



Suffolk Adult Safeguarding Board



**GUIDANCE ON SAFEGUARDING
INDIVIDUALS VULNERABLE TO
RADICALISATION (VTR)
AND
REFERRAL PROCESS**

June 2015

**GUIDANCE FOR
SUPPORTING PEOPLE
'VULNERABLE TO RADICALISATION'**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the PREVENT Strategy is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism in all its forms. The strategy has three objectives, one of which is to prevent people from being drawn into extremism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support.
- 1.2 This guidance document is intended to provide guidance to colleagues who have concerns expressed to them or have the concerns themselves in relation to any person, child or adult, who may be at risk of being adversely influenced or radicalised by any extremist group or ideology.
- 1.3 The document provides a mechanism for assessing and advising on the support that can be provided to protect those at risk of being targeted by extremists.
- 1.4 Unlike persons who fall within existing statutory frameworks, this guidance relates to persons who are at the early stages of becoming a person Vulnerable to Radicalisation or at risk of being Influenced by Extremism (hereafter referred to as 'VTR').

2. Key Elements

- 2.1 The VTR guidance uses existing collaboration between local authorities, the Police and statutory partners such as Children's Services, Adult Social Services and the local community to:
 - Identify individuals at risk of being drawn into violent extremism
 - Access the nature and extent of that risk
 - Develop the most appropriate support for the individuals concerned
- 2.2 The VTR process has a Referral Form – see Appendix D, a Single Point of Contact (Channel Practitioner), a Multi-Agency Panel and an Information Sharing Protocol. Brief details of each of these are given below.
 - VTR Referral form designed to be used by all agencies
 - SPOC – Channel Practitioner to establish and maintain a multi-agency process that assesses those at risk of being drawn into violent extremism and delivers an appropriate response
 - Multi Agency Panel (Channel) – to develop an appropriate support package to safeguard those at risk of being drawn into violent extremism, based on an assessment of their vulnerability
 - Sharing Information – the VTR guidance is not a means for gathering intelligence. However, in common with other processes, it does require the sharing of personal information about people at risk. Information sharing must be assessed on a case by case basis and is governed by legislation, details of which are set out in Appendix A

3. Sharing Information

In choosing to share information, a key question to ask of partners to help them provide a proportionate response is, does that partner hold any information that could make the individual more vulnerable to radicalisation.

- 3.1 The following principles should guide 'Channel' information sharing:
- 3.2 **Power to Share** - the sharing of data by public sector bodies requires the existence of a power to do so. This may be a statutory power relevant to the agency's statutory function, or an implied power based on the agency's common law function. The power may exist under specific legislation and may be different for each agency depending on their function. It is the responsibility of each agency to consider whether *in this particular case* the sharing of personal information is consistent with their powers and function as a public sector body if under the age of 18 Sec 47, duty to co-operate.
- 3.3 **Governing legislation** – for all bodies sharing personal information (private, voluntary or public sector) it is necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Data Protection Act, the Human Rights Act and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality.
- 3.4 **Consent** – Before any agency/group seeks consent from the person of concern this must be discussed at both the preliminary assessment and Multi-Agency Panel stages and a decision made on whether consent is to be sought and by whom. Obtaining consent can in itself prejudice the purpose of the Channel process and certain considerations must be taken before any agency seeks consent (see Appendix A).
- 3.5 **Other Gateways** - in the absence of consent it is necessary to identify an exemption or a relevant condition for processing under the Data Protection Act (see Appendix B). Where a body owes a duty of confidentiality and (in the case of public bodies) must consider the Human Rights Act, it is necessary to determine that the level of public interest overrides the expectation of privacy (see Appendix A).
- 3.6 **Necessity, relevance and proportionality** - information should only be shared where it is necessary to achieve the intended outcome and is relevant and proportionate to it. Information should be selected for sharing on the basis that the agencies involved need to know that information in order to make informed assessment and decisions. Key to determining this will be the professional judgement of the risks to an individual or the public.
- 3.7 **Non-discriminatory** – agencies must be in a position to evidence that their decision to share information as part of a Channel Referral is not discriminatory.

