FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

PREVENT ON A PAGE: WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- ***Prevent*** is a key strand of the government's counter terrorism strategy – **CONTEST** – alongside ***Pursue, Protect and Prepare***
- Prevent dates from ***2003***; the revised strategy was published in ***June 2011***.
- The purpose of the strategy is to ***"prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"***.
- The 2011 strategy addresses ***all forms of terrorism*** but mentions specifically: international terrorism; Northern Ireland-related terrorism; and extreme right wing-related terrorism as the greatest current threats
- The 2011 strategy was explicitly changed to include non-violent extremism which ***"can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit"***.
- Prevent became a statutory duty for ***seven specified authorities*** under the ***Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015***. Higher education was one of the seven authorities (alongside further education, schools, local authorities, health, prisons and probation, the police).
- The government issued ***general guidance*** in June 2015, and ***higher education-specific guidance for England and Wales*** in September 2015. For higher education the statutory duty has been in force since ***18th September 2015***. There is separate guidance for Scotland and for further education.
- The duty applies to ***all providers of higher education***, publicly funded and others, with more than 250 students (not including those on distance education courses).
- The ***legal responsibility*** for compliance resides with the **governing body/proprietor**.
- The ***monitoring authority for relevant higher education bodies (RHEBs) in England*** (excluding further education colleges which are monitored by Ofsted) is ***the Office for Students***. Governing bodies/proprietors are required to report annually to provide assurance that the institution ***"has had due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"***.
- Institutions must maintain a ***current risk assessment*** to identify the risks of vulnerable individuals being drawn into terrorism, and ***an appropriate action and training plan*** to address and mitigate those risks.
- Policies and procedures must match the expectations in the statutory guidance and must be ***actively implemented and reviewed appropriately***.
- Prevent is ***essentially about safeguarding***, and policies on student and staff welfare should incorporate the duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. There should be ***well-publicised and understood arrangements for staff and students to report concerns and to provide appropriate support to individuals***.
- ***Other policies*** and procedures should also incorporate the duty – freedom of speech, visiting speakers and external events, use of computers, information sharing, use of faith facilities.
- The Prevent duty should be implemented alongside and ***with due regard to other statutory duties*** – on academic freedom, freedom of speech, equality and diversity, data protection and confidentiality.
- Institutions should identify ***a Prevent Lead***, one of whose responsibilities will be to decide when an individual might be referred to ***Channel***, a multi-agency approach to provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism.