

**Meeting:** Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board – Adult Social Care and Health

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025

**Wards affected:** ALL

**Report Title:** Update on the Prevent and Modern Slavery Workstream

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** n/a

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Sub-Board with an update on the work being undertaken in Torbay with regards to Prevent, and Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

## 2. Background - Prevent

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- 2.1 The Prevent Duty was established via the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with the aim of stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent also extends to supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism.
- 2.2 It sits alongside long-established safeguarding duties on professionals to protect people from a range of other harms, such as substance abuse, involvement in gangs, and physical and sexual exploitation. The duty helps to ensure that people who are susceptible to radicalisation are supported as they would be under safeguarding processes.
- 2.3 As part of Prevent, we aim to:
- Increase awareness of the signs of radicalisation
  - Intervene early to support people at risk of radicalisation
  - Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism. This will help people make informed choices.
  - Enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.
  - Signpost parents, carers, family and friends to Prevent or other safeguarding services.
  - Encourage people to be safe online so that they are less exposed to harm.

- 2.4 The Local Authority is responsible for delivering Channel as part of Prevent. This is multi-agency approach that aims to provide support and interventions to reduce the level of susceptibility of an individual (adult or young person) to be drawn into extremism or terrorism.
- 2.5 The governance for the delivery of Prevent in Torbay is via the Devon and Torbay Prevent Partnership with reporting into Safer Torbay Community Safety Partnership.
- 2.6 Delivery of Prevent and Channel is closely monitored by the Home Office through annual benchmarking and national reporting of quality and compliance.

### 3. Summary - Prevent

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- 3.1 Some of the work delivered by the Prevent Partnership the following over the last 12 months has included:
  - A localised risk assessment has been produced and scrutiny of partnership self-assessment feedback to identify areas of improvement.
  - Review carried out into referrals numbers and processes for primary and secondary care.
  - Training Strategy has been updated.
  - Initiation of a Task and Finish group to look specifically at the low level of adult referrals into Channel.
  - Consideration of how problem-solving approaches work locally with guidance developed to support this process and ensure learning is fed into the partnership.
- 3.2 Home Office Benchmarking for Prevent found that the Local Authority has evidenced that it is exceeding requirements in the core benchmark areas of the multi-agency partnership group, risk assessment, delivery planning, referral pathway and training. Some areas of development were identified which are described in more detail below. Benchmarking for Channel did not take place this year however informal feedback from the Home Office local QA lead is that our Channel Panel is strong and working effectively. There is good engagement in the Torbay Channel by Adult Social Care and Mental Health services.
- 3.3 Referrals into Channel continue to be low for adults and young people in Torbay
- 3.4 Nationally following the Southport murders and subsequent rapid learning review the Home Office took steps to clarify existing policy in relation to Prevent. This included some interim policy changes introduced by CT Policing in relation to repeat referrals and referrals

categorised as ‘fascination with extreme violence or mass casualty attacks’. The policy changes seek to reaffirm that individuals whose ideological motivations are unclear, mixed or unstable, but who demonstrate a connection to, or personal interest in, extremism, terrorism or massacre should be given the same consideration for support as those whose concerning ideological motivations are more consistent and obvious.

3.5 In addition, a national evaluation of the Channel process has been commissioned by the Home Office to establish effectiveness and identify any potential areas for improvement. All Channel Panels are participating, and it will involve seeking direct feedback from Channel participants. This may result in future changes to guidance.

## 4. Areas for development - Prevent

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4.1 The Home Office Benchmarking exercise identified the following areas for development:

4.1.1. Improve the clarity of our local problem-solving processes by mapping the links between operational groups and local structures to ensure information exchange around community tension issues and the Devon and Torbay Prevent Partnership.

4.1.2 Complete a review on venue hire and IT policies as identified and give some consideration to how this can be linked into wider Martyn’s law developments. This piece of work is underway however requires contribution from wider stakeholders within the Local Authority and community voluntary sector. Guidance is awaited regarding the implementation of Martyn’s Law, which received Royal Assent in April.

4.1.3 Develop a targeted approach to communications and engagement that reflect Torbay’s priorities – the scale of comms activity should be considered pragmatically against an understanding of the local risk and threat assessment.

4.1.4 Seek to explore a mechanism for delivering face to face training to provide an evidence based enhanced offer to services identified as most in need. This will require additional resources and capacity which are currently not available; and again, a pragmatic approach is required considering this requirement against other statutory training priorities.

4.2 Linking with 4.1.1 above we need to consider how we better gauge community sentiment and emerging themes by sharing intelligence regarding community tensions and understanding local risk levels. With the current global and national political narrative there continues to be the potential for escalation of right wing, and anti-immigration sentiment including the potential radicalisation of susceptible individuals and the escalation/mobilisation of those already on a path of radicalisation. This has been seen most recently in relation to the summer 2024 protests/riots. Wider risks are noted in terms of impact on communities from hate crime, violence, public disorder and community tensions which all interconnects with the Prevent agenda.

- 4.2 As highlighted by the Prevent Partnership there are a consistently low number of Channel cases relating to adults which means there is a risk that susceptible adults are not being identified and referred into the Prevent process. National statistics for 2023-24 indicate that over 18s account for 43%, 41% and 31% of Prevent referrals, Channel Panel discussions, and Channel adoptions, respectively. Therefore, whilst under 18s account for the highest proportion of cases, the over 18 age group constitutes a sizeable cohort. From 2019/20 to 2023/24, a reduction has occurred in the annual proportion of Prevent referrals, Channel Panel discussions and Channel adoptions relating to adults over the age of 18 (*2024, Improving PREVENT Adult Referral Rates Task & Finish Group - Terms of Reference*). Of the current open Prevent cases one was from a Local Authority referral (Children's Services). The T&F Group has been established to explore this issue further and make recommendations.
- 4.3 Counter terrorism policing is reporting an increase of referrals into Prevent over the last few months which is reported as more than a temporary response to Southport and interim policy amendments. This may result in an increase in referrals into Channel which could stretch capacity to manage the Channel process locally.

## 5. Background – Modern Slavery

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- 5.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 introduced the powers that law enforcement agencies need to pursue, disrupt and bring to justice those engaged in human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. It also introduced a range of measures to enhance support and protection for victims.
- 5.2 The Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance (Home Office, 2020) applies in England and Wales to public authorities with a duty to notify the Home Office when encountering a potential victim and those involved in the identification of and support for potential victims. These individuals and organisations must have regard to the Statutory Guidance, with a view to developing a more consistent response to modern slavery victims to ensure they are identified and receive the available and appropriate support.
- 5.3 Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.
- 5.4 The governance and primary delivery mechanism for work in this area is via the Devon and Cornwall Anti-Slavery Partnership (ASP). The Partnership provides multi-agency strategic direction and co-ordination in the response to modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) across the four local authority areas, with the strategic aim of ensuring modern slavery and human trafficking is considered as daily business.

## 6. Summary – Modern Slavery

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- 6.1 The responsibilities of the Anti-Slavery Partnership (ASP) are to understand and share good practice working together with Children’s Safeguarding Partnerships, Adult Safeguarding Boards and CSPs. It aims to develop a consistent approach to addressing MSHT across the peninsula and use local intelligence and learning from local operations to inform policy and practice.
- 6.2 As a relatively new partnership the primary focus of the ASP over the last year has been to establish priority areas and key workstreams. This has including facilitating the sharing of good practice in relation to Modern Slavery Statements; stakeholder engagement and awareness raising of the partnership intelligence reporting portal; and reviewing and strengthening the Modern Slavery Adult Potential Victim Referral Pathway Protocol and MOU.
- 6.3 The Partnership is informed by the quarterly threat assessment produced by Devon and Cornwall Police. The most recent assessment highlighted the biggest threat continues to be sexual exploitation with increase in reports of labour exploitation (for example, working in nail bars and hospitality industry). Reports of exploitation within the care sector have reduced in last quarter whereas this was prevalent in the previous three months. It has been recommended that work continues to raise awareness of exploitation in the care sector with partners who may encounter potential victims of exploitation.
- 6.4 Torquay sector shows the largest volume of reports of MSHT in the last quarter (36 total), over half relate to sexual exploitation; the remainder are county lines, and small numbers relating to labour exploitation. Paignton and Brixton show similar patterns but with smaller numbers of reports (15 total).
- 6.5 Partners are encouraged to share intelligence through the [D&C Police Community Partnership Intelligence portal](#). Further information on the portal can be found in this [video](#).
- 6.6 A requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 is that organisations produce and publish a Modern Slavery Statement which demonstrates the steps they are taking to prevent modern slavery in their business and supply chains. The Statement for Torbay Council has recently been reviewed and updated and is awaiting sign off. It has been broadened slightly from purely a procurement and supply chain focus to include some additional detail on the role the local authority plays in partnership to address modern slavery. Consideration needs to be given to the scope of the statement for the next annual review, and whether to widen it further as this document could act as the overarching corporate policy in future.
- 6.7 On a regional basis SW ADASS are currently carrying out a review of how local authorities are responding to modern slavery which has included surveying all areas via questionnaire and holding focus groups. This has included sharing a maturity matrix and self-assessment template which, if adopted, could enable local authorities to benchmark against

each other across the region. The findings from this review will be used to inform regional and peninsula level work over the next year.

## 7. Areas for development – Modern Slavery

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- 7.1 The Peninsula ASP is currently finalising the revised multiagency protocol and MOU so work will be required locally to ensure this is shared widely and adopted by all relevant stakeholders. This should include monitoring of implementation to provide assurance to the ASP that it has been adopted effectively.
- 7.2 Consideration of what activity is required following completion of the SW ADASS Review – initial indications are that there needs to be a strengthening of strategic oversight within local authorities of local responses to modern slavery, with more active monitoring and assurance activity.
- 7.3 Consideration of utilising the self-assessment framework to provide additional local assurance and inform a local improvement plan. This would require a commitment of additional resources to coordinate and complete.
- 7.4 Work needs to continue to raise awareness of the indicators of modern slavery, the reporting process and increase partner intelligence submissions. In previous years, there have been campaigns delivered directly engaging with the hospitality industry and local businesses however resource constraints have meant these have not continued. These could be revisited if considered an area of focus.

## 8. Conclusions & recommendations

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- 8.1 In both Prevent and Modern Slavery workstreams the key challenge is to ensure that there is a wide awareness amongst staff of their duty to report individuals at risk of radicalisation or exploitation. There is work underway to identify where improvements need to be made, and how we can work better together in partnership to respond effectively to current risks and get ahead of emerging issues.
- 8.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Sub Board are asked to consider the areas for development and ongoing reviews; and it is recommended that a follow up report is presented at a future meeting to update members on progress and provide more details on findings and recommendations from the wider partnership reviews once they are completed.