

IN THE INDEPENDENT SOUTHPORT INQUIRY

SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF **DEPUTY ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER VICTORIA EVANS** **SENIOR NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR PREVENT AND PURSUE**

1. I make this witness statement on behalf of the Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters (CTPHQ) at the request of the Inquiry Legal Team. This is my second statement, and it deals with queries arising from my oral evidence to the Inquiry on 14 October 2025. The Inquiry's reference number for my first witness statement is [CTPHQ000006]. Acronyms defined in that document are not re-defined here.
2. None of the following information requires any correction to be made to the evidence I have given previously. This document provides some additional detail on the following discrete topics:
 - (i) Prevent training;
 - (ii) Resourcing and staff turnover;
 - (iii) Use of the Dynamic Investigative Framework in 2019;
 - (iv) Triple III policy launch;
 - (v) Prevent "markers".

Prevent training

3. As was noted during my evidence, under the 2018 Policy for Prevent Practitioners [CTPHQ000014], CTCOs and their supervisors were required to complete their respective national foundation courses "within six months" of starting their roles. The extant CTCO guide [CTPHQ000034_16&20] requires (at para 7.0.1 3(a)(iv)

and 7.0.2 (2)(a)(ii) respectively) that the foundation course must be completed by CTCOs and their supervisors “as soon as practicable”.

4. This wording allows for some flexibility – national courses may not always align with regional hiring practices or staff turnover. I would, however, expect the foundation courses to be undertaken within six months and in the majority of cases substantially sooner than this. Since June 2025, the Prevent national foundation courses have been held once a month. Between 2021 and June 2025, they were held on a quarterly basis. The increase in course regularity reflects increasing demands on Prevent.
5. While CTPHQ’s ODU retains central records of those who have undertaken and passed the national foundation courses, the ODU does not record the time elapsed between an individual accepting or commencing a role and their completion of the relevant foundation course. This information may be held regionally. As I have said, however, I would not expect to see significant gaps between CTCOs/supervisors commencing their roles and undertaking these courses.
6. Responsibility for ensuring that CTCOs and supervisors are trained adequately and promptly rests with the regional CTP heads across the network. In practice, the day to day responsibility for this will typically be delegated to the Regional Prevent Coordinator (RPC) within each area. For areas dealing with high volumes of Prevent cases, the RPC will normally be a dedicated role. In other areas, RPCs may have responsibilities for other areas of CTP work, such as leading on Investigations or Nominal Management.
7. In the event that there is a gap before an officer can complete the foundation course, a variety of online resources are available at all times. These materials serve as a supplement to various local training, mentoring, and staff supervision arrangements overseen by RPCs. Immediately upon taking up a Prevent role, and prior to undertaking the national foundation course, a new practitioner can access what is colloquially known as the “bite size” course for Prevent. This course is made up of a series of self-led video lessons and has been in place since summer 2023. The bite size course provides a basic overview of Prevent and its system. Separately, there is

a self-led package for familiarity with the PCMTe system. All of these resources are available through the CTP intranet, which is accessible to new and experienced Prevent practitioners alike.

8. In addition, a package of recorded Continued Professional Development (CPD) sessions is available to all CTP officers and staff through the intranet. Since 2022, discrete CPD sessions have been available on a range of broad topics including “Digital Device Awareness”, and “Consequence Management”; together with specific topics like the “ Hamas-Israel conflict”, “Incels, Online Platforms and Gaming”, “Islamist threats”, and an “Introduction to the School Massacre theme”.
9. Police Prevent practitioners have access to various CPD packages created by the College of Policing and hosted on its online platform KnowledgeHub.
10. Since April 2024, the version of the CTCO foundation course in place is known as the National Interventions Foundation Pathway (NIFP). The NIFP forms the core of the mandatory training for officers working within Prevent. Officers and staff working within Prevent must complete this course alongside eight other modules listed below:
 - (i) CT Induction;
 - (ii) PCMT training;
 - (iii) Constructive Communications 2 (which builds on a foundation module within the NIFP course);
 - (iv) Hydra (an interactive scenario-training exercise, where PCM is simulated with video and paper feeds and CTCOs are observed working through the challenges presented);
 - (v) Neurodiversity;
 - (vi) Nominal Management (Bitesize);
 - (vii) National Standards of Intelligence Management; and
 - (viii) [CT Intelligence System] training.
11. Supervisors must also complete a specific Prevent Supervisors module. For supervisors, the Constructive Communications 2 module is voluntary.

