

Southport Inquiry, Phase 2
London, 9 September 2026

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The Role of Prevent in managing violence-fixated individuals

Outline of Presentation

- Framing the Issues
 - Scope of Prevent
 - Violence Fixated (or Fascinated) Individuals
 - Statistics
- Question 1: Can Prevent cope with VFIs?
- Question 2: Separate framework for VFIs?
- Question 3: Expanding the remit

THE SCOPE OF PREVENT

Objectives of Prevent

(Contest Strategy, July 2023; LfP 1.2-1.3)

- *Tackling the ideological causes* of terrorism (e.g. via CSOs, formerly RICU)
- *Intervening early* to support people susceptible to radicalisation (Prevent duty, Channel)
- Enabling people who have already engaged in terrorism to *disengage and rehabilitate* (DDP)

The Prevent Duty

- CTSA 2015 s26: *“have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”*
- Prevent Duty guidance:
 - §35: **Radicalisation** is *“the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence”*
 - §§36-38: *“There is .. **no single pathway or ‘conveyor belt’ to being radicalised.** [Factors include] exposure to radicalising influences, real and perceived grievances .. and a person’s own susceptibility.”*

Relevance of Ideology

LfP 1.27-1.38

- Adherence to an extreme ideology is ***neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition*** for entry into Prevent / Channel
- ***The pathways into terrorism are not exclusively ideological:*** they depend on susceptibility and include personal/vicarious/group grievances, criminal associations and loyalty to family/friends (see Petter Nesser)

Demand on Resources

CTSA 2015, ss 26-41; LfP 1.11-1.18

- **CTP appraisal of Prevent referrals:**
 - FIMU (CTP) deconflict against police records
 - Gateway Assessment by CT Case Officer
 - Information-gathering if appropriate
 - Passed on to Channel (21% of Prevent referrals)
- **Channel Panels/PMAPs** (200 across GB): adopt, seek consent, support plan, intervention provider, closure, post-closure reviews

VIOLENCE-FIXATED INDIVIDUALS

The Lloyd Report

Inquiry into Legislation against Terrorism, 1996, 1.24

“Most significantly of all, perhaps, there are indications that some individuals with fanatical leanings or personal grievances are increasingly attracted to terrorist methods. This may come to represent the greatest threat of all, in the longer term.”

Lessons for Prevent

July 2025, 5.11

“What Lloyd called ‘*fanatical leanings*’, often fuelled by family trauma or ‘*personal grievances*’, are swiftly inflamed by geopolitical events and the malign algorithms of social media into a mash-up of resentment, rage, rigid certainties and normalised violence. Lone actors are fed by virtual communities. Extreme brutality is absorbed from any available source. Extremist content intersects in unpredictable ways ... Unformed young minds experiment with fragments of ideology ...”

The View from MI5

(Director-General Ken McCallum, October 2025)

“The online environment can blur motive, too. Some situations are clear-cut. But it’s often messier. In 2025 it can be hard to tell in the immediate aftermath of an appalling violent crime whether the incident is terrorist or state-directed, and thus a national security matter, or non-ideological, driven by a unique personal grievance, fixation or mental disturbance.”

STATISTICS

E&W year to Sep 2025: published 6 Aug 2026

(Simplified presentation:
source material contains caveats)

Referrals to Prevent

- ***10,293 Prevent referrals*** (up 39%)
- ***1,810 (18%) adopted into Channel*** (up 114%)
61% of the remainder signposted to other services
- ***969 (56%) consented to support***
- [2024-5: 632,800 referrals to child social care]

Predominant Concerns

(% of all Prevent referrals / Channel adoptions)

- No ideology : 56% / 23%
 - “no ideology, other susceptibility to radicalisation identified”
 - “no ideology identified”
- Extreme Right-Wing: 20% / 42%
- Islamist Extremism: 8% / 12%
- **VFI**s: **8% / 14%**
 - “fascination with extreme violence or mass casualty attacks, where no other ideology”
- Multiple ideologies: 3% / 6%

VFI Prevent Referrals, Channel Adoptions and Consent Rate

- **818 Prevent referrals for VFI** (fascination with extreme violence or mass casualty attacks where no other ideology)
- **244 (30% of VFI Prevent referrals) adopted into Channel**
(compare **ERW 756/36%** , **IE 212/25%**, **"no ideology" 412/7%**)
- **VFI Channel adoptions by quarter:**
 - Q4 2024 - 19
 - Q1 2025 - 86
 - Q2 2025 - 88
 - Q3 2025 - 51 [school holidays]
- **66% of those adopted consented (12-month total: 152)**

Profile of VFI Prevent Referrals

- **Age: 49% VFI referrals were 11-15**
(compare ERW 35%, 18% IE)
- **Place: 22% from North West**
(compare 16% of all referrals from NW)
- **Sex: 11%+ VFI referrals were female**
(compare ERW 7%+, IE 14%+)

QUESTION 1

To what extent is Prevent currently equipped to address non-ideological, fixation-driven violence, and where are its limitations?

SUMMARY ANSWER

- The pathways to ideological and non-ideological violence are not always easy to distinguish, in young and old alike (LfP 5.23)
- Prevent can be of value in non-ideological cases (LfP 3.67)
- Limitations include capacity of Prevent, statutory parameters and skillset of IPs

Addressing the Limitations

- ***Tailoring demand to capacity:*** LfP 5.24-5.25
 - Process (NRF prompts), training, mechanisms such as Team around Schools, dual referrals
 - 56% referrals are non-ideological *and* non-VFI
- ***Statutory parameters:*** Ambit of CTSA could be extended for clarity: LfP 5.20-5.21
- ***Mix of Intervention Providers:*** LfP 1.12(c)

QUESTION 2

Should VFIs be brought within Prevent as a distinct cohort, or managed through a separate statutory and operational network?

SUMMARY ANSWER

- VFIs have qualified for Prevent at least since the 2019 HO/CTP letter (LfP 1.29-1.30)
- Shawcross Rec 15 (referrals should have an identifiable ideological element) was “accepted” but not implemented on the ground: (LfP 5.14)
- VFIs should remain eligible for Prevent/Channel until something better can be devised
- A bespoke “VFI network” would bring its own complications

Bespoke VFI Network?

Lessons for Prevent 5.17-5.27

- Ideological and VFI cases can be *hard or impossible to distinguish* (LfP 5.19, 5.23)
 - *Conceptually*: nihilism, misogyny, Columbine fandom
 - *Practically*: range of mindset material, effect of alcohol
 - *Dynamically*: unfocussed anger and grievance may find an ideological outlet in the future
- A bespoke network would likely feature *the same people working out a similar support plan* (LfP 5.26)

QUESTION 3

What legal, governance, resource and public legitimacy issues would arise from expanding Prevent's remit beyond ideological radicalisation?

SUMMARY ANSWER

- *Prevent's remit already extends beyond ideological radicalisation*: some resultant issues were considered under Q1 above
- *A better long-term solution could be to embed Prevent in a broader, multi-agency violence prevention strategy*, as counselled by ISD, LfP 5.30-5.44, the Indept Commission on UK CT Law Policy and Practice (Nov 2025, ch6) and the Children's Commissioner (Aug 2026, Rec 4)

Southport Inquiry

Phase 1 Report, p. 18 and Recs 1-2; Phase 2 ToR, I

“Detailed consideration should be given to restructuring fundamentally the way that our society handles those who pose a real risk of killing or causing serious harm to others (including ‘violence fixated’ individuals).”

Good Luck!

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