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Safeguarding, Surveillance and Control: School Policy and Practice Responses to the Prevent Duty and the 'war on terror' in the U.K.

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Introduction

Moves towards heightened school security supported by the introduction of numerous surveillance technologies have been reported globally (see Taylor, this volume) and this international trend towards hyper-securitisation continues to gather pace as further risks are highlighted. In the U.K., the recent 'war on terror' has provided the context for new hyper-vigilant, hyper-securitised school practices, dictated by the government and carried out by school staff. These have resulted in new forms of school control, involving increased monitoring and surveillance, aimed at preventing young people from being drawn into terrorism. 'Prevent', the preventative strand of the U.K. Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST), places a duty on staff in schools and further education colleges to identify and report radicalised and extremist behaviour amongst students (HM Government, 2011; 2015). In order to fulfil this duty schools have been required to adopt new security and surveillance policies and procedures, teachers have taken on new monitoring and reporting roles, and students have been subjected to increased levels of monitoring and surveillance. These processes form part of the wider securitisation of school practices, and continue the trend towards heightened control of stigmatised groups (Thomas, 2016).

Critics argue that Prevent: integrates counter-terrorism legislations and policies into educational institutions and, in so doing, contributes to the increased securitisation of education in the U.K. (Thomas, 2016; Davies, 2016; O'Donnell 2016); legitimises the regulation and social control of young Muslims in schools (Miah, 2017; Coppock and McGovern, 2014); encourages the construction of 'suspect communities' (Heath-Kelly, 2013; Awan, 2012; Patel, 2017); and acts as a mechanism of exclusion that represses rather than encourages debate in schools (Deakin and Acik, 2017), paying little attention to the views of the young people it was designed to address (Heath-Kelly, 2013).

In this chapter we review the available literature to provide a critical analysis of how the Prevent duty is unfolding in schools. In the following sections we provide a critique of some key, and often controversial, aspects of the Prevent policy, from its introduction in schools,

through to its implementation and outcomes. Research is limited, particularly in relation to students' experiences of the strategy, but, we review the existing evidence to provide some insights, as far as possible, into how Prevent has been received by teachers and students, its impact on the working practices of teachers, and the experiences of students and local communities subject to Prevent policy and practice. In so doing we raise questions about the implications of the Prevent strategy, in particular the heightened measures of security and surveillance, for teachers, students and communities.

Our critique is structured around the following key aspects of the Prevent duty as it unfolds in schools:

1. The conceptual issues surrounding Prevent, including: its positioning within the broader framework of student safeguarding and risk management; developing working definitions of extremism and identifying signs of radicalisation.
2. The implementation of the Prevent duty, including: staff training; information sharing; promoting fundamental British values; monitoring external influences; and making referrals.

Background to Prevent

The Prevent programme was introduced to tackle the problem of 'home grown terrorism', and to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorism (HM Government, 2015a). The programme covers all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education institutions, as well as public health bodies, local authorities, police and prisons. The policy was initially rooted in communities in an effort to encourage a closer cooperation between local authorities, community groups and the Office for Security and Counter-terrorism, but after almost a decade of turbulence the Government revised the programme in 2011 (HM Government, 2011), reducing the community focus and, in July 2015, making it a statutory duty for public bodies to comply. This has put a legal obligation on schools and colleges (along with other specified authorities) to have policies and procedures in place, firstly, to identify and record early signs of radicalisation among children and young people and, secondly, to refer identified individuals to the de-radicalisation programme, Channel. The policy is

designed to deal with ‘a range of terrorism threats’ (HM Government, 2011) and yet has, from inception, taken risks of Islamic extremism as its main focus (Thomas, 2016).

Compliance with the duty for schools and further education is monitored by The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). Ofsted places a strong emphasis on safeguarding, with specific reference to Prevent, to ensure that schools, colleges and further education have effective policies in place to ‘to promote pupils’ welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism’ (Ofsted, 2015). Prevention of radicalisation is a new element of the safeguarding agenda, requiring additional policies to be devised and implemented, and constituting an additional policy and practice obligation for many schools. The Prevent framework, monitored by Ofsted, expects schools to take a pro-active role in ensuring that their students are safe, by rigorous evaluation of their policies and practices. Ofsted expect schools to raise awareness of any potential indicators of radicalisation on a regular basis and school leaders and governors are required to provide evidence of the measures they have undertaken (including reporting concerns about individuals and promoting ‘fundamental British values’. The list of indicators of radicalisation can vary from school to school and are defined by schools with some generic guidance offered by the U.K. Government – this is discussed in detail below. The framework makes it clear that inadequate implementation of the duty will be taken seriously and “could lead to governance and leadership change, restructuring or even dissolution under the Secretary of State’s reserve powers.” (HM Government, 2015a)

The Prevent duty has been controversial in a number of ways, facing criticism from academics, schools and teachers’ unions, Muslim representative bodies, the media and politicians. Most significantly it has been perceived as ill-conceived and conceptually flawed, focussing on heavy surveillance of stigmatised groups (Kundnani, 2009; 2015; Heath-Kelly, 2012, 2013) rather than educating against extremism (Thomas, 2016; Sukarieh and Tannock 2015). For head teachers interpreting the policy, school staff carrying out the duty, and students on the receiving end, these conceptual issues shape their experiences of Prevent (Mythen *et al.* 2012). Academic research has focussed on conceptual issues, policy interpretation, the impact of the strategy on young people and communities, and teachers’ attitudes. We include this research as well as findings from our own exploratory study of teachers’ and students’ daily experiences of school life since the introduction of the Prevent duty (Deakin and Acik,

2017)ⁱ. The following sections are structured around key aspects of the Prevent duty as it unfolds in schools. These are organised within two subsections: the conceptual issues surrounding Prevent; and the implementation of the Prevent duty.

1. Conceptual issues surrounding Prevent

The positioning of Prevent within school policy: safeguarding and risk

All U.K. schools are subject to stringent safeguarding policies designed to protect vulnerable children from significant harms such as drug abuse, gangs, neglect and sexual exploitation (Parton, 2006). The U.K. Government states that the Prevent duty sits within these existing safeguarding policies (HM Government 2011; 2015a). However critics argue that there are several reasons why this positioning is problematic.

From a socio-legal perspective, it would be difficult to argue that Prevent sits easily within current safeguarding policies. Prevent is rooted in the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015, whereas the safeguarding policies are embedded within the Children Act 2004 and the 2004 Green Paper Every Child Matters (DfES, 2004, Parton, 2006, 2010). These are very different policy areas responding to different political and social demands. The primary rationale behind child protection and safeguarding policies and legislation is to safeguard the 'best interests of the child'; counter-terrorism legislation, on the other hand, has a much wider scope for ensuring the safety of the public. Whilst the *protection* of young people who become radicalised is part of the counter-terrorism rationale, the legislation is concerned primarily with containing and eradicating threats to U.K. national security based on the logic of individual risk-reduction. This positions the child as a potential victim in need of protection and, at the same time, as a threat that poses a risk. Positioning Prevent as an extension to safeguarding policies assumes it fits with child welfare laws, policies and practices and is also, therefore, in 'the best interests of the child' (Davies, 2016; Durodie, 2016). This is clearly not the case for a child constructed as deviant under Prevent and managed as a potentially dangerous risk, and where intervention is likely to include heightened state surveillance rather than practical or emotional help (Stanley and Guru, 2015).

A further problem with the 'safeguarding' label, as debated extensively within the sociology of childhood literature, is that it constructs children as inherently vulnerable and in so doing provides legitimacy for any interventions deemed necessary (Coppock, 2014; Daniel 2010). As a result, the positioning of the Prevent duty within this framework of 'protection' creates a perfect storm of powerful legislative possibilities around any child caught up in a discourse of 'radicalisation risk'. With these elements in place it becomes very difficult to question the preventative practices that are put in motion around the child. Resulting interventions are likely to be seen as unproblematic or even as a moral imperative (Coppock, 2014; Daniel 2010, Parton 2010). The unquestioning nature of safeguarding policies raises particular problems for Prevent where the recipients of interventions are drawn from 'suspect communities' (Heath-Kelly, 2012). Coppock (2014; p123) argues that elementsⁱⁱ of the Prevent strategy construct young Muslims as 'risky', requiring monitoring, surveillance and "disciplinary normalisation... aimed at producing ... 'the enlightened, moderate Muslim'.". Contradictions therefore exist between the undermining nature of Prevent policies, and interventions under the 'safeguarding' banner, on British Muslim children and their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Coppock, 2014; Durodie, 2016).

For many critics, the Prevent duty has its feet firmly positioned in security rather than safeguarding in a process where measures of securitisation have replaced efforts to ensure cohesion (Thomas, 2014; Mythen *et al.* 2012). Within schools and communities, the focus on surveillance, monitoring and reporting of potential risks, and the promotion of British values have driven narratives of grievance and group division (Thomas, 2014; Davies, 2016; Panjwani, 2016; Busher *at al.* 2017). Amongst students the effects of surveillance are well discussed (see for example, Taylor, this volume; Taylor, 2013; Saltman and Gabbard, 2003). The policies and practices of Prevent add a further level to the surveillance of all students, but particularly those from communities labelled as suspect (Thomas, 2016; Heath-Kelly, 2012).

