



HM Government

Channel duty guidance: **Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation**

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**Guidance for Channel panel members
and partners of local panels**

OGL

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Introduction

Guidance for members of a panel and partners of local panels in England and Wales on the duties under sections 36 and 38 Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the provision of support for people at risk of radicalisation.

Status and scope of the duty

1. This revised guidance replaces the guidance issued on 2 November 2020. It is issued under sections 36(7) and 38(6) of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (“CTSA 2015”) to support panel members and partners of local panels in England and Wales in the exercise of their functions; panel members and partners of local panels in England and Wales must have regard to this guidance. Separate guidance is in place for Scotland.
2. Section 36 CTSA 2015 sets out the duty for local authorities to ensure that there is a local panel in place to assess, and to provide support for, people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.¹ For the purpose of this guidance, the term ‘Channel’ refers to the local authority-led support and the duty as set out in CTSA 2015. In England and Wales, this duty is met through ‘Channel panels’.
3. Individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism are referred by the police to Channel panels.
4. Section 38 CTSA 2015 sets out the duty of cooperation for partners of Channel panels. Such partners are listed at Schedule 7 CTSA 2015.²
5. This guidance is specifically directed to members and partners of Channel panels involved in the Channel process. The requirements of Channel are statutory duties and it is recommended that they should be reflected in relevant local policy and guidance.
6. The purpose of this document is to:
 - provide guidance for Channel panels
 - provide guidance for panel partners on Channel delivery (that is, those authorities listed in Schedule 7 CTSA 2015 who are required to co-operate with Channel panels and the police in the carrying out of their respective functions under section 36 CTSA 2015)
 - explain why people may be susceptible to being radicalised into terrorism, committing acts of terrorism or supporting terrorism, and describe indicators that suggest this

¹ In line with the recommendations of the Independent Review of Prevent, the primary objective of Prevent, including Channel, is to prevent people from becoming terrorists and supporting terrorism, which corresponds with the duty under section 36 CTSA 2015.

² Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (legislation.gov.uk)

- provide guidance on the support that can be provided to safeguard those at risk of being drawn into terrorism
- explain how a Prevent referral is assessed to ensure only those meeting the Prevent threshold are progressed for support through Channel

Section 1:

Prevent

6. The aim of Prevent is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Delivery of Prevent is grounded in early intervention and safeguarding.
7. The UK Government remains absolutely committed to protecting freedom of expression. But preventing terrorism will mean challenging extremist (and non-violent) ideas that are also part of a terrorist ideology, including instances where there is an interest in extreme violence or mass casualty attacks. Prevent also facilitates interventions to stop people moving from extremist activity to terrorist-related activity.
8. Prevent addresses all forms of terrorism and we continue to prioritise according to the threat posed to our national security. The allocation of resources will be proportionate to the threats we face. The most significant of these threats is currently from terrorist activity associated with Islamist extremism. Extreme right-wing ideology is a growing threat. Other ideologies are less present, but still have the potential to motivate and/or be used to justify terrorism. The dominance of individuals or small groups acting without direction or material support from an organised terrorist group, the increasing diversity of terrorist groups overseas, and the societal impacts of technological change remain a concern.³
9. Prevent has three objectives in CONTEST⁴:
 - to tackle the ideological causes of terrorism;
 - to intervene early to support people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism; and
 - to rehabilitate those who have engaged in terrorist activity.

3 This list is not exhaustive. Risk and threat to the UK is subject to constant review and updated accordingly.

4 Counter-terrorism strategy (Contest) 2023 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2023>

10. Prevent continues to monitor emerging radicalisation trends and ideologies to establish whether they represent a terrorism risk or play a role in radicalising people. Practitioners should not only be alert to violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, including certain divisive or intolerant narratives which can be reasonably linked to terrorist ideologies. Information and analysis on extremism and terrorist ideologies is available from the Commission for Countering Extremism.⁵
11. Section 26 CTSA 2015 places a duty (“the Prevent duty”) on certain bodies in the exercise of their functions to have ‘due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’. Separate guidance has been issued on the Prevent duty.⁶
12. Radicalisation is the process of a person subscribing to extremist ideology. This can include legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence. The majority of people who commit terrorism offences do so of their own agency and dedication to an ideological cause.
13. There is no single pathway to being radicalised. There are many factors which can, either alone or combined, lead someone to subscribe to extremist ideology, and thereafter be drawn into or become an advocate of terrorism. These factors often include exposure to radicalising influences, real and perceived grievances (often created or exacerbated through grievance narratives espoused by extremists), and a person’s own susceptibility.
14. One objective of Prevent is to intervene early to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This means providing bespoke interventions for people who are susceptible to radicalisation. People might be susceptible to radicalisation due to a number of circumstances, needs, or other underlying factors. It should be noted that there is no single model of a person’s radicalisation journey or single profile of a radicalised person.
15. A person’s susceptibility to radicalisation may be linked to their specific vulnerabilities. A person can be vulnerable if they are in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, risk of abuse or neglect. In many cases, these factors or characteristics are relevant to their susceptibility to radicalisation and to the early intervention approach that is required to divert them away from radicalisation.
16. In other cases, such specific vulnerabilities may not be present or be relevant to their general vulnerability, or susceptibility, to being drawn into terrorism or to the early intervention approach required. Not all people susceptible to radicalisation will be a vulnerable person as a result of such factors, and there are other circumstances, needs, or other underlying factors that may make a person susceptible to radicalisation.

⁵ About us – Commission for Countering Extremism – GOV.UK

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

17. Channel remains a cornerstone of Prevent in providing early intervention to those who meet the Prevent threshold. While there is no fixed profile of a terrorist, thresholds for accessing Prevent support should be applied to determine whether a person is on a pathway that could lead to becoming a terrorist or supporting terrorism. Only referrals that are subsequently assessed by police as meeting this threshold should be progressed to Channel.
18. Prevent has adopted three pillars across the Prevent system to ensure consistency across the range of ideologies we deal with: firstly, ensuring that all activity is in support of Prevent objectives; secondly, ensuring that activity takes account of the current threat picture; and finally, focusing on training and guidance for Prevent experts and practitioners. For Channel, this means the adoption of strengthened safeguards at each stage of the Prevent pathway to ensure the application of thresholds is consistently applied. This includes:
 - At referral stage – the provision of training for frontline professionals and promotion of the national referral form to raise awareness and understanding of what constitutes an appropriate quality referral and how to progress this.
 - At assessment – the Prevent Assessment Framework (detailed in paragraphs 107 to 109), will provide clear standards with routes for progression against which all referrals are assessed by Counter Terrorism Policing, with training for case officers improving standards and consistent practice.
 - At case management stage – The Prevent Assessment Framework extends through the life of Channel case management so that those in receipt of Channel support are routinely assessed to ensure they remain appropriate for Channel or are signposted elsewhere for support where this is not the case.
19. At operational level, the Channel quality assurance framework (detailed in paragraphs 27 to 32), will provide strengthened oversight in the consistent application of thresholds, with direction or targeted support deployed to address identified disparities in operational practice.⁷

⁷ A recently commissioned Channel outcome evaluation, set to report in 2025 will provide clear evidence of the effectiveness of Channel and identify recommendations for improvement.

20. To ensure all Prevent delivery and activity are guided by the threat, decision-making at the strategic leadership level within Homeland Security and Counter Terrorism Policing will be informed by the Security Threat Check. The Security Threat Check is a series of principles as set out below:
- is this action mindful of the UK's current terrorism and extremism threat picture?
 - is this action proportionate when placed against the UK's current terrorism and extremism threat picture?
 - is this action likely to reduce the threat of terrorism or terrorist-adjacent narratives?⁸
21. A clear distinction should be made between people who present with a 'terrorism susceptibility' requiring Channel support and those who pose a 'terrorism risk' requiring management by the police. The process for undertaking assessments of risk and vulnerability informs this determination and is kept under review. Should there be an escalation of risk, the police may remove a case from Channel if appropriate.

Practice example 1: 'supporting those at risk of becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'

The factors indicating that someone meets the threshold for Prevent and would benefit from Channel support can be hugely variable. Whilst not exhaustive, this could include cases where people:

- are accessing extremist materials
- are espousing scripted ideological narratives
- are demonstrating acute behaviour changes in relation to our working definition of extremism
- have had potentially traumatic exposure to conflict zones
- are showing signs of intolerance towards people from different ethnic backgrounds, cultures or other protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010

Other complex needs can play a part in amplifying grievance narratives.

The assessment undertaken by police will ultimately determine whether a person is appropriate for consideration by a Channel panel.

⁸ While the Security Threat Check is recommended for Strategic Prevent Boards in the Home Office's Homeland Security Group (HSG) and for Counter Terrorism Policing, HSG believe that the adoption of these principles could be helpful to inform the decision making of other strategic Prevent Boards, such as when developing action plans in response to local risk assessments or Counter Terrorism Local Profiles. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-local-profiles-ctlps>

Case study 1: interest in extreme violence or mass casualty attacks.

A young person is receiving treatment for depression, which has included suicidal thoughts.

Child and adolescent mental health services support has identified concerns regarding an increasing interest with committing mass casualties at their school, which seems to have increased since receiving a school suspension for violent behaviour.

The young person recently disclosed engaging in chat rooms where they have been receiving encouragement to carry out these acts.

The desire to cause harm to self and others, interest in mass casualty attacks and potential external influences would make this a suitable case for referral into Prevent.

Section 2:

Channel

- 22.** Channel was first piloted in 2007 and rolled out across England and Wales in April 2012 before being placed on a statutory footing in 2015. Channel focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are at risk of radicalisation, supporting terrorism or committing terrorist acts. Section 36(1) (a) and (b) CTSA 2015 relates to a Channel panel in England and Wales, which should be a multi-agency partnership having the specific functions set out in section 36(4). Channel uses a multi-agency approach to:
- identify people at risk
 - assess the nature and extent of that risk
 - develop the most appropriate support plan for the person concerned
- 23.** Channel provides early support for anyone who is at risk of radicalisation, supporting terrorist organisations, or committing acts of terrorism, regardless of age, faith, ethnicity or background. People can receive support before they begin on, or once they are on a trajectory towards participating in terrorist-related activity. Cases should not be adopted onto Channel where no such terrorism concerns exist.
- 24.** The success of Channel is dependent on the co-operation and co-ordinated activity of partners. It works best when the person and their families engage and are supported consistently. Further information relating to consent for Channel support and engaging people and their families can be found in section 6 of this guidance.
- 25.** The police or local authority co-ordinate activity by requesting relevant information from panel partners about a referred person. The police will use this information to make an initial assessment of the nature and extent of the concerns. The information will then be presented to a Channel panel.

26. The Channel duty is intended to secure effective local co-operation and delivery of Channel and build on good practice. In practice, this means:

- local authorities will have a Channel panel in their area
- the local authority will provide the panel chair and deputy chair
- the panel will develop a support plan for people adopted as Channel cases
- where Channel is not appropriate, the panel will consider alternative forms of support, including health care and social care services
- the panel will ensure accurate records are kept detailing the support plan, agreed actions and decision-making, and outcomes
- all partners of a panel (as specified in schedule 7), as far as is appropriate and reasonably practicable, will co-operate with the police and the panel in carrying out their functions

Monitoring Channel duty compliance

27. Sections 36(7) and 38(6) CTSA 2015 require panels and partners to have regard to this guidance in both exercising panel functions and in cooperation with the panel and the police in carrying out their functions. There is a power for the Secretary of State to give directions where they are satisfied that a specified authority has failed to discharge the duty imposed on it by section 26(1) (the Prevent duty) under section 30 CTSA 2015.

28. National learning has highlighted the importance of compliance with Channel processes to reduce the risk of people being radicalised or supporting terrorism. Monitoring and oversight responsibilities should sit as part of local governance arrangements within the local authority. There is further detail in section 3 of this guidance. Nationally, an enhanced monitoring and escalation framework has been developed to assess compliance and strengthen the consistency of operational practice necessary to reduce the risk of people being radicalised or continuing on a path towards terrorism, by providing support and direction to panels and panel members as required. All specified authorities must have regard to this guidance and should evidence this through the Channel quality assurance framework.

