

# Terrorism Together



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## West Midlands CTU – who we are and what we do

West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit is part of a UK-wide network of specialist officers and staff working to reduce the threat from terrorism.

Our regional unit - the largest outside of London - operates predominantly within the Midlands area. However, the nature of the threat means that we have to work across policing borders and liaise with many different forces.

We can carry out investigations across the country and with international partners.

Our business is organised in line with the government's counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

This has four main areas:

- Pursue: stopping terrorist acts and bringing offenders to justice
- Prevent: stopping people becoming involved in terrorism
- Protect: strengthening our protection against a terrorist attack
- Prepare: mitigating the impact of a terrorist attack

Within WM CTU are departments that specialise in investigations (including digital and financial), intelligence, surveillance, forensics, protective security, Prevent and Ports policing.

We work closely with a range of partner agencies, the business sector and community groups. On a daily basis we are in close contact with colleagues across the CT policing network and MI5. Our emphasis is always on the need for a joint approach to tackling the threat.

The majority of our investigations involve international terrorism but we deal with all forms of extremism. One of our biggest cases involved a far right extremist who was tracked down and jailed for murder and a bombing campaign of mosques. Other major investigations have included plots to set off multiple explosions in crowded places and a plot to bomb the London Stock Exchange.

Our host force is West Midlands Police but we also serve the Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia areas.

### How to contact us

To report any concerns connected to terrorism you can ring the national Anti-Terrorist Hotline on **0800 789 321**, or call local officers on **101**. In an emergency always call **999**. If you would like to talk to a community-based Prevent officer, or a Counter Terrorism Security Advisor for businesses, you can contact us on **101**.

Follow the work of the unit on Facebook – [www.facebook.com/wmctupreventteam](https://www.facebook.com/wmctupreventteam)



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## Prevent - the role of the police and other agencies

Prevent is one of the four 'P's that make up the government's national counter terrorism strategy known as CONTEST (Prepare for attacks, Protect the public and critical national infrastructure, Pursue terrorist offenders and Prevent vulnerable individuals becoming terrorists in the first place).

Prevent is designed to tackle terrorism at its roots, preventing people from supporting terrorism or becoming involved in terrorist activity.

Prevent operates in what we call the 'pre-criminal space' – meaning before any criminal offences have taken place. It is about supporting individuals who are at risk of radicalisation and guiding them away from becoming involved in terrorism.

It is not about a single ideology - it covers all forms of extremism from international terrorism to extreme right wing. Our officers are trained to deal with the complete range of threats.

Key to our success is helping people understand the nature of vulnerability, and the warning signs that radicalisation could be taking place – such as changes in behaviour (see our leaflet on radicalisation).

We then work with a number of agencies to support the individual or organisation involved. This may be through the Channel programme (see our leaflet on Channel) which can include support with housing, education and training, or one-to-one mentoring.

### Who delivers Prevent

Prevent is a government strategy. Statutory agencies like health, education, local authorities all have a duty (known as the Prevent Duty) to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty was introduced in July 2015.

The police have been delivering prevent since shortly after CONTEST was launched in 2003. We continue to work with partners and community groups around the country to raise awareness of the issues. This includes regular engagement with sectors such as faith, health and charities, and institutions like prisons, higher education colleges/universities and mosques.

### Products to assist Prevent leaders

To raise awareness of this strategy within the public sector, the Department of Health and the Home Office have produced a DVD-based training package called WRAP – Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent.

The workshop, is designed to help explain how front line workers can help to prevent vulnerable people from being exploited for terrorist purposes.

The workshop improves understanding of the processes used by terrorists to radicalise individuals and ensures staff are aware of who to contact within their organisation to discuss any concerns. Each agency will have a nominated Prevent lead who can advise on WRAP training.

A second useful product is an online training package introducing the [Channel programme](#). This gives a useful insight into the issues around radicalisation and explains the type of multi-agency support Channel can offer.

To contact your local prevent officer call us on 101.





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### Radicalisation – the warning signs and where to get help

There are many different ways a vulnerable individual can fall under the negative influences of a person who holds extremist views. It can be through personal contact within a peer group or it can be online between people who have never actually met.

Over recent years the ability of radicalisers to reach large numbers of people – including children - has increased as a result of social media. Through popular social networking platforms, influence can extend from the very heart of conflict zones right into the bedrooms and minds of impressionable youngsters.

