

Working with communities under the Prevent strategy

How Surrey Police and partners work with local communities to counter violent extremism on the pathway to terrorism.



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Contest

Contest is the name of the UK's strategy to respond to the threat of both domestic and international terrorism. The strategy aims to reduce the risk to the UK and our assets overseas, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.

Contest is split in to 4 strands:

- **Prevent:** To stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- **Protect:** To strengthen our protection against terrorist attacks.
- **Pursue:** To stop terrorist attacks.
- **Prepare:** When an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact.

What is terrorism and violent extremism?

Terrorism – There is no single definition of terrorism but this commonly refers to criminal acts intended to provoke a state of terror in the general public. This covers all forms of terrorism taking into account causes relating to religion, politics and race, among others.

Violent extremism – This refers to a group or individual showing signs of unacceptable behaviour by using any means to express views which justify or glorify terrorist violence. This includes those that seek to provoke others to terrorist acts or foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

Domestic extremism – The term is generally used to describe the activity of individuals or groups carrying out criminal acts of direct action to further their protest campaign. These people and activities usually seek to prevent something from happening or to change legislation or domestic policy, but attempt to do so outside the normal democratic process. This term covers extreme right wing and animal rights extremism.

Radicalisation – Radicalisation is the process in which an individual changes to become more extreme in views and in actions. This process often involves the feeding of incorrect information to gain support for a cause.



Introduction

The national threat

The UK faces a continuing threat from international and domestic terrorism. The UK's Counter Terrorism strategy, Contest, sets out the steps that need to be taken to protect the public. Preventing violent extremism on the pathway to terrorism forms a vital part of the strategy.

The local threat

Surrey's location provides challenges for preventing the emergence of violent extremism and terrorism. The county has:

- Areas with diverse communities, introducing vulnerabilities in terms of community tensions, racial tensions and grievances caused by local, national or international events.
- Proximity to key locations which could be targets for terrorist attacks: Heathrow and Gatwick airports, London, motorway and public transport networks.
- Remote rural areas which could be used as bases for reconnaissance, training, team building and/or planning.

- Regular sporting events and high football areas. These provide targets for extreme groups/individuals to gain high profile exposure for their cause.

Although Al-Qaeda and its affiliated organisations still pose a major threat to the UK, extreme right wing groups and other groups motivated by ethical themes also pose a significant threat, including groups focused on a single issue such as animal rights or the environment. Terrorism can emerge from many different communities: Surrey Police's Prevent strategy seeks to deal with all forms of terrorism proportionately. Areas which are at low risk of suffering a terrorist attack can still be used by terrorist or violent extremist organisations for purposes, such as equipment storage, recruitment and preparation and training. People who work or live in Surrey are best placed to notice activity or behaviour which strikes them as suspicious or unusual and must be prepared to report any suspicions appropriately.

Prevent objectives

The Prevent strategy was revised in June 2011 and now includes three objectives which aim to challenge terrorism.

The strategy sets out the following objectives:

1. Challenging terrorist ideology by working closely with other local and national agencies and partners, including our communities.
2. Supporting vulnerable individuals through intervention projects.
3. Work closely with institutions where risks of radicalisation and extremism may occur such as schools, faith venues and health care venues.

You can read the strategy in full at
<https://www.gov.uk/terrorism-national-emergency>



Surrey Police and Prevent

Surrey Police has a Prevent team which works closely with partners and communities to support the Prevent strategy. Part of this team are Surrey Police community engagement officers who work with local communities to identify tensions and vulnerabilities. This team of police staff aims to support and promote the Prevent strategy ensuring that terrorism does not take root in our communities and neighbourhoods. They support the wider engagement activities already taking place by Surrey Police in schools, places of worship, and communities. Through this work they aim to strengthen communities in order to challenge the ideologies and messages of hate which lead to terrorism.

How can you help?

It is important that we all work together so that we can protect communities from those who seek to radicalise and recruit people to their cause. There are many ways you can help:

- You can get in touch with your local neighbourhood officer or community engagement officer if you are worried about friends, relatives or neighbours who you believe may be vulnerable to the message of radicalisation.
- You can speak to your local community engagement officer about helping run community events to bring people from different faiths and communities together.
- You can contact your local community engagement officer if you would like to increase awareness of Prevent within your community.

To contact the community engagement officer for your local area please contact Surrey Police on 101.

How to report concerns

Individuals must not only report information when they believe a terrorist attack itself is being planned. Activity which could assist violent extremist organisations must also be reported. Prevent does not aim to police people's thoughts. However, when there is a possibility that these thoughts might translate into violent action, they must be reported.

We cannot afford to be complacent even in areas that are thought of as being at low risk from terrorism. The Prevent strategy seeks to combat those who seek to gain support for terrorist acts and this kind of activity can take place in any geographical area, including Surrey. Communities in Surrey need to be aware of how to identify potential signs of terrorist activity and report them accordingly.

Trust your instincts. If you suspect it, report it.

If something strikes you as suspicious or you are unsure about someone's behaviour please call the anonymous Anti-Terrorist Hotline on: **0800 789 321** or Surrey Police on **101**.