4. Identification

- 4.1 This section provides examples of indicators that might suggest vulnerability to violent extremism and which may therefore be useful in the VTR process-the VTR referral form itself has guidance to assist the referrer (see appendix D)
It should not be assumed that the characteristics and experiences set out necessarily indicate that a person is either committed to violent extremism or may become so. Similarly, the identifiers below are just some that may exist and it is not an exhaustive list.
- 4.2 **Expressed opinions** – this could include support for violence and terrorism or the values of extremist organisations, airing of political or religious based grievances, unaccepting of other nationalities, religions or cultures.

4.3 **Material** – the following may be relevant:

- Possession of extremist literature and imagery in hard copy or digital form
- Attempts to access, become a member of or contribute to extremist websites and associated password protected chat rooms
- Possession of material regarding weapons and or explosives
- Possession of literature regarding military training, skills and techniques

4.4 **Behaviour and behavioural changes** – relevant changes may include withdrawal from family, peers, social events and venues; hostility towards former associates and family, association with proscribed organisations* and association with organisations which hold extremist views that stop short of advocating violence in this country.

* Proscribed organisations - under the Terrorism Act 2000 the Home Secretary has the power to proscribe – forbid by law – an organisation believed to be concerned in terrorism. The below link gives details of each organisation proscribed by the UK government:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/400902/Proscription-20150123.pdf

4.5 **Personal History** – the following maybe relevant:

- Claims or evidence of involvement in organisations voicing violent extremist ideology in this country or overseas
- Claims or evidence of attendance at military/terrorist training in the UK or overseas
- Claims or evidence of involvement in combat/violent activity, particularly on behalf of violent extremist non state organisations.

5. **Referral Process – see Flow Chart Appendix C**

5.1 **VTR Referral** - A VTR referral can come to the attention of statutory agencies in various ways. This could be through information received by the Police or partner agencies following an arrest or investigation that has not led to a charge or prosecution. It could relate to friends or family of an individual under investigation.

The concern could be expressed by a parent, sibling or a friend of an individual. Similarly a professional or a volunteer may pick up on concerns that a person is showing signs of being radicalised.

5.2 A VTR referral needs to be emailed directly to the Suffolk MASH (email address on the referral form-see Appendix D). If the person referred is under 18 and has an allocated social work team, the team will alert the Head of Safeguarding prior to any contact or visit. If the referrer deems it to be an urgent referral with an imminent safeguarding concern, a call must be made to Customer First on 0808 800 4005.

5.3 On receipt of the VTR referral form the MASH will first disseminate it to Suffolk Special Branch where it will go through an initial deconfliction (to ensure no crossover with ongoing work) and to carry out an initial screening to assess whether it appears to be appropriate referral.

5.4 A referral should not continue through the VTR process if:

- it is malicious or misguided
- the person's engagement with the process would compromise or interfere with ongoing investigations into illegal activity
- it is clear the person is not vulnerable to violent extremism

- 5.6 Once deconfliction checks have been completed within SB and the referral has been initially assessed as appropriate, the VTR referral form will then be emailed back to the MASH from SB; multi agency checks will then be completed by the MASH and returned to SB.

6. The Channel Practitioner

- 6.1 On receipt of a referral and following deconfliction checks, the Channel Practitioner will conduct an initial review of the information received. This review will be based on a professional judgement to ensure that the referral meets a necessary threshold and is suitable to be taken to the Channel meeting.
- 6.3 In the application of the threshold the individual circumstances associated with the referral will be taken into account. As a minimum there must be information evidencing a concern that an individual:
- is moving towards support for terrorism.
 - or showing an attraction to terrorism
 - or displaying signs of becoming radicalised

If this link is not present the case should not be managed under Channel and should immediately exit the process. Other safeguarding measures should be considered.

If the criteria is met the Channel Practitioner:

- Records full details of the referral on the Case Management Information System (CMIS), documenting all decisions and actions
- Applies a continual assessment of the risk factors

7. Information Gathering

- 7.1 Contacts with Partners should be made via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and will be recorded on the VTR referral form.
- 7.2 If the referred individual is under the age of 18 and is suitable for further assessment the Channel Practitioner must liaise with the Head of Safeguarding with a lead on VTR.
- 7.3 In some cases it may not be appropriate for an individual to continue through Channel due to involvement in other statutory support mechanisms (MAPPA and Safeguarding).
- 7.4 Where it is apparent that the person referred has vulnerabilities not linked to radicalisation and has needs that require support through other mechanisms they should be referred to the appropriate service providers.

