**Prevent - Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. Does the Prevent Duty require teachers to shut down open and free discussion?**

A. No. teachers should encourage discussion and debate about sensitive issues rather than shutting it down. Key to the success of Safeguarding for Prevent in schools is providing a safe space to explore social and political issues and engage in an open debate about these issues within the classroom. Through Curriculum for Excellence, teachers are encouraged to provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss and more importantly develop their understanding of wider beliefs and values and how they are fundamental in both local and global communities. An essential element is developing critical thinking skills so children and young people become resilient to and equipped to challenge divisive narratives.

**Q. Are teachers being asked to spy on students?**

A. No, this is about providing those who have a duty of care to our children and young people with a better understanding of the potential factors which could make someone vulnerable to the radicalisation process. Teachers help safeguard pupils from drugs and alcohol misuse, bullying and sexual exploitation. Radicalisation can have a similarly devastating effect on our children and young people and protecting them from the influence of extremist ideas is a part of our overall safeguarding role.

**Q. Does Prevent only focus on Muslim communities?**

A. No. Preventative activity in Scotland has always focused on addressing all forms of violent extremist activity and has never focused solely on Scotland’s Muslim communities, or any other particular community. We face many different threats. No matter the ideology or idea which sits behind a vulnerability, the collective focus is always the early identification of risk to an individual in order to safeguard them.

**Q. Why do we need Prevent, this isn’t an issue in my Local Authority area?**

A. This is a commonly held view but it is simply not accurate. As our children and young people grow they inevitably search for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging, and look for adventure and excitement. This can mean that they are vulnerable to groups, who may claim to offer answers as well as identity and a strong social network. This is further enhanced by the role the internet can play; terrorist groups are very adept at using social media and the internet to engage with children and young people. This is why it is so important that teachers raise awareness of staying safe online and provide a safe space to explore and discuss these issues within the classroom.

**Q. If I have a concern, what should I do?**

A. If a member of staff is concerned that one of their pupils is vulnerable to radicalising influences, whatever the ideology or idea involved, they should follow the school’s standard safeguarding/child protection procedures and share that concern with senior colleagues. Prompt attention helps ensure that the response is proportionate and that the young person receives relevant support at the earliest opportunity.

In the event that you may wish to seek further guidance about the circumstances of an individual case, you can contact your Local Authority’s ‘Prevent Single Point of Contact’. Alternatively, Police Scotland’s Prevent Delivery Units have the knowledge and expertise required to discuss your concerns and agree the appropriate response. Email **PreventDeliveryUnit@scotland.pnn.police.uk**

In certain instances where a vulnerable individual has been identified, multi-agency partners will come together as part of the Prevent Professional Concerns (PPC) process. A PPC case conference is convened allowing partners to consider the circumstances surrounding an individual and working together to identify and provide appropriate support to steer the individual towards a more positive destination. Safeguarding the individual remains the priority.

Participation of an individual in activities that result from a PPC Case Conference remains voluntary. Consent is required to be given by the individual (or their parent/guardian in the case of a child) in advance of activities or actions being delivered or implemented. Section 3.4 of the Local Authority Prevent Code of Practice provides more information about the PPC process and the role of local authorities within that in convening Case Conferences.

**Q. Teacher Training – what’s available?**

**A.** Individual Local Authorities have undertaken training needs analysis to determine who should be trained and the level of training required for its staff including teachers. To find out about the Prevent training within your authority, please contact your Local Authority’s Prevent Single Point of Contact to discuss what is available to you.