[The problem of definition: Defining extremism and identifying risk](#)

Within the guidance documents issued to schools and colleges by the U.K. Government there appears to be considerable scope for interpretation in schools' understanding of, and responses to, the Prevent duty. One obvious area of subjectivity arises in the lack of clear definition and collective understanding of the key terms: 'radicalisation', 'extremism', and

'indicators of radicalisation' (Githens-Mazer, 2012; Kundnani 2015; Richards, 2015). For a policy to be applied consistently in practice it is imperative that school staff at all levels understand, and agree upon, the meaning of key terms, and act upon these in a consistent way (Cole *et al.*, 2012). When the terms are as complex, nuanced and context-dependent as those driving the Prevent strategy, achieving agreed-upon definitions becomes extremely difficult.

The legislation defines 'radicalisation' as "*the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups*" [HM Government, 2015a: 12] and defines extremism as: "*vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs [including] calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in the UK or overseas*" [HM Government, 2015a: 12]

However, there is a level of subjective judgement required by teachers in deciding whether a student's behaviour is based on extremist ideology (Busher *et al.*, 2017). Consequently, the action that follows is "open to personal agency, either discriminatory or liberal" (Hindle, 2016, p3) raising important questions about our attitudes to the other and how these are determined.

As part of the process of spotting signs of radicalisation, schools are required to have a Prevent risk assessment policy in place, providing details of possible indicators of extremist tendencies or radicalised behaviour. Due to the diversity in triggers, the Prevent duty and related departmental guidance avoid listing these indicators, instead permitting schools to develop their own context-specific list. Whilst this allows for local and institutional context to drive the identification of indicators, it also puts a significant pressure on schools to enforce something so complex and intangible that it eludes definition (Busher *et al.* 2017).

Despite the lack of government guidance a number of potential indicators are listed in the DCSF (2008) *Learning Together to be Safe* toolkit with the caveat: "Staff will need to take into consideration how reliable or significant signs are and whether there are other factors or issues that could indicate vulnerability." DCSF 2008; 34)

The toolkit provides the following examples:

- “Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images.
 - Pupils accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites.
 - Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance.
 - Partner schools, local authority services and police reports of issues affecting pupils in other schools.
 - Pupils voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives.
 - Use of extremist or ‘hate’ terms to exclude others or incite violence.
- “(DCSF 2008; 34)

Not surprisingly, the indicators listed above are widely adopted by schools in their own risk assessment policy documents alongside indicators from other sources (HM Government, 2012) including the Government’s Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training, documents from other schools and local knowledge from related agencies. Thus the pool of ‘signs of radicalisation’ can be extended in line with these external recommendations (Cole *et al.* 2012). The list is developed without public scrutiny or research-led evidence making these indicators subjective and problematic and increasing the likelihood of making false referrals (Kundnani, 2015; Heath-Kelly, 2012).

The Ofsted (2016: 13) report on Prevent found that there are great variations in schools’ risks assessment policies ranging from very basic ‘checklist approach to compliance’ to very detailed policies that identify and address action plans to minimise the risk. An analysis of publically available school policy documents confirms this evaluation and shows that schools have incorporated their own understanding of risk factors. For example, the Arthur Mellows Village College’s (no date, p.2) Prevent risk assessment policy lists “showing a mistrust of mainstream media reports and belief in conspiracy theories” and “appearing angry about governmental policies, especially foreign policy” as signs of extremism and radicalisation. Other schools’ policy documents include “Anti-Western or Anti-British views” as signs of extremism (Bracknell Forest Council, 2015). There has also been confusion around the type

of political dissident activities or groups that might be considered as radical and extremist ranging from anti-fracking, hunt saboteur, animal rights activity to anti-Israeli/pro-Palestinian activities (Hooper, 2016, Hayhurst, 2016). These cases highlight the loose definition of radicalisation and extremism which can encompass controversial but legal forms of protest and activities.

Clearly, there is confusion around what constitutes extremist ideology and the factors that indicate radicalised behaviour. Even the idea that there is a link between extremist ideas and violence is highly contested (Kundnani, 2015) and there is very little in the research literature to support such a link. Thus, the pre-crime logic of the Prevent strategy that uses risk factors to predict future terrorist behaviour comes into question here (Coppock and McGovern, 2014). The Prevent training and the risk assessment policies in schools do little to clarify a workable position or any level of scrutiny, instead leaving definitions open to subjectivity and inconsistency, and presenting problems for open dialogue and the application of the policy into practice (O'Donnell, 2016). The following sections, discussing the application of Prevent policy into practice, draw on this problem of definition.