This initial information gathering ensures that only cases appropriate for the Channel process continue to the next stage for a strategy meeting and the development of an appropriate support package.

8. Risk Assessment/Vulnerability Indicators and Preliminary Assessment Decision

- 8.1 Risk assessment is a continuous process from the point of referral to the point an individual exits the process.

- 8.2 The assessment of risk is a key function of the Channel Practitioner and the Multi-Agency Panel. The Preliminary assessment is led by the Channel Practitioner and will include their line manager. The assessment should be conducted in consultation with senior statutory partners, such as local authority, Police, offender management services, education and children/youth services.
- 8.3 The preliminary assessment will collectively assess risk, in doing so consideration should be given to: the risk the individual faces of being drawn towards or attracted towards terrorism and the risk the individual poses to society.
- 8.4 Where it is apparent that the person referred has vulnerabilities not linked to radicalisation and have needs that require support through other mechanisms, the referral will return to the MASH to coordinate appropriate safeguarding for that individual.
- 8.5 If the referral is deemed 'suitable', the case will progress to the Multi-Agency Panel.

9. Safeguarding Children and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

- 9.1 In some cases it may not be appropriate for an individual to continue through the Channel Process because they are involved in a different statutory mechanism such as 'MAPPA' or child protection arrangements. Channel is not intended to replace those referral systems, in such cases the ownership will rest with the relevant statutory support mechanism and the case may exit the Channel process or they may remain involved as a support to aid planning.
- 9.2 If the referred individual is under 18 or where the local authority has a legal duty of statutory arrangements for safeguarding must take precedence.

10. Channel Strategy Meeting

- 10.1 Channel is a voluntary process for the individual and their agreement needs to be obtained before they can be accepted as a new Channel case. If the case is appropriate to continue through the Channel process, the referral should proceed to a strategy meeting and include the involvement of a wider range of partners. This meeting is held every 6 weeks in Suffolk and is chaired by a safeguarding lead from the Local Authority supported by the Channel Practitioner.
- 10.2 The partners will develop a support package based on the risk assessment, the needs of the individual and any risks posed to potential support providers. Partners may consider sharing information with each other, taking into account the points made in Section three.
- 10.3 In assessing referrals the meeting may conclude that the individual is better suited to alternative support providers, or that further assessment indicates that the individual is not being drawn into violent extremism.
- 10.4 If the consensus is that support is required they should devise an appropriate support package. This should take the form of an action plan setting out details of the statutory or third sector partners who will lead on the delivery of the support.
- 10.5 One option for support through the Channel Process which the Multi-Agency Panel may decide upon is the use of a specialist 'intervention provider'. This is Home Office funded and uses those on an approved list to work with individuals around their individual

ideologies.

- 10.6 The agencies invited should be any that have a role to play in the management of risk, so it is crucial to have non-criminal justice system groups there.

11. Appraisal and Review:

- 11.1 To ensure an effective review process to decide whether the individual should remain on the programme the Channel Practitioner is responsible for regularly liaising with the support provider(s) and together with the Multi-Agency Panel assess the progress of the intervention.
- 11.2 Each intervention will be different and there should be regular contact between the intervention provider and the coordinator. However, best practice dictates that a maximum time of 3 months is allowed to elapse between the panels reassessment of the individual's vulnerability. Intervention providers should be submitting regular written updates on progress.
- 11.3 If the Panel is satisfied that the risk has been successfully reduced or managed they should recommend that the case exits the process. A closing report will be submitted setting out the evidence for the Panel's recommendation. The recommendations will need to be endorsed by the senior partners involved in the preliminary assessments.

12. Minute-Taking

- 12.1 A confidentiality statement will be read out by the Chair at the start of the meeting and will appear in the minutes. (See Appendix B)
- 12.2 It will be the responsibility of the Chair to provide a minute-taker. The minutes will include a list of all the agreed actions plus any amendments to the basic information that might have become clear as a result of the meeting.
- 12.3 Action Points will be circulated within one working day of the Panel meeting and minutes as soon as practicable.

13. Confidentiality and Security

- 13.1 Information shared at any stage of the referral process is confidential and is to be used only for the purpose of the Channel Process and any subsequent actions allocated to the receiving agency or group. It will be the responsibility of the disclosing agency/group to highlight any information which is particularly sensitive and to advise on the recording and storage arrangements for that information. Each agency/group is responsible for the secure recording and storage of any shared information and minutes of meetings, and for the secure deletion or return of the shared information once the agency/group is no longer involved in the VTR process in respect of that individual.

APPENDIX A

Legal Grounds When Considering Sharing Information

Protection against Unlawful and Unfair Disclosure

Legal Issues	Source
Protection of personal data	Data Protection Act 1998
Duty of confidentiality	Common Law
Right to private and family life	Human Rights Act, Article 8

Consent

Obtaining the informed consent (and in the case of sensitive personal data, explicit consent) of the person of concern will satisfy the requirement under data protection to identify a condition for processing, and to override the duty of confidentiality and Article 8 of the Human Rights Act. However, for consent to be valid it must be:

- freely given
- based on clear information provided to the person of who will be involved in the sharing of the information and the purpose for the sharing
- capable of being withdrawn

There may be reasons why consent cannot be obtained:

- seeking consent may adversely affect existing engagement and relationships with the person of concern and may lead to them withdrawing from existing contacts.
- seeking consent may inhibit the ability of agencies/groups to put in place support and risk management measures
- some agencies may not wish it to be known that they hold information about the person.
- the person of concern may not be capable of understanding what they are giving their consent for, or may refuse

Before any agency/group seeks consent from the person of concern this must be discussed at both the preliminary assessment and Multi-Agency Panel stages and a decision made on whether consent is to be sought and by whom.

Where consent cannot be obtained or where a party does not intend to rely on consent for sharing information, agencies/groups must establish the legal basis for sharing.

Sharing Without Consent

Some agencies may be able to rely on specific legislation or the circumstances of the particular referral might engage specific legislation. If specific legislation does apply, this will satisfy the condition for processing and override the duty of confidentiality and Article 8 Human rights Act. Examples are:

Circumstances	Legislation
Behaviour/risks indicate that the person of concern is <u>likely</u> to commit crime or disorder	Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – S.115 power to share information
Child protection – disclosure to/between social services or the Police for the exercise of functions under the Children	Section 29, Data Protection Act – exemption from non-disclosure provision where necessary for the prevention/detection of crime, apprehension/prosecution of offenders

Circumstances	Legislation
Act, where the public interest in safeguarding the child's welfare overrides the need to keep the information confidential	The Children Act
Adult protection - disclosure to/between social services or the Police for the exercise of functions under statutory code of practice, where the public interest in safeguarding the vulnerable adult's welfare overrides the need to keep the information confidential	Statutory code of practice for safeguarding vulnerable adults
Public Protection – where the individual is subject to management under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)	Criminal Justice Act 2003
Offender management – when the individual is a recent offender	Offender Management Act 2007
An order issued by the Court	

Where there is no specific legislation each agency/group must identify a relevant condition for processing under schedule 2 (and for sensitive personal data schedule 3) of the Data Protection Act 1998. The most relevant conditions are:

Condition	Schedule
To protect vital interests of the data subject; serious harm or matter of life or death	Schedule 2 & 3
For the administration of justice (usually bringing perpetrators to justice)	Schedule 2 & 3
For the legitimate interest of the data controller and/or the parties to whom the data are disclosed, except where disclosure causes unwarranted prejudice to the person of concern	Schedule 2
For medical purposes and is undertaken by a health professional or person who owes equivalent duty of confidentiality	Schedule 3
For the prevention/detection of any unlawful act where disclosure is in the significant public interest	Schedule 3

Condition	Schedule
For the provision of confidential counselling, advice, support or other service, where disclosure is in the significant public interest AND seeking consent would prejudice the provision of the service	Schedule 3
For the exercise of any functions conferred on a Police Constable under any rule of law (includes common law)	Schedule 3
Right to life Right to be free from torture or inhuman or degrading treatment	Human Rights Act, Articles 2 & 3

Balancing Principles

When considering whether to share information *in that particular case*, each agency/group should consider the following to determine whether the sharing is in the public interest and is fair and reasonable:

Proportionate, relevant and necessary disclosures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has gaining consent been considered; ▪ Respective risks to those affected; ▪ Pressing need; ▪ Need to know of other agencies; ▪ What information to share to achieve the objective.
<p>Public interest in disclosure:</p> <p>Consider whether this overrides the duty of confidentiality and the right to private life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The administration of justice; ▪ Maintaining public safety; ▪ The apprehension of offenders; ▪ The prevention of crime and disorder; ▪ The detection of crime; ▪ The protection of vulnerable members of the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the intended disclosure proportionate to the intended aim? ▪ What is the vulnerability of those who are at risk? ▪ What is the impact of disclosure likely to be on the offender? ▪ Is there another equally effective means of achieving the same aim? ▪ Is the disclosure necessary to prevent or detect crime and uphold the rights and freedoms of the public? ▪ Is it necessary to disclose the information, to protect other vulnerable people?
Human Rights Act	Ensure that the actions taken by public sector bodies are not discriminatory in order to comply with the above.

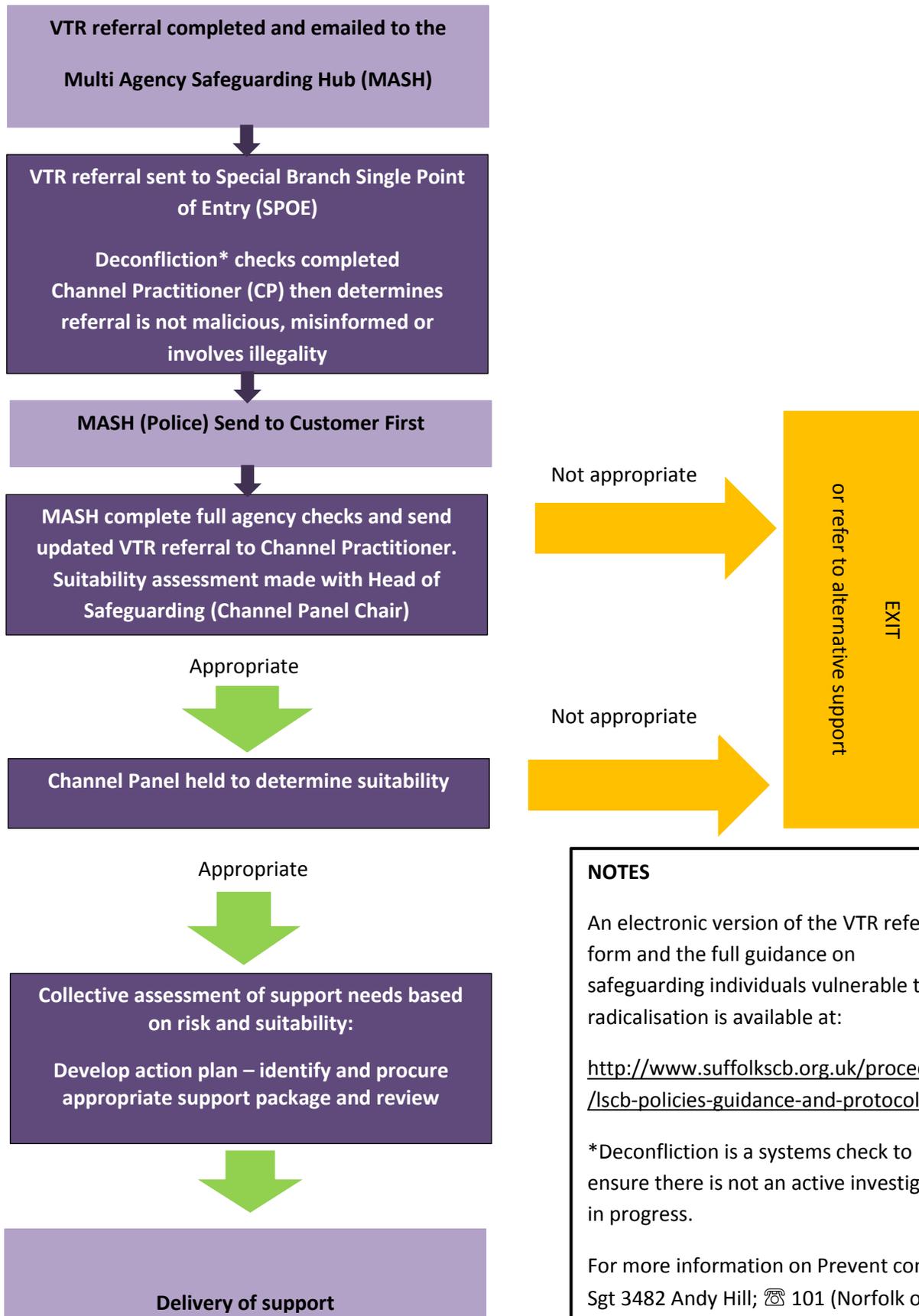
APPENDIX B

Confidentiality Statement

Attendees are reminded that all information shared in this meeting is confidential and is shared and recorded only for the purpose of the meeting.