Parents and siblings are often best placed to notice differences in behaviour that could indicate that radicalisation is taking place. These are some of the potential warning signs:

- Becoming withdrawn, not mixing with normal friendship groups and spending more time on the internet
- Changing appearance
- Developing a sense of grievance around faith/religious/ideological matters
- Being unusually vocal about political matters or foreign affairs
- Expressing extremist views or accessing extremist material online
- Asking for passports and other important documents like birth certificates

- Saving money and/or paying off bills
- Researching travel plans online, along with buying goods and clothes to take to conflict zones (binoculars, maps, boots, first aid kit)

#### What to do

Talk to the person you feel is vulnerable and let them know of your concerns. If you are still worried, call the police on 101 for assistance. We understand this will not be easy for you but we have experience of stopping the situation becoming far more serious. We work with a range of agencies and community groups to offer tailored packages of support. This could be help with education, health and housing or a mentor to provide positive guidance.

However it is vital that we intervene early before criminal activity takes place.

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For more useful information, visit [www.preventtragedies.co.uk](http://www.preventtragedies.co.uk) or [www.educateagainsthate.com](http://www.educateagainsthate.com)



## 4 Staying safe online – what parents need to know

The digital world is central to the lives of the vast majority of young people. It provides endless opportunities for education and entertainment – but sadly also some dangers.

Among these is the risk of young people viewing extremist material or talking to radicalisers via social media.

The police service has a specialist unit which is taking down thousands of pieces of extremist material every week. It is called the Counter Terrorism Referral Unit (CTIRU) and you can report any concerns anonymously online by going to [www.gov.uk/report-terrorism](http://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism)

Terrorist material could include:

- Articles, images, speeches or videos that promote terrorism
- Content encouraging people to commit acts of terrorism
- Websites made by terrorist organisations
- Videos of terrorist attacks

Parental vigilance is vitally important. Here are some tips for parents and young people to help stay safe from extremists on line.

- Talk about the dangers – if you have concerns, start a conversation with your family or peer group
- Never post personal details like addresses or phone numbers online
- Do not download anything you think might be illegal
- Be careful about what material you share with others
- Set privacy settings as high as you possibly can
- Report any material you think might be extremist to the CTIRU
- Remember, not everyone on line is who they say they are
- Take time to look at the many websites, such as this one [www.educateagainsthate.com](http://www.educateagainsthate.com) that give advice and tips about staying safe online.

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## Channel – help to support vulnerable individuals

Channel is a multi-agency, local authority led programme which helps people make positive life choices.

It is an early intervention scheme that supports people at risk of radicalisation, providing support tailored to individual needs.

The process of radicalisation can lead to some people adopting and acting on violent, extremist views. This can then lead them to breaking the law and – in some cases – carrying out acts of terrorism.

Channel can help stop this progression by providing factual information and wider opportunities.

### What kind of support can Channel offer?

The type of support Channel offers includes:

- Education, training and mentoring opportunities
- Access to services and activities that offer support tailored to an individual's needs
- Access to people with specialist knowledge, or just someone to talk to
- Open and honest conversations with issues of concern
- Support for family members and loved ones

Channel is a supportive process that can help anyone vulnerable to any form of extremism regardless of faith or ethnicity. Participation is voluntary.

A wide range of agencies such as health, education, housing and the police take part. They come together to develop solutions at what are known as Channel Panels. These are chaired by the local authority. The coordination work between the agencies is usually carried out by a police officer.

This work all exists in the 'pre-criminal space'. In other words, before a crime has been committed. No one participating will have a criminal record as a result of being with Channel.

This [training package](#) will help anyone interested in learning more about Channel.

### How to contact us

If you are concerned about someone who you think might benefit from Channel, call local officers on **101**. Follow us on [facebook.com/WMCTUPreventTeam](https://www.facebook.com/WMCTUPreventTeam)



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## Traveling to conflict zones – the dangers explained

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all travel to Syria. The whole of the country is unsafe. There are similar warnings for many areas in Iraq and only essential travel is advised in the remaining regions (see the latest at [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)).

A number of UK nationals have been killed or injured whilst in Syria and there is a high risk of being drawn into terrorism or being kidnapped.

The availability of medical support is very limited and there are regular disruptions to phone, internet, electricity and road networks. Travellers can find themselves stranded and vulnerable.

Anyone travelling, for whatever reason, is putting themselves in considerable danger. Both the Assad regime and terrorist groups have attacked humanitarian aid workers and the moderate opposition.

The UK and its allies are undertaking airstrikes against Daesh in both Syria and Iraq.

### How to help the Syrian people

You can take action in your local area to fundraise or take part in practical action, for example, helping to pack supplies bound for Syria.

