inform and shape the work of the Prevent Board and the Prevent Delivery Plan. During 2016/17, there will be a drive to establish a more direct relationship through the establishment of community voices group to help inform and shape the Prevent Delivery Plan and in turn inform the commissioning of services. The development process for the council's Children and Families Plan which sets out how the council will support young people and families for the next three years and shapes safeguarding priorities already includes strong mechanisms for the engagement of young people and the wider community.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:**

The council should continue to engage local citizens, in particular young people, in the shaping of plans and commissioning of services aimed at promoting safeguarding and undermining the risks of people being drawn in to terrorism, the support of terrorism or violent extremism.

## 5. Promoting Cohesion in Tower Hamlets

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### Enhancing cohesion through schools

- 5.1 Since its inception, the Prevent Strategy has recognised the importance of community cohesion as an important element to developing community resilience against extremist narratives. The 2011 Prevent Strategy for England and Wales argues that a stronger sense of "belonging" and citizenship makes communities more resilient to terrorist ideology and propagandists'.<sup>12</sup>
- 5.2 As part of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, all schools in England and Wales have been under a duty to promote community cohesion. The definition of community cohesion provided in the accompanying guidance is set out as: 'working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; ... and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.'<sup>13</sup>
- 5.3 Exploring the national context, members of the review panel noted that there is a decline in provision particularly across Key Stage 4 for subjects such as Religious Education and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE): these serve as key platforms for tackling issues of cohesion. Research conducted by the National Association of Teachers of RE had shown that by 2015 the exclusion of RE as contributing subject to the English Baccalaureate measure had contributed to an overall decline of 20% since 2009.<sup>14</sup> Similarly research led by the Centre for Education and Inclusion Research concluded that whilst practitioners recognise the benefits of PSHE there appears to be a decrease in provision for older students.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *The Prevent Strategy*, 2011, HM Government, pg. 27

<sup>13</sup> *Guidance on the Duty to promote Community Cohesion*, Department for Education, 2007, pg. 3

<sup>14</sup> *Full course GCSE Religious Studies entries rise, but number of schools with no RS students at all is increasing*, National Association of Teachers of RE, August 2015

<sup>15</sup> Willis, B., and Wolstenholme, C., '*Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education under the Coalition Government*', Centre for Education and Inclusion Research, 2016

- 5.4 Providing evidence to the panel, officers from the council acknowledge that whilst the schools in the borough have done well to retain a high number of entries for RE GCSE, they are not immune to national trends which drive schools to maximise opportunities to secure expected outcomes across 'core' subject areas. Whilst more work could be done to promote cohesion in schools and expand the horizons of young people, the national context has meant that the number of opportunities available to engage outside of their usual contexts has declined. This is due in part to increasing academic pressures and a complex health and safety landscape that have made schools increasingly risk averse.
- 5.5 The Council has commissioned projects aimed at improving understanding of faith and belief through educational materials and school visits to places of worship. Due to commence in September 2016, the council has also commissioned the council's HEC Global Learning Centre, part of the Schools Library Service to develop innovative lesson plans and 'Train the Trainer' training materials for school councils. These will help to develop critical thinking skills and raise awareness and understanding amongst young people around issues of cohesion, equality and hate crime. This builds on work delivered through the Prevent Education Officer aimed at supporting schools to map and take stock of the delivery of cohesion and 'British values' throughout the curriculum.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:**

The Learning & Achievement Service should build on existing work to support schools in promoting equality and diversity, cohesion and critical thinking skills through the school curriculum and help them explore further opportunities to do this outside the curriculum.

- 5.6 Views of secondary school students from the 2016 Pupil Attitude Survey commissioned by the council showed that the BME student population (excluding Bangladeshi students) were more likely to disagree with the statement that young people of different backgrounds got on well together in Tower Hamlets. Feedback from the workshop for young people also highlighted concerns around cohesion, suggesting more work is required to reduce barriers and promote greater cross-cultural interaction amongst young people outside of formal settings. It was suggested that whilst people of different backgrounds respected one another, there was a need to do more to develop relationships, interaction and engagement outside of formal structures and settings.
- 5.7 Members of the review panel believe that whilst the council has invested resources to promote a vision of 'One Tower Hamlets' over a number of years, until recently much of this work has been centred around tackling inequalities and empowering and celebrating new and underrepresented communities in the borough. Whilst this work is welcome, there needs to be a focus on addressing the challenge of building communities around people with different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and providing sustainable infrastructure to facilitate this form of engagement beyond the lifespan of any project. In light of the current pace of change within the borough, driven by the surge of development and the associated demographic changes, the panel felt that there is a need for a clear strategic

vision to guide cohesion activities in the borough. This would help ensure that barriers preventing sustained interactions between different communities in the borough can be removed.