12. This is all in addition to the mandatory Prevent Assessment Framework (PAF) training rolled-out from May 2024 (the PAF went into operation in September 2024). The PAF is an accredited tool, meaning that all CTCOs must pass relevant training before they can use it. As I mentioned in my oral evidence to the Inquiry, this training has been completed by existing and new practitioners alike [14.10.25/45/14-24].
13. Over and above the mandatory courses, CTPHQ provides voluntary and refresher online training materials for all CTCOs and supervisors on the following subjects:
 - (i) The Prevent Assessment Framework (refresher);
 - (ii) Open Source (Internet Intelligence and Investigation);
 - (iii) Disclosure;
 - (iv) Minute-Taking for Police Led Panels;
 - (v) CT Legislation.
14. The distinction between voluntary and mandatory training reflects the difference between the core roles of all CTCOs and supervisors and those activities which may be undertaken by specific individuals depending on the structure and expectations of a particular regional unit. Some regions, for example, employ dedicated staff to conduct open-source enquiries, meaning that in those areas most CTCOs will not need to undertake that training.

Resourcing and staff turnover

15. At present, there are approximately 400 dedicated Prevent officers and police staff across the network. During my evidence to the Inquiry, I was asked about whether there are any gaps or vacancies in CTP's Prevent workforce, beyond the natural short-term vacancies that one would expect to see in any field. I do not consider there to be a problem in this regard. From September 2025 data, the Prevent function within CTP had a 99% occupancy rate against budgeted posts. The reference to "budgeted posts" reflects that previously funding has been withdrawn from a number of then-unoccupied posts and the organisation design has yet to adjust. Against that previous design, the September data shows a 92% occupancy

rate. My experience is that these kinds of accommodations are in line with expectations for other areas of policing generally.

16. The Organisational Development Unit (ODU) within CTPHQ assesses that on average there is a 15% turnover in Prevent staff year on year. The national “churn rate” for policing overall, according to available Home Office figures for the previous year, is approximately 11.9%. While these are rough figures, the picture fits with my anecdotal experience.
17. While I cannot comment on the experiences of individual officers or regions, it is beyond doubt that the pressures on Prevent officers are significant. My experience is that average caseloads for individual officers are increasing.
18. While many areas of policing are under strain, there is reason to think that those who work in Prevent are under particular pressure. Between April 2024 and March 2025, a record number of young and vulnerable people were referred to Prevent because of concerns over radicalisation – a total of 8,778, reflecting an increase of 27% on the previous year’s figure. While steep, this is by no means a one-off and current trends indicate the total will continue to increase. We attribute this increase in referrals partly to the public impact of the horrific events in Southport, as well as greater awareness of radicalisation risks among young people following popular TV programs such as ‘Adolescence’. We also consider that the risk truly is increasing due to the ready access that susceptible individuals have to harmful online content. The impact of the recent increases in referrals is such as to have placed the Prevent system under considerable strain.
19. CTP has found ways to adapt to meet these challenges. One example of this has been the development of reserve “cadres” in some regions. These are CTP officers trained in one or more areas, who can move between departments to reflect fluctuating demands. Since April 2024, a total of 170 Prevent officers and staff have undertaken the NIFP course. Only half of these individuals are employed in Prevent roles full-time. The remaining number are “cadre” officers, capable of being re-deployed from (for example) Investigations teams when Prevent teams require more support. To manage demand in some regions, it has been necessary for CTPHQ to

help coordinate the movement of resources across different areas of the network at times.

20. As part of my national coordinating role, I am mindful of the need to ensure that the heads of regional CTUs and CTIUs have sufficient resources to carry out their core functions. The ODU is currently working to identify ways to monitor national data on staff retention, and to improve liaison with the regions to monitor staff turnover and identify resourcing issues. In the interim, there are a range of governance mechanisms designed to ensure effective national coordination, notably the National Capability Board, and the Prevent and Pursue Board; through which senior representatives from the regions meet regularly to discuss resourcing and other issues.

Use of the Dynamic Investigative Framework

21. The use of the Dynamic Investigative Framework ("DIF") for both police gateway assessments and ongoing assessment for cases outside of Channel launched in 2018 [CTPHQ000040]. I confirm that the use of the DIF as the Prevent Gateway Assessment (PGA) was standard practice at the time of all three of AR's referrals. The DIF was subsequently subsumed into the Prevent Assessment Framework, which went into operation in September 2024 [CTPHQ000006_14].