29. The framework includes the following activities for the Home Office:

- reviewing referral and case data using the approved Home Office case management system
- Providing section 30 directions in exercising panel functions
- undertaking Channel observations
- providing advice and support
- offering panel or chair training
- undertaking Prevent learning reviews to identify national learning and implement recommendations for improvement

30. Local authorities can be supported in establishing regional Channel peer networks to share good practice and provide an additional source of advice and mutual support.

31. Prevent and Channel now feature within a range of inspection regimes. Adherence to this guidance should provide additional assurance that local cross-sector requirements to safeguard people susceptible to radicalisation or those at risk of committing or supporting terrorism are being worked towards.⁹ Where Prevent activity has fallen short of the standards set out in this guidance, practitioners and the public may raise concerns through an independent complaints function.¹⁰
32. Where serious case reviews, safeguarding adult reviews or domestic homicide reviews are triggered due to a serious incident or a death involving a person supported through Channel, input from local Prevent practitioners, including the Channel chair and Counter Terrorism Policing, should be sought to support the identification of practice improvements and shared learning. In these instances, the Home Office should be notified. Report findings, detailing recommendations and any identified learning should also be forwarded. Where terrorism offences or incidents of serious violence are committed by people with a Prevent history and a statutory review process is not triggered, a Prevent learning review may be undertaken to identify national learning and drive system improvement. Where these instances are assessed as high harm by the Home Office, Prevent learning reviews may run in tandem with statutory review processes.

Practice example 2: monitoring compliance

A newly appointed employee has adopted Channel chair responsibilities in a local authority area and has quickly observed that panel processes do not align with the national guidance.

A self-assessment is completed with input from panel members and external input is sought from the Home Office Channel quality assurance team to observe the Channel panel. Recommendations for improvement are made, which, along with identified areas for development within the annual assurance statement, are used to agree a six-month improvement plan.

9 Inspection regimes such as Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Care Quality Commission (CQC) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMCFRS) include elements of Prevent within their inspection frameworks. Some of these inspections may be initiated when concerns are raised.

10 The establishment of a Prevent standards and compliance unit was recommended in the Independent Review of Prevent. This recommendation was accepted and the new complaints function is expected to be operating from spring 2024. Prior to its operation, complaints will be processed through existing sector processes.

Practice example 3: monitoring compliance

An area has had no live Channel cases for 10 months, although the national case management database highlights that referrals are in line with the national average. A member of the Home Office Channel quality assurance team attends a Channel panel meeting to observe and identifies that the referrals presented for panel consideration generally met the threshold for accessing Channel support, however, there is a reluctance from panel members to adopt cases due to perceived stigmatisation of people. Referrals are instead redirected to alternative case management forums for discussion.

The Home Office observer makes recommendations for immediate application and suggests access to available training.

The progression of referrals is monitored at the Home Office for a period, with a view to offering further support if needed. An audit of non-adopted referrals is undertaken where these did not progress to police management.

The Home Office works with Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters to share any concerns and agree necessary steps for improvement in partnership with the local authority and police.

Section 3:

Channel panels and partners of a panel

Requirements for panels

- 33.** Section 36 CTSA 2015 places a duty on local authorities to ensure that a Channel panel is in place for their area.¹¹ This should constitute a single panel, which jointly covers the needs of both adults and children, with a single chair, and a single deputy chair. The local authority Channel chair and panel members should have confidence that their arrangements are appropriate to cater for the unique susceptibilities associated with those who may be at risk of supporting terrorism or committing terrorist acts.
- 34.** As a minimum, the local authority should ensure these meetings are serviced and administrated appropriately. The Channel panel chair should have the contact details of relevant local partners in their area to aid their ability to call meetings at short notice if required.
- 35.** Section 37(5) CTSA 2015 requires Channel panels to be chaired by the responsible local authority (that is, the authority responsible for ensuring a panel is in place). Chairs and deputy chairs should therefore both be a senior local authority officer. Members of the panel must include the responsible local authority and the police for the relevant local authority area under section 37(1) CTSA 2015, and they have principal responsibility for Channel in their areas. Under the CTSA 2015, the definition of a local authority is one of the following:
- a county council in England
 - a district council in England, other than a council for a district in a county for which there is a county council
 - a London Borough Council
 - the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority
 - the Council of the Isles of Scilly

11 Except in instances where combined arrangements have been agreed as detailed in paragraphs 43 to 44.

- a county council or county borough council in Wales
- a council constituted under section 2 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994

36. In the case of two-tier authorities, the county council should chair the panel and take on all the responsibilities as detailed in section 4 of the guidance.

37. Section 38 CTSA 2015 places a duty on all partners of a panel, as far as is appropriate and reasonably practicable, to co-operate with the police and the panel to carry out their functions under CTSA 2015. The local authority chair and the police will be present at each panel, as will other members, as determined by the responsible local authority (see section 37(4)). Schedule 7 CTSA 2015 lists the partners required to cooperate with the panel. If the responsible local authority chooses one of the schedule 7 partners to be a member of the panel, there is an expectation that the partner will agree to sit on the panel if requested.

38. Depending on the nature of the referral, representatives from the following groups may be requested to sit on the panel (this is not exhaustive):

- NHS
- social workers
- education, including schools, further education and higher education
- youth offending services
- children's and adults' services
- local safeguarding arrangements
- local authority safeguarding managers (adults and/or children)
- local authority Early Help services

- Home Office Border Force and Immigration Enforcement
- housing
- prisons
- probation providers

39. For organisations that are not panel partners or specified authorities under CTSA 2015, there may still be an expectation to engage with the Channel panel for the area. For example, NHS contract arrangements include a contractual obligation to pay due regard to Prevent, where it may be appropriate to engage with the local Channel panel.

Determining the lead authority for Channel

40. If a case involves two or more upper-tier local authority areas (e.g. if the person lives in one authority but works or attends education in another, or if a looked after child is the responsibility of one authority but housed in another), it is expected that the lead authority for the purposes of Channel will always be the authority where the person is living. There are two reasons for this:

- the person will draw on services local to their place of residence
- Counter Terrorism Policing responsibilities include managing risk in their respective policing area

41. This should not be affected by the person being temporarily absent from the area. Where people are placed temporarily outside of their normal place of residence, the placing authority should retain responsibility for convening the panel.¹² Where an adult is deemed to have no settled residence, the lead authority for Channel is then the authority where they are physically present.
42. The Department of Health and Social Care provides oversight and guidance on ordinary residence in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2015.¹³

Case study 2: residency and lead authority example

A 12-year-old child is the subject of a care order by area A, which has placed them in a children's home in area B.

The accommodation provider has submitted a referral following concerns the child is being influenced by radicalisers at school.

The referral is progressed in area B, where the child now resides and is adopted on Channel. Social care in area A provide consent for the child to receive Channel support.

The child's social worker in area A attends or reports into the Channel meetings and ensures the care plan is revised and updated, progressing any social care actions as needed. Other interventions, such as access to Connexions, input from school and mental health support, is provided through area B.

Area B can raise any concerns it has about the care plan direct with social care in area A or via area A's independent reviewing officer. Contact was made with the school to consider additional referrals and school support in relation to tackling the radicalising influences present there.

12 The courts have held that temporary or accidental absences, including, for example, holidays or hospital visits in another area, do not necessarily break the continuity of ordinary residence, and local authorities should take this into account.

13 Care and support statutory guidance – GOV.UK:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance

Combined panels

- 43.** Section 41(3) CTSA 2015 makes provision for two or more local authorities to have a panel in place for a combined area, allowing for proportionate and efficient use of resources. Where local authorities decide to run panels in conjunction with more than one other local authority, the authorities can determine between them who should chair the meeting. Panel members and the chair should be satisfied that the combined panel is fit for purpose and that it will effectively manage the terrorism concerns associated with cases supported through Channel.
- 44.** Combined panels should have the following members:
- representation from each local authority relevant to the referrals and cases to be discussed
 - police representation for each of the local authorities relevant to the referrals and cases
 - other panel members as referrals and cases dictate, which may also include partners listed in paragraph 38.

Practice example 4: combined panels

An area where there had been no Channel cases for 12 months opted to have a combined Channel panel with a neighbouring authority that also has a low number of Channel cases.

Meetings were scheduled monthly in advance, but only convened when the panel considered referrals or held a live case. Where no case discussions were required, quarterly meetings were convened to review practice and conduct panel development.

Chairing and deputy chairing responsibilities were split between the two areas with both attending panel meetings, providing opportunity to keep their skills, experience, and case exposure up to date.

Governance

- 45.** Channel panels are most effective when clear governance processes are in place to provide local oversight and ensure accountability. Each local authority area should determine the most appropriate governance arrangements for its Channel panel. Where there is a combined panel, Channel governance should feed into multi-agency arrangements as appropriate for each authority. Governance responsibilities could be held by existing statutory multi-agency partnerships, such as community safety partnerships or county strategy groups, or through other local strategic bodies such as CONTEST boards.

46. Functions of the governance arrangements may include assessing compliance with Channel duty requirements, overseeing implementation of development plans, and assessing referral data and anonymised case studies to monitor performance. To maintain clear lines of accountability, the chair for strategic governance must not hold responsibility for elements of Channel panel oversight or delivery. The local strategic governance structure should provide relevant data to inform development of the counter-terrorism local profile for the area. It should also be briefed on counter-terrorism local profile content and kept abreast of changes to the local threat picture.¹⁴ A process of escalation to strategic governance should be agreed and distributed to panel members, enabling them to raise concerns relating to the form or function of the Channel panel in the area.
47. Details of how to raise Prevent concerns or refer someone for assessment to receive support should be promoted locally by the local authority and partners. Where there are concerns that someone is either being radicalised or may be at risk of radicalisation, or there is a risk of them supporting terrorism or committing a terrorist act, a referral should be made to the police using the National Prevent Referral Form for assessment to determine whether support is required.¹⁵

14 A counter terrorism local profile is a report that outlines the threat and risk from terrorism-related activity within a specific area. Local Counter Terrorism Policing can provide further details.

15 Additional information can also be found on the ACT website (www.actearly.uk) and Get help for radicalisation concerns – GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-if-youre-worried-about-someone-being-radicalised

Section 4

Channel panel roles

The police counter-terrorism case officer and Channel co-ordinator

48. For the purpose of this guidance, any reference to the Channel case officer refers to either the police counter-terrorism case officer (CTCO) or the Home Office-funded Channel co-ordinator, employed by the local authority.¹⁶
49. All Channel case officers are responsible for:
- managing referrals and cases through the Channel process in accordance with the Channel guidance and case management principles

- ensuring that referrals are dealt with swiftly, and where appropriate, brought to the attention of the Channel panel as soon as possible
- ensuring case information is kept up to date, accurately recorded and retained on the Home Office-approved case management system
- regularly reviewing and amending the Prevent assessment framework (PAF) as a case progresses to accurately reflect all relevant Prevent concerns and terrorism risk¹⁷

In addition, the CTCO is responsible for:

- assessing any escalating risk associated with the person's potential involvement in terror-related activity

16 The Channel co-ordinator role referenced here relates only to those local authorities designated by the Home Office to make the section 36 decision.

17 The Prevent assessment framework (PAF) is a new tool used to assess a person's risk and susceptibilities to radicalisation, their risks of supporting terrorism or committing a terrorist act and their suitability to access Prevent support. There will be a pilot before the PAF is scheduled for wider roll out. For the purpose of this guidance, all references to the PAF refer to both the current vulnerability assessment framework as detailed in Annex B, and the new tool following transition.

- transferring cases to police-led partnership or into Pursue wherever appropriate¹⁸

50. The CTCO should attend every Channel panel. The chair should also consider the value of having local policing as standing members to add local context and provide local support and tactical options.

The local authority chair

51. Section 37(2) CTSA 2015 stipulates requirements relating to the local authority and the police representatives. The local authority representative, the Channel chair, should be a designated officer within the responsible local authority. Where a panel covers more than one local authority area, chairing responsibilities should be agreed between the authorities.