- 5.8 The conclusion of the review panel mirrors findings from initial consultations held with stakeholders as part of the development of specifications for the commissioning of new cohesion programmes within the borough. The new proposed projects will build on some of the positive work achieved through the Mainstream Grants programme which has delivered positive outcomes in relation to improving intergenerational and cross-cultural engagement.
- 5.9 In addition to promoting cohesion through community organisations commissioned by the council, members of the review panel noted that the commissioning process could also be used to promote understanding of the Prevent Strategy, develop safeguarding practices and improve community resilience. This could also help to empower communities to develop counter narratives against those promoting extremism. In light of the recent history of the borough and the attempts by the far right and Islamist extremist groups to cause disruption and undermine cohesion, this was noted as an area of importance.
- 5.10 The council's refresh of its Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy seeks to build on a commitment of the Community Plan to "build strong community leadership and social capital through a thriving voluntary and community sector". The VCS Strategy sets out key activities which aim to develop leadership and resilience within the voluntary and community sector through capacity building, opportunities to participate in co-production and collaborative commissioning opportunities as well as developing and promoting new ways of volunteering to promote and strengthen cohesion. The adoption of this strategy is expected to pave the way for more of the council's commissioning to support the local community to develop local leadership and promote cohesion.
- 5.11 As part of its broader commissioning approach, the council recognises the importance of securing community benefits, which can also include opportunities to develop community leadership and promote cohesion, in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. This approach however is constrained by the need to pay due regard to the value for money being achieved as well as relevant EU Directives to ensure specifications are not anti-competitive and do not discriminate against suppliers not based locally.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:**

The council should exploit all commissioning opportunities to ;

- Develop greater community leadership to promote and celebrate diversity; and to build resilience to challenges to community cohesion
- Ensure its approach to the commissioning of cohesion activities strengthens engagement across all communities in the borough and provides a platform for sustained interaction between communities.



- 5.12 The 2011 National Prevent Strategy recommended that local authorities avoid merging Prevent and cohesion strategies to limit the risk of undermining community cohesion. Despite this, Birmingham City Council provides a distinctive example of an area where both the Prevent and cohesion strategy are intertwined. Members of the review panel noted that the city council viewed its Prevent and cohesion strategies as part of the broader equalities agenda driven by the Equality Act 2010 and this was closely linked to its vision for promoting civic leadership.
- 5.13 As part of its approach to embedding a strong cohesion and equalities programme in schools, Tower Hamlets council has worked closely with schools to deliver cultural awareness training for school leaders. This has been led by Educational Psychologists to explore development cycles and religiosity in young people to facilitate a more sensitive implementation of the Prevent Duty within schools. The council has also invested in promoting the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award, offering schools an opportunity to obtain an accredited outcome. Through a funding arrangement with schools to offset the costs of a trainer, the scheme has managed to engage 127 schools as part of its initial rollout. Initial evaluation of the programme had shown the programme had a positive impact on school leadership and on young people. Although this programme has been in place in Tower Hamlets since 2011, only a third of primary schools in the borough and smaller proportion of secondary schools are actively involved with the accreditation scheme.

**RECOMMENDATION 8:**

The Learning & Achievement Service should continue to promote the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award to improve uptake across schools in the borough.

**Maintaining consistency in Language**

- 5.14 The Prevent Strategy in all its revisions and accompanying guidance has maintained consistency in setting out its primary objective – to combat ‘radicalisation’. The definition of radicalisation however has evolved throughout the years, leading to some suggestions that this has contributed to confused notions of the Prevent Strategy.
- 5.15 Since 2008 the definition of ‘radicalisation’ has increasingly become synonymous with support for violence and terrorism as opposed to a distinct phenomenon. More recent definitions provided by the government, most

notably in the Educate Against Hate website, suggest 'radicalisation' is 'a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social or religious ideals and aspirations that (1) reject or undermine the status quo or (2) reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions or freedom of choice'.

