

## Prevent: UK's Counter Terrorism Strategy

### What is Prevent?

Prevent is one part of the UK's Contest Counter Terrorism Strategy. It includes four sections:

- **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.

Prevent is unique in that it involves all parts of Government, such as the Home Office, the Cabinet Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development.

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### UK's Contest Counter Terrorism Strategy

Prevent is a key part of the Contest Counter Terrorism Strategy. The Government has now changed both its scope and its focus in this area.

Like Contest as a whole, Prevent now addresses radicalisation to all forms of terrorism. At the same time integration projects are no longer being securitised, as they were before.

Success in Prevent in Contest will mean that:

- There is a reduction in support for terrorism of all kinds and in states overseas whose security most impacts the UK
- There is more effective challenge to those extremists whose views are shared by terrorist organisations and used by terrorists to legitimise violence, and
- There is more challenge to and isolation of extremists and terrorists operating on the internet.

### When was Prevent released?

The revised Prevent Strategy was released in June 2011 with the full Contest Strategy being released in July 2011.

These are the third versions of both strategies. Links to these are as follows:

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/counter-terrorism-strategy/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/counter-terrorism-strategy/)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/>

### Why now?

The need for an up-to-date strategy is reflected in both the British threat level, where there is continuing risk of a terrorist attack (for example: Substantial for England but Severe for Northern Ireland) and the change in government.

The new Prevent Strategy has just been released by the Coalition Government. It is a full reworking of the old strategy and has been brought up-to-date to reflect changed circumstances, such as value for money (VfM) and the localism agenda.



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### *What are the key elements of the Strategy?*

Prevent addresses three distinct themes. These are:

#### **1) Challenging the ideology that supports terrorism and those who promote it.**

All terrorist groups have an ideology. Promoting that ideology, frequently on the internet, facilitates radicalisation and recruitment. A fundamental part of Prevent lies in challenging their ideology and disrupting the ability of terrorists to promote it.

#### **2) Protecting vulnerable people**

Radicalisation is usually a process not an event. During that process it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into terrorist-related activity. There are some analogies between this work and other forms of crime prevention.

#### **3) Supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation**

A wide range of sectors are helping to prevent people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The way Government works with particular sectors will vary. Priority areas include education, faith, health, criminal justice and charities. The internet is also included as a theme running through the Strategy.

The main focus is on Al-Qaida-inspired terrorism, though other types are covered.

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### *Key Issues for Discussion in Schools*

1. The new Prevent Strategy focuses on ideology as the central challenge of terrorism. Is this the correct focus? Or should more consideration be given to grievances which may be primary causes of terrorism?
2. Even though the main focus in the Strategy is on Al-Qaida-inspired terrorism, are others like Northern Ireland-related terrorism or extreme right terrorism just as dangerous? How does the Prevent strategy cover this?



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