

Channel

A partnership approach to protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism and violent extremism.

Violent Extremists are groups or individuals who hold strong political or religious beliefs that encourage or support violence. They are a real and serious threat to us all and we have seen that they can strike at any time and any place without warning.

These groups need to recruit vulnerable or impressionable people to their cause; this is called '**radicalisation**'.

We need the support and confidence of communities to improve our ability to identify those people who are most vulnerable and who may need support and interventions.

The priority in Leicestershire is to keep the public safe by working together with key partner agencies, the voluntary sector and communities to tackle all forms of extremism regardless of race, culture, religion or politics.



Channel

Channel is a national programme that has been put in place to safeguard individuals who may be vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists.

The aim of the process is:

To support and protect people who might be susceptible to radicalisation at a very early stage so that they are not drawn into criminal activity which may affect their prospects in later life.

To ensure that individuals and communities have the resilience to resist all forms of violent extremism whether it is far-right extremism, Irish -related, Al-Qaeda inspired, Animal Rights, Environmental or any other form.

Channel is not about prosecuting or stigmatising individuals who have been referred.

It is a multi-agency safeguarding process to protect a person and help them avoid a pathway to extremism and crime.

What can put people at risk?

There is no single profile of a terrorist or violent extremist. Factors which may make people more vulnerable include:

- Graffiti symbols, writing or artwork promoting extremist messages or images
- Accessing extremist material online; web sites, social media (Facebook, YouTube)
- Changes in behaviour and friendships
- Voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideology or narrative
- Use of extremist or hate terms to exclude others or incite violence
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Issues of personal identity
- Mental health issues
- Domestic violence
- Condoning or supporting violence or harm to others

How does it work?

Channel assesses the nature and extent of the potential risk to an individual and, where necessary, provides an appropriate support package tailored to their needs. This decision is made by a multi-agency panel and may include diversionary activities and/or support from services such as education, housing, employment and mentoring designed to help them resist those who may be seeking to harm them or others.

Local community issues and tensions can sometimes contribute to an individual's behaviour. The context of a situation is always taken into account.

Who can help?

Early intervention can help to keep all our communities safe. Both partnership and community involvement is needed to ensure that those who may be at risk are given early access to support.

Partners include:

- Local Authorities, Adult & Children's Services
- Housing, education, health, probation & prisons
- Emergency services
- The Youth Justice Board through youth offending teams
- The UK Border Agency
- Community & Voluntary services

People working in neighbourhood and community safety roles, carrying out home visits, volunteering, working in safeguarding roles or those who are already supporting vulnerable people.

Examples of referrals we have received into Channel

Case Study 1

Dorian is a 32 year old male from who had lost his father at a young age. During these early years he was given support by local individuals linked to far right extremism who became a surrogate family for him during this vulnerable time in his life. The group gave Dorian an outlet for the anger he felt inside at the loss of his father. Over time, he became a trusted member of this group and was promoted to the role of radicaliser; it was his job to find like-minded, vulnerable people - especially young people - to recruit into the organisation.

Internet chat forums and marches by the English Defence League became a favourite pool to recruit from and Dorian found he was easily able to exploit common public concerns and grievances about unemployment, immigration and other Government policies.

However, on the eve of preparing for a violent attack, Dorian suffered a mental breakdown and the statutory agencies that supported him quickly identified the violent ideology he followed and wanted to seek specific support for these views to complement their own provision. They contacted the local Prevent team who referred Dorian to the Channel group and over a period of 18 months, he was offered a tailored programme of care, guidance and support.

The intervention has been so successful that Dorian now dedicates his time to assisting others who are engaging with the Channel process to help divert them away from a life of violence and hatred.

Case Study 2

Ismaa'iyl is a young Muslim from Afghanistan who had made comments to his local Housing Officer that he blamed David Cameron personally for his financial situation in the UK and in revenge for this he would return to Afghanistan to join the insurgency to fight against British troops and kill them.

It was clear that he was unable to cope with some of the realities of his situation and his transition to the UK as an asylum seeker and he was likely to become homeless if he was not able to address them. The Housing Officer had concerns for Ismaa'iyl's wellbeing and referred him to Channel so he could benefit from a multi-agency assessment and his intentions to fight could be explored sensitively.

As part of this assessment, an intervention provider from the East Midlands Community Contact Unit (EMCCU) was introduced to Ismaa'iyl who was able to communicate in his native tongue (Farsi) and establish any truth to the intention of joining the Taliban as well as identify the clear need for mental health support for Ismaa'iyl and a wider community support network appropriate to his nationality.

As a result of multi-agency support, he has now engaged with the local authority, resolved his housing crisis, is taking medication for his mental health condition and has recently been offered an opportunity for employment. His desire to join violent jihad was identified as an expression of his frustration and there are no further concerns that he may still harbour such aspirations

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I make a referral or pass on information?

If you have any concerns about an individual and work for a partner organisation, please speak with your organisation's Safeguarding lead. They will be able to advise and guide you about making a referral.

If you have any concerns about an individual and are a community or family member please refer to the contact details in this leaflet.

Is there an age limit?

No, Channel will accept referrals for any individual who displays a vulnerability to violent extremism, regardless of age.

Is the information I provide confidential?

Channel operates within a number of legal and statutory frameworks to ensure that data protection and human rights principles are maintained. The exchange of any information must be necessary, proportionate and legal.

**To report information anonymously you can contact the charity Crimestoppers on:-
0800 555 111**

Contact Us

Leicestershire Police has a dedicated Prevent Engagement Team (PET) based in Spinney Hill Police Station in Leicester. The team is a mix of Police Officers and Police Staff, each committed to promoting trust and confidence in communities when engaging with the sensitive subject of violent extremism.

They host the **Channel Co-ordinator** who can offer support and advice.
They can be contacted using the following details:

Telephone: 101—ask for the Prevent Team
Prevent.team@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk

You may also contact the **Leicester Prevent Co-ordinator** based at the St Philips Centre, if you want to discuss a possible Channel referral:

Telephone: 0116 273 3459
Mobile: 07403 727727
Email: admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111
Anti-Terrorism Hotline 0800 789 321