A number of well-established national and local charities are running campaigns to alleviate the crisis. They are experienced providers of humanitarian assistance in high risk, insecure, and dangerous environments.

The Charity Commission strongly advises against individuals taking money into Syria in person. The quickest, safest and most effective way to help is by contributing to a registered charity in the UK.

Check the [Charity Commission website](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk) to ensure your chosen charity is registered. If a charity isn't registered, you can't be sure your donations will be used as intended.

### What about aid convoys?

Charity law and laws against terrorism, bribery and corruption apply to those who deliver humanitarian aid directly. Cash above a certain limit that has not been declared may be seized at the airport by the Border Force or police.

People who have travelled to deliver aid within Syria have been denied access to cross the border, or significantly delayed. There is also a risk of being denied exit.

Direct delivery of aid involves very high logistical costs. Your time, money and personal commitment can deliver greater support to the Syrian people by sending supplies through established charities and international relief organisations.

### Upon return to the UK

Anyone returning to the UK from a conflict zone can expect to come to the attention of the police or other authorities. If police suspect a person may have been involved in criminal or terrorist related activities, they will take action.

UK police are making many arrests on suspicion of Syrian-related terrorism. The impact that has on families who have seen loved ones handed long prison terms is huge.

### What to do if you are concerned

If you suspect someone you know is thinking about going to Syria, contact us on 101. Let us intervene at an early stage. Your call will be dealt with sensitively. Or visit this website for more information [www.preventtragedies.co.uk](http://www.preventtragedies.co.uk)

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### Terrorist Funding - how to give safely to charities

Every year millions of pounds are donated to worthy causes by the British public. Sadly, this generosity can be abused. We have seen in the West Midlands area bogus charity collectors deceiving people and defrauding charities of much needed cash. They have then used this money to fund criminal activity, including terrorism.

The Charity Commission urges charity trustees to take steps to minimise the risks posed by bogus collectors, and is encouraging the public not to be afraid to ask collectors questions to ensure they are genuine.

#### Top tips when donating to an appeal

1. Before giving, check the charity's name and registration number.
2. When approached by collectors, check whether they are wearing a proper ID badge and that any collection tin is sealed.
3. If in doubt, ask the collector for more information - a genuine fundraiser should be happy to answer questions and explain more about the work of the charity.
4. Genuine fundraising materials should feature the charity's name, registered name and a landline contact number. Be wary of those that list only a mobile number.

5. Look for the FRSB tick logo indicating that the charity is signed up to fundraising regulation, encouraging you to give with confidence.

[www.givewithconfidence.org.uk/](http://www.givewithconfidence.org.uk/)

6. To check whether a fundraiser is authorised to collect money in a public place, contact your local authority. If it is on private property, such as a pub or office, check with the owner or staff. Check with a staff member if you are unsure about someone collecting at a train station.
7. After making these checks, if you think that a collection or appeal is bogus, report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 and inform the Charity Commission.
8. If in any doubt, contact your favoured charity direct to make a donation.

For more help and advice, visit the [Charity Commission website](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/).

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## Schedule 1 & 7 - police powers and international travel

Counter terrorism officers working at international ports (air, sea or rail) are known as Ports officers. In the West Midlands we have a team based at Birmingham Airport and they have additional powers to help keep the public safe.

The two special pieces of legislation they used are referred to as Schedule 1: the right to seize passports, and Schedule 7: the right to detain and question someone. Both of these powers relate to terrorism only.

### Schedule 1

This power enables a police officer (or Border Force officer if directed by the police) to seize and retain a person's travel documents at an airport or port when there is reasonable suspicion that the person is travelling outside the United Kingdom to engage in terrorism-related activity. This includes passports and tickets.

Schedule 1 is a significant addition to the existing range of powers that can disrupt terrorism-related activity and, in particular, enables the police to take immediate action against individuals to prevent them leaving the UK to engage in terrorism overseas.

Travel documents can only be retained by police for an initial period of up to 14 days while investigations take place. This retention has to be authorised by a senior officer. The police can then apply to a court if they wish to continue to hold the travel documents, up to a maximum retention period of 30 days.

### Schedule 7

This power allows police officers to stop, question, search and, if necessary, detain people entering or leaving the UK. This detention can last for up to six hours.

Schedule 7 can only be applied to determine whether a person is or has been involved in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism. Unlike other powers to detain the public, officers do not have to have 'reasonable grounds of suspicion'.

Any detentions that last more than one hour are regularly reviewed by a senior officer. Anyone detained will have the right to have someone informed about what has happened and have the right to legal advice.

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