

London Assembly Police and Crime Committee – Wednesday 8 March 2023

Transcript of Agenda Item 6 - Independent Review of Prevent

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): We now move on to our main item of business and I would like to welcome our guests, Oliver Levinson, Head of Countering Violent Extremism in the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC); Kenny Bowie, Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, also from MOPAC; Commander Dom Murphy QPM, Head of Counter Terrorism Command, Metropolitan Police Service (MPS); and Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan, Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, MPS. Good morning to you all and thank you for coming.

I am going to start the questions about the background to the Independent Review of Prevent. How did the MPS and MOPAC engage with the Independent Review of Prevent?

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Thank you very much and good morning. You might remember that there was a call for evidence from the lead reviewer, which we made a submission to. That submission in large part was derived from the evidence that we had accumulated in our Countering Violent Extremism Programme's engagement and review phase, which was the most comprehensive city-wide engagement and review activity in this policy area ever, therefore a significant amount of evidence. That report is published and still available.

We have continued to have ad hoc engagement with the reviewer and his team and most recently William Shawcross [CVO, Independent Reviewer] attended the Contest Board to discuss the review and hear from the membership of that board.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. I would like to say at this point we tried desperately to get William Shawcross here because it is a very interesting report and we have many questions, but unfortunately, we could not get him on this occasion. Hopefully he will come again. I am not sure who from the MPS would like to take this. Dom?

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): Thanks for the question. In a very similar vein really, all of our engagement from the start of the review was with Mr Shawcross. He met the team both in London, in national Prevent for Counter Terrorism policing, and he also met a number of our advisory groups from Counter Terrorism in respect of how we lead on Prevent in terms of the police response for London.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. This one is really for MOPAC. What is your assessment of the delivery of the Prevent across London, and what is the Mayor and MOPAC doing to strengthen the effectiveness of Prevent across the capital?

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): It is important to recognise that Prevent has delivered a lot of good work that has changed and saved lives, no doubt, but it has not been without its shortcomings and failures also. As a balanced interpretation, the Independent Review has offered some recommendations that will improve the systems within Prevent and that should be welcomed. There are a number of recommendations that we are pleased to see.

The report is not very prescriptive as to how those recommendations should be discharged, so we have to wait to see what the Home Office does with those recommendations, but it has been transparent with us so far. We hope that continues and we welcome that.

There are some recommendations that we do not necessarily agree with, and I do not think that will be a surprise to anybody because there are 34 recommendations. When we first heard about the Independent Review and lobbied for the Independent Review of Prevent there were really two outcomes that we would have liked to have seen from that. The first are some systems improvements and we have a smattering of those, which we are pleased to see.

The second is a point that we have talked about previously with the Committee, which is that we are concerned that a lack of awareness around Prevent, a lack of awareness and understanding around what the signs of radicalisation are, where help and support can be sought, and how people can engage it and what that help and support looks like; there is a lack of awareness around that. Certainly, more problematic, there is some continued mistrust and scepticism around the strategy.

Therefore, when the Independent Review was called for and announced, we thought that secondary issue would perhaps be dealt with as part of this review. Sadly, I do not think that is going to be the case, so that we are going to see a continued problem around awareness. I am not sure that the report is going to increase awareness hugely. Certainly, we feel very pessimistic about it moving people from a mistrustful or sceptical position. That is possibly some of the tone and some of the key findings of the report, which talk about things like an overwhelming interest in Islamist extremism. We have a longstanding issue where people feel that Prevent is all about Islamist extremism and all about the Muslim community, whereas we know that is simply not the case.

But also, perhaps some of the tone in the report around the movement from vulnerability to susceptibility, the movement from safeguarding to security, and again that has not moved that cohort who are worried about Prevent being too much of a securitisation strategy and not enough of a safeguarding strategy. Some of that probably sits within the tone and the wordcount of the report itself. But some of that has been exacerbated by the reporting of it, which is focused on those two issues.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, we are going to go into this in more depth. This is basically more of the background.