52. Chairing a Channel panel is a significant responsibility. Therefore, the local authority chief executive officer, or the equivalent head of paid service, should be satisfied that the designated chair has the required skills and experience and sufficient capacity and resource to fulfil these functions. This should be an officer with the appropriate authority to facilitate the engagement of multi-agency partners and the direction of their resources to help deliver the support plan. To build resilience into the process, a deputy chair role should also be designated to a local authority officer of similar standing as the chair. An annual assurance statement issued by the Home Office will be requested from the local authority and must detail

the named officers designated by the chief executive officer to fulfil these roles and to confirm suitable arrangements are in place to meet the requirements set out in this guidance. The local authority should notify the Home Office where there are any changes to the named officers fulfilling the chair and deputy roles.

53. To enable the chair and deputy chair to take full ownership of the Channel process and apply appropriate challenge where necessary, neither role should hold line management responsibility for officers leading Channel case management delivery, nor hold responsibility for strategic governance to which Channel is accountable. As a minimum, when appointing the chair and deputy chair, the following core competencies should be applied to ensure responsibilities are fulfilled to a consistently high standard:

- holding sufficient authority to direct multi-agency delivery
- having previous experience in chairing multi-agency meetings
- having a sound understanding of Channel, within the context of Prevent and CONTEST
- not holding a position or having line management responsibility for elements of Channel case management delivery
- not holding responsibility for Channel strategic governance
- committing to complete training as required

54. While not mandatory, it is recommended that chairs and deputy chairs of Channel panels acquire UK national vetting

18 Pursue is a strand of CONTEST 2023 aimed at stopping terrorist attacks in this country and against UK interests overseas. Further information on police-led partnerships is detailed in paragraph 124.

clearance at 'Security Check' (SC) level to enable police to share more sensitive information with them and to strengthen local authority involvement in police-led partnership case management. Requests for security clearance vetting should be directed to the Home Office.

55. The Channel panel chair is responsible for:

- overseeing all Channel cases in their area
- inviting the appropriate representatives to each meeting as panel members
- establishing effective relationships across partners of the panel to ensure effective co-operation over information sharing, attendance at panel meetings and delivery of support¹⁹
- ensuring a person (independent of Channel panel membership) is available at each panel meeting to take minutes
- establishing the appropriate support plan for identified people, which takes account of wider family context and needs, by using the expertise of the panel
- ensuring that susceptibilities of people at risk of radicalisation are assessed by the panel and accurately reflected in Channel minutes
- putting an effective support plan in place and ensuring consent is sought from the person (or their representative) before support is accessed
- tasking the most appropriate panel member to update the person and families on progress where appropriate
- ensuring people and/or organisations on the panel carry out their elements of the support plan, holding partners to account where necessary through proactive management of actions, enquiries and interventions
- ensuring all panel discussions, decisions and the rationale for decisions are accurately reflected within the Channel panel minutes
- ensuring draft minutes are circulated to all core panel members for review and are approved by the panel at the next scheduled meeting
- ensuring appropriate information exchange occurs where people transfer between services
- ensuring the panel functions effectively to address identified susceptibilities
- actively addressing or escalating issues of non-engagement within partner organisations or concerns relating to local Channel form or function through local governance arrangements where needed
- applying professional judgement and providing the casting vote on the adoption of cases and panel decisions where there is no consensus and no clear majority among panel members
- highlighting and requesting that identified gaps in local service provisions are considered by commissioners
- putting information sharing arrangements in place for the panel in compliance with the data protection legislation, in partnership with local information governance and legal teams²⁰

¹⁹ This includes ensuring that where the person is in education, the education setting is invited to be a participant in the Channel process. Additionally, when a participant is involved in education and then changes education setting, the new education setting is invited to join the panel and contribute to the support.

²⁰ See sections 3(9) and (10) Data Protection Act 2018.

- liaising with other local authority teams (such as child and adult social care) if appropriate, to ensure that Channel support is aligned and co-ordinated with other safeguarding processes

56. The chair should be briefed by the Channel case officer before the panel to aid agenda setting, support meeting preparations and identify which panel members should be in attendance. The pre-brief must only be used to provide a summary of referrals for consideration at the panel. It should be concise, brief and must not be treated as a decision-making forum or a filter for considering Channel referrals.

Panel members

57. Multi-agency involvement in the Channel process is essential to ensure that people at risk of radicalisation have access to a wide range of support, from specialist services to diversionary activities. It also ensures the full range of information is accessible to the panel, so that ideological drivers, risk, vulnerabilities and support needs can be fully assessed.
58. Panel members have a responsibility to work collaboratively with the chair and panel partners to help mitigate identified risk and susceptibilities. This will include attending panel meetings as required, contributing towards the support plan, and sharing information as necessary and proportionate to the effective working of the panel (in line with the panel's locally agreed information-sharing agreement). Panel members attend the local Channel panel not as experts in counter-terrorism, but as experts in their respective profession and the local service and support provision.

Where possible, core membership of Channel should be consistent in terms of agency representation to ensure effective management of cases.

59. Schedule 7 CTSA 2015 sets out the partners required to co-operate with local panels, though membership of panels should be tailored to reflect local provision. Practitioners should draw on sector-based guidance where this exists. For example, guidance is available for mental health services on their roles and service standards.
60. Where the case involves a serving member of the armed forces, an appropriate representative from that service who is familiar with the person's circumstances may be invited to attend. This would be subject to getting consent from the person receiving support.
61. In two-tier arrangements, the Channel case officer must contact the Prevent lead for the district or borough council to request information to inform the PAF. Borough or district councils should be included within Channel information-sharing agreements to facilitate this information exchange. It is also good practice for the county council Channel chair to liaise with representatives at the district or borough council level where the person lives to keep them updated on referrals within their area, and to invite these representatives to attend the panel where appropriate.

Section 5:

Channel process

Identifying people susceptible to radicalisation

62. There is no single way of identifying who is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism or supporting terrorism. Factors may include:
- peer or family pressure
 - influence to support an ideology from other people or via the internet
 - bullying
 - being a victim or perpetrator of crime
 - anti-social behaviour
 - family tensions
 - hate crime
 - lack of self-esteem or identity
 - personal or political grievances
63. All Channel case officers and local authorities should develop effective links between services, such as the education sector, social services, health, children's and youth services, offender management services and credible community organisations, so services are well placed to identify and refer people at risk of being radicalised, into committing terrorist acts or supporting terrorism.
64. Channel case officers and local authorities should use their networks to highlight the importance of protecting those who are susceptible to radicalisation and to raise awareness about how Channel can offer support. Details of available training for practitioners is provided in section 7 of this guidance. It is not expected that panel members, or professionals making a referral, are experts in terrorism or radicalisation, but they should be experienced practitioners in their own field.

65. When assessing terrorism susceptibility, consideration should be given to contextual safeguarding principles, and the full range of relevant indicators, influencing factors and relationships that may have an impact on a person's level of risk, individual agency, and any associated vulnerabilities. This may include direct contact with extremists, community, family influences or the influence of wider networks, such as materials sourced via online or social media platforms. The panel should consider alignment and co-ordination with other support structures, available to address wider safeguarding needs (e.g. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference or a child in need plan), though these should be in parallel with rather than in place of Channel.²¹ A safeguarding overview is provided in section 9 of this guidance.

²¹ The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference is a partnership response to supporting victims of domestic abuse.

Case study 3: contextual safeguarding and variation in support package

A 15-year-old pupil began receiving support through Channel following a Prevent referral from their school.

The pupil had disclosed making plans to travel to continental Europe after becoming fixated on an extreme right-wing group based there.

Further discussions revealed the pupil was being influenced by a third party with known links to this group.

Enquiries were ongoing with police to identify the third party.

Initial support centred on reducing the immediate risk of travel with an emergency Channel panel meeting convened between the Channel chair, social care and police to consider the necessary legal safeguards to do this.

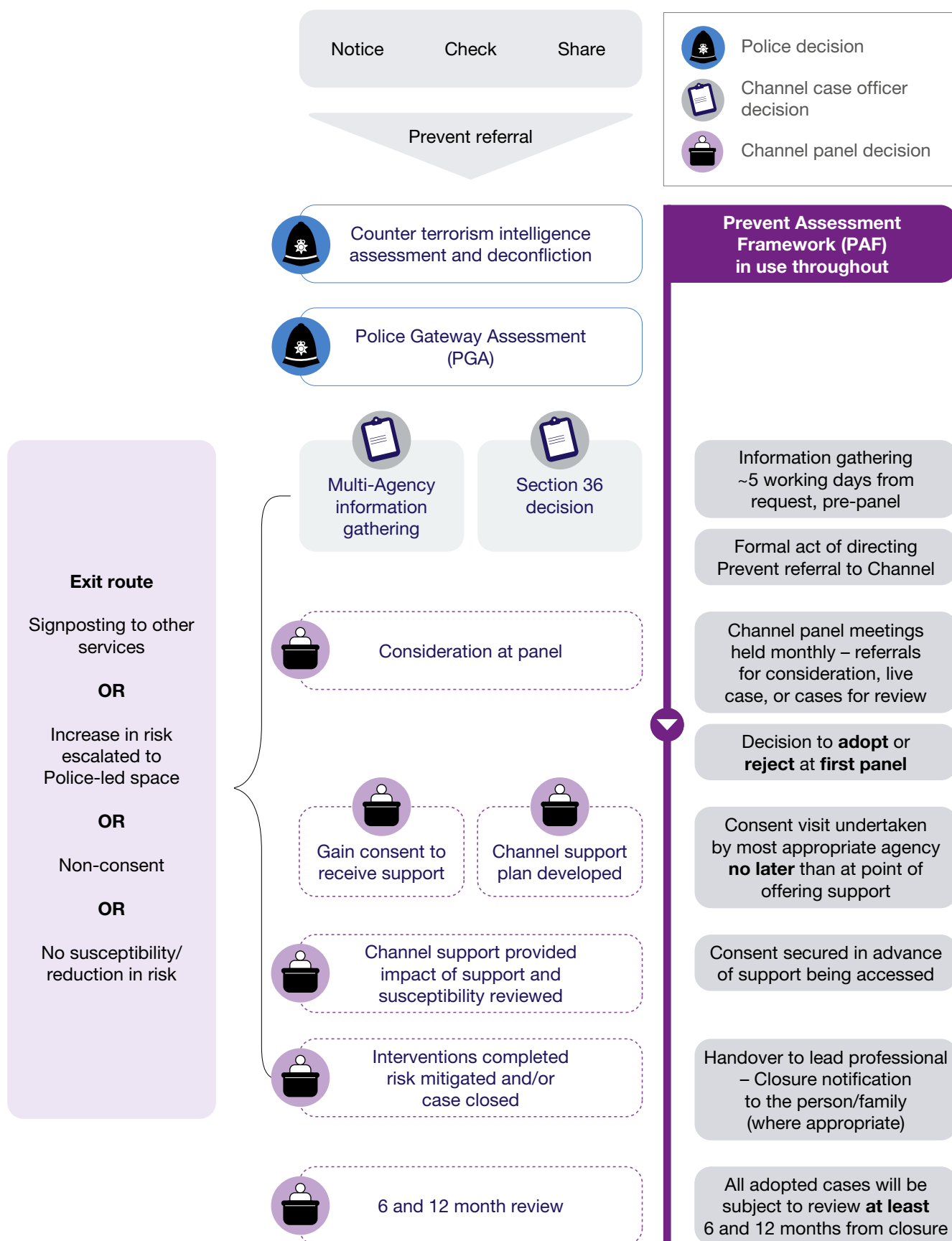
The resulting support plan accounts for changes in situation, with the sequencing of interventions informed by need and responsiveness to the support provided.²² Parents engaged with planned support and were updated on progress.

Risk indicators and protective factors	Intervention	Provider	Sequencing
Over-identification with group, cause or ideology	Travel restrictions put in place	Social care/ police	First
Susceptibility to indoctrination	Ideological support provided	Home Office-approved Intervention Provider (IP) ²³	Second
Strengthen parental protective factors	Parental training provided on internet awareness	Early Help	Third
Grievance or injustice	Advice on further education options	Connexions	Fourth
Grievance or injustice	Pastoral support provided	School	Fifth
Susceptibility to indoctrination	IP sessions resumed for a short period to re-assess ideological drivers and identify potential disguised compliance after third party influence resumed	Home Office-approved IP	Sixth

²² There is no time limit linked to the provision of Channel support. Cases should remain open until the panel is satisfied that the terrorism concerns have been sufficiently reduced or managed.

