

Channel: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism

Communications Toolkit
October 2012

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1. Communications Toolkit Introduction

Welcome to the Channel Communications Toolkit

This product has been developed by the National Channel Steering Group which includes representatives from key Government Departments and agencies including: the Home Office, Department of Health, Department for Education, the Youth Justice Board, National Offender Management Services (NOMS), Channel police practitioners and local authorities.

The toolkit is designed to complement the Channel Guidance for local partnerships (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/channel-guidance>). This material is for use by delivery partners within their organisations/agencies and with their key stakeholders. We are developing, separately, a pro-active communication strategy for use with communities; in the meantime should you need to communicate with the public about Channel please ensure your messaging is consistent with the content here.

What is Channel?

Channel is a partnership approach to safeguard individuals who are vulnerable to being radicalised by terrorists and drawn into terrorist activity. It is a key strand of the Government's *Prevent* Strategy, published in June 2011 (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/>).

A multi-agency panel, chaired by the local authority, decides on the most appropriate action to support individuals after considering their circumstances. Every support package is monitored closely and reviewed regularly. By providing this support, we are able to safeguard our communities from the threat of terrorism.

Who should use the Channel Communications Toolkit?

This toolkit is designed to support national and local stakeholder engagement activity around the Channel process – both with internal and external audiences. It should not be regarded as exhaustive but as a selection of communication 'tools' to complement existing activity. It is intended for use by police forces and other local Channel statutory delivery partners. It is also suitable for use by Government Departments and national statutory agencies who want to raise awareness of the role that Channel plays within the *Prevent* Strategy. You are encouraged to use the toolkit as a template for Channel communications activity, adapting the materials as appropriate for use with your specific internal and external audiences and via communication channels relevant to your own organisation.

Why should I use the Channel Communications Toolkit?

Many agencies have a statutory responsibility to safeguard vulnerable individuals – whether from the risk of crime, gangs, drugs, or, in the case of Channel, radicalisation.

The Channel process will work effectively if it has buy-in from all of us – partner agencies, the voluntary sector and communities. If our stakeholders do not understand what Channel is and how it can help to safeguard vulnerable individuals they are unlikely to have confidence in the process and therefore unlikely to refer someone onto Channel.

It is vital that we articulate what Channel is in a way that is relevant to our audiences and consistent across all partners involved in delivering the process. The elements contained within the toolkit are intended to help facilitate this – providing communication templates that can be adapted, as appropriate, by individual agencies.

What does the Channel Communications Toolkit contain?

The toolkit comprises a range of documents. These are not protectively marked. This includes:

- National Channel narrative
- Channel stakeholder factsheet
- Messaging guidance
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Media guidance
- Content for external facing website and intranet site.

Adapting the Toolkit for your own use

This toolkit has been designed with accessible PDF documents, and in such a way that individual elements are suitable for adaptation by your own organisation. The messaging within any material you produce must be consistent with the core messaging within this document. You may wish to consider including your own 'local' or 'corporate' contact details or signposting information. You may also want to add your organisation, and partner agencies, logos to relevant materials – subject to their approval.

Further information

For further information regarding the Channel Communications Toolkit, please contact:

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2. National Channel Narrative

Channel is a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist-related activity.

The process forms a key part of the Government's *Prevent* strategy.

Channel works in a similar way to existing successful partnership initiatives which aim to safeguard individuals who are vulnerable and protect them from harm, such as initiatives concerned with drugs or involvement in knife and gun crime.

The process provides a mechanism for safeguarding vulnerable individuals by assessing the nature and extent of the potential risk they face before they become involved in criminal activity and, where necessary, provide a support package tailored to an individual's needs.

Terrorism is a very real threat to all our communities and terrorists seek to exploit those who are most vulnerable. That is why it is vital that we all work together to support those who are at risk of radicalisation – regardless of faith, ethnicity or background.

Channel is about working together to support vulnerable individuals at an early stage and providing them, where appropriate, with advice and support to divert them away from terrorism.

3. Channel stakeholder factsheet

What is Channel?

Channel is a key part of the Government's work to prevent terrorism.

The aim of Channel is:

To safeguard individuals who might be vulnerable to being radicalised, so that they are not at risk of being drawn into terrorist-related activity.

What factors can put people at risk?

There is no single way of identifying who is likely to be vulnerable in this way. Factors may include: peer pressure, influence from other people or the internet, bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour, family tensions, race/hate crime, lack of self esteem or identity and personal or political grievances.

How do I make a referral or find out more about Channel?

If you work for a partner organisation and want to know more about Channel or have a concern about an individual and want to make a referral, contact your organisation's safeguarding lead.