Information shared and recorded as part of this meeting will not be disclosed outside of the meeting other than for official purposes that have been sanctioned by the members of the meeting. Similarly, other than via official minutes, no attendees will make a record of another agency's information for any purposes other than those sanctioned by the members of the meeting. Information shared should not be discussed with the subject unless the owner of the information has given approval.

APPENDIX C Vulnerable to Radicalisation (VTR) referral process



NOTES

An electronic version of the VTR referral form and the full guidance on safeguarding individuals vulnerable to radicalisation is available at:

<http://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/procedures/lscb-policies-guidance-and-protocols/>

*Deconfliction is a systems check to ensure there is not an active investigation in progress.

For more information on Prevent contact Sgt 3482 Andy Hill; ☎ 101 (Norfolk or Suffolk)

APPENDIX D – VTR referral form:

Section 1: Person referring to complete (please expand boxes as required)	
Subject's full Name (include all known inc alias/maiden if relevant)	
Date and place of birth	
Full Address	
Spouse/Partner/Parents' names/D.O.B	
Children/Siblings names/D.O.B	
Reason for Referral	
Background and risk issues - Page 4 offers guidance notes (include chronology if known)	
Faith / Ideology	
Personal / emotional & Social	
Risk / Protective factors	
Referrer's full name, role, contact details & date submitted.	Date:

once completed, email to: MASH@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

Section 2: MASH forward to

Suffolk Special Branch by e-mail SpecialBranch@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

Deconfliction checks completed by SB, form then returned to MASH

MASH complete agency checks

This process must only take place after SB deconfliction checks – then return to Special Branch

MASH system checks

(please expand boxes as required)

Police inc. CIS, PNC, PND	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Adult Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Children's Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
General Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please state)		
CATS reference generated		
Completed by:		Date/time:

For MASH only: **Send to Suffolk Special Branch by e-mail**
SpecialBranch@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

Referrer notified of outcome	By:	Date/Time:
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GUIDANCE NOTES FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

This form is to help you refer concerns about an individual who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Below are questions which may help you to quantify and structure your concerns. The list is not exhaustive and other factors may be present but they are intended as a guide to help communicate your professional judgement about what has led you to make this referral.

Faith / ideology

Are they new to a particular faith / faith strand?

Do they seem to have naïve or narrow religious or political views?

Have there been sudden changes in their observance, behaviour, interaction or attendance at their place of worship / organised meeting?

Have there been specific examples or is there an undertone of “ Them and Us “ language or violent rhetoric being used or behaviour occurring?

Is there evidence of increasing association with a closed tight knit group of individuals / known recruiters / extremists / restricted events?

Are there particular grievances either personal or global that appear to be unresolved / festering?

Has there been an increase in unusual travel abroad without satisfactory explanation?

Personal / emotional / social issues

Is there conflict with their families regarding religious beliefs / lifestyle choices?

Is there evidence of cultural anxiety and / or isolation linked to insularity / lack of integration?

Is there evidence of increasing isolation from family, friends or groups towards a smaller group of individuals or a known location?

Is there history in petty criminality and / or unusual hedonistic behaviour (alcohol/drug use, casual sexual relationships, and addictive behaviours)?

Have they got / had extremist propaganda materials (DVD’s, CD’s, leaflets etc.) in their possession?

Do they associate with negative / criminal peers or known groups of concern?

Are there concerns regarding their emotional stability and or mental health?

Is there evidence of participation in survivalist / combat simulation activities, e.g. paint balling?

Risk / Protective Factors

What are the specific factors which are contributing towards making the individual more vulnerable to radicalisation? E.g; mental health, language barriers, cultural anxiety, impressionability, criminality, specific grievance, transitional period in life etc.

Is there any evidence of others targeting or exploiting these vulnerabilities or risks?

What factors are already in place or could be developed to firm up support for the individual or help them increase their resilience to negative influences? E.g. positive family ties, employment, mentor / agency input etc.