



# **Channel Duty Guidance**

**Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn  
into terrorism**

**2015**

**12. It is essential that Channel panel members, partners to local panels and other professionals ensure that children, young people and adults are protected from harm.**

**Whilst the Channel provisions in Chapter 2 of Part 5 of the CT&S Act are counter-terrorism measures (since their ultimate objective is to prevent terrorism), the way in which Channel will be delivered may often overlap with the implementation of the wider safeguarding duty, especially where vulnerabilities have been identified that require intervention from social services, or where the individual is already known to social services.**

**14. Channel was first piloted in 2007 and rolled out across England and Wales in April 2012. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by: a. identifying individuals at risk; b. assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and c. developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.**

**24. Depending on the nature of the referral, the panel may also include, but not limited to, representatives from the following groups:**

- 1. NHS;**
- 2. Social workers;**
- 3. Schools, further education colleges and universities;**
- 4. Youth offending services;**
- 5. Directors of children's and adult's services;**
- 6. Chairs of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Safeguarding Adult Boards;**
- 7. Local authority safeguarding managers (adult and/or children);**
- 8. Local authority Troubled Families Teams;**
- 9. Home Office Immigration (Immigration Enforcement, UK Visas & Immigration);**
- 10. Border Force;**
- 11. Housing;**
- 12. Prisons; and**
- 13. Probation.**

## **Vulnerability Assessment Framework**

**47. Channel assesses vulnerability using a consistently applied vulnerability assessment framework built around three criteria.**

**The three criteria are:**

- a. Engagement with a group, cause or ideology;**
- a. Intent to cause harm; and**
- a. Capability to cause harm**

**48. The criteria are considered separately as experience has shown that it is possible to be engaged without intending to cause harm and that it is possible to intend to cause harm without being particularly engaged.**

**Experience has also shown that it is possible to desist (stop intending to cause harm) without fully disengaging (remaining sympathetic to the cause);**

**though losing sympathy with the cause (disengaging) will invariably result in desistance (loss of intent).**

**49. The three criteria are assessed by considering 22 factors that can contribute to vulnerability**

**:(13 associated with engagement,**

**six that relate to intent:**

**and three for capability).**

**These factors taken together form a holistic view of the vulnerability of an individual that will inform decisions on whether an individual needs support and what kind of support package may be appropriate. These factors can also be added to and are not considered an exhaustive list.**



**46. The default for panel partners when determining what information can be shared should be to consider seeking the consent of the individual (or their parent/guardian). In some circumstances, consent from the individual will not be sought at this early stage. This will be dependent on the circumstances of the case but may relate to issues such as the health of the individual, law enforcement or protection of the public. Where consent cannot be sought, information sharing may take place if any of the exemptions to the various legislative provisions restricting information sharing applies, and it will need to be made explicit in the record of the case by a panel partner which exemption or gateway is being relied upon.**

**51. Example indicators that an individual is *engaged* with an extremist group, cause or ideology include:**

- a. spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists;**
- b. changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group;**
- c. day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause;**
- d. loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause;**
- e. possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause (e.g. the swastika for far right groups);**
- f. attempts to recruit others to the group/cause/ ideology; or**
- g. communications with others that suggest identification with a group/cause/ideology.**

**52. Example indicators that an individual has an *intention* to cause harm, use violence or other illegal means include:**

- a. clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social or political ills;**
- b. using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group;**
- c. speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group and the importance of action now;**
- d. expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group, cause or ideology;**
- e. condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others; or**
- f. plotting or conspiring with others.**

**53. Example indicators that an individual is *capable* of causing harm or contributing directly or indirectly to an act of terrorism include:**

- a. having a history of violence;**
- b. being criminally versatile and using criminal networks to support extremist goals;**
- c. having occupational skills that can enable acts of terrorism (such as civil engineering, pharmacology or construction); or**
- d. having technical expertise that can be deployed (e.g. IT skills, knowledge of chemicals, military training or survival skills).**

