



Walsall Prevent Digest

February 2021

Current Threat Level in the UK: SUBSTANTIAL– An Attack is Likely

Niall Markham, Prevent Coordinator

Hello everyone and welcome to the Walsall Prevent Digest for February 2021.

As are undoubtedly aware by now, on Monday 8th February 2021, The Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) lowered the UK terror threat level to Substantial - meaning an attack is likely. The decision comes following the significant reduction in the momentum of attacks in Europe since those seen between September and November 2020. However and to echo what the Home Secretary said when delivering her message, 'we cannot allow this announcement to distract the public and our partners from the threat we still face'.



Update by Dave Chadwick, Prevent Education Officer

Hello Everyone,

I hope that you are keeping well during this latest lockdown. I thought I would take a minute to point you in the direction of a couple of videos that have recently been brought to my attention and which I believe they may be of use to those of you working in primary education. Whilst 'Safer Internet Day' may have passed, it remains important to ensure that our young people are empowered to stay safe online, particularly at the moment when myself and our funded external providers are unable to access the schools to work with the students face to face.

The below videos and attached resource notes have been put together by 'Warning Zone' and were recently sent to me to view. I consider them to be both informative and well structured.

The first video is about misinformation and disinformation (16m) - what they are, why they're created, disseminated and strategies for understanding and reacting to each. This video contains a section about conspiracy theories which is especially pertinent at this current moment in time.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=us0DI9QYa-8

The second video is a case study covering The Momo Challenge (16m). We look at the real history of the 'Momo' character, the dramatic and often unsubstantiated news stories that caused the myth to spread, and reasons why we often react this way to hoaxes and trolling. www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPKtMfBO-FY

The third and final video is an examination of the Boston Marathon Bombings in 2013 (13m). This discusses the role of amateur online investigators involved in the case and the problems they caused for the real investigation. We talk about the way information is created and spread in tense, emotional situations, and the best way to react to unfolding news under these circumstances. www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhrIACaSe9g



Walsall Council

Violent Reduction Unit

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you all to Jade Hibbert and Hayley Walton who work within the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).

The VRU adopts a public health approach to violence, i.e. thinking about violence in the same way that health professionals consider the spread of disease. It also means focusing on understanding the root causes of the problem and on testing, evaluating and upscaling interventions. Developing stronger data and analysis about the problem is key to working in this way. It is intended that Violence Reduction Units will change systems and working across organisations to understand the way in which processes and approaches to issues can be improved to reduce the risk of violence.

The five main strands to the VRU's work include, supporting:

1. Communities and professionals to work together
2. Interventions to prevent violence
3. The use of evidence to inform decisions
4. Leaders to connect around a shared long-term ambition
5. Production of guidance, advice and toolkits

By tackling the problem in this way the VRU strives to build even more resilient and compassionate communities. It hopes it can close the cracks in the system to prevent people from falling through. It aims to ensure the violence interventions that are in place are the very best they can be. And it hopes by doing so it can encourage the whole system to work together so it can be more than the sum of its parts.

Jade Hibbert is the Exploitation Lead for the VRU and is both a committed professional and an enthusiastic advocate for the child/young person to be at the centre of any decisions made that affect them. She will ensure robust and effective systems are in place to prevent, identify and respond to exploitation. For over 10 years she has worked directly with the community's most vulnerable children by adopting a trauma informed, holistic, family-centred approach to working with victims of exploitation, their families and support network.



At the VRU, Jade will facilitate opportunities to influence the development of regional pathways, policies and protocols to ensure a coherent and consistent response to safeguarding those most at risk of experiencing exploitation. She acts as a bridge between violence reduction activity and wider activity to reduce exploitation, particularly in relation to violence linked to criminal exploitation.

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Hayley Walton is the Education Delivery Manager for the VRU and has a keen interest in trauma and how early intervention can support children and young people. After teaching in primary schools in inner-city Birmingham and areas of the Black Country, Hayley has spent time working with the National Probation Service and also supporting children and young people at Black Country Women's Aid. She believes early intervention is key and that the education system can provide children and young people with the skills and tools to lead safe and fulfilling lives.



In her role as VRU Education Delivery Manager Hayley links with colleagues across all of the West Midlands local authorities to reduce violence, encourage pupil voice and support schools in their ambitions to become trauma-informed.

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Independent Review of Prevent

As you may have seen, Ministers have announced that William Shawcross has been appointed as the new Independent Reviewer of Prevent, following a full and open competition.

William Shawcross brings a range of skills and experience to the role; he was the Chair of the Charity Commission between 2012 and 2018 and became the Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism. He is also a writer and journalist.

Act Early campaign – New video content

Just as a gentle reminder, CT Policing have added two new animated 2-minute explainer films about Prevent to their **ACT Early website** and **partners' toolkit**.

www.actearly.uk/support/reach-out-for-help/
www.actearly.uk/working-together/how-we-help/

The films are aimed at a general public, concerned friends and family audience providing an introduction to Prevent and to the work of Prevent officers.

By improving understanding of Prevent and explaining the way that partners work together, the aim is for more people to be encouraged and assured to seek help at an earlier stage where appropriate.

Website

Again, just by way of a reminder please visit the Prevent Webpage on our Safer Walsall Partnership external website. The site is live and the Prevent page can be accessed via the below link:-

www.saferwalsallpartnership.co.uk/prevent

For Information, Support or Guidance around Prevent, or should you have any queries, concerns or are looking to make a referral, please do not hesitate to contact us...



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Institute for Strategic Dialogue 'Be Internet Citizens' programme

The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) has just launched a **curriculum** for Be Internet Citizens (BIC), a program led by Google for both schools and youth groups, reflecting the lived experiences and challenges young people face online.

The resources are free to download and include sessions unpacking key topics such as;

- how to identify mis- and disinformation
- fact versus opinion
- analysing 'us vs them' narratives
- responding effectively to hate speech
- creating inspiring digital content.