- 5.16 This broad definition issued by the government has been criticised for failing to establish a link between extremism and violent terrorist acts and instead facilitating the labelling and marginalisation of sections of the population who adhere to orthodox or conservative religious teachings. A report published in January 2015, by the think tank Claystone, argues that "Advocacy of the official narrative on the causes of terrorism has had a significant polarising effect on public discourse in Britain"<sup>16</sup> and points to the wide body of academic research indicating that the overwhelming majority of those holding radical beliefs do not engage in violence and those engaged in violence may not necessarily hold 'radical' views. This adds to existing concerns in relation to the Prevent Strategy. In a written submission to the Home Affairs Select Committee, the independent reviewer of terrorism laws, David Anderson QC, notes that elements of the Prevent Strategy were being applied in an insensitive or discriminatory manner.<sup>17</sup>
- 5.17 Within Tower Hamlets the issue of language and possible implications for cohesion has been recognised and fed back to the Home Office and continues to be part of an ongoing process. The council has demonstrated positive examples of its ability to effectively use language when communicating complex and sensitive messages as demonstrated by some of the literature produced for schools and parents. However in some instances members of the review panel noted that the language used in discussing faith and values was inconsistent across the organisation which could undermine rather than promote cohesion.
- 5.18 Anecdotal evidence provided by members of the panel suggests that the terms 'radical' or 'radicalisation' have increasingly come to be associated with the potential for violence and is often associated with a particular community or individuals displaying increased religiosity. In light of this, continued use of terms such as 'radicalisation' fails to describe to the specific risks being tackled and could harm the objectives of the Prevent Strategy locally.
- 5.19 The panel believes that language used by the council and its partners (including those from whom it commissions services) should be consistent and compliant with the objective to promote community cohesion. This includes distinguishing between faith and ideology, avoiding objectification of groups or communities, and clearly describing the specific risks or threats being tackled. An example of this would be 'people being drawn into terrorism or the support of terrorism' or 'increasing risk of travel to Syria', rather than the more vague term 'radicalisation'.

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<sup>16</sup> Kundani, A., 'A Decade Lost: Rethinking Radicalisation and Extremism', Claystone, January 2015

<sup>17</sup> 'Prevent strategy 'sowing mistrust and fear in Muslim communities'', David Batty, The Guardian, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016

### **RECOMMENDATION 9:**

The council should ensure the use of language across services and commissioned partners is consistent and compliant with the objective to promote community cohesion. This should include appropriate use; distinguishing between faith and ideology, avoiding objectification of groups or communities and greater clarity in describing risks/threats i.e. *“people being drawn into terrorism, the support of terrorism or violent extremism”* or *“increasing risk of travel to conflict zones including Syria and Iraq”* as opposed to using more general terms such as ‘radicalisation’.

#### **Promoting a positive image of Tower Hamlets**

- 5.20 As home to a diverse population, which also includes the largest Muslim population in the UK, the borough has received significant media attention in recent years. This has included both direct and indirect coverage, with stock imagery of key landmarks in the borough (such as the East London Mosque and the Whitechapel Market) accompanying news items around the role of faith in society, integration and counter-terrorism. More recently, the intervention by the Department for Communities and Local Government, re-run of the Mayoral elections and the events linked to Ofsted and the departure of three students to Syria has seen the borough subject to intensive coverage.
- 5.21 The Communications Services manages the interface with media organisations and supports the organisation’s reputation. The Prevent communications approach has been primarily reactive. For example, since 2014, the service has handled 48 enquires pertaining to Prevent and has on 4 occasions supported the promotion of Prevent work.
- 5.22 The service maintains a strong relationship with the Community Safety Service, which oversees delivery of Prevent work. This partnership has played an important role in supporting the council to engage with key partners, and respond to immediate threats presented by organisations such as the English Defence League and more recently Britain First.
- 5.23 Officers from the Communications Service have stated that that there is potential for the service to be at the forefront of the Prevent conversation. A new communications strategy will see the service take on a more proactive and strategic approach to communication activities and will include significant investment in campaigns to promote cohesion in the borough.
- 5.24 Referencing the example of Birmingham City Council, members of the review panel set out the approach of the council which embeds communications activity as an integral part of the delivery of the Prevent Strategy and this is included within the Prevent Delivery Plan. This includes responsibility for consequence management in response to any high profile events and a more frequent and proactive approach to promote the city in a positive light, emphasising the message of cohesion and undermining notions of communities being under siege.
- 5.25 Members of the review panel agreed that there is a need for greater communications activity to promote a strong civic identity as well support the development of community resilience. This is considered to be particularly

important for young people for whom negative coverage of the borough, driven by external sources, could contribute to a sense of grievance that could be exploited. This conclusion is also supported by analysis from the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR) that suggests that after stripping away all grievances and individual triggers, a crisis of identity and the lack of a sense of belonging is a common thread amongst those joining extremist groups.<sup>18</sup>

