

Press release: New figures show improved referrals to Prevent and a rise in far-right concerns

Figures released by the Home Office today (Tuesday 27 March) show that between April 2016 to March 2017, 6,093 individuals were referred to the government's Prevent programme and of those who received support from Channel, over a third were as a result of far-right concerns.

Security Minister, Ben Wallace, said:

The Prevent programme is fundamentally about protecting people who are vulnerable to all forms of radicalisation and has stopped hundreds of individuals being drawn towards terrorism and violence.

The figures released today show that the programme is continuously improving, demonstrated by better referrals being made and the fact that we are tackling the threat from the far-right.

We have seen all too starkly the devastating consequences of radicalisation and the need for a coordinated response at a local and national level. We will continue to work with partners to improve and make sure this crucial support is given to those who need it.

The number of individuals referred to Prevent who went on to be discussed at the multi-agency Channel panel who examine whether an intervention is necessary, rose from 14% in 2015 to 2016 to 19% indicating better quality referrals are being made. The proportion of referrals which went on to receive Channel support also increased slightly.

The figures also show:

- of those referred to Prevent, 332 individuals went onto receive support from Channel as well as 54% of all referrals being signposted to other forms of support
- the proportion of individuals supported by Channel as a result of far-right concerns has risen from a quarter in 2015 to 2016 to over a third in 2016 to 2017
- 79% people left the programme with no further terrorism-related concerns

One person who benefitted from the Channel programme was Joe who was drawn to the extreme right-wing when he was just 15. He started going to football matches and fell under the influence of some older individuals who had far-right views.

His behaviour soon became a problem for others and he started getting in trouble, including racial discrimination at school. This eventually escalated to violent behaviour which saw Joe getting in trouble with the police. He was referred to Prevent where he met his mentor, Nick, who helped him broaden his views.

Joe said:

It was easy to get dragged along. There were a lot of people I looked up to and I thought they were positive role models.

Nick helped me to understand both sides of the argument. Before then I had only seen one side of things that I'd seen or watched online.

I would encourage anyone who is referred and needs support to be involved with Prevent. It can open your eyes and create opportunities that you may not have had otherwise.

Nick is one of many Channel mentors who supports individuals referred to Prevent across the country. They come from a range of backgrounds, some are former far right and Islamist extremists themselves, and are matched to individuals based on the support they need.

Rashad Ali, a Channel Intervention Provider, said:

Everyone involved in the Channel programme is passionate about helping those who are vulnerable to radicalisation to stop them from going down a very dangerous path.

Channel is a voluntary and confidential safeguarding programme which provides support to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It deals with all forms of radicalisation including Islamist extremism and the extreme right-wing.

The number of Prevent referrals is very small compared to other forms of safeguarding, for example, in the same time period, over 645,000 children were referred to children's social care in England.

[News story: First tree planted in](#)

River Aire natural flood management pilot

The first of thousands of trees to be planted across the upper River Aire catchment took place today as part of a pilot natural flood management project.

Cllr Judith Blake CBE, leader of Leeds City Council, planted the first tree on site at Eshton Beck, Gargrave, witnessed by volunteers, landowners, local authorities and partners. This pilot site will have 450 trees planted, to see how natural techniques can slow the flow of water and reduce the risk of flooding downstream.

Ray Bridge Farm, Eshton Beck, Gargrave is the location of the first pilot site where trees such as Dogwood, Guelder Rose, Downy Birch, Alder, and willow will be planted along with hedgerows of hawthorn, blackthorn and hazel. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust staff and volunteers will be leading the planting of trees at the site.

The natural flood management pilot forms part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme, led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency, which has a catchment wide approach to flood risk as it enters its second stage.

This £500,000 pilot programme, which has been funded by Leeds City Council, forms part of plans to plant hundreds of thousands of trees that will support second phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk, known as natural flood management, is an important part of managing and reducing flood risk in a sustainable way alongside more traditional engineering solutions. The interventions will also create habitat for wildlife and help regenerate rural and urban areas through tourism.

The pilot sites will allow the team to be able to do monitoring and research of the techniques used to gather evidence and increase their understanding and the benefits they give to reducing flood risk. The pilot programme will also be used by the Environment Agency and Leeds City Council to develop a co-design approach to working with landowners, tenants, local authorities and other key partners such as the Aire Rivers Trust and the White Rose Forest. This will help to then develop future plans for the catchment.

Leader of Leeds City Council Councillor Judith Blake said:

These new trees are a hugely significant part of our plans to protect Leeds from future flooding like the devastation we saw on Boxing Day 2015.

It's great to be working with partner authorities along the River

Aire to get the first of the trees planted.

They are part of what will be a range of natural flood management measures in a catchment wide approach to prevent future catastrophic floods affecting communities along the river.

Adrian Gill, Area Flood Risk Manager at the Environment Agency said:

I'm really pleased to launch this pilot programme in partnership with Leeds City Council. Using natural techniques to minimise flood risk while creating new habitats and increasing woodland cover across the Aire catchment will help realise the ambitions set out in the Defra's 25 year environment plan.

