

## **FE /HE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT** **COMMUNITY COHESION AND PREVENT DUTY**

The government's strategy for Countering Terrorism **CONTEST** is split up into 4 areas: Pursue; Prevent; Protect; Prepare. Within this framework, all FE Institutions have to comply with the Prevent Duty under the Counter Terrorist Act 2015. The Prevent strategic objective is to stop people from becoming or supporting terrorists and since 2011, will now address radicalisation and challenge all forms of terrorism; including the influence from far right extremist groups.

The Prevent Strategy has 3 key objectives and will specifically: **1**

- + respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it***
- + prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support***
- + work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address***

### **Approaches and input to community cohesion and Prevent Duty**

Governors/Colleges now have new legal duties to promote, undertake activities and implement community cohesion and prevention of violent extremism as part of their PREVENT Duty. Although colleges are already implementing the Duty and play a vital role in this agenda, they are increasingly required to respond to events that may take place and subsequently having to manage both the negative impact that this may have on both the college and its learners. Colleges therefore need to assess the impact of their new legal Duty and manage risk on their activities, policies, procedures and practices for example, safeguarding and whistleblowing policy, so that college staff or governors can raise concerns in a confidential manner. This would allow them to report any concerns they may have to potential college malpractice or illegal acts. This whole area is quite sensitive, complex and thought-provoking and could be subject to ongoing change depending on the changing political climate.

Colleges associate community cohesion with a diverse range of issues including outreach; inclusion; equalities, access to programs, employability; shared values; campaigning for rights and now preventing violent extremism and radicalisation. There is a variation in attitude in response to this

agenda between different colleges, depending on their location, settings, diversity, urban, rural etc. Although more emphasis seems to be placed on violent extremism and the concern here is that it can risk division between communities, it has to be noted that community cohesion is a generic term and not necessarily associated with diversity, so it should be encouraged in all areas irrespective of location and setting. Colleges are ideally placed to explore controversial issues and should be in a position to allow students and staff to use critical thinking skills to challenge and debate issues in an informed way.

Colleges see themselves as part of their local communities as they provide a focal point for them. A large number of students typically come from the local area, so colleges are able to make a wider contribution to the local community both externally in the college community and internally through their student intake. However in certain areas, students often travel from outside the area, which means that colleges need to use varied and creative communication channels to promote community cohesion, to raise awareness and understanding, break down barriers, develop shared values, mutual trust and respect. This can have a positive impact on a student's social attitudes and show them how they can 'give back' and be involved in their local community.

The majority of colleges already meet regularly to discuss more conventional college issues, (not necessarily Prevent or safeguarding), so this could be used as an avenue and opportunity to share intelligence, impart both good and bad practices and promote a common understanding and approach.

The Duty and responsibilities aligned to community cohesion and Prevent Duty will at this stage raise some pertinent questions at senior level. To manage the required changes Governors could be asking the following **Questions of the Senior Management Team**:

- What have SMT done to review how effectively the current policies and programs promote community cohesion in line with the new Duty?
- How are the new duties going to be incorporated within our safeguarding and whistleblowing policies?
- Are existing arrangements satisfactory or do we need to amend our policies and programs.
- What are the apparent trends or political issues locally that are likely to impact on the community cohesion agenda for the college?
- How are we responding to this?
- What barriers or challenges do we face?
- How are we actively promoting fundamental British Values and upholding Freedom of Speech in the college for both students and staff?
- Are we using local background information and demographic research data as a monitoring tool?
- What are the additional resource implications for the college ie. on personnel, finance etc.
- How will this impact on Ofsted inspection?

**2 - Ofsted will include monitoring of the Prevent Duty as part of their inspection framework and all FE Institutions should review their Prevent policies, self-assess and undertake a risk analysis.**

**Fostering good relationships**

There needs to be an awareness that this is all about communities, how to work with them and how not to alienate them. Colleges tend to be pro-active in working with local partners (ie. police, local authority), voluntary/charitable organisations and communities on areas such as:

- volunteering schemes for students
- partnership work with local organisations
- citizenship programmes/schemes
- outreach work/programmes with community
- police
- places of worship

In this way they are working with their college community to develop resilience to those ideologies that promote hatred and violence, foster shared values and develop trust, openness and collaborative working. The Prevent agenda has the potential to cause friction and suspicion in some geographical areas. To manage this risk, awareness, liaison, dialogue and a joined up approach of the local organisations working with communities and race issues is essential for a positive strategic approach to race relation.

There is usually a named person within the SMT who is responsible for promoting good relations within the college, with responsibility for safeguarding and Prevent. There is also usually a link governor who feeds into the SMT on this. FE institutions may wish to review their governing body representation to make sure it adequately meets the needs of their particular institution.

Colleges endeavour to have good campus relations with students and have campuses that are free from race crimes, bullying, and intolerance and have respect for diversity. Buildings are used/made available for community use, in order to promote good relations and develop links with families and local community and encourage active citizenship and student voice.

