

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.