If you are a community or family member and are concerned about someone please contact **[insert relevant contact details for your own organisation/agency here]**

How does Channel work?

The Channel process identifies those most at risk, and refers them via the police or local authority for assessment by a multi-agency panel which decides how to support their vulnerability.

Channel is about communities working closely in partnership with the police and local authorities, to divert people away from potential risk at an early stage so that they are not drawn into or drawn back into, terrorist related criminal behaviour.

Partnership involvement ensures that those at risk have access to a wide range of support ranging from mainstream services, such as health and education, through to specialist mentoring or faith guidance and wider diversionary activities.

Who should be involved?

Channel is a multi-agency process. Partnership and community involvement is vital to ensure that people most at risk are given support at an early stage. Partners include:

- Local authorities;
- Education;
- Health;
- Probation, Youth Offending Teams and Prisons;
- Police and other emergency services;
- UK Border Agency;
- Community and Voluntary Services; and
- Local communities.

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, may often be the first to see signs of concern.

4. Messaging guidance

This document provides partner agencies with an overview that can be used when they want to communicate their work about the Channel process. This may be used to support communication with local stakeholders, partners and potential partners and the creation of publicity materials such as leaflets and posters.

Safeguarding vulnerable people who may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism is an essential part of the *Prevent* strategy. Terrorism is a real and serious threat to us all because terrorists actively seek to harm us, to damage community relations and to undermine the values we share. Throughout the country there is a requirement for *Prevent* local action plans to be in place to support vulnerable individuals – this support is provided by a referral process known as Channel.

What is *Prevent*?

Prevent is one strand of the Government's counter terrorism strategy known as CONTEST. The *Prevent* strategy aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. *Prevent* addresses all forms of terrorism but prioritises these according to the threat they pose to our national security. *Prevent* is delivered in partnership by a wide range of organisations including the police service. Together we recognise that the best long-term solution to preventing terrorism is to stop people becoming terrorists in the first place.

What is Channel?

Radicalisation is usually a process and not an event therefore it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorist-related activity.

Channel is a multi-agency initiative that uses existing partnership structures and collaboration between partners to help safeguard individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation, regardless of faith, ethnicity or background. This is similar to the way in which individuals at risk from involvement in crime, drugs and other social issues are supported. By providing support to those most at risk, they can be diverted away from any potential threat, which could otherwise draw them into criminal activity.

Channel, alongside other supportive processes, provides a clear framework in which to respond to safeguarding concerns for those adults and young people who may be particularly susceptible to terrorist ideology, and thereby at risk of becoming involved in terrorism.

How does Channel work?

Channel works by identifying individuals who may be at risk, assessing the nature and the extent of the risk and, where necessary, providing an appropriate support package tailored to their needs. A multi-agency panel, chaired by the local authority, decides on the most appropriate action to safeguard an individual after considering their circumstances. Each support package is monitored closely and reviewed regularly by the multi-agency panel. By providing this support, we are able to safeguard our communities from the threat of terrorism.

Who are the partners in the Channel process?

The multi-agency involvement in the Channel process ensures that vulnerable individuals have access to a wide range of support, from diversionary activities through to providing access to specific services provided by local authorities. Partners involved will sign up to an information sharing protocol and will be those who can provide the most relevant support to address the needs or vulnerabilities identified. Partners can include:

- Local authorities;
- Education;
- Health;
- Probation, Youth Offending Teams and Prisons;
- Police and other emergency services;
- UK Border Agency;
- Community and Voluntary Services; and
- Local communities.

These partners will use their shared expertise to consider the individual's needs and to tailor support to meet those needs.

What can put someone at risk of radicalisation?

There is no single way of identifying who is likely to be vulnerable. Factors may include: peer pressure, influence from other people or via the internet, bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour, family tensions, race/hate crime, lack of self esteem or identity and personal or political grievances.

Is the Channel process discussed with the individual identified as vulnerable?

All individuals receiving Channel support must be aware that they are receiving support as part of a programme to protect vulnerable people from radicalisation and that as part of the scheme information about them will be shared with multi-agency partners, including the police. All decision making is clearly documented and in line with the Channel Guidance on the sharing of information.

Is Channel good for communities?

Channel is not about reporting or informing on individuals in order to prosecute them. It is a process that supports vulnerable people at the earliest possible opportunity before they become involved in illegal activity.

Channel is a partnership response to preventing terrorism. The Channel process has similarities to other crime prevention initiatives in place around drugs and gangs prevention work, however its focus is specifically on safeguarding those vulnerable to being drawn into terrorist-related activity.

All communities are affected by the threat of terrorism, but the extent of the threat varies across the country, which is why Channel is delivered at a local level and proportionate to the needs of local people.