²³ Information about Home Office Intervention Providers (IPs) are detailed in paragraphs 163 to 166.

Diagram 1: Pathway Diagram



Referral stage

- 66. Prevent referrals are often likely to be made by people who come into contact with those who appear to be at risk of radicalisation, usually following a degree of deliberation on the part of the referrer. Individuals making a referral should follow the 'Notice, Check, Share' procedure before making a referral to the police.²⁴
- 67. Where a Prevent referral is made, it is good practice for the police or Channel case officer to contact the referrer where it is appropriate to do so. This may be in instances where clarification is needed on aspects of the referral.
- 68. A Prevent referral can only be considered if it is progressed through the pathway detailed in diagram 1.

Screening and information gathering stage

- 69. The primary route for people identified as having Prevent relevant concerns is support through local authority-led, multi-agency Channel panels.
- 70. All Prevent referrals are triaged in the first instance by specialist police officers and staff. These officers determine whether there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a person is at risk of radicalisation, and therefore appropriate for support through Prevent. This 'gateway assessment' draws upon police databases and other resources to determine the level of susceptibility and risk around the referred person, and whether they are appropriate for Prevent.
- 71. If the initial information received through the referral shows there is not a susceptibility that puts the person at risk of radicalisation or supporting terrorism, then they are not suitable for Channel. The Channel case officer will refer the person to other more appropriate support services. The reasons for that referral and details of onward signposting must be recorded appropriately. This will ensure that only referrals where there is a genuine concern of this kind are progressed to Channel.
- 72. Those whom the police reasonably suspect pose a serious or imminent risk of terrorism offending are unlikely to be recommended for support through Channel. Depending upon the type and level of terrorism risk identified by police, these cases may be adopted for management in the police-led partnership or escalated into the Pursue space.
- 73. The gateway assessment should determine the most appropriate forum to discuss the referral. Those that are appropriate for consideration at Channel are subject to a further, more detailed Prevent assessment led by the Channel case officer. The PAF is informed by information sharing with wider Channel partners and must be circulated to core Channel panel members before the meeting. As part of this more detailed assessment, the local authority should ascertain to what extent services are already involved with the person, including through immediate family,

²⁴ Details are provided in the GOV.UK Get help for radicalisation concerns and in section 7 of this guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-if-youre-worried-about-someone-being-radicalised>

and liaise with relevant teams to ensure safeguarding processes are aligned with the Channel process where appropriate.

74. If, following completion of the gateway assessment and multi-agency information gathering, the referral is deemed to be appropriate for consideration at Channel by the section 36 decision, it should be recorded on the Home Office-approved case management system used for recording and managing Channel cases. The CTCO should receive, or as a minimum be sighted on, partner responses to the request for information. All assessments and minutes of Channel meetings must be recorded on this system.²⁵

The Channel panel process

75. When a referral is first presented for consideration, the Channel panel must decide whether or not to adopt. This should include the adoption of cases while a person's consent for support is being secured, or where further information gathering is being undertaken. A decision on case adoption must be made. Decisions must not be deferred, nor referrals held for a period of 'monitoring' by panels without adoption.
76. Where a decision is made to adopt, the most appropriate agency should be identified to seek consent to access Channel support (as outlined in paragraphs 145 to 150), and panel can begin considering the provision of support aligned with factors identified
- within the PAF. Where this involves under 18s, the consent of their parent or guardian is required.
77. Where consent is secured, the panel will develop a support plan (in line with requirements detailed within paragraphs 134 to 135), and sequence support interventions to reflect both need and risk. There is a clear expectation that Channel cases remain open until either of the following:
- the panel deems that the terrorism susceptibility has sufficiently reduced to warrant exit
 - the terrorism risk has increased, and the case is escalated to the police for consideration
 - consent to access support is not secured or is withdrawn
78. The Channel panel may also determine whether contact with the referee is needed during the provision of case support, to advise them on either the outcome of their referral or provided with advice on any continuing engagement with the person concerned. In these instances, the panel should determine which professionals are best placed to make those discussions. Assurances should be given that re-referrals can be made where concerns continue, or escalate.
79. Every case adopted into Channel is kept under review and routinely re-assessed for any changes to identified susceptibilities and risks in relation to terrorism-connected offending. If there

25 The Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 extended provision for local authorities designated by the Home Office to make the section 36 decision. Within those designated local authorities, this decision is typically made by the supervisor of the Channel case officer. Steps are underway to end the local authority pilots and revert the case management function in these pilot locations to police, who will undertake all section 36 decisions following this transition.

is an escalation of risk, where deemed appropriate, the police may transfer a case from Channel to police-led partnership management or escalate it into Pursue.

80. Where consent is not secured within three months, the case will need to be closed to Channel. Police will need to consider whether sufficient concerns remain for escalation to Police-led partnership (see paragraph 124) or for an onward referral to health or social care.

Case closure

81. Where the panel has decided to close a case, the person receiving support should receive notification that their case is being closed and that they will no longer receive support through Channel. This should include confirmation that ongoing support received through mainstream services will be unaffected by this decision.
82. Designating oversight to a lead professional at the point of case closure where ongoing support is being provided through mainstream services, provides continued assurance that a person can be brought back to panel attention quickly should concerns re-emerge. The panel is best placed to identify which agencies will be continuing to engage with the person beyond the point of Channel case closure and to identify a lead professional to which ongoing oversight can be designated. Frontline practitioners involved in providing continuing support must be informed that Channel no longer has case oversight and advised on how to re-refer the person in for Prevent re-assessment should concerns materialise.
83. In cases where family has been identified as a protective factor for the person, a letter will be sent to the designated family contact. For under 18s, this is likely to be a parent or guardian. For adults, permission to liaise with a family contact must be captured on the consent form at the point of getting consent to access Channel support. Where no permission for an adult has been given to keep a family contact up to date, a letter cannot be issued. The family letter must include confirmation that the person is no longer being supported through Channel, and that while some mainstream service provision will continue beyond this point, Channel no longer has case oversight to monitor Prevent-related concerns. The letter must include advice on the steps to re-refer the person in for Prevent reassessment where concerns continue, return, or escalate.
84. The appropriateness of engaging family members as part of the support plan and as part of the strengthened oversight following the end of Channel support will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. This will, in part, be determined by the extent to which family are a protective factor. This will not be appropriate if there are concerns that family may be a radicalising influence.
85. In cases involving a child/young person (under 18), where case closure arises due to the person receiving a custodial sentence for a non-TACT offence, the CTCO must forward details that Prevent concerns remain, to the Youth Custody Service via the central mailbox. The Youth Custody Service will in turn provide this information to the relevant secure estate prior to the person entering custody. If the person was aware that they were in Prevent,

they should be notified that they have been exited from Prevent due to their custodial sentence. Should the secure estate require further details, these can be requested from Counter Terrorism Policing.

Reviewing Channel cases

86. All cases which have been adopted by a Channel panel must, as a minimum, be reviewed by the panel at least 6 months and 12 months from the point of case closure. At the point of closure, it is the responsibility of the Channel case officer to accurately record the closure on the case management database to ensure review triggers are flagged at the appropriate time. This review process must be undertaken for all Prevent referrals that are adopted by the panel, including Channel cases that are adopted but are subsequently referred elsewhere or offered support under Channel. The review process should be informed by relevant information from Channel partners to the Channel case officer. Information should be submitted within five working days of the request being made and should include police checks, relevant service involvement, change of circumstances, current social care involvement, any concerns since case closure and contact with the initial referrer. Chairs have discretion to accept partner information updates as part of the panel meeting where these arrangements have been agreed in advance. The review should also include checking with the designated family contact (where appropriate) that Prevent concerns have not re-emerged.

87. Where new information that may have an impact on risk comes to light regarding a closed case pending review at 6 or 12 months, the Channel chair will be notified and the case subject to re-assessment by the police.

88. Panels will have discretion to undertake more frequent reviews within the 12-month period and to include a further review (at a specified period) beyond the 12-month period if there are still concerns that the person may be at risk of radicalising influences or is facing a life change which may place them at risk (e.g. bereavement, loss of employment or relationship breakdown). This should be determined on a case-by-case basis.²⁶ CTSA 2015 makes provision for further panel assessments to be conducted under section 36 (4)(e).

Exit reviews

89. Panels should strive to improve their practice and effectiveness in reducing terrorism susceptibility and tailoring support plans to needs identified in the PAF. To enable panels to gain greater insight into their practice, consideration should be given to capturing the experience of individuals exiting the Channel process, which could be used to highlight good practice or areas requiring improvement.

26 Where panel determines the need for reviews beyond the initial 12-month period, these should not exceed a further 12 months. Where concerns remain 24 months following case closure, a re-referral into Prevent must be made.

Co-operation by partners of a panel

- 90. Partners of a panel may be requested to provide information about a person to the Channel case officer during the information gathering stage. It is considered good practice for the panel to draft a local information-sharing agreement to accelerate the appropriate sharing of information. A template for local adaptation is available on the Knowledge Hub.²⁷
- 91. Section 38 CTSA 2015 requires the partners listed in schedule 7 to co-operate with the panel and the police, including providing any relevant information, so that they can determine whether a person is at risk of committing or supporting terrorism. Partners are expected to respond to the Channel case officer within five working days of receipt of any information requests.

Information sharing

- 92. The partners of a panel must co-operate with the panel and the police in carrying out their functions for Channel. The duty to co-operate extends only as far as is compatible with the partners' functions provided by law. Compliance with the duty does not require or authorise the making of a disclosure that would contravene the data protection legislation and it is important to consult local organisational information governance leads and legal advisors as appropriate.

- 93. The data protection legislation is not a barrier to lawful information sharing, but instead provides a framework for sharing personal data lawfully, securely and appropriately.²⁸ Under the data protection legislation, there must be a lawful basis to process (e.g. share) personal data – for example, when fulfilling a statutory function such as that set out in section 36 CTSA 2015. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website provides guidance on the data protection legislation and, for convenience, a copy of its guidance on lawful basis can be found in Annex A.
- 94. When requesting information from or sharing information with partners, the basis for making the request should be stated clearly. When responding to a request to share information, the grounds for doing so must be legitimate and in accordance with the law. Information should only be used for a purpose compatible with the purpose for which it was processed originally.
- 95. Information shared for the purposes of Channel will often include special category data. There are further requirements for the lawful processing of such data under the data protection legislation. Further information is detailed in Annex A.

27 Knowledge Hub: www.khub.net/group/prevent1

28 Human Rights Act 1998 – legislation.gov.uk: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents

96. Consent to share information is distinct from consent to receive support. These two issues should not be conflated or treated as a single consent. Even where it seems that consent to share personal data has been given, a public authority should consider whether it provides an appropriate lawful basis (see ICO's guidance).
97. Processing authorities must be aware of the individual rights of the data subject and the data controller must take steps to ensure the subjects' individual rights are respected. More information on individual rights can be found on the ICO website.²⁹
98. If a panel partner has any concerns about the appropriateness of sharing the requested information, they should consult with the Channel case officer, the local authority Channel panel chair, legal advisers, and their own information governance teams for assurance as to its lawfulness.
99. If panel partners have provided information for the Channel panel, it is highly likely that they will be invited to attend the meeting to discuss the individual case. Panel partners invited to meetings should attend to discuss the full range of a person's susceptibilities and seek expert advice from attendees.

29 Information Commissioner's Office: www.ico.org.uk

Practice example 5: cross-sector information sharing

An employer referred an employee, after Islamist extremist materials were left on a work photocopier and staff had reported their increased intolerance towards non-Muslim colleagues.

Following the Prevent referral, information was requested and the following responses were received from partners:

- Early Help – accessed domestic abuse and parenting advice but disengaged from services
- mental health – previously received services but case closed due to non-attendance
- housing – individual is sole tenant and lives with spouse and two children
- anti-social behaviour team – neighbours report as abusive, and tenant is threatening to staff (tenancy enforcement pending and individual is on the ‘potentially violent persons’ register)
- local policing – attended to reports of domestic abuse, and previous conviction for violent disorder with use of a weapon linked to an Islamist extremist group activity

An established Channel panel information-sharing agreement set out the appropriate lawful basis for sharing, with an appropriate framework ensuring compliance with the other data protection principles, to allow the swift exchange of relevant and proportionate information, once it was determined that the case met the necessary conditions.