While we can never truly eliminate the threat of flooding, working together across local authority boundaries to develop and deliver this programme will help us to create better, more effective solutions to a catchment-wide challenge.

Following the successful opening of the £50million first phase of the scheme serving the city centre, Holbeck and Woodlesford in October last year, phase two identifies measures further upstream including the Kirkstall corridor which was badly hit by the 2015 Christmas floods. It also looks at areas beyond the city boundary to further reduce the possibility of the river flooding in Leeds, as well as additional measures to offer protection for the South Bank area of the city centre which is a key future economic driver for Leeds.

The phase two plans have a strong focus on natural flood management, with proposals to create new woodland areas which would more than double canopy coverage in the River Aire catchment. It also proposes water storage areas to be created and developed, operated by control gates system meaning water can be held and then released back into the river when safe to do so. A third element would be the removal of existing obstructions along the river to help reduce water levels, along with lowering the riverbed in places to improve its capacity and flow.

An outline business case for phase 2 has been completed, which was submitted at the end of January 2018. Outline design for engineered options is being progressed, which will be followed by a tender process with an aim to awarding the construction contract award in autumn 2018.

News story: First tree planted in River Aire natural flood management pilot

Leader of Leeds City Council, Cllr Judith Blake and Adrian Gill, Area Flood Risk Manager at the Environment Agency, on the site of the first tree.

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Press release: Nomination of Suffragan Bishop of Tonbridge: 27 March 2018

The Queen has approved the nomination of the Venerable Simon David Burton-Jones, MA, BTh, Archdeacon of Rochester, in the Diocese of Rochester, to the Suffragan See of Tonbridge, in the Diocese of Rochester. He succeeds the Right Reverend Brian Colin Castle, MA, PhD, who resigned on the 30 November 2015.

News story: Stranding of trains and self-detrainments at Lewisham

View from Lewisham station towards London (Photo by Matt Buck on Wikimedia Commons. Used under Creative Commons).

At about 17:30 hrs on Friday 2 March 2018, the delayed 15:56 hrs Southeastern service from London Charing Cross to Dartford encountered difficulty in drawing electric current due to ice on the conductor rail, while attempting to depart from platform 4 at Lewisham station.

The following train, the delayed 16:26 hrs Southeastern service from London Charing Cross to Dartford, was then held at a red signal on the approach to platform 4 at Lewisham station. This train was held around a coach length from platform 4, because the track section that included that platform was still occupied by the 15:56 hrs service.

The train behind that, the delayed 17:06 hrs Southeastern service from London Charing Cross to Orpington, was consequently held at a red signal on the incline between Tanners Hill junction and Lewisham Vale junction. This train was 12 coaches long and its rear coaches blocked the fast lines at Tanners Hill junction. A total of four trains heading away from London and two trains heading towards London were stopped on the fast lines as a result of this. Two further trains were held on the slow lines in St Johns and Lewisham stations as a result of the congestion.

The 15:56 hrs service continued to make insufficient progress out of Lewisham station to clear the track section for the signalling to allow the 16:26 hrs service into platform 4. By 18:30 hrs Network Rail staff had arrived to help clear the ice from the conductor rail ahead of the 15:56 hrs service. The signaller and electrical operators were making preparations to locally

isolate the power to allow the de-icing to start.

In advance of the power being switched off, the signaller was in the process of seeking special permission to allow the 16:26 hrs service to pass the red signal into platform 4. This would allow detrainment of the passengers onto the platform. However, during this discussion, the signaller received an emergency call from the driver of the 16:26 hrs service advising that some passengers had opened the doors and were getting out onto the track. The signaller immediately asked the electrical control operator to switch off the power to the conductor rail in the area.

The train driver, assisted by Network staff on the track, attempted to persuade passengers to re-board the train or to get clear of the track; they also advised those still on board to remain there. A short time later, British Transport Police, London Fire Service and London Ambulance service staff were called to Lewisham to assist with the passengers who were on the track. However, passengers continued to exit the 16:26 hrs service, and others alighted from the 15:56 and 17:06 hrs services. Passengers also alighted from trains that had stopped near New Cross station.

A controlled evacuation of the 15:56 and 16:26 hrs services to the Lewisham station platforms took place between about 20:00 hrs and 20:45 hrs. It then took some time for Network Rail and the emergency services to confirm that all passengers and staff were clear of the track in the affected area. Power was restored at 21:36 hrs and most trains were back on the move by about 22:00 hrs.

Our investigation into the incident will determine the sequence of events and the actions of those involved. It will also include consideration of:

- the reasons for the trains becoming stranded and measures used to manage this
- the emergency preparedness arrangements for cold weather
- the processes used to manage the stranded trains and how standard rail industry guidance was applied
- how passengers were briefed and kept informed, including the part played by mobile phones and social media
- the plan for managing the safety of detrained passengers and recovering railway operation, and how this was applied (including liaison with the emergency services)
- the high level management of the event by Network Rail and Southeastern

Although the investigation will focus on the events near Lewisham, it will also identify other serious stranding events that occurred on the UK rail network during the 1 and 2 March 2018.

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry, or by the industry's regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation. This report will be available on our website.

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