Does the Channel process target Muslim communities?

No. The process applies to any individual, from any faith, ethnicity or background who may be at risk of being drawn into any form of terrorism.

How you can help?

If you work for a statutory agency and have concerns about someone who may be vulnerable please contact your local Children or Adult Safeguarding lead.

If you are a family member or from the local community and have a concern about an individual please contact **(insert contact details relevant to your organisation i.e. local authority Social Services teams, Safer Schools Officer, Safer Neighbourhood Team etc).**

5. Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs are intended to assist you in communicating your work about the Channel process with local stakeholders, partners, potential partners and respond to local media enquiries. They complement the messaging guidance within this toolkit.

Please also refer to the media guidance page of this toolkit for further information regarding media related issues.

What is Channel?

Channel is a multi-agency process, which provides support to those individuals who may be vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism. It is a key part of *Prevent* – the Government's strategy to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Through Channel, partner agencies work together to assess the nature and the extent of the risk of radicalisation, and where necessary provide an appropriate support package tailored to an individual's needs.

How does Channel fit into the Government's *Prevent* strategy?

Safeguarding vulnerable individuals is an important part of the *Prevent* strategy. The Channel process supports people at risk of radicalisation across England and Wales.

Why is it necessary?

Radicalisation is usually a process and not an event therefore it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorist-related activity.

Channel is a multi-agency initiative that uses existing partnership structures to safeguard individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation, regardless of faith, ethnicity or background. This is similar to the way in which individuals at risk from involvement in crime, drugs and other social issues are supported. By providing support to those most at risk, they can be diverted away from any potential threat, which could otherwise draw them into criminal activity. Channel, alongside other supportive processes, provides a clear framework in which to respond to safeguarding concerns for those adults and young people who may be particularly susceptible to terrorist ideology, and thereby at risk of becoming involved in terrorism.

What forms of terrorism does Channel cover?

The Channel process, and the wider *Prevent* strategy, address all forms of terrorism, including far right extremist activity. This can involve measures to counter forms of extremism that could lead to terrorist-related activity. But policy and programmes to deal with extremism and with extremist organisations that are not related to terrorism are not part of *Prevent* and are coordinated by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The Channel process can apply to anyone who is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Its purpose is to safeguard vulnerable individuals of any faith, ethnicity or background and to stop them being drawn into terrorism.

How does Channel work?

Channel works by identifying individuals who may be at risk, assessing the nature and the extent of the risk and where necessary, providing an appropriate support package tailored to their needs. A multi-agency panel, chaired by the local authority, decides on the most appropriate action to support an individual after considering their circumstances. Each support package is monitored closely and reviewed regularly by the multi-agency panel.

Who makes the referrals?

Referrals can come from a wide range of sources and could include youth offending teams, social services, health, education, police and members of the public.

Which partners are involved in the Channel process?

The multi-agency involvement in the Channel process ensures that vulnerable individuals have access to a wide range of support. This can include support provided by mainstream services such as health and education, through to guidance and mentoring to increase theological understanding and/or challenge the claims of violent ideologies. It also includes wider diversionary activities such as access to appropriate training or education courses. The partners involved will be those that can provide the best relevant support to address the needs or vulnerabilities identified. Partners can include:

- Local authorities;
- Education;
- Health;
- Probation, Youth Offending Teams and Prisons;
- Police and other emergency services;
- UK Border Agency;
- Community and Voluntary Services; and
- Local communities.

What is the Case Management Information System (CMIS)?

CMIS is the system that Channel police practitioners use to manage their caseload. It includes a vulnerability assessment that enables them to assess whether an individual is at risk of being drawn into terrorism. The vulnerability assessment has a strong evidence base and has been peer reviewed by international experts in risk assessment.

What kinds of support do people referred to Channel receive?

If the Channel multi-agency panel assesses that someone is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism they will put in place a package of support tailored to address the individual's specific needs. The types of support could include:

- **Life skills** – work on life skills or social skills generally, such as dealing with peer pressure;
- **Mentoring support contact** – work with a suitable adult as a role model or providing personal guidance, including guidance addressing extremist ideologies;
- **Anger management session** – formal or informal work dealing with anger;
- **Cognitive/behavioural contact** – cognitive behavioural therapies and general work on attitudes and behaviours such as thinking skills;
- **Constructive pursuits** – supervised or managed constructive leisure activities;
- **Education skills contact** – activities focused on education or training;
- **Careers contact** – activities focused on employment;
- **Family support contact** – activities aimed at supporting family and personal relationships, including formal parenting programmes;
- **Health awareness contact** – work aimed at assessing or addressing any physical or mental health issues;
- **Housing support contact** – activities addressing living arrangements, accommodation provision or neighbourhood; and
- **Drugs and alcohol awareness** – substance misuse interventions.

Who provides support to people referred to Channel?

Providers of support can include local agencies such as local authorities, the police education, health services, probation and youth offending teams. Support can also be provided by community partners where appropriate. Because the individuals that are safeguarded through Channel are vulnerable people, any community partners engaging with an individual will have first been approved by the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) in the Home Office.

Who pays for these services?

Where support is provided by a statutory partner the cost of the support is met from within their existing budgets. Where support is provided by a community partner, the Channel police practitioner is responsible for funding the provider.

Isn't Channel just a way of police spying on communities?

Channel is a supportive process to safeguard vulnerable individuals who may be at risk from being drawn into terrorism. It is not about spying and gathering intelligence. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risk they may face at an early opportunity. Police already work with individuals vulnerable to being drawn into criminal activity such as drugs, knife or gang crime. In a similar way the process of radicalisation allows us to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into terrorist-related activity.

The police service is tasked with keeping the public safe and communities have a significant part to play in this. Police officers routinely gather information to combat crime and anti-social behaviour – public protection from terrorism and violent extremists is no exception. The public is a key partner in this process and has a central role to play in providing information to police to help protect their own communities from harm.

Does the Channel process target Muslims?

No. Channel applies to any individual, from any faith, ethnicity or background that may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

What should someone do if they have concerns that someone they know may be vulnerable?

Anyone who works for a statutory agency and has concerns about someone who may be vulnerable should contact their local Children or Adult Safeguarding Lead.

Family members or those within local communities who have concerns about someone should contact (insert details as relevant to individual agency i.e. local authority Social Services team, Safer Schools officer, Safer Neighbourhood Team etc).

How many people have been referred to Channel?

Referral figures for Channel can be found on the ACPO website:

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/ACPOBusinessAreas/PREVENT/NationalChannelReferralFigures.aspx>

6. Media guidance

The success of Channel relies heavily on an accurate understanding of, and support for, the Channel process and what it seeks to do.

If Channel is surrounded by suspicion or misunderstanding we will not get buy-in from key stakeholders – both those that can help deliver the process and those who have concerns about vulnerable individuals.

That is why it is important that all our communications around Channel are open, consistent and transparent, and that we use appropriate and credible communication channels to get our message across about the part the process has to play in safeguarding our communities.

Work is underway to develop a comprehensive media strategy for Channel that will underpin wider engagement activity and this toolkit will be updated to reflect this in due course. In the meantime, you will find included in this toolkit a Frequently Asked Questions document to assist you in responding to queries from local media and other local stakeholders.

Please note that national, international and specialist media queries about Channel are managed by either the Home Office Press Office or Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Communications and should be referred to either of these directly on the following numbers:

ACPO Communications
0207 084 8859/8947 or 8948.

Home Office Press Office
020 7035 3849

It is also helpful if you can make the Home Office Press Office or ACPO Communications aware of any local media interest you receive at an early stage.

7. Intranet/internet content

Channel – A partnership approach to safeguard individuals who may be vulnerable to becoming involved in terrorism

Channel is a partnership approach to identify and safeguard individuals who may be vulnerable to being radicalised and drawn into terrorist activity. The process is a key strand of the Government's *Prevent* Strategy. Building on existing partnership structures, Channel works in a similar way to other safeguarding processes that support individuals at risk from involvement in gangs, drugs and knife crime. By safeguarding those most at risk of being drawn into terrorism they can be diverted away from any potential threat at an early stage.

Partnership and community involvement are vital to Channel ensuring that people most at risk are given support at an early stage. Partners include:

- Local authorities;
- Education;
- Health;
- Probation, Youth Offending Teams and Prisons;
- Police and other emergency services;
- UK Border Agency;
- Community and Voluntary Services; and
- Local communities.

Through the Channel process partners are able to work together to assess the nature and extent of the risk and, where necessary, provide an appropriate support package tailored to the individual's needs. A multi-agency panel, chaired by the local authority, decides on the most appropriate action to safeguard an individual and this is monitored closely and reviewed regularly.

The support provided will vary according to the nature and extent of the risk that has been identified by the multi-agency panel and may include targeted support (including faith guidance, counselling and mentoring or diversionary activities) or by providing access to specific services such as health or education.

Guidance for partner agencies on the Channel process is available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/channel-guidance>.

This provides local partner agencies in England and Wales with advice on implementing Channel and details of the support it can provide for vulnerable individuals.

For more information about Channel and [insert the name of your own organisation/partner agency) please contact [insert relevant contact details].

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