

GOOD MUSLIM, BAD MUSLIM
A response to the revised *Prevent* strategy



About Cageprisoners

Cageprisoners is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee which operates as a human rights NGO. The organisation seeks to work for political Muslim detainees, specifically those interned as a result of the 'War on Terror' and its peripheral campaigns, by raising awareness of the illegality and the global consequences of their detention. By promoting due process, the vision of the organisation is to see a return to the respect of those fundamental norms which transcend religion, societies and political theories.

Cageprisoners comprises of an advisory group which includes patrons, seasoned activists, lawyers, doctors and former detainees. From the group, a board has been elected which oversees the strategy and management of the organisation and its employees. By working in such a way the working environment of the organisation can constantly be reviewed in light of its aims and objectives.



Report Author: Jahangir Mohammed & Dr Adnan Siddiqui

Copyright © 2011 Cageprisoners
All rights reserved.

Cageprisoners
27 Old Gloucester Street
London
WC1N 3XX

Telephone: 00 (44) 2031674416
Email: contact@cageprisoners.com

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION5

PROFILING MUSLIMS6

ROOT CAUSES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE8

SECRECY AND SPYING10

PROBLEMS OF DEFINITIONS AND THE LAW.....12

‘EXTREMISM’ AMONGST OTHER COMMUNITIES14

EQUALITY, DISCRIMINATION, SECTARIANISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS16

PREVENT AND THE CHANNEL PROGRAMME.....18

PREVENT AND THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR20

CONCLUSION23

Introduction

The UK government has released a revised *Prevent* strategy in the hope that it can break links to past policies in relation to Muslim communities. Those communities eagerly anticipated the new formulation in the expectation that the government would have listened and positively acted on the advice that had been given over the last six years.

The original *Prevent* strategy proved to be counterproductive both in terms of its strategy and its implementation. The government has attempted to rework the way in which it approaches the Muslim community, and unfortunately the revised formulation only seeks to further alienate Muslims from the mainstream of society.

The report—*Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*—helps to expose the inconsistencies of the position put forward by the government.

Among the main features of the report include analyses relating to:

1. Profiling of Muslims
2. Root causes of political violence
3. Secrecy and spying
4. Problem of definitions and the law
5. 'Extremism' amongst other communities
6. Equality, discrimination, sectarianism and human rights
7. The healthcare sector
8. The Channel programme

Throughout the report, what is shown to be of greatest concern, is the overemphasis on the ideological challenges relating to political violence, and very little recognition of other factors. Indeed, the title of report was chosen precisely because the government's latest position signals to Muslims in the UK that it is the government that will decide what is acceptable religious practice and belief, and not the communities themselves.

The events in Norway on 22 July 2011 have raised further questions about the way in which 'extremism' has been analysed and the failure of European governments to see the clear trends that resulted in such a tragedy.

The overemphasis that has been placed on Muslims and Islam has blinkered Europe into a position where it has not only ignored, but some might say encouraged the tendencies of far right movements. By playing up the threat of Muslims, those who consider themselves liberals, have provided a space to validate racism against Muslims.

Good Muslim, Bad Muslim, also seeks to address the phenomenon of 'extremism' in other communities and ask questions of the way in which groups like the English Defence League are allowed to operate without any of the sanction or scrutiny that is afforded Muslims.

Whether or not Anders Breivik was part of an organisation or operated alone, the climate under which he chose to carry out such atrocities tells us that the entire strategy relating to 'extremism' and 'radicalisation' is flawed and dangerous.

[Asim Qureshi – Executive Director]

Profiling Muslims

A major flaw identified (by the Review) in the last prevent policy is confusion of Prevent policies with integration policies. This appears to have been addressed and is welcome. However only 20% of all Prevent activity has been exclusively terrorism related and 80% cohesion and integration (point 6.26 of Prevent report). We do not believe that there is justification for a Prevent policy that encompasses the entire Muslim community.

Apart from this change and the fact that the policy is now even more explicit in saying that it is about legitimizing what is acceptable Islam; there is little change from the previous strategy. It is disappointing that the many flaws/concerns about the policy identified by Muslims over the last few years have not been addressed, and there has been so little change, and new thinking in the review. We will reiterate some of those flaws and concerns below.

There is no change in the narrative that underpins the policy, from the original. The narrative in relation to political violence, 'extremism', 'radicalisation' and Muslim/Islamic issues is heavily influenced by US and UK think tanks and policy groups, i.e. it is ideological and political. The bibliography and sources in the prevent review are overwhelmingly non-Muslim. Hence many of the statements in relation to Islam in the review display a lack of deep understanding of Islam and theological/sectarian issues.

Traditionally local authorities have excluded from funding religious or political activities. Prevent activities are both religious and political. We think Local authorities are ill equipped for this role and it will simply end up damaging the excellent community relations built up by councils in many areas.

The strategy identifies, that the threat from terrorism comes from Al Qaeda, but throughout the report it uses the phrase "Al Qaeda, its affiliates and like minded groups". This broadens the scope of the strategy to whomever anyone cares to define as like-minded. This is problematic; since many Muslims support the underlying causes that Al Qaeda claim to be fighting for, but disagree with the method (i.e. most Muslims support the non interference of western powers in Muslim political affairs, the right of Muslim peoples to self determination, and the toppling of despotic and unaccountable rulers). Many Muslims are also admirers of preachers such as Anwar Al Awlaki prior to his opinions changing after his detention and abuse. His earlier religious talks are still an inspiration for many, does that put these people in the "like minded" category.

Prevent is a political programme more than counter terrorism. We are concerned that the police, teachers and other professionals are being 'politicised' and asked to play a role in a political programme that is about Muslim politics and Islamic theology. This is something of which they have little understanding and it is not their role.

Recommendations

- ◆ The resources dedicated to prevent would be better spent on policing, intelligence work, and preventing terrorism.
- ◆ The majority of the Muslim community will remain unsupportive of the Prevent strategy, and view that their concerns have been ignored.
- ◆ It would be useful for civil servants to publish names of advisers, think tanks, and consultants that have been used to draft the strategy.
- ◆ What measures are in place to ensure that advice given is free from the political bias of think-tanks, and counter balance of opinion is provided to civil servants?
- ◆ The government should clarify who the affiliates, like-minded groups and individuals to Al Qaeda are. Those concerned should be able to challenge this label.
- ◆ The strategy should be re-assessed and underpinned by deeper analysis of the politics and causes of political violence in the Muslim world as opposed to a focus on Islamic theology.

Root causes of political violence

Cageprisoners asserts that a key problem in the strategy is the analysis of the root causes. It follows that if the analysis of the problem is flawed, then the solutions arising from them will have little impact.

The Home Secretary states that:

“First, we will respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat from those who promote it. In doing so, we must be clear: the ideology of extremism and terrorism is the problem; legitimate religious belief emphatically is not.”

All terrorists and acts of political violence have an ideology. But terrorism and political violence is not caused by ideology. Terrorism is a methodology not an ideology.

British Muslims believe that the violence emanating from the Muslim world is a direct consequence of the political situation in those countries, and western involvement in occupation, support for dictatorships that have, and continue to, cause so much suffering to Muslims. There is not a single reference to this in the strategy.

We also do not accept that some commit acts of terrorism because they don't support parliamentary democracy. This is more to do with alienation from the entire system than it is with parliamentary democracy in particular.

The strategy seems to draw on all kind of sources in analysing causes and the problem, except the most obvious one, those that have been convicted of terrorism and related offences throughout Europe. It breaks down their social characteristics, age and ethnicity, but not their views and motivations. This should be redressed in order to provide a correct conceptual framework for understanding these issues.

Recommendations

- ◆ As long as the causal analysis is flawed and at odds with the overwhelming majority of Muslims, the policy will not enjoy much support from them.
- ◆ The strategy should incorporate alternative analysis of causes as well as the view put forward from think-tanks close to the government. These should include a variety of views from the Muslim communities, as well as the views of non-Muslims who provide an alternative analysis.
- ◆ Independent academic research, interviewing those convicted of terrorism should be conducted and results available widely to get a real understanding of causes rather than relying on theory, conjecture and propaganda.

Secrecy and spying

The strategy states “the percentage of people who are prepared to support violent extremism in this country is very small” (para 3.3). We know that the number of those who have gone on to plan or commit acts of violence is even smaller. Despite this the Prevent policy targets almost all aspects of Muslim community life. The strategy goes on to talk about prevent activity focussed on Muslims in schools, madrassahs, universities, prisons, mosques, Muslim charities, Muslim women, community projects and activities overseas i.e. almost every aspect of Muslim life. We cannot see a justification for such a comprehensive targeting of the lives Muslims lead.

Prevent is the first British strategy that targets the entire Muslim community. It is perceived by Muslims as a form of collective targeting for the acts of a few, and most are resentful that they are made responsible for dealing with someone else’s crimes (suspect community). It is for this reason that many have distanced themselves from Prevent e.g. Lancashire Council of Mosques, Rochdale Centre for Diversity, many Imams and mosques, and even those initially working with Prevent, in places such as Reading, to name but a few.

Local authorities knowing that Prevent is unpopular have tended to badge projects as cohesion and not to mention the funding programme on documents and activity (it is normal Government practice to require Councils to publicise the funding programme).

Some projects have been commissioned disingenuously under the guise of community interests e.g. the spy cameras in Birmingham or the Muslim needs research in Liverpool which was in effect a community mapping exercise of Muslim organisations for the benefit of the police and local authority officers, and to which the community objected strongly.

Information on all projects funded by Prevent has not been forthcoming and sometimes shrouded in secrecy. Thanks to the efforts of the Tax Payers Alliance this information was collated, however some councils refused to provide information.

Communities should be able to challenge Prevent projects about which they have concerns.

Those Muslims that have concerns about Prevent, its principles, its aims, and do not wish to engage with it or its activities, should have the freedom to choose not to get involved. However this freedom cannot be exercised if Prevent projects are disguised and not clearly labelled. In some cases Muslim scholars have not been aware that they have participated in Prevent funded activity, and have indicated they would not have attended had they been aware of this fact.

Recommendations

- ◆ Muslims and their groups should be free to choose to engage, or not, in Prevent projects/activities. Prevent funded projects, and activity should clearly display “funded by Prevent logos” in line with protocols for other funding regimes.
- ◆ Websites of projects/activity funded by Prevent, such as the Radical Middle Way, should be required to state they are funded by Prevent.
- ◆ Full details of projects funded, amounts, and what activities, achievements, should be available to local communities, and nationally for scrutiny by the Muslim community.
- ◆ There must be clear processes in place, for Muslim communities to challenge/overturn Prevent projects that they have concerns about.

Problem of definitions and the law

Terms, definitions and labelling are having a major impact on Muslim rights.

We are concerned that the strategy will further erode Muslim rights and freedoms and increase religious discrimination. These rights have already been affected by terrorism laws. This legislation added to the Prevent strategy which uses, loosely defined labels such as 'extremism' and 'radicalisation' interchangeably with terrorism and violence, creates an impression that they are all unlawful activities and a threat. This message is reinforced by media stories. This can legitimise officer perceptions and prejudices about Muslims and lead to differential treatment.

Violence and the advocacy of violence are against the law. 'Extremism' and 'radicalism' are not, nor do they have a legal definition. Prevent seems to be a shifting strategy; it started off a few years ago by talking about dealing with violence, then extremism and now radicalism. We note that the title of this Committee includes "roots of violent radicalisation." This simply adds to the confusion.

Since almost the entire Muslim community has distanced itself from violence and stated it is unlawful to promote or advocate it; the strategy appears to be about silencing Muslim political opposition to western foreign policy, occupation of Muslim lands and promotion of Islamic political ideas of governance. This becomes clearer when reading the strategy and when one looks at the glossary of definitions.

The proposition that western governments have the perfect vision of good governance for a country seems an extreme position. To criminalise dissent against democracy silences any legitimate discussion regarding the role of good governance. Considering the failed project of democracy in Iraq and the manner in which the Arab Spring is choosing to exercise its right to self-determination, the strategy is going too far by criminalising dissent.

The strategy offers the following definitions in the glossary:

"Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas".

"Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism."

"A radicaliser is an individual who encourages others to develop or adopt beliefs and views supportive of terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism".

"Radicalising locations are venues, often unsupervised, where the process of radicalisation takes place. Locations include public spaces, for example university campuses and mosques, as well as private/more concealed locations such as homes, cafes, and bookstores".

"Radicalising materials include literature or videos that are used by radicalisers to encourage or reinforce individuals to adopt a violent ideology. Some of this material may explicitly encourage violence. Other materials may take no avowed position on violence but make claims to which violence is subsequently presented as the only solution."

The use of violence interchangeably with terms such as extremism and radicalism is a clear attempt in our view to outlaw Muslim political ideas and views. These definitions are problematic and will give rise to further restrictions on Muslim freedom of speech and right to hear speakers with alternative views. In light of the definition of extremism, we would want clarification on whether Muslim and non Muslims who view it the legitimate right of the people of Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq to resist occupation of their lands; fall within this definition? Since the majority of Muslims globally support the right to resist occupation, does that make them all extremists?

Who is responsible for defining or labelling an individual or group as extremist or radical, or vulnerable to extremism? And what rights do those so labelled have to challenge that label, particularly if they are to be denied rights such as to funding, access to jobs, to book publicly funded venues, exclusion from talking or activism on campus, non-attendance by government figures at events, and probably an intelligence file.

Much of this labelling takes place via the media and think tanks, and relies on propaganda, out of context quotes, and appears to be a moving target. Groups once considered moderate, and who have in a real sense cooperated with the Prevent agenda from the early days, are now considered extremist (para 3.18).

The strategy gives the impression that Muslim political “extremism” and “radicalism” is a pathway to violence and terror. In fact according to the strategy only 15% of those convicted have previously been linked to extremist groups (5.37).

Recommendations

- ◆ The Strategy should make it clear at the outset, that extremism and radicalism is not unlawful and can be healthy. That Muslims have a right as citizens to freedom of political thought, assembly and association, and that Prevent should not be used to deny them those rights.
- ◆ The Government and Local authorities should list clearly those beliefs considered to be ‘extremist’ and ‘radical’. It should ensure that all public service providers know that this applies equally to all communities not just Muslims.
- ◆ It should publish lists of those groups and individuals locally and nationally who fall within these definitions and, hence are ineligible to apply for funding, excluded from public debate, and booking venues.
- ◆ It should lay down clear procedures for those who wish to challenge their exclusion.
- ◆ The Government should clarify whether support for resistance to occupation overseas falls within the definition of extremism in the glossary.

‘Extremism’ amongst other communities

After criticism by Muslims that Prevent only targets Muslim extremism, the new strategy refers to other forms of terrorism, violence and extremism, notably right wing racists (5.10-5.11 and 5.42-5.46).

This part of the strategy appears to be a tokenistic effort to appease criticism. It is very weak. In reality, the strategy remains only concerned with Muslim “extremism” and “radicalism”.

We are surprised at the Home Office’s lack of intelligence on right wing groups, violence, organisational and military training. The anti-fascist magazine of Gerry Gable “Searchlight” has for decades infiltrated and exposed neo-Nazi violence and terror.

The Home Office seems also to have forgotten that right-wing violence against Muslim communities in the North of England in 2001 was what provoked the riots in that part of the country.

We are informed 17 people have been convicted of right wing terrorism (para 5.10). We are led to believe that others have been charged under the Explosives Acts and do not therefore appear in the figures for terrorism.

There are also links between the EDL in this country and extreme right-wing Christian and Zionist groups in the United States. The seriousness of these links though has been best exposed through the tragic events that took place in Norway on 22 July 2011. The terrorist attack by Anders Breivik highlighted the toxic legacy of all the right wing groups and commentators who have contributed to the formulation of his opinions.

The manifesto written by Breivik, highlights groups such as the EDL as those he has worked with or taken inspiration from. What is even more worrying though, is that the rhetoric that he uses is taken from the mantra of

various European leaders such as Angela Merkel and David Cameron, as well as commentators such as Melanie Philips. The speeches and positions taken by these governments and populist writers, has resulted in a widening space have opened up for the far right to express themselves thereby becoming increasingly vitriolic and violent in their targeting of other communities.

The Muslim community and all aspects of its life have been subject to intense scrutiny and research over the last decade. Other communities have not.

We are concerned that the strategy still only effectively applies to Muslims and fails to look into links between extremism and violence amongst other communities. We feel this is clearly discriminatory.

The Muslim community and all aspects of their life have been subject to an intense level of scrutiny, over the last 10 years. If other communities were subject to the same level of scrutiny we are in no doubt we would find unacceptable, possibly unlawful, views and behaviour.

Recommendations

- ◆ The Prevent strategy should make it clear at the outset that there is a problem of political violence amongst other communities beyond right wing groups, and make it clear that Prevent funding can be used for such issues.
- ◆ Groups should be able to apply for funding to Prevent to research and highlight other forms of politically/racially motivated violence.
- ◆ The Home Office needs to gain better intelligence on right wing activity and violence.
- ◆ A full analysis should be provided of those who have been convicted under Explosives Acts and their links to right wing, racist and other ideologies. Explanations should be provided as to why the prosecution occurred under these laws rather than the terror laws.
- ◆ Lessons should be learnt from Norway and the actions of Breivik. It is important that European governments, particularly the UK, should recognise the real danger that exists in other communities outside of Muslims.

Equality, discrimination, sectarianism and human rights

The Equality Impact Assessment has almost nothing to say on the likely impact on the Muslim community and equality, and is very poor indeed and again appears to be a tokenistic effort.

Labelling and stereotyping coupled with ignorance about communities invariably leads to reinforcement of prejudice and discrimination. Labelling someone as an extremist or radical and therefore a potential terrorist can have a major impact on someone's life, sometimes just as much as being prosecuted. What processes are in place to challenge such labelling and what redress for damage done to an individual or group?

There are a number of areas of concern that we believe are /will lead to discrimination against Muslims.

Prevent is clearly about dealing with the political views of Muslims. Most equal opportunities policies adopted by the public sector state clearly they will not discriminate against someone because of their political and religious views. We believe that the Prevent policy will potentially legitimise discrimination against Muslims because of their politics and religion. Something most Muslims already believe is an issue in the job market.

Does the strategy and its implementation apply equally to all communities e.g. we are aware that Muslim applicants for Prevent posts are required to obtain security clearance. Does this apply to Non-Muslims as well? We are aware of a case where a well respected Muslim applicant for a Prevent post, completed a security questionnaire (asking detailed questions about his politics and that of his parents as well), was engaged subject to clearance, and then refused clearance. There has been no mechanism for establishing or challenging the grounds of the decision. The individual has been left devastated and many members of the community now avoid him.

We have heard of cases where pressure has been applied to community centres not to book venues to a group or individual that some officer or councillor, has decided is 'extremist'. The Council refused to put this in writing. Without clear mechanisms in place for such decisions, which can be challenged, there is too much scope for individual discretion and councillor prejudice.

We have heard of cases where local police have encouraged mosques to report to them and prevent leafleting outside their premises by Muslim groups and individuals, thus breaching their human rights.

We are concerned that the ways of working under Prevent, will become precedents for dealing with Muslims e.g. will all Muslim job applicants now start to be discreetly security checked or screened for their political views. Will all Muslim groups applying for funding from other programmes be assessed using the Prevent principles?

We are also concerned that sectarian bias is creeping into Government policy and that some of its Muslim advisers have provided advice, based on subjective sectarian differences rather than based on objective analysis. This is reflected in the previous strategy and the new one. This cannot be explained in detail here.

Examples we would point to, is the decision to exclude Dr. Zakir Naik branding him an 'extremist' after petitions from some Muslims who disagreed with some of his views from a sectarian viewpoint. We have also heard of instances where projects have only provided resources to mosques from one sect.

Recommendations

- ◆ A comprehensive impact assessment is carried out on the likely impacts on the Muslim community in particular.
- ◆ Clear guidance is issued on what views and behaviours constitute 'extremism' and 'radicalism'.
- ◆ Procedures are in put in place to prevent discrimination against Muslims because of political or religious views.
- ◆ There should be a mechanism for the right of appeal and challenge to those labelled as extremists and radicals. Redress in the case of wrongful accusation.
- ◆ Government to clarify that the scope of the strategy includes all communities.
- ◆ The right to challenge security check information held on individuals and groups to be built into the strategy; where this about political/religious views and activities.
- ◆ Where Muslim community groups or mosques are told to not to allow individuals and groups to book venues or carry out activities this should always be in writing with clear reasons. Those affected should be allowed to challenge these decisions.
- ◆ What mechanisms are in place at national and local level to ensure that advice by Muslims is free from sectarian bias?
- ◆ What mechanisms are in place to ensure that political and sectarian differences used by Muslims to make accusations of extremism are not given due serious consideration?

Prevent and the Channel Programme

We are told that Prevent will build and expand into the Channel Programme. We have concerns about the operation of this project and the numbers being referred to it (section 9).

We are told that this programme now operates in 75 local authority areas. And that 1120 young people have been referred, mainly under 25, as vulnerable and at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Of these, 290 are under 16 and 55 under 12. We are told that 88% of the referrals are due to concerns about international terrorism. We do not accept that so many youngsters in our community are at risk of being drawn into terrorism. We suspect that this reflects the manner in which risk indicators are interpreted and judgements are being made about comment/behaviour by youngsters relating to international politics.

We are concerned that communities and parents have not been made aware of the operation of this programme in their areas and the number of agencies involved.

“The guidance states that identification of vulnerable people should be made by a wide range of statutory organisations. They include local authorities; police; youth offending services; social workers; housing and voluntary groups. Identifications must be made carefully and against a range of possible indicators”. (9.10)

Communities and parents have not been provided with any information of the range of risk indicators and behaviours that could trigger referrals. They have not been told how they can challenge such referrals and their right to know what the risk indicators are; and when referrals are made their rights to representation at panels. Given that those referred will probably have an intelligence file at a young age for the rest of their life this is extremely worrying.

The training and guidance manuals have not been approved by the Muslim community and

have not been open to scrutiny by them.

We have concerns about discussions taking place about *Jihad* in Prevent *madrassah* projects. Most Muslim children go to *madrassah* to learn Arabic or another mother language. Islamic education is not available in most. Discussions on *Jihad* are inappropriate and counter productive at a young age and will simply encourage youngsters to explore further, possibly on the internet. Parents should know when these discussions are taking place and have the right to withdraw their children.

There are also concerns about the manner in which pressure is being applied to Universities to spy on their Muslim students and restrict their political activities. We have concerns about the petitioning of the Charity Commission by pro-Israel groups to investigate Muslim Charities that are helping Palestinians using the allegation of terrorism.

We do not think that the British taxpayer should be funding Islamic missionary activities under the guise of Prevent. Nor do we think road shows of Muslim scholars talking about theological issues and on violence when there is not the other side to debate with, will be of impact. It will simply encourage those attending to look for the alternative arguments elsewhere.

The strategy states about schools: *“It must not start from a misplaced assumption that there is a significant problem that needs to be resolved”*. It then goes on to contradict this statement itself (10.49) by saying, *“That is why a Preventing Extremism Unit, which includes experts in counter-terrorism, has been established within DfE”*.

If something is not a major issue then why create this unit. We are concerned about the advice that is coming out of this Unit. Once something like this is in operation it is inevitable that more and more youngsters will be caught up in the Channel programme.

Recommendations

- ◆ Local communities, schools, mosques etc. should be informed through leaflet campaigns that Channel is operational.
- ◆ Information should be made available to parents about the risk indicators, and how statements and behaviour are evaluated.
- ◆ Parents/family members should always be informed that a referral has taken place. The grounds for the referral and rights to challenge the referral.
- ◆ Parents/individuals should have a right to appeal against an assessment and referral and representation at a panel hearing accompanied by a friend or legal representative if needed.
- ◆ There should be a right to redress where youngsters have been wrongfully referred.
- ◆ The training manuals/guidance used for training officers should be made available to Muslim communities on request to scrutinize. Their authors should be known.
- ◆ When madrassah projects are conducting discussions on *Jihad*, parents should be informed, have the right to withdraw or attend with their child.
- ◆ Universities should publish guidance on those areas it considers are not open to debate on campus and those speakers it considers should not be invited. Where a speaker has been refused.
- ◆ The work of the Preventing Extremism Unit in the DfE should be open to public scrutiny and challenge. This should include the guidance it issues, the advisors/ it uses and implementation.
- ◆ Training for schools on the Channel programme should encompass an alternative viewpoint to that presented in the Prevent strategy and guidance.
- ◆ Where an allegation is made to the faith unit at the charity commission about use of funds for terrorism, and there appears to be a political or sectarian purpose, an investigation should not be automatic.
- ◆ Where Muslim scholars are invited to Prevent activity; it should be made clear to them that it is government sponsored Prevent activity.
- ◆ No Islamic missionary activity should be funded where speaker has been refused there should be a right to challenge.

Prevent and the healthcare sector

The proposals to extend the original inadequately researched strategy, particularly regarding outcomes, in to a critical sector which is undergoing significant changes seems to be fraught with danger. This is in terms of efficacy, cost-effectiveness but critically may change the relationship between healthcare professionals and their patients which is based on trust.

