

# Expression of interest

# Title: Prevent referrals in Higher Education: approaches and practices

**Project reference: DFE/RPPU/2019/027**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 23:59 on Tuesday 1st October 2019**

## Summary

Expressions of interest are sought to undertake research to explore the approaches and practices that exist amongst Higher Education providers for making Prevent referrals. The overall aim is to understand and exemplify existing diversity of approaches, identify good practice and understand what challenges and/or barriers there are, if any, to making Prevent referrals.

## Background

Relevant Higher Education Bodies (RHEBs) in England are under a duty which requires them to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism – this duty is called the Prevent duty. The latest report from the Office for Students[[1]](#footnote-1), which monitors the HE sector’s compliance with the Prevent duty, shows that the large majority of RHEBs demonstrate due regard and are considered compliant.

A Prevent referral is made when there is concern that a person may be radicalised. This can lead to a range of interventions including to access to support through the Channel programme, which is a voluntary, confidential programme which safeguards people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Latest Home Office data[[2]](#footnote-2) shows that Prevent referrals are increasing overall, with the biggest proportion coming from the education sector. The data is not disaggregated by education phase, but it is done so by age group. The data shows that there is also an increase in Prevent referrals for individuals in the age ranges relevant to the higher education sector (15-20 years old and 21-30 years old). The Office for Students (OfS) report shows that, of the 122 cases of university students escalated to a Prevent lead, only 15 (12%) were referred to a Channel panel. This compares to 183 cases and 24 (13%) respectively for the previous year.

RHEBs vary greatly in size and shape and there is no “one size fits all” approach when it comes to Prevent referral thresholds and/or the mechanisms used to inform their decisions on whether and how to make Prevent referrals to their institution’s Prevent lead and/or external agencies.

The Department for Education’s Counter Extremism Division is therefore interested in understanding the approaches and practices taken by RHEBs for making Prevent referrals given that the referrals are a key part of the Prevent safeguarding process and are central to ensuring effective safeguarding against radicalisation. The research will be used by DfE to consider what, if any, further action is needed to support the HE sector in their implementation of the Prevent duty.

## Research aims

The main aims of the research are to:

* Understand the approaches and practices that higher education providers use when considering whether or not to make Prevent referrals, including the thresholds, mechanisms, implementation practices; and
* Understand whether or not the approaches being taken are leading to consistent, high quality referrals and appropriate responses to risk.

## Methodology

We envisage this work will require a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods.

**In-depth qualitative telephone interviews** with the person/s, working in RHEBs, most knowledgeable about Prevent related issues (e.g. safeguarding/Prevent lead student service staff).

As there is wide variation in the types of Prevent referrals made, to ensure this research considers the approaches and practices in a consistent way, the Department wants to ask RHEBs about a specific set of scenarios.

We expect the researcher to work with the DfE and FE/HE Prevent Coordinators to develop 4 or 5 scenarios of varying severity, and ask participants to explain the process they would follow in each case and the different thresholds for seeking engagement with organisations outside the provider (e.g. members of the multi-agency safeguarding hub).

The interviews will also include a number of other research questions separate from the scenarios but related to:

* Safeguarding leads’ understanding of the Prevent referral process;
* The thresholds safeguarding leads apply when a concern has been raised in order to decide whether to make a Prevent referral;
* Sources of information safeguarding leads use to inform their decision about whether or not to make a Prevent referral, including RHEBs’ use of their own risk assessments and risk assessment practices;
* The reasons for Prevent referrals not translating into Channel cases; and
* The extent to which practices surrounding Prevent referrals are influenced by RHEBs’ relationships and information sharing with other institutions.

*Sample size and selection***:**

The sample is not intended to be fully representative of the wider population of RHEBs, but will seek to get a diverse range of 30 institutions, taking into account size, type, population, location and rate of referrals.

**Quantitative survey –** A survey of members of staff in all of the RHEBs taking part in the research.

The Department envisages this survey being sent out to HE staff by the Prevent/safeguarding lead via an online platform.

The Department believes the survey should be short and light touch with the main aims being to understand:

* Whether staff understand how and when to raise a Prevent related concern;
* What barriers, if any, HE staff face when thinking about raising a concern/referral; and
* What information staff in RHEBs use to decide whether to raise a concern to their safeguarding lead.

The survey should contain mostly closed questions but may contain some open ended questions to provide a more in- depth understanding of any barriers and issues staff face when thinking about raising a Prevent concern.

## Timing

* Deadline for EOIs – 23:59 Tuesday 1st October 2019
* Issue Invitation To Tender (ITT) – Thursday 3rd October 2019
* Deadline for submission of ITT – Wednesday 23rd October 2019
* Review ITTs - Friday 25th October 2019
* Contact preferred supplier – Monday 28th October 2019
* Contract in place by – Monday 4th November 2019
* Begin fieldwork - Tuesday 26th November 2019
* Final report due March 2020

## Assessment criteria

Expressions of interest will be assessed against the following criteria:

* Understanding of the Department’s requirement;
* Capacity to develop an appropriate methodology and reporting approach;
* Evidence of experience of the proposed methods to be used; and
* Expertise and experience of discussing safeguarding issues in an education context.

**Each one of these criteria has equal weighting.**

* Expressions of interests submitted must be no more than 750 words – anything longer will be disregarded.

| **Closing date for EOIs: 23:59 on Tuesday 1st October 2019**  **Send your EOI form to: katie.abrahams@education.gov.uk** |
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## How to submit an expression of interest

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the NEW EOI Form which can be found under attachments. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

All contracts are let on the basis of the Department’s Terms & Conditions, a copy is available attached to the Contracts Finder listing. You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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1. *source:* [*OfS Prevent monitoring accountability and data returns 2017-18: Evaluation report, June 2019*](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/prevent-monitoring-accountability-and-data-returns-2017-18-evaluation-report/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *source:* [*Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2017 to March 2018, Statistical bulletin 31/18, 13 December 2018*](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/763254/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2017-mar2018-hosb3118.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)