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Sorry, I have jumped in too early.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): No, the thing is that what you are saying I think lots of us agree with you and I am hoping that will come up later. If it does not, at the end of the session please remind us and we will go back because that is a very valid point in my view. If I can ask either of you from the MPS, what do you think is needed to strengthen the Prevent programme in London?

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you. First of all, any opportunity to review a part of the Contest strategy and our response to that strategy is welcome. Therefore, the review is welcome for that reason and in a very similar vein we do not necessarily recognise all of the recommendations as impacting upon our everyday delivery of Prevent in

London. However, that is not to say that there are some things in there that I am sure will help us to frame Prevent in a slightly different way or perhaps deliver it in a different way.

Of course, it is for the Home Office to come back with that strategy and that assessment, but for us this represents an opportunity to look at what we do. That is always welcome and it is welcome in every strand of Contest. It will not make any immediate difference to how we are delivering Prevent at the moment. I am sure we are going to get on to the definitions and the challenges between the different ideologies that we deal with within Prevent and some of the comments made by Mr Shawcross in the review. But primarily there are some challenges here for us, and of course we need to wait for the Home Office to come back with a strategy for how that might impact upon Counter Terrorism policing and particularly Prevent in London.

But there are some big challenges that need to run alongside this report. Changes in how we fund priority areas across London are going to be particularly impacted for us. That is almost on a par with this review as to the impact it is going to have on how we deliver Prevent in London going forward.

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): For me it is helpful if you put a spotlight on Prevent; it is good because it gets people talking, it raises awareness around the challenges that we have around radicalisation and the questions that we grapple with every day are: what is radicalisation? What is that journey? At what point does intervention take part? Is it too early? Is it too late? What does success look like when we talk about the delivery of Prevent? That is a really challenging area too.

In London, and Mr Shawcross' report makes some good observations around disguised compliance, he specifically talks about Ali Harbi Ali and the tragic murder of Sir David Amess [MP]. He talks about how he knew what he was going to do at a very young age, and did he disguise his intentions to Prevent professionals? There is also talk about susceptibility and vulnerability and we are seeing younger people entering the world of terrorism, which is a real challenge for us because of course Prevent is about keeping people innocent while they still are that. We need the community support to do that.

Terminology I think is a really key challenge for us because, whether we like it or not, and it is not necessarily borne out in the report as much as we would like, but we do need to get to the position where we can describe what extremism is. Lord [Justice] Haddon-Cave's review in relation to Shakeel Begg [Head Imam of Lewisham Islamic Centre] and the yardstick he used is something that we should look more at going forward in terms of how we describe extremists, harmful but legal individuals that operate within our space.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, we are going to explore that more. You have answered my next question, but I will ask this of you, the Independent Review of Prevent says that Prevent does not have sufficient focus on the threat posed by Islamists. Do you agree with that and what are you going to do in response to that?

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): I entirely understand the point that was being made and what comes out in the review at this point is the challenge of taking a national view of something that has very local implications. In that case we do not recognise in London that we have removed our focus from Islamist ideology. In fact, our numbers are not necessarily borne out in the review in the way that we would like. We still see the majority of Islamist referrals into Prevent here in London. While extreme right wing does present a very significant challenge to us and is across some of our Pursue casework in increasing numbers, it is true to say that, in London, Islamist ideology is still the dominant ideology in Prevent referrals.

Our focus is where the threat exists and that is a key point that needs bringing out for Counter Terrorism policing certainly, but also for our partners; we need to go where the threat exists. Where we see that threat and harm to the public, or where we see that threat and harm to individuals who may be being drawn into an ideology as a result of a vulnerability of some kind, or an intention, that we respond to that threat. Therefore, we are less driven by an ideology, but driven by the threat, which is a point that the review brings out quite strongly and is something that we in London particularly - but for the whole Prevent network - are involved in.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): I am going to come to MOPAC about this as well, but I will stay with you then, Dom. Are you concerned that there is an imbalance or disparity in thresholds applied to Islamist and extreme right wing referrals to Prevent?