A comprehensive picture of the person and family circumstances was developed. Context was provided for their spouse’s service disengagement and potential coercion.

The panel identified the most appropriate agency to discuss Channel with the person and seek consent for support.

Risk to their spouse, children and staff was factored into discussions and mitigating actions agreed. Support was re-opened to the family.

Actions, decision-making rationale, progress and outcomes were accurately recorded within the Channel minutes.

Disclosure and confidentiality

- 100.** Channel is a voluntary programme where the person consents to receive support to address their terrorism susceptibilities and reduce the risk to them. They should therefore not be subject to any negative consequences as a result of their involvement in Channel (unless criminality subsequently becomes apparent). Where a Prevent referral is adopted onto Channel, insofar as possible, the details of those interventions should remain confidential and should not be routinely disclosed outside of the partners involved in the Channel process.
- 101.** While Channel is a confidential and voluntary process, information shared for the purposes of Channel may be disclosed to a third party when it is legal, necessary and proportionate to do so (e.g. to a family court). This must be judged in the individual case.
- 102.** Where a case also triggers safeguarding thresholds or where concerns arise involving people in positions of trust, the relevant onward referral to local safeguarding processes should be made. For cases involving people in positions of trust, the chair will need to balance confidentiality with wider safeguarding concerns and may consider on a case-by-case basis whether there is a need to notify relevant contacts (including a person's employer) when it is appropriate and necessary.
- 103.** Information relating to a person's Channel support package – for example, Channel minutes or IP reports, may be subject to disclosure where there is a legal requirement to do so or the law enables the disclosure to be made and the necessary conditions are met. Requests for disclosing Channel documentation can come from several sources, including:
- courts (including family and coroners' courts, and tribunals)
 - Independent Office for Police Conduct
 - Crown Prosecution Service
 - subject access requests
- 104.** While documents such as the PAF will be controlled by the authoring organisation, members of the Channel panel who receive this document may need to disclose it if required. Document disclosure should be with the agreement of the authoring organisation on advice from local information governance and legal teams. Documentation linked to Channel must only be held on the Home Office-approved case management system. No other systems (such as social care systems) must be used to retain Channel-related documentation.
- 105.** Where a request to disclose information is received, the purpose of the disclosure should be specified and recorded in all cases. Before disclosure is made, the request should be carefully considered to establish whether it is appropriate to disclose all or some of the information. An informed decision should be made about how much information to disclose. There should be a lawful basis for sharing information and it must be necessary and proportionate to do so. Further details are provided in Annex A.

- 106.** Channel partners should read a confidentiality declaration at the start of each meeting to ensure they understand and agree these principles of confidentiality. The minutes must reflect the panel members' agreement to the confidentiality statement, which should include those partners inputting virtually.

Prevent assessment framework (PAF)

- 107.** Channel will assess people using the Prevent Assessment Framework (PAF), which will provide an overview of a person's susceptibility to radicalisation, and their risks of committing or supporting terrorism, from the police gateway assessment stage and throughout their time on Channel.
- 108.** The PAF will support the triaging of a person and ensure that their case is progressed appropriately based on the level of counter-terrorism concern.³⁰ When progressed into Channel, the PAF will provide a tiered approach to support and decision-making based on the identification of any relevant counter-terrorism factors or susceptibilities, and will require a corresponding support plan to be in place to address each identified factor.
- 109.** There is no single route to terrorism, nor is there a simple profile of those who become involved. For this reason, any attempt to derive a 'profile' can be misleading. It must not be assumed that these characteristics and experiences will necessarily lead to people becoming

terrorists, or that these indicators are the only source of information required to make an appropriate assessment. The PAF will serve as a live document that keeps each factor closely under review to monitor progress effectively, allowing for a change in approach to case management as necessary.

Links with extremist groups

- 110.** Membership and inviting or expressing support for a proscribed organisation are criminal offences under Terrorism Act 2000.³¹ It may be appropriate in some cases to refer someone on the periphery of proscribed organisations to Prevent for support. Professionals at a local level should contact the police where there are concerns that a proscription offence may have been committed. Where these concerns come to light within Channel panel discussions, it is the role of the CTCO to escalate them.
- 111.** If professionals at a local level determine that someone attracted to the ideology of proscribed groups also shows additional behavioural indicators that suggest they are moving towards terrorism, then it would be appropriate to make a referral. The presence of additional behavioural indicators would inform whether a referral should be made and considered for adoption at Channel.

³⁰ Counter-terrorism concern includes an assessment of harm to self, others or the wider public. It incorporates escalation towards non-violent terrorism-related offences (as per the breadth of the UK's terrorism legislation), in addition to plans or attempts to commit any relevant acts of violence.

³¹ A list of proscribed groups can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2

Transferring Channel cases

112. Where a case has been adopted by a Channel panel in one area, and the person relocates to another area, the case should be transferred to the Channel panel of the new local authority (the receiving panel). It should be assumed that the case would be automatically adopted at the receiving panel, or as a minimum, a panel discussion held to discuss closure and a rationale for the decision recorded in the minutes. Consent to access support will not be needed again. In these instances, the receiving panel will lead reviews post-case closure. Where a panel has closed a case, but the person has since relocated to a different area, the closing panel will conduct the review, but may contact agencies in the panel of relocation for any information to inform the review discussion.

113. The Channel case officer in the transferring area should amend the case management system to reflect the transfer, allowing access to case information. This should be accompanied by a police notification to the receiving police force area. The chair should request contact details for the Channel chair within the receiving local authority area from the Home Office. The originating Channel chair, in partnership with the Channel case officer, should have a discussion with the receiving Channel chair to provide some context and rationale to the case and follow up in writing. The principles of 'ordinary residence' should be followed where case transfers are considered. The lead authority should always be the authority where the person lives or is present. Details relating to the lead authority are provided in paragraphs 40 to 42.

114. Where the panel decides liaison with authorities abroad is required, these discussions will be led by police.

Case study 4: case transfer

A 19-year-old had been receiving Channel support for six months, after being targeted by an Islamist extremist group. The person received support from an IP and from Connexions, securing a Prince's Trust placement and exploring employment options.

After being thrown out of the family home, they began sofa-surfing and eventually decided to move to a different location with their partner.

As their risk of radicalisation remained, the case was transferred to the Channel panel in their new location.

Details were changed on the case management system and the Channel chair sent a secure email to the receiving panel's chair with an overview of the person's circumstances and support plan.

The case was added to the agenda of the next scheduled meeting and following panel discussion was subsequently adopted. The decision and rationale were recorded in the minutes.

After a review of the PAF and support plan, housing and employment were identified as areas requiring particular focus.

Channel, targeted support and offender management

Prisons

- 115. Channel can be used where appropriate to support people at risk of committing or supporting terrorism as a consequence of radicalisation who are serving custodial sentences for non-terrorism offences and who are referred as part of internal risk management processes. This can apply in cases where people are due to be released from prison and need some form of intervention or support before or following release to address identified terrorism susceptibilities. Police and probation will continue to have a role in assessing risk, vulnerability and the influence of potential radicalising sources.
- 116. The decision to refer an offender to Prevent must be agreed in close consultation with prison staff and the Probation Service.
- 117. Where people who have been adopted onto Channel are subsequently held on remand, the case can be retained on Channel for the period of remand. However, the panel will need to make this decision, informed by the probation assessment of remand timescales. The Channel responsibility will remain within the location of the person's release or bail address.

Probation and youth offending

- 118. Offenders who are supervised in the community by a provider of probation or youth offending services, and are at risk of being radicalised or of committing or supporting terrorism, may be managed by both the appropriate offender management service and Prevent.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

- 119. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are reserved for those who present the highest risk of harm in their local community. Most people are managed within MAPPA because of the nature of their offending. In some cases, agencies may determine that a person's risk and vulnerability is so high that it is best managed through the MAPPA process.
- 120. Where this is the case, the multi-agency public protection panel can, if necessary, seek the advice of the Channel case officer. It should be noted that all offenders convicted of TACT offences will be managed through MAPPA and will not be suitable for Channel.
- 121. Where license conditions have ended for a MAPPA TACT offender, yet part 4 reporting requirements remain, these are not appropriate for Channel case management.³² Counter Terrorism Policing is responsible for overseeing these cases.

32 Part 4 of the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008 provides a notification regime for individuals sentenced to 12 months' or more imprisonment for a specified terrorism offence or (in England, Wales and Scotland) an offence with a terrorism connection. The regime requires notification of information about individuals' names and dates of birth, addresses at which individuals stay and foreign travel.

- 122.** However, where an offender is MAPPA-eligible for other (non-TACT) offences, managed through ordinary agency (level 1) MAPPA meetings, and deemed to be at risk of committing or supporting terrorism, a Prevent referral should be made.³³ It will then be for the lead agency to liaise with the local Channel panel to determine how this risk should best be managed. MAPPA cases (with a higher status than level 1) are not suitable for management in Channel.

Desistance and Disengagement Programme

- 123.** The purpose of the Desistance and Disengagement Programme is to support the overarching risk management of people who have been involved in terrorism or terrorism-related activity and reduce the risk they pose to the UK. It aims to achieve this by providing rehabilitative support to people and contribute to wider available capabilities that manage the overall terrorism risk.³⁴ Where cases have progressed to the Desistance and Disengagement Programme, these should not be considered suitable for Channel case management.

Police-led partnerships

- 124.** Police-led partnerships cover the management of people, groups or institutions that are not suitable for Channel, but which have identified Prevent-relevant issues requiring support or mitigation. Police-led partnerships are led by police but working in partnership with other agencies, and employ many of the same type of approaches used within the multi-agency processes of Channel. Therefore, some of the options taken will likely be considered in consultation with partner agencies.

Police investigations

- 125.** Circumstances may arise where a person receiving Channel support is the subject of an investigation by police for a non-terrorism-related offence. In this instance, the person is not prevented from accessing Channel support. Channel can continue to provide support, with any information shared between Channel partners used to assess a person's susceptibilities, risk and support needs. However, where information is exchanged that suggests criminal activity, the police are duty bound to investigate.

³³ Ordinary agency management level 1 is where the risks posed by the offender can be managed by the agency responsible for the supervision or case management of the offender.

³⁴ Factsheet: Desistance and Disengagement Programme – Home Office in the media blog: <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2019/11/05/fact-sheet-desistance-and-disengagement-programme>

- 126.** While access to Channel support would ordinarily stop or be closed to people who are subject to a Terrorism Act investigation, there may be instances where continued support would be beneficial, as long as it does not impede the ongoing investigation or affect the integrity of a person's informed consent. The Home Office and Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters are developing parameters to determine the suitability of Channel support in these instances and will be identifying test cases to inform any wider change in policy. The identification of test cases will be jointly agreed by the Home Office, Counter Terrorism Policing and the senior investigating officer. Under no circumstances should cases subject to Pursue investigation for Terrorism Act offences be held on Channel outside of these arrangements. Practitioners will be notified of any subsequent change in policy once agreed.

Section 6:

The Channel panel

Panel meetings

- 127.** Channel panels must be held monthly where there are referrals forwarded to panel for consideration, where a live case is held, or where cases are scheduled for review, though there may be occasions where meetings need to be held more frequently. As a minimum, there should be a minuted discussion between the chair, relevant partners and the Channel case officer to review progress and actions. It is good practice to schedule meetings 12 months in advance to support partner planning and, in the absence of live cases, to meet at least quarterly for learning and development. These meetings can be used to review practice, conduct audits, develop or monitor improvement plans, or plan and deliver panel training. It is good practice for Channel panels to schedule an annual development day to inform improvement plans for the coming year.
- 128.** The composition of the panel is a decision which should be made based on the nature of individual cases and time bound actions that may be required. The Channel chair should keep the Channel case officer informed of any changes to panel membership.
- 129.** Where partner input is required and a physical partner presence cannot be secured, the chair has discretion to allow virtual input from partners, through systems such as video- or tele-conferencing provision, though this should not be the default method of convening panel meetings. Where meetings are held via video- or tele-conferencing, recording is not advised. While recording can aid the accuracy of panel minutes, it also raises issues concerning security and confidentiality, that should be borne in mind. The chair will need to be satisfied that the confidentiality and integrity of the meeting is maintained and that the minutes reflect the panel members' agreement to the confidentiality statement, which should include those partners inputting virtually.

Persons under consideration for Channel or receiving support and their family members or representatives, must not attend Channel panel meetings.

130. An anonymised PAF should be circulated in full to panel members relevant to the case by the Channel case officer before meetings so that all relevant panel members can contribute their knowledge, experience and expertise. The Channel case officer will provide a verbal summary of the referral to the Channel panel based on the information gathered from panel partners and the outcome of the Prevent assessment. Further detail on use of the PAF is provided in paragraphs 107 to 109.

131. Panel members should satisfy themselves of their compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and be sensitive in their considerations.³⁵ The panel must fully consider all the information available to them to make an objective decision on the support to be offered, without discriminating against the person based on their protected characteristics, and must make any reasonable adjustments to meet their needs. The panel must decide whether to adopt the referral at the first meeting. A decision to adopt will be made because the panel agrees there is a susceptibility to radicalisation or a risk of committing or supporting terrorism that may be reduced through Channel support. This decision is often distinct from decisions on the nature of

the support plan, which do not always occur during a single panel meeting. An auditable record of decision-making (including the rationale for decisions taken) should be kept for quality assurance purposes, as accurate and agreed minutes provide an important account of this process. Following case closure, Channel panel minutes should be kept in line with the local authority's agreed data retention period. The Home Office Channel Data Privacy Information Notice and retention schedules can be found on the Home Office website.³⁶

132. To help structure efficient practice for Channel panels, standardised templates are available for local adaptation if appropriate. These include terms of reference, information-sharing agreements and consent forms. An updated bank of templates is accessible on the Knowledge Hub site.³⁷

133. The chair should aim to reach panel consensus on all decisions. Where this cannot be achieved, the decision should be based on the panel majority, with the chair holding the casting vote where no majority exists. Local governance arrangements, which should include the process for escalating concerns regarding the form or function of Channel panels, should be clearly communicated to panel members.

³⁵ The Equality Act 2010 places a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This applies generally, but also to the assessment of need and risk faced.

³⁶ Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP): data privacy notices – GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-data-privacy-notice

³⁷ Knowledge Hub: www.khub.net/group/prevent1

Support plans

- 134.** Each case is handled separately. People deemed appropriate to receive support will have a tailored package developed for them, according to their identified needs. Using the Prevent assessment and their professional expertise, the panel should develop a package to support the needs of the person and use the information to inform the assessment and mitigation of any risk posed to potential support providers. The wider family context must be considered as part of this assessment, and the panel should agree on arrangements for updating families on progress where it is appropriate to do so.
- 135.** Section 36(4) CTSA 2015 requires panels to:
- prepare a plan for someone for the purpose of reducing their vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism (i.e. addressing identified radicalisation or terrorism susceptibility and concerns)
 - make arrangements for support as described in the plan, where consent is given
 - keep the support given under review
 - revise or withdraw a support plan if at any time the panel considers it appropriate
 - carry out further assessments, after periods the panel considers appropriate, of a person's vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism where:
 - the necessary consent to the provision of support is refused or withdrawn
 - the panel has determined that support should be withdrawn
 - prepare subsequent support plans if considered appropriate

Risk

- 136.** Risk is a theme that runs through the entire Channel process – risk to the person, risk to the public, and risk to partners or organisations providing support to the person, including any IPs. The Channel panel holds responsibility for the terrorism-related susceptibilities of a case, meaning the adequate provision and review of supportive interventions around the complex needs and causes of the terrorism-related concern. Statutory partners are responsible for safeguarding around a person's intrinsic and contextual vulnerabilities that can be exploited by others, or that may exacerbate the complex needs of a person, to the extent that they may be drawn increasingly towards terrorism offending. The police are responsible for identifying and mitigating imminent risks of people mobilising towards any terrorism offences, and the desistance of such high risk and criminal behaviours.
- 137.** Support offered for some people could span several agencies, and each agency will own the element of risk that they are responsible for addressing through the support plan.
- 138.** The risk of a person's involvement in terrorism offending lies with the police. This is the risk posed by the person to themselves and to society through their escalating or potentially active involvement in terrorism-related offending. The police are the most appropriate agency throughout the entire life of each Channel case to assess and manage this risk.

- 139.** Channel brings together a wider network of support available to reduce a person's terrorism or radicalisation risk. The terrorism risk for the case is kept under review by police and the case may be removed from Channel if the risk escalates to a level that police believe cannot be safely managed by the Channel panel.
- 140.** In assessing the terrorism susceptibility, consideration should be given to:
- the risk posed to the person of being radicalised and exploited
 - the degree of individual agency and the extent to which ideology is a contributing factor
 - the wider needs of the person
- 141.** At this point, panel members in attendance at a meeting should collectively assess the risk and decide whether the person:
- is susceptible to radicalisation or at risk of committing or supporting terrorism and, therefore, appropriate for Channel
 - should be referred to a different support mechanism
 - should exit the process
- 142.** There is a clear expectation that Channel cases remain open until one of the following occurs:
- the panel deems that the terrorism susceptibility has sufficiently reduced to warrant exit
 - the terrorism risk has increased and the case is escalated to the police for consideration
 - consent to access support is not secured or is withdrawn
- 143.** If consent to receive support is not ultimately secured, or consent is withdrawn, the case will be closed to Channel.
- 144.** Information sharing should also highlight any wider risks posed, which professionals need to be aware of before any visits are undertaken. This could include, but is not limited to, recording where there is a history of violence, threatening behaviour or use of weapons. Partners of the Channel panel must satisfy themselves that their own processes for completing risk assessments to ensure the safety of staff and others are in place and adhered to while fulfilling their Channel duty.

Practice example 6: risk-based, auditable decision-making

A case had been supported through Channel for three months and had a support plan in place aligned to the susceptibilities captured in the PAF. Action updates were provided at each meeting and all decisions relating to the support were accurately recorded in the minutes.

The PAF and support plan were reviewed at each meeting by the panel.

When the person established links to others who were part of an ongoing police investigation, it was deemed that the risk had increased, and the police decided to close the case to Channel and manage it within the police-led partnership. The case was subject to review at 6 and 12 months following closure.

Consent for support

- 145.** As support received through Channel remains voluntary, section 36 (4)(b) CTSA 2015 requires consent to be given by the person (or their parent or guardian, when aged under 18), subject to capacity considerations detailed below. Everyone who receives support through Channel must be made aware why they are receiving this support, what the aims of the programme are and what to expect.
- 146.** Consent to receive support should take the form of a signed agreement to support the auditable decisions of the panel and received no later than at the point of accessing support. When seeking consent, consideration should always be given to who is the most appropriate professional to do so. Consent should be informed, explicit and freely given, without coercion or duress. The offer of support through Channel should be fully explained, alongside written information which details what provision is available and how their personal data will be used to determine vulnerabilities, risks and the support package. The circumstances around getting a person's consent should be captured and recorded within the minutes. Where consent has been provided but there is no written record, the rationale must be captured and recorded within the panel minutes. We are keen to capture equalities monitoring data to better understand the cohort of people accessing Channel support. An update to the Channel consent template will include
- a voluntary survey on age, ethnicity, religion, and sex.
- 147.** This communication should be in an appropriate language and explained in terms fitting to individual needs, to ensure the person understands the aims of the programme and gives informed consent. Paragraph 151 provides further details on capacity to consent. Where someone does not wish to continue with the process, it may be appropriate to close the case to the Channel panel but provide alternative support by signposting the referral to other mainstream services, such as child or adult social care services.
- 148.** Where consent to receive support is initially refused or withdrawn, section 36 4(e)(i) CTSA 2015 makes provision for the panel to carry out further assessments of the person's vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism as appropriate.³⁸ Where a terrorism risk remains, this would be passed to the CTCO for management by the police.
- 149.** Information discussed at a Channel panel may be sourced from a variety of partners but will be controlled and processed by the local authority as the lead agency for Channel. Personal data will be processed for each person referred to Channel. Local authorities, therefore, should comply with any responsibility under the data protection legislation to inform the person that their data is being processed as well as other requirements of that legislation. This notification will best form part of the informed consent required to access Channel support as outlined above.³⁹

³⁸ Where consent is not secured within three months, the case should be closed.

³⁹ Your right to be informed if your personal data is being used – Information Commissioner's Office: www.ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/your-right-to-be-informed-if-your-personal-data-is-being-used

An example consent form which incorporates this notification can be accessed on the Knowledge Hub.⁴⁰

- 150.** In instances where the person is not considered appropriate for support, is not adopted, and is therefore not approached for consent, the Home Office Data Protection Information Notice, which is available on the Home Office website, may provide the necessary level of notification and no direct contact with the individual may be needed.⁴¹ Local authorities may wish to consider the requisite level of notification on a case-by-case basis. The Data Protection Information Notice for the local authority should also be updated to reflect Channel statutory functions, in partnership with local information governance and legal teams. When notifying people of local authority data processing in relation to Channel, reference to the Home Office-approved case management system must also be made.⁴² The requirement to inform does not apply to Counter Terrorism Policing when processing personal data under part 3 of the DPA 2018.

Capacity to provide consent

- 151.** A person's right and capacity to make decisions about issues that affect them is always assumed. Where the capacity of a person to make a specific decision is brought into question, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides safeguards within a statutory framework to protect the rights of those who may not be able to make their own decisions.⁴³ Where a 'best interests' decision to consent to Channel support is made for an adult who is deemed not to have capacity to make an informed decision regarding that support, an assessment to determine capacity and their ability to make this decision should be undertaken in line with Care Act 2014 guidance.⁴⁴ Guidance issued by the Department of Health and Social Care provides further information on assessing capacity, which can be found online.⁴⁵

40 Knowledge Hub: www.khub.net/group/prevent1

41 Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP): data privacy notices – GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-data-privacy-notice

42 Channel data privacy information notice – GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-data-privacy-notice/channel-data-privacy-information-notice

43 Professional guidance on the Mental Capacity Act is available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/mental-capacity-act-making-decisions

44 Care and support statutory guidance – GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance

45 Reference guide to consent for examination or treatment (second edition) – GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/government/publications/reference-guide-to-consent-for-examination-or-treatment-second-edition

- 152.** Where the consent to receive support from Channel is being sought in relation to a person under 18, the consent of the parent or guardian will be needed in line with requirements under section 36(4)(b) and the meaning of “necessary consent” at section 41(1) CTSA 2015. Consent to continue receiving support should be sought after a person already in receipt of Channel support reaches the age of 18.

When parental consent cannot be obtained

- 153.** In the case of a child, there may be certain circumstances when a parent or guardian does not give consent for their child to be supported through Channel. If the child is thought to be at risk from significant harm, whether that is physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, social or behavioural harm, then social services for the relevant local authority area must be involved in decisions made about the child. There may be circumstances where the Channel panel and social services determine that a child is in need.⁴⁶ More information on safeguarding children can be found in the ‘Working together to safeguard children’ guidance (for England), and the ‘Keeping learners safe’ guidance (for Wales).^{47, 48}
- 154.** Where safeguarding thresholds to enable social care support for a minor have not been met and the person meets requirements for Prevent and is receptive to Prevent support, the police

can make a further assessment as to whether police-led partnerships can provide support where parental consent cannot be gained.