- 5.26 The 'I Love Hackney' campaign established in 2006 as a response to the designation of the area as one of the worst places to live in the UK<sup>19</sup> serves as a positive example of a successful campaign promoting pride in the local area. The campaign has been actively promoted through badges, bags and posters and used as platform to engage residents and promote improvements to local services. In 2011 the campaign also served as the focal point for uniting the community in the aftermath of the London riots. As part of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the campaign has also introduced a new civic award to recognise outstanding individuals within the local community. Members of the review panel believe that the 'I Love Hackney' campaign should serve as a model for future communication campaigns in Tower Hamlets.
- 5.27 As part of a new communications strategy developed following the review of the council's communication activities in 2015, the council has identified the need to refresh and deliver a broad campaign promoting cohesion and civic pride in the borough. This will form one of several priority campaigns throughout 2016/17 and beyond.

**RECOMMENDATION 10:**

The Communications Service should adopt a more proactive approach to promoting cohesion through a borough wide campaign which celebrates our history, diversity and resilience to adversity. This should include opportunities for resident involvement to promote the borough and a greater role within the Prevent Delivery Plan.

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<sup>18</sup> Maher, S., 'The roots of radicalisation? It's identity, stupid', The Guardian, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015

<sup>19</sup> In 2006 the London Borough of Hackney was designated as the worst place to live in the UK by the Channel 4 programme *The Best and Worst Places to Live in the UK*

## **6. Developing Leadership around Prevent**

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### **Empowering elected representatives and Improving Collaboration**

- 6.1 As part of the new statutory Prevent Duty introduced through the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Government devised the Prevent Duty Guidance setting out how specified authorities are to comply with the Prevent Duty. Sections C and E of the 2015 Prevent Duty Guidance set out responsibilities on local authorities and elected members to demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation in their area, institution or body.
- 6.2 Birmingham City Council has worked closely with all elected members to develop capacity and encourage the development of a political consensus on issues such as cohesion and safeguarding, including Prevent. This has been realised through strong working relations between members and officers as well as training opportunities for elected members to help them understand their roles and provide leadership. This approach has enabled the council to benefit from consistency in leadership and stability in support for this area of work across political change.

- 6.3 The establishment of a local political consensus on the issue of the Prevent Strategy alongside the reassurance of political leadership across all parties has played an important role in establishing a strong working relationship with the West Midlands Police Force. This development has been instrumental in moving towards a model which allows for restricted documents such as the Counter-Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) to be shared (albeit in redacted form) more widely across elected members to help them to develop an awareness of the risks as set out in the Prevent Duty. The wider dissemination of this document across the council has also enabled decision-making to be better informed and ensure elected members fulfilled their Duty under the Act.
- 6.4 Birmingham City Council has also trialled models that have seen elements of the CTLP verbally briefed by members of the West Midlands Police Force across local communities to promote an understanding of risks. This approach has supported the council in dispelling myths and also encouraging community engagement.
- 6.5 Highlighting the approach of Birmingham City Council, members of the review panel identified the potential benefit of training opportunities available to elected representatives in Tower Hamlets. This would help enable local councillors to provide more effective leadership within their communities and support delivery of sections C and E of the Prevent Duty Guidance.
- 6.6 Recognising the concerns of members, officers have taken forward initiatives to provide councillor training opportunities in order to support them to improve their understanding of Prevent and their roles in relation to it. This will build upon updates on local prevalence, referrals and risk which are provided at each Prevent Board meeting which takes place bi-monthly.
- 6.7 Members of the review panel believe that training opportunities on offer to promote an understanding of the risks of people being drawn into or the support of terrorism or violent extremism should take into account specific responsibilities and levels of leadership that may be required of individuals. Whilst noting that the Home Office is currently in the process of working with the Local Government Association (LGA) to develop a programme with elected members in mind, the panel believes the council should play an active role in contributing to the development of this programme where appropriate and ensure its availability once finalised.
- 6.8 Building on its information-sharing approach, Birmingham has also put in place mechanisms to provide elected members with high-level information on police activity in hotspots. Although this does not include operational details, the approach enables members to engage with communities after events and provide reassurance.
- 6.9 Within Tower Hamlets the council maintains a strong partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service and has in place a range of platforms such as the Community Safety Partnership, Prevent Boards, Tension Monitoring Group and Cohesion Working Group which brings together police and council offers alongside other key partners. The council also has in place mechanisms which include Gold meetings to address serious incidents and regular operational meetings to ensure effective communication is in place between the council and police.