Triple III policy launch

22. I am aware that CTPNW conducted a 'Historic Case Review' of Prevent cases recorded in the region between July 2023 and July 2024, dealing with closed cases where there was a potential fascination with school massacres and/or extreme violence [CTPNW000088]. CTPNW found that 17 cases had been closed otherwise than in accordance with national policy. In particular, that 15 of these cases had failed to take into account the Internet Intelligence Investigation policy (Triple III).
23. When I gave evidence to the Inquiry on 14 October 2024, it was suggested to me that CPTNW were not aware of the III policy until November 2024, when CTPHQ conducted a business assurance visit [14.10.25/p72/20 to p74/2]. I understand it is

accepted that the Triple III policy was first disseminated on 21 October 2022, via email to all RPCs, including the CTPNW RPC. This was a draft document. It was suggested that this email may have been missed and that CTPHQ did not follow this up.

24. While CTPHQ is always open to exploring more effective forms of information-sharing, our initial review of available materials suggests that CTPHQ had no reason to consider that CTPNW were unaware of the policy. This was for the following reasons:
 - (i) A member of CTPNW was part of the working group which created the Triple III policy (albeit the individual concerned was not a Prevent officer, rather part of the CTP intelligence function working alongside Prevent).
 - (ii) The policy was discussed and signed off at the CTPHQ Prevent Capability Board on 6 February 2023. The RPC for CTPNW was present for this discussion, as is reflected in the minutes of the meeting.
 - (iii) The updated and finalised Triple III policy was distributed to RPCs. As before this was done via AnCIR, a recorded email distribution system. The email contained an explanatory message together with the policy itself. The AnCIR record shows that the policy and explanatory message was sent to the CTPNW RPC on 28 February 2023.
25. CTPHQ necessarily relies on RPCs and regional arrangements to ensure the effective dissemination of new policies, information and updates issued to the network. At any time there are hundreds of officers working within the Prevent system across the network. It would be extremely challenging for CTPHQ to maintain a mailing list for direct communications to CTCOs, supervisors and managers. Such lists would require frequent maintenance as staff joined and left the network.
26. While direct communications to practitioners is deemed unworkable, CTPHQ maintains and regularly updates a communal CT Policy Library on the CTP intranet.

The Library contains current versions of all “live” Prevent policies and is available to all police officers and relevant police officer staff.

27. The implementation of the Triple III policy is currently being reviewed by a dedicated CTPHQ team. Any issues or areas for improvement will be identified and tested in future rounds of business assurance as required. The next round of business assurance is currently in the planning stages

Prevent Markers

28. “Markers” are flags on police records used to alert officers to specific circumstances, such as a person being wanted by police, reported as missing, vulnerable, or a risk to themselves or others. Markers help guide the actions an officer should take when interacting with an individual. They are an important policing tool.
29. The principal national recording system relied on by officers across the country is the Police National Computer (PNC). This is a central database used by law enforcement to access information about particular individuals, vehicles, and property.
30. There are a number of other specialised databases where markers can be used to flag information relevant to the assessment of risk. This includes the general CT intelligence database, among others. These databases are complemented by intelligence management units (IMUs) and local police systems used to progress particular investigations.
31. Since 2018, CTPHQ policy has required CTCOs to consider the use of “markers” on relevant police systems to identify that an individual is involved with Prevent. In 2018, as now, this requirement only arises after a section 36 decision has been made to take a case forward into some form of management, either via Channel or PLP. As of 2024, markers *may* be implemented during the PGA or information gathering stage, but only where this is authorised by an inspector.

32. That Prevent markers are generally considered only after the section 36 decision is a reflection of the need for proportionality. If the outcome of information-gathering is to close a referral, then it follows that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that person is susceptible to becoming a terrorist or to supporting terrorism. Many thousands of people are referred into Prevent each year who are then exit-processed out of the Prevent space because information-gathering reveals no reason to believe a risk of this kind exists. It would undermine the purpose of markers if they were applied in circumstances where there is no sufficient basis for their inclusion.
33. It must also be remembered that Prevent is a specialist policing programme carried out by trained officers, and its full scope may not always be well understood by those working outside of the system. For obvious reasons, Counter Terrorism Policing is publicly associated with stopping terrorists and bad actors; outside of specialist circles this can lead to misconceptions about the implications of a referral to Prevent. The PNC, for example, is routinely relied upon in generic vetting checks for jobs and voluntary roles. We are conscious of the need to avoid inadvertently and unfairly casting suspicion over individuals, simply because they have received or are receiving support from Prevent.
34. In AR's case, the issue of Prevent markers never arose for consideration, because PS Thompson did not conclude, in respect of any of the three referrals, that there were *reasonable grounds to suspect* that AR was susceptible to becoming a terrorist or supporting terrorism. This meant his case never progressed to information-gathering of the kind that might have led to a section 36 decision requiring PLP or Channel intervention.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I confirm the contents of this statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief of its truth.

Signature

Signed:

Dated: 24.11.2025