Support to address identified susceptibilities

- 155.** The involvement of the correct panel partners ensures that those at risk have access to a wide range of support from mainstream services, such as health and education, through to specialist guidance from an IP to increase theological understanding and challenge the claims of violent ideologies. It can also include wider diversionary or developmental activities such as appropriate training courses. The partners involved should be tailored to the identified susceptibilities of the person getting support.
- 156.** As part of agreeing a full wrap-around package of support, the panel must decide how to connect the person with the support providers. All decision-making should be clearly documented and aligned to identified susceptibilities.
- 157.** The type of activities that are included in a support package will depend on risk factors, vulnerabilities, and local resource. To illustrate, a diversionary activity with lower-level support may be sufficient for someone who is in the early stages of radicalisation. The support offered should be directly aligned to the needs and risks identified within the Prevent assessment, which should

46 An assessment of a child’s needs will be determined using definitions within section 17 or section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (for England) and section 21 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

47 Working together to safeguard children – GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

48 Keeping learners safe – gov.wales: www.gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe

include consideration of wider contextual and transitional safeguarding needs. The following kinds of support might be considered appropriate:

- theological/ideological support – structured sessions using a Home Office-approved IP to understand, assess or challenge ideological, theological or fixated thinking, which must be considered for all cases
- life skills – work on life skills or social skills generally, such as dealing with peer pressure
- anger management sessions – formal or informal work dealing with anger
- cognitive/behavioural contact – cognitive behavioural therapies and general work on attitudes and behaviours
- 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
- drugs and alcohol awareness – substance misuse interventions
- mentoring – work with a suitable adult as a role model to provide personal guidance or pastoral care

158. The panel is collectively responsible for ensuring delivery of the overall package of support, but not for managing or funding the support providers. Where support is provided by a panel partner, they should be present at the panel meeting to provide an update on progress and are responsible for the delivery of that element of the overall support package. Funding for any support offered should be met from existing local services.

159. Providers of support to people at risk of committing or supporting terrorism (including providers who are not specified as panel partners) need to be credible with the person receiving support and to understand the local community. Given their important role, their reliability, suitability to work with people at risk of supporting terrorism or committing terrorist acts, and commitment to shared values need to be established. If non-public sector provision is being considered as a part of Channel support, Chairs and police must satisfy themselves that the potential support provider is suitable, and does not pose a risk, before commissioning them. Partners should conduct their own due diligence to establish suitability before appointment.

Any concerns raised by panel members should be discussed at the panel.

Monitoring Channel support

- 160.** The Channel case officer is responsible for regularly liaising with the support provider(s), updating the PAF and assessing progress. Where there is a live case or referrals presented for consideration, a Channel panel should be held monthly. The PAF will run in parallel to assessment through the entire period of support, to capture the progress being made in supporting the person. Prevent assessments should be reassessed more frequently to inform a key panel meeting, where the provision of support has reached a particular milestone, or there have been significant changes to circumstances or levels of risk.
- 161.** If the panel is satisfied that the terrorism concerns have been sufficiently reduced or managed, they should recommend that the case then exits the process. The PAF should be completed by the Channel case officer as soon as possible, setting out the reason for the panel's recommendations. The recommendations will need to be endorsed by the Channel panel chair and the Channel case officer.
- 162.** If the panel is not satisfied that terrorism concerns have been reduced to an acceptable level, the case should be reconsidered. A new action plan should be developed, and alternative support put in place. If the terrorism risk has increased, the police must consider escalating the case through existing police mechanisms. The panel must determine whether the case remains suitable for Channel. The Prevent assessment captures changes in risk, situation and vulnerability, while panel minutes must record the agreed decisions and rationale aligned to this

assessment. Together, they inform Channel panel decision-making and risk management and must be retained on the Home Office-approved case management system for future reference.

Accessing specialist support

Intervention Providers (IPs)

- 163.** IPs are ideological and theological specialists. They are experienced in assessing ideological drivers, possess a high level of understanding around radicalising extremist narratives, and have the ability to counter them. They receive comprehensive training to support their roles through the IP professionalisation programme. IPs are also subject to a rigorous recruitment process and must receive ministerial approval to work on the programme.
- 164.** Where the person has a need for theological or ideological support to address extremist views, there are multiple ideologies, or the ideological drivers are unclear, Home Office-approved IPs must be commissioned. The IP aims to increase theological understanding and challenge extremist ideas or fixated thinking where they are used to legitimise terrorism, or to otherwise understand the extent of concerns relating to ideology. Use of a Home Office IP must always be a consideration for live cases and kept under review where not commissioned. A record must be kept detailing the panel's decision and its basis. Where the Channel panel identifies that the person would benefit from an IP, the Channel case officer will be responsible for arranging the provision of that service. While it remains best practice for the Channel case officer to present

three potential IPs to the panel for its consideration, this may not always be feasible. The priority will always be to match the specific IP skillsets to the requirements of the person receiving support.

- 165.** Where a Home Office IP has been commissioned, written reports on progress will be prepared and returned to the Channel case officer within five working days of the intervention session being completed. The Channel case officer will use this report to provide a verbal update to the Channel panel and update the PAF when needed. IP reports should be made available to the Channel panel chair. While standing panel members should not need routine access to IP reports, they may be viewed on request via the Channel case officer. The IP reports are produced for the specific purpose of informing Channel panels of the risks of radicalisation and the susceptibilities present. Therefore, they should not be shared beyond standing panel members. Further details on disclosure are referenced in paragraphs 100 to 106.
- 166.** In England and Wales, IPs must first have been approved by the Home Office. With all other non-public sector services provided as part of the support package, the chair and police must be satisfied that these providers are suitable to deliver the interventions. Individuals and organisations holding extremist views used to legitimise or support terrorist-related activity of any kind, or to radicalise others into terrorism, in this country or overseas, have no place in delivering support through Channel, nor will they be given public funding to do so. This applies irrespective of the source of the funding: central government, local government,

policing, or other publicly funded bodies. Where support is through Home Office-approved IPs, the Channel case officer is responsible for liaison with the support provider and for funding and monitoring the delivery of that element of the support package.

Intervention Support Fund

- 167.** Most support available in Channel is funded by the statutory bodies that provide it. The major exception to this is ideological and theological mentoring through IPs, which is funded by the Home Office through the Channel case officer.
- 168.** The Home Office has additional funding by way of the Channel Intervention Support Fund, which can be used in instances where provision from statutory partners, IPs or third sector organisations is not appropriate to reduce identified Prevent susceptibility. These funds are intended to be used flexibly for activity or costs that take place alongside other Channel interventions and should be linked to identified susceptibilities. Use of these funds must be pre-approved by the Home Office to cover non-theological or non-ideological support, training, or one-off purchases to support the effectiveness of an intervention. The Channel case officer will have details of eligibility and how to access this fund via the Channel Intervention Support Fund application form.

Vulnerability support hubs (VSHs)

- 169.** Vulnerability support hubs are in place to support the CTCOs. The hubs use a formulation-based approach to jointly triage referrals (police and health) to rate the concern and urgency of each case based on the referral information

and clarify whether people are known to mental health services. The hub provides early assessment of a person's mental health and psychological needs, which may impact on levels of risk, inform the Prevent assessment, and aid the development of Channel support plans. Vulnerability support hub services are accessed through the CTCO, who will consult with Channel panels on their use within Channel case management. Whilst Counter Terrorism Policing retain final decision making responsibility for VSH referrals, CTCOs will always seek to do so with agreement of Channel Panels, and use of the service outside of this agreement should only be considered in exceptional cases.⁴⁹

Immigration Enforcement services

- 170.** Specialist advice and support regarding immigration is available to Channel panels for addressing queries, sourcing information and advice, and where appropriate, seeking immigration representation on Channel panels. Channel panels will be notified of arrangements for accessing this service.

Onward referrals to alternative forms of support

- 171.** Information sharing between partners will sometimes reveal no evidence that the person is at risk of being drawn into terrorism. It may identify other personal vulnerabilities that need to be addressed, such as substance misuse or mental health issues. Under section 36(6) CTSA 2015, where it is determined that support via Channel is not

appropriate, the panel must consider whether a person should be referred to support from health providers or social care services and, if so, make such arrangements as the panel considers necessary. It is good practice for the Channel panel chair to consider inviting these partners to panel meetings. Once a decision on managing the case has been reached by the panel, the Channel panel chair should confirm the recommendation and ensure that the decision is properly recorded, and that arrangements are made to refer the person.

Sharing good practice

- 172.** Local authorities may find it useful to form regional Channel chair networks, which should come together to share best practice in running Channel panels, discuss case studies, and provide mutual support and advice. These networks can be a useful resource for those local authority areas that have few Channel cases in order to learn from more experienced areas, or for new Channel chairs to observe practice. Channel panel chairs also have the opportunity to attend regular national forums to share good practice more widely.

⁴⁹ During financial year 24/25 the existing VSHs will change to become the CT Integrated Clinical Formulation Service (CT ICFS). The CT ICFS will replicate many of the existing functions of the VSHs and will expand to provide a national service. Access for Channel partners to the services within CT ICFS will continue to be via the CTCO.

**Practice example 7:
sharing good practice**

Where Channel chair networks have formed, usually on the basis of a Counter Terrorism Policing region, they have found value in coming together to share practice and learning, provide mutual support, and co-ordinate training. These networks provide an excellent platform to review anonymised cases, share good practice and understand ineffective practice across local authority areas.

Section 7:

Training

- 173.** The successful delivery of Prevent is dependent on the engagement of national, regional and local partners across multiple sectors, including the community and voluntary sector. Public sector frontline staff have been identified as a key group that can make an important contribution to identifying and referring people who may be at risk of committing or supporting terrorism as a consequence of radicalisation.
- 174.** Alongside sector-specific training, panel members and partners should complete the GOV.UK Prevent duty training courses available at www.gov.uk/prevent-duty-training. Each course has specific learning outcomes to support awareness of Prevent and radicalisation; making a referral; and the Channel programme. The Channel course has tailored content for chairs and for those who are new to attending Channel panels.
- 175.** In addition to the GOV.UK Prevent duty training, as an introduction to Prevent, face-to-face training sessions may be made available. This is designed to help attendees understand what may make people susceptible to radicalisation and understand more about the local context. For more information, speak to your Designated Safeguarding Lead or an equivalent.
- 176.** The Home Office has commissioned a range of additional training to meet the needs of Channel chairs, deputy chairs and panel members in fulfilling the requirements set out within this guidance and to understand the national risk and threat picture. Channel chairs and deputy chairs are required to complete mandatory 'delivering Channel locally' training within six months of starting these roles. Information regarding available training will be sent directly to Channel chairs and Channel case officers, and can be sourced from the Home Office.

Other local training

- 177.** There may be other training available within local authorities or regions which cater for the specific needs of sectors. Clarification should be sought in the first instance from local authority Prevent single points of contact, or through individual organisations. Panel members and panel partners are not expected to become experts in countering radicalisation, however, all should have completed the relevant training to ensure they understand Prevent, Channel, the radicalisation process and how to intervene to prevent someone from being drawn into terrorism. The Home Office may commission additional training to meet the needs of Channel panels nationally.

Section 8:

Information requests

178. When considering information requests, it is important that local organisational information governance leads, and legal teams are consulted and are satisfied that there is compliance with legal requirements and organisational policy.

Freedom of Information Act requests

179. All recorded information held by a public authority is covered by the right to information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. There is a presumption in favour of disclosure to enhance greater openness in the public sector and enable the public to better understand the decisions of public authorities, ensuring that public sector services are seen to be efficiently and properly delivered. We want, as far as possible, to be open and transparent about the Channel process.

180. It is good practice to consider the implications of releasing information on third parties when complying with freedom of information legislation.⁵⁰ In the context of Channel, third parties may include local and national delivery partners. The code of practice of the Freedom of Information Act enables public authorities to consider the interests of third parties and stakeholders who may be affected by any decision to disclose information by setting standards for consultation. All public authority partners involved in Channel may receive freedom of information requests. If a request is made, all information will need to be assessed against freedom of information legislation to see if it is disclosable or not in line with relevant exemptions (such as for personal data and health and safety). All requests for the release of information held must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

⁵⁰ Freedom of information code of practice – GOV.UK:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-of-information-code-of-practice

- 181.** To achieve a consistent approach in responding to freedom of information requests relevant to Channel panels and assessments of individuals, and to protect third parties, all local partners who receive such a request should bring it to the attention of their local panel. The chair should notify the Channel case officer and the Home Office, who will advise if any further consultation is necessary – for example, with other central government departments.

Subject access requests

- 182.** Under section 45 of the DPA 2018, individuals can also make a subject access request to see data held about them or children they have parental responsibility for. The person can request information on any records held about them. Any organisation holding personal data can be subject to these requests. The right to make a subject access request is described in the UKGDPR article 15, 'Right of access by the data subject'.⁵¹
- 183.** There are a limited number of exemptions, and not all personal information needs to be released in all circumstances. Exemptions to these rights are listed and described in the DPA 2018 schedule 2 part 4.⁵²
- 184.** As with Freedom of Information Act requests, to achieve consistency in responses, any requests for subject access requests should be brought to the attention of the Channel panel chair.