- 6.10 Officers in Tower Hamlets recognise the importance of disseminating information to elected members. For example, they have progressed work to embed this as part of a communications protocol for the Tension Monitoring Group to circulate information on significant events, such as attempts by far right organisations to cause unrest in the borough. In addition, members of the review panel did note that positive steps have been taken with the police to provide information through email to key partners including elected members. This however did not provide members with an explicit role in supporting post incident arrangements and providing reassurance to their communities.

**RECOMMENDATION 11:**

Elected Members should be further supported to understand and comply with Sections C and E of the 2015 Prevent Duty Guidance, including:

- Dissemination of intelligence information to designated elected Members in line with section C of the Prevent Duty Guidance;
- Guidance and training tailored for elected Members to enable them to understand their role in the Duty;
- Further consideration to the role of elected Members in the management of consequences following any local incidences.

- 6.11 The approach taken in Birmingham City Council demonstrates strong collaborative working at a wider regional level. This is driven, in part, by the regional devolution agenda leading to the formation of the West Midlands Combined Authority. However, there is also a clear recognition that communities do not end with local authority boundaries and that consistency in approach at a regional level will deliver greater results.
- 6.12 Although Tower Hamlets engages with the London Prevent Network and the London Prevent Board, members of the review panel agree more should be done to develop sub-regional ties across existing partnership regions to promote greater information-sharing, including counter-terrorism profiles, and a consistent approach to managing the risks of people being drawn in to terrorism or the support of terrorism.
- 6.13 As part of an initiative to establish a cross borough peer support and strategy group to improve practice, the council has held initial discussions with the London Borough of Islington and expects to also engage Newham, Waltham Forest, Hackney and Redbridge councils as part of a wider partnership initiative.

**RECOMMENDATION 12:**

The council should progress work to promote greater collaboration on Prevent and Safeguarding across the East London region. This should include work to promote greater consistency across the delivery of the Prevent duty and sharing of appropriate intelligence across officers and elected Members.

## **Embedding the Prevent Duty across the Council**

- 6.14 The Prevent Duty Guidance reinforces the importance of offering training to staff in order to be able to recognise vulnerability. To support this objective Birmingham City Council has established a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary workforce development team for Prevent who lead on providing training across the organisation.
- 6.15 Recognising the importance of safeguarding risks, Birmingham City Council has moved towards mainstreaming Prevent work by developing levels of training for staff to reflect their interactions with the wider population. This approach includes delivering training to a much wider array of staff ranging from those involved in front line waste management services to back office staff. The council also incorporates recognition of the risks of terrorism within its planning functions to ensure new developments of significant scale have appropriate design safeguards to improve resilience.
- 6.16 Birmingham's approach to training and development around Prevent has also been embedded as part of a broader vision for the city that seeks to promote greater civic responsibility amongst staff during and outside of work. As a major employer in the city, the council recognises the importance of ensuring that all staff, regardless of role, are nonetheless equipped and encouraged to actively engage with this area as local citizens.
- 6.17 Within Tower Hamlets the need to promote the Prevent Duty and provide appropriate training across a much wider pool of staff is recognised. Information provided to the panel, through the course of the review, suggests that the levels of funding provided by the Home Office are inadequate to support some of the work required. Despite the challenges, positive progress has been made to ensure key stakeholders such as schools and the Youth Service have had access to appropriate training and steps are being taken to widen the roll out across the voluntary and community sector.
- 6.18 The development of an e-learning module by the Home Office offers the option to promote a wider roll out of training with minimal resource implications. Members of the review panel also recognise the importance of embedding the Prevent Duty as part of the wider initiatives expected of the council to promote cultural change within the organisation.

### **RECOMMENDATION 13:**

The council should take steps to promote an organisational culture which includes a focus on safeguarding and civic responsibility. This should also include consideration for rolling out appropriate e-learning modules for all staff to promote an understanding of the risks of being drawn into the support of terrorism and violent extremism.



**Appendix 1: Prevent Governance Structure**

