

PREVENT IN

UNIVERSITIES



PREVENT
WATCH

LIBERTY

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL





WHAT IS THE PREVENT DUTY?

Prevent is a UK government policy that aims to stop people turning to terrorism by identifying ‘susceptible’ individuals.

Public bodies – including schools, colleges and universities – can refer to the police people they suspect might be ‘drawn into terrorism’. They must also avoid exposing people to extremist views. Individuals assessed to be ‘at risk’ are invited to join the Channel programme, a ‘support scheme’ to ‘deradicalise’ them.



HOW IS PREVENT USED IN UNIVERSITIES?

A third of all Prevent referrals come from the education sector, including universities. Students and academics are often referred by university staff.

Prevent is used to block or impose restrictions on campus events, for example not hosting certain external speakers.



HAVE I BEEN REFERRED TO PREVENT?

People referred to Prevent are often approached for questioning or ‘informal chats’ by senior staff members, pastoral care staff or counter-terrorism police officers to discuss their political, cultural or religious beliefs and activities. A referral might not be clear.

Keep an eye out for:

- Buzzwords such as radicalisation, extremism, safeguarding concerns, terrorism and Islamist
- Unusual lines of questioning about your beliefs and activities, for example on social media
- Threats of a referral by university staff or being provided with external support through a ‘mentor’.





WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?



- 1 Prevent is voluntary.** You do not need to answer any Prevent-related questions or take part in the Channel programme.
- 2** If you are approached for questioning, **ask the following first:**
 - What purpose and under what power are you asking questions?
 - Why do you want to speak to me?
 - Has a Prevent referral been made and why?
 - Which organisations are involved in the referral?Keep a record of this information and ask for answers to be provided to you **in writing.**
- 3** If you think you are being referred, **report and get advice.** You are not alone: a support network is ready to help (swipe to “Where can I get support?”)

An illustration of a person in a yellow hoodie and dark pants standing in the center. Surrounding them are several hands of different colors (orange, white, dark blue) pointing towards the person. The background is a solid blue color.

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT PREVENT?



While Prevent is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time, it is important to know that:

- Many referrals are not considered serious enough for intervention. They have been based on incorrect and often prejudiced connections between expressions of faith, solidarity and political dissent and ‘extremism’.
- Prevent is not a criminal process but your information could be stored on multiple police databases.
- Prevent stifles your right to express your political and religious views and your right to peaceful assembly. It is often used to silence free speech and has led to self-censoring.



WHERE CAN I GET SUPPORT?

You are not alone. For help and to report any Prevent interaction or referral, contact:

- 1 Prevent Watch**, which provides free and specialist advice and help throughout the process with a dedicated helpline. Call on 0333 3443396 or email contact@preventwatch.org
- 2 Your union**, which will support you. Students: contact your university's student union. Academic staff: contact your university and college union or relevant trade union
- 3 Maslaha's Coming Home project**, which offers free and confidential counselling by Muslim therapists for Muslims affected by Prevent. Visit maslaha.org/Project/coming-home or email cominghome@maslaha.org.