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): That is not something we have seen in London; we are very alive to it. It is something we clearly monitor. But what I can say is - and to go back to my point really - we are in the game of trying to understand where the threat lies for the public and we will respond according to that threat. That is across the Contest picture. But certainly, for Prevent and how it connects into the Pursue activity that you might see us undertake, this is about the threat posed to the public and the threat posed to individuals who might be vulnerable or susceptible. Therefore, for us, we need to ensure that we are responding in that way so that disparity does not quite exist in that way because we are agnostic to what the ideology is, and we are threat-focused and potentially harm-focused. That is where we need to be.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Good. That is what we want to hear really. If I ask MOPAC the same question.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I have very little to add to what Commander Murphy said. All I would point out is the latest figures, which we have for this, show that there were over three times as many Prevent referrals in London related to Islamist activity than there were for extreme right wing. It is 384 against 122. That would suggest that they are going, and they should go, where the threat is. I know that is not the national trend, but I do not want to speak for outside of London. I would also agree with what William Shawcross said that obviously thresholds should be set at the same level regardless of what ideology you are talking about. I have not seen the evidence that he has and I have not had all of the conversations that he has had. I do not want to talk about what has happened in the rest of the country. But I have been reassured by MPS colleagues that in London they do feel that they are applying that in the right way and that they are not seeing those sort of disparities.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Good. If anybody is watching this, and I know people do, we are specifically talking about London now and how this affects Londoners. Sticking with MOPAC, in what ways has the London Prevent Board been successful in co-ordinating Prevent in London and where could improvements be made?

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I can talk to that. The London Prevent Board is what I would describe to be a strategic and tactical board. It is cochaired by the Chief Executives of London Committee's Prevent Lead and the Home Office. Its members are primarily Chief Executives across London local authorities, sometimes represented by Directors of community safety, alongside multi-agency partners. That Board has existed for some time now. It has made some improvements in that time. It now has a better buy-in from senior local authority leads, which makes it more

effective. It has a good buy-in already from multi-agency partners. Jane attends it also. It is good at looking at strategic issues and trying to come up with tactical responses to those.

As an example of something that it is looking at right now is colleagues have touched upon the fact that, in the Shawcross review, Shawcross talks about the need for regionalisation of local Prevent delivery across the board in England and Wales. That is something that we have been talking about and potentially looking at for a number of years now and recommending that is looked at by the Home Office. But that is going to be complicated in London and on one hand, looking at a new model of delivery with the same amount of resource that you currently have, and that is very different to looking at a new model of delivery with much fewer resources. That seems to be the direction of travel and that worries us. Therefore, the London Prevent Board is looking at that very closely now and trying to come up with some potential models around how we can most effectively deliver Prevent locally in London based within those confines.

The last thing to say about the London Prevent Board is that it does report to the London Contest Board. Niall [Bolger, Chief Executive, London Borough of Hounslow], who chairs the London Prevent Board, is a standing member of the London Contest Board, which is purely strategic.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes. Let us hope they do listen to make it different in different parts of the country because we have different issues here to some other places for sure. Coming to both sets of you, in your opinion, has the Independent Review of Prevent helped or hindered efforts to increase public confidence in the Prevent programme? Shall I start with you, Dom, and then go back?

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): I am not sure I am best placed to say if it has helped or hindered really. Our engagement with communities will bring that out as we understand some of the reaction to the Prevent review and any of the response that we get from the Home Office in terms of strategy, which I know there have been some public comments made. I know that we are waiting on what the strategy changes might be to the recommendations and they are really important to us, for us to take those on board and move forward with them.

I honestly believe that any opportunity to talk publicly about Prevent, about Counter Terrorism, and all the challenges we face in Counter Terrorism and the communities' challenge in how they deal with them inside their own communities and with us, and across our partnerships, is welcome. It is a really important point to make, because we have not necessarily always got it right when we are talking about Prevent with communities and how we explain that. It is something we are very alive to, how can we engage more publicly in these discussions, and this review is a catalyst to that and I welcome that as a chance to talk more about Prevent publicly.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Have you been surprised - because I certainly have - that it has not been in the media more? You are, you are all nodding. Because I keep looking and it is such an important piece of work. Whether you agree with the report or you do not, it needs to be discussed. I regret that it has not been out there more.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): It has certainly been on quite a few of the blog spots that I read and there has been quite a lot about it, but there probably has not been as much in the mainstream media, if I can put it that way, as you might have expected. What would I say about this? I would start with one thing, which is one that is linked to that is that these Government reports, or other reports, often have a lot less cut-through with the general public than we

might otherwise expect. Whether it is going to move the dial or not with lots of people, it is probably never going to move it marginally.

I would say though, even within that, whether it has helped or hindered, I suppose I would describe it more as a bit of a missed opportunity, really. When you look at the number of organisations, which boycotted this, I think it was around 450, and some of them are, I suppose, what I would describe as the usual suspects you would have expected to be the case anyway. But there were others, for example, Amnesty International boycotted it where maybe some of those people would have been useful if they could have engaged and they could have done that. I am not making comment as to the validity or not of why they did the boycott, I am just saying I think that is a bit of a missed opportunity on this.

Then a final point I would say on all of this is I do think - as Jane was saying earlier - the language matters in all of this. I suppose this will come out in the wash with what the Home Office does with this and how it refers to the strategy. But there had previously been - because of concerns within certain communities and certain individuals, especially the Muslim community - that it had become a sort of spying mandate or an overly securitised Prevent, that they had intentionally tried to move it to more talking about safeguarding and an ability to engage people and get communities looking at it.

If you look in London, still the lowest levels of referral to Prevent come from family and friends and from the sort of wider community. Therefore, I do think it will be important how the Home Office responds to it and the language which then gets adopted going forward, how we talk about this, in order that can help to build that confidence and trust with people so that they are willing to make the referrals. Because, as Oliver said at the start, Prevent is undoubtedly the only show in town, does a lot of good, undoubtedly changes lives, saves lives, but we need to somehow find the language and find a way of talking about that in a way that is going to encourage and engender that trust and confidence.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Absolutely. I was very surprised that so many people boycotted it. I read weird things and a speech that [Sir] Mark Rowley [QPM, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] wrote, I think it was the beginning of 2018, said he would like to see many impressive leaders stepping forward to confront issues, including William Shawcross. Even if you do not agree with somebody's report, it is good to engage with it and say why - in front of everybody - you do not agree with it. I was very disappointed and I am pleased we are giving it an airing and I hope we do again because it is such important work.

Moving now on to Assembly Member Desai.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Good morning, panel. I have three questions, I think the first question to some extent has been already answered, but I will put it in a wider context. Firstly, can I say that the Labour group in this room, we believe that Prevent is the only show in town and I think, as you said, Oliver, it is doing a lot of good work. But also welcome any attempt to improve its efficacy and also iron out any flaws. But, as I say, it is the only game in town; it is about how we can improve it. Therefore, I welcome this session and also there are aspects of the Shawcross review that are clearly meritorious, but there are also some serious flaws in the review as well.

I was going to ask both MOPAC and the MPS the question whether there is a false dichotomy between addressing extreme right-wing terrorism and Islamist terrorism and whether one should follow the evidence. Commander, you already answered this question to some extent by saying that your work in London is not driven by ideology, but by the threat. Therefore, perhaps I could ask your views, Kenny?

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I have nothing really to add to what Commander Murphy says. It should be driven by the threat. In London, if you look at the threat level as a whole, we have something like - I am about to be corrected here I fear - but something like 60% of the acute threat in London at any one time. Therefore, for Londoners as a whole, they would expect Prevent, they would expect Pursue, they would expect the police, they would expect the security service, they would expect the work that we do in MOPAC, and in the Greater London Authority (GLA) to follow where that threat is. The important thing is not what ideology it is you are tackling; it is that you tackle it and you keep Londoners safe. I am not sure whether you call it a false dichotomy or what you would call it, but I agree with what Commander Murphy said about following the threat and making sure that the same thresholds are applied consistently.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Perhaps this is a question we would like to ask Mr Shawcross, who I think was going to come, but has not been able to be here.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): No, he did not respond, and then eventually said he could not come.

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): Assembly Member Desai, if I could just add to what my colleagues have said, it is worth noting within London, when we talk about regionalisation and prioritisation, the Home Office had introduced a system called Prioritisation where 40 local authorities across the country received additional funding due to the threat, risk, and harm. That threat, risk, and harm was not just Prevent referrals, but also investigations, suspects who were released from prison, and convicted offenders. London had 22 of those 40 areas. So that gives you an idea in terms of the scale of the threat in London when it comes to terrorism.

Obviously, as you know, we are going to move to a regionalisation model, and what that means, in reality, is that London will move from having 22 prioritised areas down to having seven, and that may even reduce further to five. That obviously causes some concern because what we do not have is that dedicated resource in those areas. But it is important just to give you an idea in terms of the scale of the threat and where we sit in terms of the referrals and us following that evidence in terms of where we need to focus.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): My second question really to both MOPAC and the MPS is about one of the major criticisms of Prevent being that it lacks legitimacy among our Muslim community. Oliver, you said earlier that there is distrust, to use your words. What exactly are we doing to address this mistrust?

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): That is about engagement; it is about transparency. I am pleased to see that there are findings in the report that talk about a need for further transparency. It also is about perhaps not adopting positions that are polarised and not adopting a position where you say you either support Prevent or you do not. and you are an extremist or you are not and you do not understand it fully. We need to be a bit more broad-minded about that and look at the history of the strategy and accept that it has had a bumpy road, but also be avowedly supportive of the progress that it has made and the good work that it has done in a transparent way. There are a lot of recommendations in the Shawcross review about the Home Office doing that better.

There are good recommendations in the Shawcross review about rebutting - more transparently and openly - criticisms of Prevent. I think that is really good because they can become somewhat urban legend and urban myth, which it does not matter if they are true or not because the perception creates a disengagement with the

strategy. A lot of those criticisms, urban myths, legends, if you like, relate to Muslim community members who have had involvements with Prevent. So, the creation of a system or a team that can rebut those transparently is very welcome. One of the best things about the report is a recommendation to create an independent body that will accept complaints and criticisms and be able to review those and respond to those. That is a very positive thing.

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): I completely agree. The thing for us is we have over 1,500 Prevent champions now in local Basic Command Units (BCU), police officers and police staff who represent Prevent, and they are based with communities in our BCU areas. Any opportunity that we have that allows us to engage communities directly on the realities of Prevent and the perceptions that we all accept exist, unfortunately, is a welcome one. I do think this is a really good start to that process, being able to sit and talk about it and discuss the challenges we face and what lies ahead.

We will take every opportunity we can to be involved in any scrutiny of Prevent like this Independent Review and the engagement that follows with communities and our partners and that is a really important point. This is not just about MOPAC, this is not just about the police, there are so many partners involved in delivering Prevent and so many of those partners are locally based in the areas of London and we need to keep that engagement. We have local officers now who are permanently based in the communities. It is helpful. Would we want to do more of that? Absolutely, but this is that start point and if some of those recommendations were to be brought in and supported by the Home Office, we would support those.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you. The final question, Chairman, again to both MOPAC and the MPS, just again speaking very generally, do you think the Prevent review is a fair and unbiased review of the facts? In particular I am concerned with methodology used by Shawcross, I have some figures here that really focus on a handful of cases, six out of 1,500 are focused on 15 organisations from a total of 110. The explanation in how these were chosen and whether they were a representative sample or just cherry-picked.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I think that the report is a welcome contribution to the wider debate on Prevent. I am not going to get into any ad hominem attacks on whether it is or is not. I have not seen the facts or the evidence that Mr Shawcross has and all I can talk about is what we would like to see as a result of it in London, and I think we have been doing that.

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): In danger or repeating myself, I agree entirely. I have not met these two gentlemen before either, therefore it is entirely genuine. This is again - and I am in danger of repeating myself - a really good opportunity for us to look at it. I do not think it would be helpful for me or us to look at the report and how it has been drafted; we are where we are. We now have all of the material and, as we say, we do not necessarily recognise every recommendation. Some of them will have a greater impact in London than they may elsewhere. It is time for us to work with the Home Office and others to try to move forward now with this and help it contribute to how we deliver Prevent.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Moving forward, that is OK, thank you.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Before I carry on to my other colleagues, I would like to welcome, and my colleagues would like to welcome, students from CONEL College [of Haringey, Enfield and North East

London], Level 3, Year 1 and 2 Public Service classes, so hopefully future police and uniformed personnel. Welcome. Do you want to give us a wave? Hello. Today we are talking about the William Shawcross review on Prevent, which is Counter Terrorism. Absolutely fascinating stuff, I hope you enjoy it.

I am now going over to Assembly Member Russell.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you, Chairman. I just want to just circle back to the issue of public confidence and the fact that a huge number of the grassroots organisations that you have talked about as being so important in terms of the delivery of Prevent did not engage with the Shawcross review. I understand from statements that these groups have made that is because Shawcross is perceived to have a bias against Muslim communities. I just wonder whether you think that is going to be challenging in terms of taking the recommendations of the review forward. Everything you have both said about the recommendations, you have been clear you do not agree with all of them, and you have talked about it as an opportunity to review Prevent and talk about Prevent, and it all depends on what the Home Office comes back with in terms of how the review's recommendations are put into practice. I would just be interested in anything you can say about the absence of those community voices in this review.

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): It is a really difficult question because I know Mr Shawcross did reach out to a number of communities and here in London, for example, he spoke to the Counter Terrorism Advisory Group. That is a group of survivors and victims of terrorism, a group of community members who run a number of charities and certainly some of them are supported by funding from MOPAC under the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programme, as well as academics. They act as our critical friend, really, and they have spoken out about the Shawcross report. I guess for me that is my temperature check. Alongside that I manage the Strategic Engagement Team, we have over 400 community contacts that we reach out to, to understand sentiment across London, and again that is a really good test for us in terms of are we getting it right.

When we talk about working with non-governmental organisation (NGO) groups, it comes back to the question around are we intelligence focused. I see community groups as being a really good opportunity. For example, we do a huge amount of work in sports and you look at sports and you say, "What does that have to do with Counter Terrorism?" It has lots to do with Counter Terrorism as we know within some sporting sectors it can be a draw for people to come together to discuss ideologies. We know it can also be a diversionary activity in terms of young people wanting to get off some energy and meet groups and form healthy relationships. We know it is another eyes and ears of the community, whereby the leaders and the organisers and the people who commit their time to work with these young people can spot the signs in terms of radicalisation, and therefore make referrals to us. They can offer that safeguarding influence.

Therefore, for us, working with that third sector is really important and we have to be focused in our time and effort because it is a challenge. It is a challenge reaching such broad communities and it is a challenge sometimes having the conversation. But I think London and London communities are really committed to this, I really do. I do see referrals come from families and friends and, although low, it is very difficult to pick up that phone and talk about your loved one, or sometimes not so much loved one, to say that you are worried about them. Because of course you are worried about what the next steps are. However, we do have a high proportion of people who do that.

We also know that communities really matter and in terms of information that comes into Counter Terrorism, whether it be people phoning the anti-terror hotline or the Act Early support line, we know that 20% of the

information that comes in has a direct impact on terrorism investigations, therefore that is really significant. Therefore, if I was to use the data that we have and the feedback that I get from that outreach, I think we are doing a good job in London. Can we do more? Absolutely. Is this review an opportunity? Definitely. I welcome the Prevent duty guidance refresh. What I am hoping is some of the recommendations around Mr Shawcross' report, around some of the groups that are not included within the Prevent duty, for example I would love to see doctors being included. I would like to see them having a duty. I would like to see immigration included and have that duty, so that we can work as a partnership to really identify and support people who are vulnerable to being radicalised.

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): If I could I just add one further thing, that was an excellent answer from Jane in terms of Prevent. For me, if you look at the Commissioner's plan to grow and develop our community policing model, we will increasingly have more officers and staff based in the communities and responding to community needs. That has to work in conjunction with all of the activity that we are undertaking across the Contest strategy in addition to all of the challenges we face in policing London and safeguarding our public. Therefore, that is absolutely true for Prevent but, as part of the MPS, we need to look towards the opportunities that an increased community policing model will provide to engage those communities and increase public trust and confidence in Prevent as well as the police and our response.

Caroline Russell AM: I am hearing a very strong desire for deep community engagement. But I have not really heard an answer to is it a problem that these groups' voices have not been heard in this Prevent review because so many of those groups decided not to engage with it?

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I do not think it is as simple as a yes and no answer. As I said earlier, I do think for very many of these groups and individuals that boycotted, it is a missed opportunity and it is a shame that they have not had a chance to have their voices heard, and they all have their own reasons for that and I am not going to speculate on what they may or may not be. What I would say is, it is not as simple as saying it is A or B, for example.

There are groups there who, regardless of who the reviewer had been, regardless of what the terms of reference had been, almost inevitably would have boycotted it. Am I particularly worried that certain of the groups that are mentioned in his report - and we can all think of which ones I am referring to here probably - have not engaged with the review? No, I am probably not if you think of a group like CAGE for example, I suspect they would not have engaged regardless. So, I do not think that makes a huge difference.

But then there are probably groups in the middle where it would arguably have been useful, but then the question is how likely they are then to have an impact on the people who would not already be likely to report individuals to police if they were at risk of radicalisation or report into Prevent. We know from the Public Attitude Survey; I think it is something like 87% of Londoners say they probably would. Therefore, you are looking at what impact and what contact they have with that marginal 13% who already would not and how likely are they genuinely to have an influence with people at the margins? You are probably talking relatively small numbers in the grand scheme of things.

I still would contend that it is a missed opportunity because I think the more positive voices you have speaking up for Prevent and seeking to influence those people who are influenceable in this the better it would be. I suppose my direct answer to your question would be that it is a bit of a missed opportunity, but it is not quite as cut and dried as it might initially seem, if that makes sense.

Caroline Russell AM: I think I am hearing that practitioners in the field are using that deep knowledge of those community organisations to frame your response to the recommendations.

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime):

Yes, I think that is right. It would be slightly remiss of us to believe that this was the one opportunity for those communities to engage. Engagement is a continuum and it will change all the time depending upon the challenges we face, particularly in the Counter Terrorism world, how we engage and who we engage with will change and have to flex and be more agile. But we see very much this engagement being an ongoing thing. This is a missed opportunity, as you say they did not engage with the review, however that is not their only opportunity and we are keen to ensure that every community has a voice in this process.

Caroline Russell AM: That will presumably help in terms of building trust and confidence in the processes. Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I had wanted to ask, it is probably to Kenny or Oliver, I just want to know, just listening to the discussion, is there need really for a refresh/rebrand of Prevent, maybe calling it something else, bringing in a different package, taking some of the things out of this review, what is needed in order to try to deal with it. Because in some ways it is a toxic brand and how can you take that forward? Is that what is needed perhaps at this stage?