**Governance**

Governance arrangements are central to the integral running of not only FE/HE provision but also community engagement, responsibility and accountability. Most colleges seem to have the necessary governance in place and have a heightened understanding and are sensitive to the fact that there is a real threat of radicalisation, and are doing as much as they can to prevent violent extremism.

Senior leadership teams are seen as having the most knowledge about their community cohesion context, followed by teaching staff, support staff and then governors. It is important for Governors to understand and have their 'finger on the pulse' on the local political context, and understand the different ethnic origins, cultures, faiths and religions in their college and the area it serves. This is because Governors will have increased responsibility and accountability for what happens in the college and the community it serves, so strong governance, local knowledge of the community within the governing body is essential.

### **Staff training/providing a safe place for students**

Colleges will need to make sure that all staff/governors have the necessary training and development in line with the Duty and share information across curriculum areas.

Knowledge and confidence about PREVENT seems to be linked to the amount of training received. Once staff/governors have the skills, training and development, they are confident in being able to deal with issues, use the reporting systems in place, and recording and monitoring incidents, and adhering to safeguarding and whistleblowing policies.

They are also working closely with the student union, or other student bodies that may exist, other colleges, local partners and the community to share good practice. This in turn can improve relationships between the college community and different student groups.

### **Student experience**

Colleges are key partners in promoting community cohesion. Most have links with community groups, local charities, police, local authority and locality partnerships and these links have been further developed since the Duty became statutory. A large number of students come from the local area, so it is important that the college is seen as a key player and an integral part of the local landscape.

The student experience is very important as it can improve community relations and increase a student's chance of progressing onto higher education and/or gaining employment - possibly with employers/community where they may have had the opportunity to take part in a volunteering scheme or enrichment program.

Colleges in the country have a mix of students, including international students, refugees, asylum seekers and students for whom English is not their first or main language. It is therefore important that colleges fit into, listens to its community base and provides local information to help students settle in.

### **Engagement with local partners/businesses**

Many colleges are working with key partners by:

- Having links with local businesses who may provide work experience for students.
- Work with local police – police relationship and response can vary between from different forces. Some have a designated police officer linked to the college.

- College representation in local decision making processes ie. on local authority panels/boards. This varies across the country and is dependent on what the college is doing to establish links and build strong the relationship is in the local area.
- Identifying good practice among other FE/HE institutions, police, and local authorities.

Colleges gear teaching/training to the needs of the local economy and are carrying out research which is locally focused to make sure that provision is focused to the needs of the community it serves.

**Additional Guidance:**

**National Contacts:**

Education Training Foundation	<a href="http://www.et-foundation.co.uk">www.et-foundation.co.uk</a>
Association of Colleges	<a href="http://www.aoc.co.uk">www.aoc.co.uk</a>
Department for Business Innovation & Skills	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department</a>
NIACE - National Institute of Adult Continuing Education,	<a href="http://www.niace.org.uk">www.niace.org.uk</a>
CESI – Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion	<a href="http://www.cesi.org.uk">www.cesi.org.uk</a>
Department for Communities and Local Government	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department</a>
Department for Education	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/.../department-for-education">www.gov.uk/.../department-for-education</a>
Home Office	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office</a>
Ofsted	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted</a>
Skills Funding Agency	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/.../organisations/skills-funding-agency">www.gov.uk/.../organisations/skills-funding-agency</a>
Higher Education Funding Council for England	<a href="http://www.hefce.ac.uk">www.hefce.ac.uk</a>
Higher Education Statistics Agency	<a href="http://www.hesa.ac.uk">www.hesa.ac.uk</a>
Education Funding Agency	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/.../education-funding-agency">www.gov.uk/.../education-funding-agency</a>
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary	<a href="http://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmic">www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmic</a>

**BIS HE and FE Prevent Regional Coordinators:**

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**Core Cities Regional Voluntary Sector Networks:**

London LVSC	Eithne Rynne	<a href="http://www.lvsc.org.uk">www.lvsc.org.uk</a>
Birmingham BVSC	Brian Carr	<a href="http://www.bvsc.org">www.bvsc.org</a>
Bristol Voscur	Wendy Stephenson	<a href="http://www.voscur.org">www.voscur.org</a>
Leeds VA Leeds	Richard Jackson	<a href="http://www.val.org.uk">www.val.org.uk</a>
Liverpool LCVS	Tony Okotie	<a href="http://www.lcvs.org.uk">www.lcvs.org.uk</a>
Manchester GMCVO	Alex Whinnom	<a href="http://www.gmcvo.org.uk">http://www.gmcvo.org.uk</a>
Newcastle Newcastle CVS	Sally Young	<a href="http://www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk">www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk</a>
Nottingham NCVS	Helen Kearsley-Cree	<a href="http://www.nottinghamcvs.co.uk">www.nottinghamcvs.co.uk</a>
Sheffield VA Sheffield	Sue White	<a href="http://www.vas.org.uk">www.vas.org.uk</a>