Enquiries

- 185.** Please note that national, international and specialist media queries about Channel are managed by the Home Office Press Office and should be referred directly on the following number: 020 7035 4848.
- 186.** It is also helpful if you can make the Home Office Press Office aware, at an early stage, of any local media interest received.

Participation in research

- 187.** Channel chairs and panel members do not participate in external research linked to their Prevent role, except in exceptional circumstances. This applies to Prevent policy staff, IPs, Prevent co-ordinators and Home Office staff. In some cases, the Home Office may offer to provide written input to a research project instead of participating in interviews or other data collection methods. These written submissions will be co-ordinated by the Home Office and will be provided on the understanding that the content is likely to be published in any research output.
- 188.** Exceptional circumstances are defined as those where the research would fill a priority evidence gap for the Home Office, where the research design is robust and high quality, and where the research team has a track record of producing high-quality, published research. All new research requests must be considered by the Home Office.

51 Article 15 GDPR: Right of access by the data subject: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/individual-rights/individual-rights/right-of-access/>

52 Data Protection Act 2018, schedule 2, part 4 – [legislation.gov.uk: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/schedule/2/part/4/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/schedule/2/part/4/enacted)

Section 9:

Safeguarding

- 189.** While safeguarding thresholds do not need to be met to make a Prevent referral, there will be occasions where the assessment and support provided through Channel to prevent people at risk of supporting terrorism or committing terrorist acts will run alongside safeguarding processes. A brief overview of the safeguarding frameworks for adults and children are outlined here for reference.
- 190.** Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding partners, as defined under the Children Act 2004 (and amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017), have a statutory duty to work with relevant appropriate agencies within their locality to safeguard and protect children. A safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England may be the local authority, certain health bodies or the police. All three safeguarding partners have equal responsibility for fulfilling the role and for selecting the relevant agencies they will work with to safeguard and protect children in each locality, and to publish their local arrangements.
- 191.** The 2018 statutory guidance, 'Working together to safeguard children', sets out the legislative requirements and expectations on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in England.⁵³ In Wales, the 'Keeping learners safe' guidance should be referred to. It includes advice on radicalisation.⁵⁴
- 192.** Safeguarding adults is also a key role for local authorities. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities are required to have Safeguarding Adults Boards in their area. These boards provide strategic leadership to the work of the local authority and partner agencies on the development of policy and practice

53 Working together to safeguard children – GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

54 Keeping learners safe – gov.wales: www.gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe

in relation to safeguarding adults at risk. Guidance on safeguarding adults is relevant in England in this context.

- 193.** Under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, there is a duty on relevant partners to report suspected cases of adults at risk and a complementary duty for the local authority to make enquiries into whether that adult is at risk of a safeguarding harm, and to determine if any action needs to be taken in response. Provision is overseen by six Safeguarding Children Boards and six Safeguarding Adults Boards in accordance with part 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- 194.** It is essential that Channel panel members, partners to local panels, and other professionals ensure that children, young people and adults are protected from harm. While the Channel provisions in chapter 2 of part 5 CTSA 2015 are counter-terrorism measures (since their ultimate objective is to prevent terrorism), the way that Channel will be delivered may often overlap with implementation of wider safeguarding duties. This is especially true where vulnerabilities have been identified that require intervention from social services, or where the person is already known to social services.
- 195.** It is imperative that Prevent referrals are considered by the local authority and panel partners alongside their work to safeguard vulnerable people. Key links should be established with social services and other panel partners to ensure that a person has the most appropriate support available. Where a child or an adult receives social care support, as well as support through Channel, the social worker relevant to

that local authority should be present at the panel and be involved in all decisions. Channel can run in tandem with, but must not be replaced by, other safeguarding meetings where safeguarding thresholds have been met.

Section 10:

Annexes

ANNEX A

Sharing information with partners

1. The UKGDPR and the DPA 2018 and subordinate legislation under the latter, form the data protection legislation that governs the processing of personal data (i.e. information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual).
2. The ICO's guide to the UKGDPR can be found on the ICO website.⁵⁵ Article 5 of the UKGDPR sets out the six key principles which lie at the heart of the general data protection regime.
3. Article 5(1) requires that personal data shall be:
 - a. processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals ('lawfulness, fairness and transparency')
 - b. collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes ('purpose limitation')
 - c. adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed ('data minimisation')
 - d. accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date. Every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay ('accuracy')
 - e. kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed ('storage limitation')

⁵⁵ Guide to the UK General Data Protection Regulation – Information Commissioner's Office:
www.ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr

- f. processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures ('integrity and confidentiality')
4. The lawful bases for processing include (as replicated from the ICO website):⁵⁶
- a. Consent: the person has given clear consent for you to process their personal data for a specific purpose.
 - b. Contract: the processing is necessary for a contract you have with the person, or because they have asked you to take specific steps before entering into a contract.
 - c. Legal obligation: the processing is necessary for you to comply with the law (not including contractual obligations).
 - d. Vital interests: the processing is necessary to protect someone's life.
 - e. Public task: the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for your official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law.
 - f. Legitimate interests: the processing is necessary for your legitimate interests or the legitimate interests of a third party, unless there is a good reason to protect the person's personal data which overrides those legitimate interests. (This cannot apply if you are a public authority processing data to perform your official tasks.)

5. It is the responsibility of Channel panel partners to consider their role in relation to data sharing as part of the Channel process. Information governance and legal teams should be engaged where deemed appropriate to ensure data sharing is necessary, proportionate and lawful. Organisations should also document the nature, basis and agreement of data sharing in line with the UKGDPR principle of accountability (Article 6 (2)). This will include having data sharing agreements in place among all the parties involved that are regularly updated and signed off at the appropriate level.

Lawful bases for processing to consider

6. You must have a valid lawful basis to process personal data. The ICO website provides information on identifying and, importantly, documenting the lawful bases your panel identifies. When processing special category data, you must identify both a lawful basis for general processing and an additional condition for processing that type of data. There are six available lawful bases for processing.

Article 6 of the UKGDPR and, section 8 of the DPA 2018

7. Under article 6(1)(e) UKGDPR and section 8 of the DPA 2018, personal data may be shared if it is necessary for the purpose of a statutory function. Channel is a statutory function as per section 36 CTSA 2015.

⁵⁶ Lawful bases – Information Commissioner's Office:

www.ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/key-dp-themes/guidance-for-the-use-of-personal-data-in-political-campaigning-1/lawful-bases

Article 9 of the UKGDPR and part 2, schedule 1 of the DPA 2018

8. Under article 9(2)(g) UKGDPR and paragraph 6 of part 2, schedule 1 DPA 2018, special category data may be shared where there are reasons of substantial public interest on the basis of domestic law, such as for the discharge of a statutory function as under section 36 CTSA 2015.
9. Your panel may deem it of substantial public interest to share special category data for the purposes of Channel.

Special category data

10. Special category data is personal data that needs more protection because it is sensitive. It is listed at Article 9(1) UKGDPR, including – for example – information about an individual's religious or philosophical beliefs. It is likely that Channel panels will require certain special category data to make an informed decision regarding the nature of support required for people referred to Channel. More information about special category data can be found on the ICO's website.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Special category data – Information Commissioner's Office:
[www.ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/
lawful-basis-for-processing/special-category-data](https://www.ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/special-category-data)

ANNEX B

Vulnerability assessment framework

This annex provides a description of the vulnerability assessment framework used by Channel to guide decisions about whether someone needs support to address their risks of supporting terrorism or committing terrorist acts as a consequence of radicalisation and the kind of support that they need.

It should not be assumed that the characteristics set out below necessarily indicate that a person is either committed to terrorism or may become a terrorist. The assessment framework involves three dimensions: engagement, intent and capability, which are considered separately.

1. Engagement with a group, cause or ideology

Engagement factors are sometimes referred to as 'psychological hooks'. They include needs, susceptibilities, motivations and contextual influences and together map the individual pathway into terrorism. They can include:

- feelings of grievance and injustice
- feeling under threat
- a need for identity, meaning and belonging
- a desire for status
- a desire for excitement and adventure
- a need to dominate and control others
- susceptibility to indoctrination
- a desire for political or moral change
- opportunistic involvement
- family or friends' involvement in extremism
- being at a transitional time of life
- being influenced or controlled by a group
- relevant mental health issues

2. Intent to cause harm

Not all those who become engaged by a group, cause or ideology go on to develop an intention to cause harm, so this dimension is considered separately. Intent factors describe the mindset that is associated with a readiness to use violence and address what the person would do and to what end. They can include:

- over-identification with a group or ideology
- 'them and us' thinking
- dehumanisation of the enemy
- attitudes that justify offending
- harmful means to an end
- harmful objectives

3. Capability to cause harm

Not all those who have a wish to cause harm on behalf of a group, cause or ideology are capable of doing so, and plots to cause widespread damage can take a high level of personal capability, resources and networking to be successful. What the person is capable of is therefore a key consideration when assessing risk of harm to the public. Factors can include:

- individual knowledge, skills and competencies
- access to networks, funding or equipment
- criminal capability

4. The three criteria are assessed by considering 22 factors that can contribute to vulnerability (13 associated with engagement, six that relate to intent and three for capability). These factors taken together form a holistic view of the vulnerability of a person that will inform decisions on whether they need support and what kind of support package may be appropriate. These factors can also be added to and are not considered an exhaustive list. By undertaking regular vulnerability assessments, the progress made in supporting a person can be tracked through changes in the assessment.
5. Completing a full assessment for all 22 factors requires thorough knowledge of the person that may not be available at the point of the initial referral. However, there are a number of behaviours and other indicators that may indicate the presence of these factors.
6. Example indicators that a person is **engaged** with an extremist group, cause or ideology include:
 - spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists
 - changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group
 - day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause
 - loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause
 - possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause (e.g. the swastika for right-wing groups)
 - attempts to recruit others to the group, cause or ideology
 - communications with others that suggest identification with a group, cause or ideology
7. Example indicators that a person has an **intention** to cause harm, use violence or other illegal means include:
 - clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social or political ills
 - using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group
 - speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group and the importance of action now
 - expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group, cause or ideology
 - condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others
 - plotting or conspiring with others
8. Example indicators that a person is **capable** of causing harm or contributing directly or indirectly to an act of terrorism include:
 - having a history of violence
 - being criminally versatile and using criminal networks to support extremist goals
 - having occupational skills that can enable acts of terrorism (such as civil engineering, pharmacology or construction)
 - having technical expertise that can be deployed (e.g. IT skills, knowledge of chemicals, military training or survival skills)

9. The examples above are not exhaustive and vulnerability may manifest itself in other ways.
10. The vulnerability assessment should initially be completed by the Channel case officer and then be circulated in full to panel members before meetings so that all relevant panel members can contribute their knowledge, experience and expertise to the case.
11. The vulnerability assessment should complement and inform rather than replace professional judgement and/or other forms of safeguarding assessment when deciding on the most appropriate types of support at panel meetings.

ANNEX C

Prevent-related guidance, HMG strategy and legislation

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents/enacted>

Counter-terrorism strategy (Contest) 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2023>

Prevent duty guidance

www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance

Prevent duty training courses

www.gov.uk/prevent-duty-training

Other relevant guidance and legislation

Working together to safeguard children

www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Keeping children safe in education

www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Care Act 2014

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted

Care Act factsheets

www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets/care-act-factsheets

Information Commissioner's Office guide to data protection

www.ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection

General Medical Council confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information guidance

www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/confidentiality

UK Caldicott Guardian Council

www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-caldicott-guardian-council

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

Guidance for mental health services in exercising duties to safeguard people from the risk of radicalisation

www.england.nhs.uk/publication/guidance-for-mental-health-services-in-exercising-duties-to-safeguard-people-from-the-risk-of-radicalisation

NHS England Prevent training and competencies framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-prevent-training-and-competencies-framework/nhs-prevent-training-and-competencies-framework>

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, section 21

www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/section/21

Keeping learners safe – provides advice on radicalisation and supplements the above Welsh guidance on safeguarding children

www.gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe

