

Prevent Briefing.

Overview and Scrutiny 2021

Summary

Since 2015 it has been a statutory duty for all public sector organisations to engage with and participate in the home office Prevent Agenda. The prevent agenda aims to identify individuals who are at risk of being radicalised before they act criminally. Once identified interventions will be used to de-radicalise the individual reducing the risk that the individual will participate in criminal activity.

Prevent organisation in Lancashire

In Lancashire there is a Pan Lancashire Prevent Board, which is attended by senior officials from various Public Sector Agencies including all the District Local Authorities. In Wyre it has been agreed that the Corporate Director Environment will attend this meeting, the Board is responsible for the Pan Lancashire implementation of the Prevent agenda.

Sitting underneath the Board there are 3 are based practitioner groups, Wyre is located within the North West grouping and this meeting is chaired by the Blackpool lead practitioner. I attend this meeting on behalf of Wyre Council. The group has responsibility for implementing the prevent strategy.

Both these groups are supported by a dedicated prevent Hub which is currently based in the East of the County.

If an individual is identified within a particular area the case is referred to police CT teams and into the channel process. Essentially the Channel process is attended by a number of different agencies including the referrer and the individual is discussed and a tailored intervention plan is produced for that individual.

Each year Lancashire has to undertake a Counter Terrorism Local Profile, this is received by Prevent leads and provides latest intelligence on the threat facing the area.

In addition we receive regular updates from Paul team.

Wyre Role

Wyre role is in the main to ensure that its venues cannot be used to promote terrorist activity and that its IT equipment cannot be used to access terrorist material. I have been assured by both relevant Heads of service that this is the case.

The main role is however is to recognise individuals vulnerable to radicalisation and know how to refer those individuals into the channel process.

Within Wyre we have trained visiting staff on Prevent, when the statutory requirement was introduced in 2015. During 2019 we reviewed our safeguarding procedure and embedded Prevent into the safeguarding process. The safeguarding lead is the Head of Housing and we have 3 other safeguarding officers including myself, who is the lead for Prevent, and all of us have been provided with up to date contact details to refer individuals into the channel process should the need arise.

Essentially what we want is for our visiting officers to notice if something did not appear normal when they are going about their normal daily duty and report it to their line manager.

The line manager no matter how trivial are encouraged to contact any of the safeguarding officers to discuss the case, and where radicalisation was thought to be the concern the matter would be referred into the channel process via this process.

During 2020 we carried out virtual training on our new safeguarding procedures/ policy because training in a room has not been possible.

Just prior to the pandemic being declared we were able to run two workshops for Wyre staff and local businesses on Act Awareness attended by over 200 people.

As we have embedded prevent into safeguarding all visiting officers should receive repeat training on safeguarding.

Wyre referrals

Currently the number of referrals made by Wyre Council staff is low, what activity we are aware of has been in the main extreme right wing graffiti found within the Fleetwood area.

Whilst this has been referred into the CT police teams we are not aware of who is responsible, but it does high-light that these sentiments exist within the local population.

I feel that the most likely route we will come into contact with an individual at risk of radicalisation is through the Wyre Council Anti-Social Behaviour meeting and so we have extended an invite to our contact within the Pan Lancashire prevent Hub who has agreed to attend the meeting when she can.