

Northumbria University Prevent Policy Statement

1. Legal Context and University Approach

- 1.1 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on all universities as a relevant higher education body (RHEB) to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This legislation is given specific statutory force through the Prevent duty guidance for higher education institutions in England and Wales, referred to as the 'Prevent Duty'.
- 1.2 The underlying considerations adopted by Northumbria University in implementing the Prevent Duty are:
- 1.2.1 A commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our staff and students and all who interact with the University, including not being victims of, or complicit with any activities linked to radicalisation.
 - 1.2.2 Upholding the legislative requirements and champion the spirit of academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law and with the appropriate obligations and responsibilities arising from such freedoms. To this end the University has developed a separate Statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech.
 - 1.2.3 Equality and diversity as foundations of University life, whilst ensuring these values are not threatened.
 - 1.2.4 Support for campus cohesion and harmonious relations across all parts of the University community.
 - 1.2.5 That the requirements described in this Policy Statement are implemented in a proportionate and risk-based manner, relevant to the local context in which the University is based.
- 1.3 The legal definition of terrorism, as defined in the Terrorism Act 2000, applies to the Prevent Duty. The University acknowledges and upholds the position that the definition of terrorism in the Terrorism Act is broad, in describing it as *"the use or threat of action which involves serious damage to property; or endangers a person's life; or creates a serious risk to the health and safety of the public or a section of the public; or is designed seriously to interfere with or disrupt an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause."*
- 1.4 Terrorism may take the form of extremist behaviour and acts. The statutory Prevent Duty Guidance 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 and calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas"*.
- 1.5 In accordance with this definition, the University considers that extremist ideologies, and those who express them, undermine the principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom. Freedom of speech and academic freedom, as separate but interrelated liberties, are key features of university life and the University has produced a separate Statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech which sets out the legal obligations, rights and responsibilities related to preserving this freedom.
- 1.6 The Office for Student (OfS) is the principal regulator of the University and has established a monitoring framework to assess compliance of all RHEBs with the Prevent Duty. The University has a legal duty to provide reports and evidence of its compliance with the Prevent Duty to OfS, including serious issues which arise related to the University's Prevent responsibilities. The role of OfS does not extend to investigating terrorism-related incidents on campus.

2. Scope and Application of this Policy Statement

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy Statement is to provide high-level information on the requirements of the Prevent Duty.
- 2.2 This Policy applies to all staff, students, governors and third parties of the University and to all University-controlled activities undertaken in the UK. Northumbria University Nursery Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary company of the University and is required to maintain its own arrangements to comply with the Prevent requirement, following guidance produced by the relevant national professional network.
- 2.3 The Prevent Duty requirement does **not** apply to:
- 2.3.1 Activities undertaken by the University in other countries, although the University would not expect any activities directly related to the University overseas to be at odds with this Policy. Any concerns around overseas operations should be referred to the relevant Consulate or Embassy.
- 2.3.2 Northumbria Students' Union, or its clubs and societies. However, the University is required to ensure that arrangements are in place to ensure that activities undertaken in its name comply with the Prevent Duty. The Prevent Lead will liaise with the CEO of Northumbria Students' Union to assist with training requirements and ensure messaging is consistent.

3. Arrangements to deliver the Prevent Duty

- 3.1 **Working in Partnership.** The University actively works in close partnership with relevant partners including the Department for Education Regional Prevent Coordinators for North East and London Regions, police, local authorities and the North East Regional Prevent Group for sharing good practice in approaches, and information where this is a necessity.
- 3.2 **Leadership and Governance.** The Board of Governors has a statutory responsibility to ensure the University satisfies the requirements of the Prevent Duty, with leadership and implementation delegated to the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive as Authorising Officer for Prevent-related matters.
- 3.3 The University Executive has established a Prevent Co-ordinating Group chaired by the Head of Governance and Secretary to the Board, and comprising senior staff and student representatives who play a role in the delivery of the Prevent Duty to oversee its implementation ongoing review of requirements.
- 3.4 **Risk Assessment and Action Plan.** The University has developed a Prevent Risk Assessment of how and where students and staff might be drawn into terrorism, including violent and non-violent extremism, and an associated action plan to mitigate risks. The Risk Assessment addresses the adequacy of institutional policies and arrangements regarding the campus and student welfare, including equality and diversity and the safety and welfare of students and staff. The Risk Assessment and Action Plan is developed and reviewed by the Prevent Co-ordinating Group.
- 3.5 A separate Risk Assessment and Action Plan is in place for London Campus reflecting the unique situation in London.
- 3.6 **External and Visiting Speakers and Events.** The University has revised its current Policy on External and Visiting Speakers and Events to reflect the Prevent Duty responsibilities. The Policy sets out the arrangements for managing events on campus and the use of premises. The Policy is set within the context of the statutory responsibility of the University to secure freedom of speech. These principles have now been supplemented and strengthened by a separate Statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech. The Policy is also mindful of the freedom of expression, association and assembly in the Human Rights Act 1998. The legislation, however, emphasises the importance of freedom of speech within the law and the duties of the University and the obligations of the organisers of speakers and events to act within the law. A risk-based approach to the assessment of events will be taken and this may require modification of adjustments to the content of or arrangements for events to mitigate risks in respect of the Prevent Duty. Whilst in exceptional circumstances only, the right is reserved by the University to prohibit events where speakers promote or seek to incite hatred of, or violence against others.
- 3.6 **Welfare and Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy.** The University has in place a range of services for welfare, pastoral care and chaplaincy support provided centrally through its Student Life and Wellbeing Team, information on which for staff and students is available from the University's website. The University also has a Chaplaincy Team comprising a broad spectrum of faiths to provide personal and group support. This includes multi-faith areas and prayer facilities. The Team plays a key part in promoting understanding between individuals and groups and encouraging dialogue, debate and respectful and frank exchanges of views.

- 3.8 **Staff Training.** The University will develop and make accessible training materials available to all staff outlining the requirements of the Prevent Duty. Training will also be delivered to appropriate key staff to aid awareness of the Prevent Duty and its requirements, the arrangements that the University has in place to seek to prevent staff or students from being drawn into terrorism or victims of it. This will include training appropriate members of staff to understand the factors that make people support terrorist ideologies or engage in terrorist-related activity, and recognise vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism, and be aware of what action to take in response.
- 3.9 Key Staff are those that have regular contact with students or control access to substances and information of use to terrorists. A list of job roles designated as Prevent Key Staff will be maintained and regularly updated. This will be promulgated via the Quarterly Prevent Bulletin and data on numbers in date for training reported annually to OfS.
- 3.10 **IT Networks.** The University has in place web-filtering mechanisms to ensure that its IT networks or equipment cannot be used by staff or students to access, support, promote or facilitate harmful content, including extremism-related material, unless this is for *bona fide* teaching and research purposes as approved by the University. Communication of Policy on this matter will be covered in the University's Information Security Policy and the Policy related to IT Acceptable Use.
- 3.11 **Student Engagement and the Students' Union.** The University is committed to engaging with its students in relation to the Prevent Duty requirements and works with Northumbria Students' Union in this regard. This engagement includes collaboration and consultation on Prevent Duty Policy Statement requirements as developed and delivered by the University, representation of Student Union Officers and Management on the Prevent Coordinating Group, and ongoing dialogue to ensure that the arrangements between both parties are joined up and effective.

4 Referral and Reporting

- 4.1 The University's intended implementation of the Prevent Duty is not to challenge or re-shape the current relationship between staff and students, or between any other stakeholders who make up the Northumbria community. Instead, the focus is that, in the rare event that a member of our community – be it a staff member, student, or anyone else connected with the University – has a serious concern that someone else in our community is potentially being drawn into violent extremism or terrorism, they know where to seek advice and what to do with that concern.
- 4.2 When a concern is raised about an individual in line with the process following this paragraph, we will respond sensitively and appropriately, mindful of the fact that some of the factors which may appear as signs of a person's potential radicalisation might, in fact, be signs of a wide range of other support needs on the part of that individual. The University therefore recognises the difficulties in defining attitudes and behaviours which may suggest someone has been, or is being, drawn into terrorism but would encourage concerns to be reported as shown below. Possible indicators, which may suggest a referral are provided in the 'When to Refer' Guidance.
- 4.3 Where an individual is thought to be at imminent risk of harm to themselves or others, the University Security team should be contacted on the 24 hour emergency number: 0191 227 3200 or 999. For the University's London Campus, the emergency services should be called first and then University Security to ensure follow-up action is coordinated.
- 4.4 For Prevent-related concerns about students where there is not perceived to be an immediate threat *to the individual concerned or others*, a senior manager in Student Life and Wellbeing (SLW) should be contacted directly on 0191 227 4207 or 0191 227 3467. If neither is available, the concern should be raised via the main SSW contact number: 0191 227 4127. The lead should involve liaison with the Head of Governance as the Prevent Lead or, in her absence, the Head of Security for investigation which may require referral to the external authorities.
- 4.5 For concerns about staff where there does not appear to be an immediate threat *to the individual concerned or others*, the relevant HR Manager should be contacted with details of the concern. The HR Manager will liaise with the Head of Governance as the Prevent Lead or, in their absence, the Resilience Manager and the Head of Security for investigation, which may require referral to the external authorities.
- 4.6 It is recognised that allegations against, or concerns about staff and students may be submitted via other routes, including the Students' Union. In turn, these may be raised anonymously, in which case these will be raised as per the relevant routes above.
- 4.7 Allegations or concerns which are raised by anonymous individuals will be investigated where there are sufficient grounds or scope to be able to do so based on the information provided.

- 4.8 If a vexatious allegation is made by a student or staff member, disciplinary action may be taken against the person making the allegation. However, no action or detriment related to employment or study respectively will be taken against any member of staff or student who raises a genuine concern that proves to be unfounded.
- 4.9 The University may follow disciplinary procedures against any member of staff or student who is found to have committed criminal acts or any other misconduct related to terrorism, in the course of their studies or work activities, which may result in expulsion or dismissal.
- 4.10 The University has a legal duty to share information – in confidence – within the University, and with external authorities, on matters related to individuals assessed as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, or at risk of being complicit in terrorist activity. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if, as a result of an investigation, individuals are requested to participate in subsequent investigations by the statutory authorities.
- 4.11 A confidential record of all internal and external referrals made under this policy will be kept. In reaching any decision about external referral, the University will have regard to its obligations under its Data Protection Policy and the Data Protection Act 2018. Concerns will only be shared externally where there is a clear and compelling requirement to do so.
- 4.12 **Related safeguarding considerations.** Concerns about individuals being drawn into terrorism may raise related welfare and safeguarding considerations, due to the likelihood of increased personal vulnerability (e.g. due to the recruitment tactics employed by radicalisers) and the possibility of associated abuse. Additional referral options exist for such cases, which would be explored and agreed with external safeguarding and statutory agencies as required.

Further Information regarding the Prevent Duty and the University's prevent requirements can be provide dby:

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1.1	Georgina Bailes	01.03.2021	Update to Head of Governance
1.2	Andrew Coates	13.12.2022	Update to contact information
1.2	Clare Stogden	03.02.2023	Update to regulator and department name
2.0	Robert Wicks	12.09.2023	Review following Independent Review and CONTEST review