

**COUNCIL SEMINAR
16th February, 2016**

Present:- Councillor Sims (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor M. Clark), Councillors Atkin, Beaumont, Burton, , Cutts, Elliot, Ellis, Hughes, Jepson, Jones, Khan, McNeely, Parker, Pitchley, Reeder, Rose, Smith, Taylor, John Turner, Wyatt and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cowles, Currie, Evans, Fleming, Godfrey, Roddison, Sansome, Watson and Whelbourn.

PREVENT.

Councillor Sims, Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety, welcomed Officers to the seminar on Prevent, the duty on local authorities to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults from being drawn into terrorism.

The officers who were in attendance: -

Carol Adamson, Community Engagement Officer, RMBC;
Inspector Brendan Pakenham, South Yorkshire Police HQ Prevent/
Channel Manager;
Steve Parry, Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
Manager, RMBC;
PC Zuleika Ahmed, South Yorkshire Police.

Carol delivered a presentation that outlined how Elected Members could recognise the signs that someone was at risk of being radicalised, how they should report their concerns and the support channels that existed to safeguard vulnerable people.

Carol played two video clips that showed scenarios of how different individuals were at risk of becoming involved in different types of terrorism. The clips showed how the statutory agencies responded to the risks and put in place a tailored support plan for the individuals. One scenario showed a school pupil at risk of becoming drawn into Islamist extremist ideologies. The other showed an adult male who was at risk of being drawn into far right extremism and crime as a result of becoming disengaged with society and criminal acts being committed against his family members.

The presentation provided a reminder of the different types of terrorism and looked at how, well before people were drawn into terrorism-related crimes, grooming takes place in communities or on-line to recruit people. Vulnerable adults, children and young people anywhere in the UK may be vulnerable to being groomed and exploited in this way. Risks and concerns in relation to Rotherham's communities and organisations include:

- People being drawn into far right extremism;
- People travelling abroad to join ISIL or to take part in conflicts;
- Vulnerability of Kurdish communities to fundraising by the PKK - a proscribed organisation;
- On-line posting and re-posting of information supporting terrorism or inciting hatred;
- Hate crime;
- Risk of publically owned resources and venues being used to disseminate extremist views;
- Potential to alienate communities who felt unfairly targeted by the extremism agenda;
- Workers and community representatives could potentially not identify or report Prevent related concerns.

There was a distinction between individuals who were actively involved with terrorism and grooming/encouraging others to take part, and those who were being groomed to take part in terrorism and had not yet committed criminal acts/were on the edges of criminality.

The Prevent duty placed an obligation on agencies to respond to concerns. The governance of Prevent was considered by the Safer Rotherham Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Safeguarding Adults Board. The Channel programme was a multi-agency way of supporting individuals in an open process before their vulnerabilities to being groomed were exploited in a serious way.

Ways of reporting concerns: -

- In an emergency, ring 999;
- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub should be contacted if concerns related to a child;
- Adult Safeguarding (via Assessment Direct) should be contacted if a vulnerable adult was involved;
- If a child or adult was not in immediate danger, but it was believed that a crime may have been committed, then the Police should be contacted on 101.

The importance of reporting any concerns about identifying a vulnerable individual/individual susceptible to being drawn into terrorism at as early a stage as possible was reiterated. Agencies had a statutory obligation to respond appropriately. Reporting was not criminalising an individual but helping to prevent terrorism and ensuring their safety.

Discussion followed and the following questions and answers were raised:-

Councillor Pitchley asked how long had Prevent been running? How many people had been helped and how many do we know we were not engaging?

Insp Brendan Pakenham explained that the Prevent Duty came in on 1st July, 2015. The need for Prevent, and the numbers accessing Police Prevent support, had escalated because of the context and international events. Rotherham was comparable in risk to Doncaster and Barnsley, whereas Sheffield was categorised as a higher Tier Two risk. The Police Prevent team had dealt with numerous enquiries within the Duty and other concerns had been responded to by Adult and Child Safeguarding.

It was known that there was under-reporting of events. Nobody could afford to leave any stone unturned. If issues were caught in the early stages it was possible to make an impact. All engagement with individuals was positive and conducted as a partnership.

Councillor McNeely explained that she had complained about attendance of Elected Members at Safer Rotherham Partnership meetings in the past. If this meeting was the lead/governance of Prevent, how confident could we be that attendance was sufficient? Steve Parry described the root and branch restructure of SRP governance and how it had removed two layers of meetings. The SRP needed to be confident that the right people were attending the meeting. On paper there was a good structure but it was the people within it and their commitment that delivered results.

Councillor Elliot asked what was being done about the people who were drawing those in to radicalisation? It was likely that they had been radicalised themselves. Do we criminalise them, or do they get support too? Insp Pakenham replied that if a criminal act was in the early stages support could be offered. The internet was either a friend or a foe and could trap individuals into crime, sometimes unwittingly. Any criminality was dealt with formally whereas the pre-criminal stage would be dealt with via Safeguarding.

Councillor Reeder asked how the information about Prevent and the support available was shared? She had learnt some information from training through her job in the care sector. Members should have been informed before now. Brendan agreed that more could always be done. The central Prevent Team was small and it was 'front facing' teams that were often the ones to identify issues. It was important for the Prevent Team to empower front line staff to be confident to share their experiences and gut feelings.

Carol Adamson explained that all front line staff had been asked to complete e-learning packages that were available on the RMBC e-learning portal educating them about Prevent. This is also available to Elected Members

Councillor Parker felt that most parents were behind the use of the internet compared to their children. How can parents identify if their child was involved in criminality? Insp Brendan Pakenham explained that parental responsibility included parents engaging with their children and talking to them. He reminded Members about privacy and control settings that parents could set on their home computers and internet access. Internet search histories ensured that there was always a footprint left of any activity.

Councillor Khan asked how the Prevent team were working with religious establishments? Insp Brendan Pakenham confirmed that his team had worked with establishments within the faith and voluntary sectors, including parishes and their committees. The work and relationships went very well. In 2013 a pre-criminal case was identified and the individual was helped and had turned around in two years. Prevent was building relationships, but it was always possible to make improvements.

Councillor Yasseen thanked the officers for their presentation. She felt that the process needed to be carried out carefully or individuals and communities may not respond positively. Through Prevent, teachers were feeling that they were being asked to spy on children. In addition, she asked why Rotherham had not been graded as a higher priority, as Sheffield had been. Rotherham's context, community cohesion and a sad recent racially/religiously motivated murder highlighted there was a need. Insp Brendan Pakenham confirmed that Prevent was not spying, it was safeguarding. Prevent and anti-terrorism should be spoken of in the same way as CSE and people should be expected to engage. Democracy allowed people to protest and only the Home Secretary had powers to ban this. Hate Crime was an early sign of community cohesion problems and Insp Brendan Pakenham always encouraged people to report them.

Councillor Sims thanked Carol for her informative and interesting presentation and all Officers in attendance for their responses to the questions raised. She urged Elected Members to take away the information about how to report concerns and also to complete the e-learning modules on the issue.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.