2. Application of Prevent into practice

A second area that warrants discussion is the application of the Prevent duty into practice. Many of the criticisms of Prevent practice presented in this section stem from the lack of clearly defined terms and agreed definitions: what do we mean by extremist behaviour? What exactly are we safeguarding from? What constitutes a 'sign of radicalisation? Without any solid definitional foundations Prevent is essentially a policy built in sand, with each practice initiative sitting precariously on a moveable base (Deakin and Acik, 2017).

Five main inter-related areas of concern are addressed here, these focus on: the training received by teachers and support staff in schools; information sharing within multi-agency groups; promoting fundamental British values; monitoring external influences; and making referrals.

Staff training

Staff training on Prevent is a requirement for all teachers and school support staff (including members of the governing bodies, temporary teaching staff and estate personnel). Training was initially delivered to leaders, managers and safeguarding officers but was later extended to include at least basic training for all staff and governors. The training is intended to enable staff to identify children at risk of radicalisation and understand appropriate follow-on procedures, from simple recording of information to making referrals to the government's de-radicalisation programme, Channel. It is delivered in various ways from online support resources (see for example HM Government 2016) and an online 'Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP)' to meet basic training needs, to the more tailored and detailed training delivered by Prevent coordinators and independent providers.

A year after the introduction of the Prevent duty, the Home Office reported a high uptake in Prevent training (H.M. Government, 2017). However, despite the variety of training options available, there is disquiet amongst school staff, school leaders, inspectors and MPs about the availability, quality and appropriateness of the training. Whilst most teachers had received on-line training many had found it insufficient (Santry, 2016). Moreover, Ofsted (2016) identified an over-reliance on online training packages, such as WRAP, and expressed the need for more bespoke training for staff with different responsibilities as well as Prevent training linking more effectively to existing Safeguarding training (Ofsted 2016; 16-17).

Academic research on the effectiveness of staff training presents mixed views. While Busher *et al* (2017) found that the training was well received by most of their respondents, in our own research the training was criticized as superficial and inadequate leaving the staff-group feeling ill-prepared and confused (Deakin and Acik, 2017). In both studies it was clear that, where teachers did feel confident about managing potentially sensitive conversations, the training had **not** been a significant factor. Confidence was more likely to be expressed by those teaching subjects like Drama, Religious Education, Sociology and Citizenship Education, where 'difficult discussions' were the norm, as well as by more experienced teachers and those from Muslim backgrounds (Busher *et al*, 2017; Deakin and Acik, 2017)

An important part of the training focuses on being able to spot signs of radicalisation in young people. The difficulties resulting from a lack of clearly defined terms have been discussed above and provide significant obstacles to effective staff training. In a parliamentary debate on Prevent, the Conservative MP Lucy Allan questioned the effectiveness of the training in helping staff to spot signs of radicalisation and expressed concern that schools apply their own definition of extremism leading to some subjective and confused referral scenarios:

“From what I have seen, when schools look for signs of extremism, they do not really know what they are looking for. They often come up with suggestions for things that might be grounds for referral that have no possible connection at all to extremism. I have sat in governors’ meetings where teachers who want to comply have openly discussed scenarios such as a child coming into school and saying that he has been on a Fathers4Justice march or a march to protest against badger culls.” (Allan, 2017, no page)

Coupled with problems of defining extremism and radicalisation, the lack of effective training presents significant barriers to the effective implementation of the Prevent strategy into practice (Deakin and Acik, 2017). Exactly where the training is failing, the extent to which it is deficient and the nature of teachers’ dissatisfaction are unclear and require further research. Adequate staff training remains a key concern of regulators and schools alike. The U.K. Government believes much of the criticism of Prevent can be traced back to a lack of adequate training and that once this is resolved Prevent will become more effective (House of Commons Hansard, 2017).

Information sharing within multi-agency partnerships

For a long time schools and colleges have worked in partnership with a number of agencies, such as social services and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and information has been shared in the interests of the child for the purposes of safeguarding (see Tucker and Trotman, this volume). However, the nature and extent of information sharing under the Prevent duty has been criticised as excessive (Coppock and McGovern, 2014; Kundnani, 2009).

Prevent strategies rely on close communication between schools and a range of agencies working together in a multi-agency partnership. These include co-operation with existing agencies and bodies such as local authorities, Youth Offending Teams, The Police, Community Safety Partnerships, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), as well as with Channel panels and local and regional Prevent co-ordinators. The emphasis is on sharing information about students and their families, as well as sharing good practice in order to effectively implement the duty. This differs from the existing multi-agency partnership arrangements in two significant ways: 1. under Prevent, further agencies are involved in the partnership, for example local and regional Prevent co-ordinators and, 2. additional information about students and their families is shared (Ofsted 2016; 10).

The requirements to share information may be in conflict with schools' existing confidentiality obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and sections of the Human Rights Act 1998 concerning privacy. This highlights a key mismatch that can occur between the state driven policies of Prevent and the teaching profession's core values (Coppock and McGovern, 2014). A high degree of concern has been expressed by teachers at the extent of the information that must be collected, recorded and shared about the lives of young Muslims and Muslim communities (Coppock and McGovern, 2014; Kundnani, 2009).

In recognition of this potential conflict, the Prevent duty reminds staff and the leadership team to consider "*necessity and proportionality*" when bypassing existing confidentiality agreements and calls for caution to share personal information only "*where it is strictly*

necessary to the intended outcome and proportionate to it.” The guidance provides little insight into what type of information ought to be shared and leaves it to the ‘professional judgement’ of the school leaders to determine whether there are “risks to an individual or the public” which necessitates information gathering and sharing (HM Government 2015a, 4).

Human Rights and civil liberties groups have criticised Prevent for leaving parents and young people in the dark about the extent they are being monitored, the kinds of information being shared, the *profiling of individuals and groups ‘at risk’ of radicalisation* and the retention of data after a referral (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2016). Schools, too, have expressed concerns about their role in the surveillance and monitoring of students (see Rosen and Santesso, this volume, and Taylor, this volume for a wider discussion of monitoring, surveillance and privacy in schools). In cases where unsuccessful referrals are made and no further actions are taken, the individual will still be monitored by their school as part of ongoing risk assessment policies. Where a successful referral has been made, schools are required to store details in a Child Protection file, transfer the file to any new school or college or keep it until the child’s 25th birthday if the pupil has left education (Craven Pupil Referral Service, 2016). It is difficult to believe the notion that the best interests of the child are at the heart of this process of heavy surveillance and monitoring (Thomas, 2016).

Promoting fundamental British values

A parallel duty handed to schools under Prevent is to promote fundamental British values, through teaching and debate, as a way of building pupils’ resilience to radicalisation and challenging extremist views. Reinforcing democratic values at school and developing critical skills are seen as an important aspect of prevention of extremism and terrorism (Moghaddam 2005; Davies, 2008). However, the teaching of fundamental British values has received criticism from Ofsted, practitioners and academics for several reasons: the inconsistent standard of teaching; encouraging an ‘us-versus-them’ dichotomy; reducing community cohesion; and potentially impacting upon free speech. (Browne Jacobson and ASCL, 2016;

Thomas, 2016; Busher *et al*, 2017; Davies, 2016; Ofsted, 2016; Panjwani 2016; Richards, 2015).

The Ofsted report on Prevent (2016) found that although the promotion of British values had become an integral part of the curriculum, the quality of teaching of British values varied considerably. The report identified limited understanding and knowledge of British values amongst staff, and difficulties integrating British values into the curriculum (Ofsted 2016; 18).

The School Leaders Survey (Browne Jacobson and ASCL 2016; 18) asked respondents about the challenges they faced in promoting British values. It concluded, “There is concern that using the label ‘British’ may alienate students and staff with another heritage, and has the potential to divide communities and people from different cultural backgrounds” (p18). Similarly, Busher *et al*. (2017) found that the promotion of fundamental British values was seen by most respondents as a problematic element of the Prevent duty in terms of definitions and process. Many expressed discomfort with the idea of British values, linking them to issues of imperialism, empire, exclusionary identities, and racism, and potentially repressing rather than encouraging engagement amongst students. This concern highlights a fundamental problem with the promotion of British values, and with the Prevent approach more generally: “The implication is always that ‘immigrants’ do not adhere to British values (whatever these are) and therefore represent a threat.” (Davies, 2016, p7). Ironically, this divisive narrative is the very thing Prevent had intended to uproot (see HM Government, 2015).

Moreover, with a few local exceptions such as Greater Manchester Police’s RadEqual schemeⁱⁱⁱ, the teaching of fundamental British values has largely replaced the community cohesion programmes intended to counter extremism in earlier versions of Prevent. The current version of Prevent does little to create community cohesion, focuses on schools and students and is in danger of alienating Muslim communities, labelling them as ‘suspect’ (Thomas, 2016; Coppock and McGovern, 2014; Heath-Kelly, 2012).

Wider concerns about teaching British values in schools have been raised from different quarters including teachers, academics and think-tanks. They argue that reinforcing British

values in schools alongside the surveillance measures of Prevent will have a 'chilling effect' on free speech, particularly amongst Muslim students (Khan, 2016; Open Society Justice Initiative, 2016; Liberty, 2015). Some argue that students will withdraw from discussing radicalisation and extremism for fear of saying something that could link them with radicalised thinking or, in some way, raise teachers' suspicions (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2016; Khan, 2016).

Our own research suggests that discussions are being stifled: students feared being safeguarded or sanctioned for 'saying the wrong thing', making a joke that could be seen as inappropriate, or expressing feelings of anger, and some provided examples of sanctions being applied for these reasons. For example one boy was sanctioned for shouting 'Allahu Akbar' in an imitation of a suicide bomber, after hearing a loud noise outside the classroom. Clearly, for students, expressing contentious issues, even as a joke, becomes very difficult whilst they are being monitored and the threat of referral is present (Deakin and Acik, 2017). Many teenagers explore extremist attitudes as part of their natural development and schools should be safe places where students feel free to express any opinion (however unpalatable), without fear of reprisal (Deakin and Acik, 2017). Young people, in developing their opinions and learning to challenge extremist views, need to be able to engage with political debate without being made to feel that "their opinions have to meet with official approval' (Institute of Race Relations 2010: 79; Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015). Otherwise, young people's developing perspectives "run the risk of being reconstructed within securitised adult and neo-liberal discourses." (McKendrick and Finch, p8)

In response, the U.K. Department for Education (DfE) emphasise that the Prevent duty "does not intended to stop pupils debating controversial issues. On the contrary, schools should provide a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments" (DfE 2015: 8-9). Resources are available (including Government toolkits, workshops and materials from external facilitators and voluntary sector organisations) to support teachers in managing debates about contentious issues and to help them develop pupils' critical thinking skills (Bonnell et al. 2011; DfE, 2008)^{iv}.

Teachers appear to be accessing these resources (Ofsted, 2015) but, despite the support, many were concerned about the effect of Prevent on the openness of discussions (Busher *et al*, 2017). They expressed concerns that the requirement to report extreme views would alienate students, erode their trust and therefore have a repressive effect on classroom discussions (Deakin and Acik, 2017; Parton, 2010). There is still little evidence of any school-based work that builds youth resilience against extremism (Thomas, 2016)

Monitoring external influences

IT policies

There is an increasingly widespread recognition that terrorist and extremist organisations are utilising the internet and social media to recruit new followers and spread their message. Under Prevent, schools must demonstrate suitable filtering in place to avoid students accessing websites and materials deemed extremist. Incorporating Prevent policies into existing IT policies seems to be the least burdensome requirement of Prevent and most providers inspected by Ofsted have complied with it (Ofsted, 2016). Yet, the policies of 11 out of 37 educational providers were judged as ineffective: learners were able to bypass firewalls to access inappropriate websites including those promoting extreme Islamic ideology, right-wing extremist and the purchase of firearms (Ofsted 2016; 19). Good practice found in schools included stringent monitoring of students' internet activity, reporting to the police blocked websites that students had attempted to access, and 'risk-rating' students involving keeping a record of students who show signs of accessing blocked material (Ofsted 2016; 19). Schools are encouraged to contribute to intelligence gathering by keeping a watchful eye on pupils or groups of pupils that could potentially display signs of radicalisation and keep a record of them. These practices form part of the wider securitisation of school practices involving heavy surveillance of stigmatised groups (Thomas, 2016). Importantly, these practices are not open to scrutiny or subject to independent evaluation; instead, they are, again, subject to the schools' and practitioners' personal judgement as to what should be considered extremist (Busher *et al*. 2017).

External speakers/ giving platform to extremists

Under the Prevent Duty, schools and other public bodies must ensure that publicly-owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. This means that schools and colleges have to have a process of vetting and monitoring external speakers in place. There are various approaches schools and FE institutions have taken to comply with this duty (157 Group, 2015). Some organisations have tried to mitigate the risk of any potentially controversial speaker by inviting another speaker to present an alternative view, and by monitoring the event closely. However, most have chosen not to invite controversial speakers due to the potential reputational damage that could ensue. Providers might also refuse a speaker on the grounds that although they might not say something controversial at the event, they could invite students to other events outside the school and thus pose a future risk to them (157 Group, 2015). The Ofsted (2016) report criticised the management of some schools for not having a clear oversight of external speakers and events. Examples of good implementation included liaising with 'Prevent' coordinators and the police to gather background information on speakers before organising an event and sharing the information with partners (Ofsted 2016; 14).

Working definitions of extremism are contested. While Government publications are carefully worded, policy documents published in relation to Prevent by educational providers can differ. The Arthur Mellows Village College's Prevent Risk Assessment and Action Plan, for example, refer to the expression of 'anti-British sentiments' as extremism. These seemingly protective measures deny students an opportunity to be exposed to controversial speakers thereby removing possibilities for rigorous debate in a safe and balanced environment, a process that can help reduce radicalisation (Sedgwick, 2010).

Reporting and Referrals through Prevent

The final stage of the Prevent duty is the referral mechanism that obliges schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. These referrals are typically made by school safeguarding officers in conjunction with the head teacher before being received by a Prevent officer or the Channel Police Practitioner (CPP).

The Channel process draws on the existing collaboration between local authorities, the police, statutory partners (such as the education sector, social services, children's and youth services and offender management services) and the local community. Based on referrals of 'potentially at-risk' individuals from schools and other organisations, the Channel process will assess the nature and extent of that risk and develop the most appropriate support for the individuals concerned (HM Government, 2012; 2015b). Since the introduction of the Prevent duty the number of young people referred to Channel has increased dramatically. A 75% increase in the first year, including a doubling of referrals from schools (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2016), demonstrates the impact of the duty on referrals. However, while referrals have increased, it is unclear how many of those young people were later found to be at risk of radicalised behaviour.

There are a number of related concerns that have been raised in relation to referrals to Channel, many of them an extension to concerns raised earlier in the process about increased surveillance and securitisation. These mostly centre on the subjective and inconsistent nature of referral decisions, the stigmatising effect of referrals on students and communities, and the additional pressure on teachers.

Busher *et al* (2017) highlighted the inconsistent nature of referral decisions amongst their respondents. They reported a range of opinions from respondents, including those that were less likely to refer a child after a risk-related comment, believing decisions must be based on common sense and professional judgement, those that thought it best to refer when in doubt, and those who would refer a student based on an inappropriate comment despite a certainty that no risk was present (Busher *et al*, 2017). Again this comes back to the lack of agreed definition of extremism and signs of radicalisation discussed earlier in the chapter.

Further research is required before a full picture of teachers' decision making in the report and referral process is clear. However, early indications suggest that there may be a wide pool of influential factors including fear of missing something important, pressures from Ofsted and governors to fulfil the duty, experience in the profession, personal biographies and general cultural and religious awareness, as well as the academic potential of the student. Concerns about the impact of an incorrect referral on the young person concerned may also, in some cases be a factor (Busher *et al*, 2017; Deakin and Acik, 2017). The extent of the

inconsistencies in safeguarding referrals is staggering, with the more extreme examples hitting the headlines of daily newspapers^v.

Surveillance under Prevent has been felt disproportionately by Muslim students (Busher, 2017) and the referral process, in particular, carries significant potential for unfairly labelling or stigmatising Muslim students, especially those targeted for intervention who may not pose a genuine risk. This type of negative and stigmatising label serves to alienate and ostracise those who are labelled from the rest of society and may actually strengthen an anti-social identity (Muncie, 1999). In the case of those referred to Channel the risk of 'false positive assessments' is high: there are likely to be many young people referred to Channel who pose no risk of being radicalised (estimates are about 90% (Adams, 2016)). These false positives can have negative consequences for children, parents, and communities (Heath-Kelly, 2012).

Finally, the necessity to make value judgements about students as part of reporting and referral, have contributed to concerns about the pressures teachers face throughout the process (Hindle, 2016). Teacher unions have objected to teachers being used, in counter-terror measures, as agents of the state (Davies, 2016) and teachers have expressed their anger with the referral process, arguing that it puts them in an ethically and logistically difficult situation (Deakin and Acik, 2017). Many teachers agree that the duty to report makes it more difficult to create a school environment in which white British staff can get on well with students from different backgrounds, arguing that this 'is likely to exacerbate the stigmatisation of Muslim students' (Busher et al, 2017).

Specifically, a minority of teachers worried that they might miss something important, or fail to report a piece of critical information with the associated implications for public safety and for the reputation of the school. (Deakin and Acik, 2017). More commonly teachers expressed concern about reporting students for the referral process. Specifically they expressed concern about stigmatising Muslim students, being perceived as racist, criminalising a bad joke, damaging relationships with children, shutting down lines of communication with their students and 'being forced to participate in something damaging and morally wrong' (Deakin and Acik, 2017). Referring a student under Prevent makes teachers complicit in a 'stigmatising agenda' that demonises Muslim children and communities (Coppock and McGovern, 2014).

It is little wonder that many teachers felt they would rather avoid the sensitive and controversial issues of radicalisation and extremism altogether (Davies, 2016)

The implications of Prevent

The so-called 'war on terror' waged by the U.K. government has led to further increases in securitisation of U.K. schools, and provided justifications for the introduction of new forms of security, monitoring and control. The Prevent duty positions schools as sites of potential risk requiring an institutional response in the form of increased surveillance, monitoring, reporting and security. These new forms of control are not without implications for those tasked with imposing them, for those on the receiving end or for wider communities. Furthermore, they contribute to the worrying global trend towards the hyper-securitisation of school practices that are experienced disproportionately by certain groups (see Taylor, this volume; Thomas, 2016). The discussion above has highlighted significant concerns raised in the literature about the implications of the Prevent strategy on students, teachers and communities. The stigma experienced by students on the receiving end of Prevent practices and the reinforcement of the concept of suspect communities (typically of Muslim heritage) have been central elements of the discussions amongst academics, teachers, teacher unions, think tanks and campaign groups. This final section draws together the messages from research on Prevent and points towards possibilities for future policy and practice.

It's still early days to give a comprehensive account of the impact of Prevent on school practices, teachers, students or communities. Most schools have fulfilled the basic criteria, including staff training, and have updated their policies in line with the Prevent duty. However, the implementation of Prevent is 'inconsistent' as are decisions to record information and refer young people to Channel, the de-radicalisation programme. Part of the government message - that Prevent should not constitute 'an extra burden' to teachers and schools - has not been borne out in practice. Teachers were concerned about managing their new tasks (Busher *et al*, 2017) especially fulfilling the surveillance and reporting duties of Prevent alongside their usual overly-burdensome workload (Deakin and Acik, 2017). Yet, the fact that Prevent is a legal responsibility may influence any mounting dissent, and gradually the additional surveillance will become embedded within every-day routines and accepted as normal (Busher *et al*, 2017). Although the available research only represents a snapshot of

experiences from the field, it, nevertheless, gives a first insight into how the policy has been received and implemented. Research on this is still ongoing.

There is still very little available research that discusses the experiences of students and communities labelled as suspect, but evidence suggests that concerns about the stigmatising and silencing effects of the policy are not unfounded. Clearly, processes that target Muslim populations are likely to increase speculative suspicion (Kundnani, 2014; Awan, 2012) and have a negative impact on community cohesion (Thomas, 2016). Students from these communities have felt increasingly stigmatised since the introduction of the Prevent duty (Busher *et al*, 2017).

Overall, critics present a bleak picture of Prevent's impact and, relatedly, of its effectiveness in reducing radicalisation, arguing that it is currently doing little to 'educate against extremism' (Davies, 2008) and has not been able to build youth resilience against extremism (Thomas, 2016). Prevent's focus on securitised surveillance, particularly of Muslim youth has been seen as fundamental to its failure (Thomas, 2016; Kundnani, 2015). Instead, critics call for an objective, human-rights based approach to citizenship education with a focus on educating against extremism (Thomas, 2016; Kundnani, 2014; Davies, 2008).

"What is needed is less state surveillance and enforced conformity and more critical thinking and political empowerment. The role of the communities in countering terrorism is not to institute self-censorship but to confidently construct political spaces where young people can politicize their disaffection into visions of how the world might be better organised" (Kundnani 2014: 289).

Similarly, at a National Union of Teachers' conference, Christine Blower, the general secretary said "Schools' best contribution to countering any behaviour that could be a problem is by encouraging discussion. Some aspects of Prevent inhibit this and it is for this reason that we need a review of the strategy to find the right, and best way to protect children and young people" (Adams, 2016).

Schools and external partners can rise to this challenge by engaging in a pedagogy that, through the taught curriculum and social daily interaction, allows young people to discuss and explore the desirable skills of a democratic society (Sieckelinck *et al*, 2015). For Prevent to be an effective tool in the armoury against home-grown radicalisation, securitised surveillance

must give way to a human-rights-based educational approach that, in open and free discussions, analyses inequalities and redresses discriminatory practices.

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ⁱ In our recent exploratory study we carried out a series of art and drama workshops to discuss experiences of Prevent with a group of teachers and students in a Manchester school. Our intention was to explore the conversations that go on amongst students, and between students and staff about the issues surrounding radicalisation: how open and honest are these conversations, and how are these enabled or stifled by the enactment of the Prevent duty? (Deakin and Acik, 2017)

ⁱⁱ Coppock refers specifically to 'Learning together to be safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism' (Department of Children, Schools and Families, 2008)

ⁱⁱⁱ RadEqual is a campaign and grant programme co-designed between communities, Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Police and The Foundation for Peace supporting community empowerment, resilience and inclusion. <http://www.makingmanchestersafer.com/mms/homepage/22/radequal>

^{iv} See for example <http://www.preventforfeandtraining.org.uk/p-curriculum-guidance-and-materials>)

^v See for example the case of the 10 year old boy interviewed by police after writing that he lived in a 'Terrorist house' rather than a terraced house <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3407915/Muslim-boy-writes-lives-terrorist-house-accident-quizzed-police.html>

Or the examples of the 4 year old boy who was referred to Channel after drawing a picture of his father with a knife cutting a cucumber, but in describing it to nursery staff, mispronounced it 'cooker bomb'

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/four-year-old-raises-concerns-of-radicalisation-after-pronouncing-cucumber-as-cooker-bomb-a6927341.html>