Two cases (Nicky Reilly and Andrew Ibrahim) were highlighted to make a general point about people with mental health issues or learning disability being more vulnerable to radicalization. This is a gross generalisation of two groups of people who are already stigmatised and marginalised. It is hoped this alarmist statement is held up to scrutiny by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and all mental health professionals. Similarly the case of one doctor (Bilal Abdullah) was used to stress that healthcare professionals can also be radicalized. Yet no mention is made about the fact that he is Iraqi and the effect the Iraq war had on him, or any reference made to Eliza Manningham-Buller's statement on the radicalizing effect of that particular war.

This strategy mentions the challenge healthcare professionals would face in correctly interpreting signs of someone being drawn in to terrorism. This begs the question, is there any evidence based checklist of signs/symptoms that would enable someone to accurately predict this? Are the questions to elucidate such a state based on any agreed definition (DSM-4 or ICD-10) or is this an exercise in asking people about their political/religious beliefs and then applying politically loaded labels which are given dubious significance?

Nine Strategic Health Authorities have piloted PREVENT since January 2010 and the Department of Health has published guidance and a toolkit and training for some 700 people. The publication and scrutiny of the outcomes of

these 9 SHA pilot schemes may help answer the questions regarding the previous paragraph and would give more credence to the rolling out of this strategy in the Health sector.

The Department of Health's support for the review of "No Secrets" guidance on safeguarding adults requires a full discussion between frontline health workers, ethicists, lawyers, civil libertarians and those involved in national security to enable a balance to be struck between patient confidentiality and national security. Any unilateral approach could have a deleterious effect on the relationship between healthcare professionals and patients.

Is it the role of doctors, nurses and other staff to help protect people from 'radicalization' when the concept itself is so nebulous and has not even been defined adequately in the Prevent review strategy? Is healthcare being 'securitised' when there are far greater health priorities (alcohol/drug abuse, smoking) that cause substantially more fatalities than terrorism yet healthcare professionals are being asked to do the job of the security services.

Uptake of Prevent has not been consistent due to unfamiliarity of the subject matter and some of the training was not appropriate. Until there is consensus and training that is robust and based on clinical evidence and outcomes then this would be a waste of resources.

What is the support available to someone suspected of being radicalized? Has this been shown to have successful outcomes in this country or abroad? The necessity of clear guidelines is mentioned yet no empirical data is forthcoming to inform any such initiative.

The evaluation of Prevent referrals in the health sector is mentioned and that it is improving but incomplete. This should be further proof that Prevent is still evolving and has still not proved that it is fit for purpose.

Recommendations

- ◆ An assumed link between mental health and learning difficulty issues with terrorism should not be put forward by the government without more empirical research.
- ◆ The government should reassess the examples it has put forward in relation to this point in order to understand better the influences involved.
- ◆ The government must make it clear the criteria that healthcare professionals are to assess in order to make recommendations on the potential for radicalisation.
- ◆ In order to maintain a trusting relationship between healthcare workers and their patients, it is important that there is a full discussion about confidentiality between frontline health workers, ethicists, lawyers, civil libertarians and those involved in national security.
- ◆ Before any expansion of Channel to the healthcare sector the matter should be thoroughly debated via the BMA.
- ◆ In areas where Channel in health is operational patients should be made aware through leaflets.

Conclusion

The fundamental failures of the previous Prevent strategy have again found their way into the revised document produced by the government. It is time that the government actually listened to the advice of the whole Muslim community, rather than to those it chooses to represent Muslims and Islam.

The proposals that have been put forward are extremely dangerous, as they seek to alienate the suspect community more than ever.

The various policies mentioned, from the referrals within the healthcare system to the ways in which madrassahs should be used indicate that in every aspect of the lives of Muslim communities, they will feel under suspicion.

This renewed Prevent strategy is nothing more than an exercise in alienation. If the government does not heed the advice that it is being given outside of its own close network, it may result in the Muslims of the UK isolating themselves out of fear of being criminalised.

It is best to conclude on the Home Secretary's statement at the start of the document which should be constantly brought to the fore when reading the proposals suggested,

“Monitoring and evaluation of Prevent has not been robust enough to justify the sums of public money spent on them. We will make sure that they are improved and unless there is evidence that they are effective and of value for money projects will lose their funding.”

Wise words which should be heeded about the proposals for Prevent, words which apply to the entirety of the strategy.

CAGEPRISONERS