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I can give you, I guess, an honest and personal answer to that. That would have been a good idea a number of years ago. To an extent that ship has sailed. What I mean by that is a number of years ago you had a Prevent system that was not nearly as effective, fair, or equitable as it is now. If we had have had that rebrand then and produced what we have now, which in essence is a pretty good system, Prevent and Channel are pretty good things, they are not perfect, but they are pretty good things. Now you run the risk of improvements having been made and the association to the word "Prevent" still being the problem. Therefore, it is a lot of the time a perception issue and I am not sure that would solve the issue now.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is helpful. I just thought from the discussion, I just wanted to tease that out. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Garratt.

Neil Garratt AM: Just a quick question, maybe quite a basic question, talk about extremism and tackling extremism, what is the working definition used of "extremism"? it seems to be quite a vague term. I do not know, Dom, whether you can help me out on that?

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): I might well defer to others on that one. For the reasons you mentioned, how we practically apply that is very different in a number of different types of investigations.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I think this goes to the heart of the problem in that there is a genuine legal definition of terrorism, the Government obviously brought in 2015, I believe it was, a Counter-Extremism Strategy, which had a very wide working definition and included issues in it, like female genital mutilation, which was very contested area as to

whether that should be within Counter-Extremism Strategy or not, for example, which broadens the whole thing. My understanding, and certainly the reporting is that the Bill, which was meant to accompany that strategy, never saw the light of day for very many concerns about how they would be able to frame that definition in a way that was workable. Therefore, you get exactly to the heart of one of the points, for example, in this Mr Shawcross talks about whether you should use a non-violent extremist to deal with somebody who is deradicalised, if I can use that term, somebody who will define a non-violent extremist and what you mean by that. That is one of the problems. Obviously there will be a spectrum there and everyone will agree you should not use, if you have somebody who is an extreme right-wing terrorist, you should not use somebody who everyone would recognise as being an outspoken extreme right wing propaganda, whether they are extreme left. But then as you move down that spectrum, I think that will be a much more contested definition.

Neil Garratt AM: Sorry, just very conscious of time, would a fair summary be that there is not a really clear definition and once you move away from people who are actively working or somehow involved in terrorist activity the question of the difference between an extremist ideology and just a non-mainstream political idea is a very grey area that is not well defined. Is that where we are?

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I think what you are getting to is from what William Shawcross says about some of the stuff which is used in the extreme right wing there. I would absolutely say that is right and that was part of the issues that the Government had when it tried to bring in the definition for the proposed Bill previously.

Neil Garratt AM: None of his recommendations, I think, include having one or the need to have one, so that just sits there as an unanswered question.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): That is why I am genuinely interested to see how the Home Office takes his recommendations and wants to act on them. That is something I have also been grappling with since 2015 and maybe this is a fresh opportunity for it to come forward with that.

Neil Garratt AM: Great. Thanks, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Let us hope so. We are now moving to safeguarding and vulnerability and I will go back to Assembly Member Russell.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. Do you agree with the Independent Review that Prevent has, and I quote, "increasingly come to be seen as synonymous with safeguarding"? Is this a concern or not, and why? Who wants to go first? The MPS first?

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, I will answer that question. It is a really difficult one because we talk about "safeguarding" and then we say, "Well, what is safeguarding?" From a policing perspective, that is really about information sharing, and it is about making sure that we fulfil our role in terms of child and adult safeguarding procedures and that we work with relevant partners.

In terms of the cohort of individuals that we deal with within the Prevent Programme, there are a lot of safeguarding needs. About 40% have some form of mental ill-health and we also see a large range of other

complex needs, whether it be adverse childhood experience; we see a range of domestic abuse within our casework; and just individuals who are looking for a sense of belonging.

Is that safeguarding and does that mean that there is not a terrorism risk? Well, there can be a terrorism risk and there can be a safeguarding [risk]. What Mr Shawcross does mention, which I think is useful, is that we should absolutely still safeguard young people. It would be a loss for us to move away from that and to just look at terrorism risk. I would much prefer to intervene early and identify an early indication that somebody is not going on to be managed under Prevent because they have not gone so far down that radicalisation journey. Safeguarding still has a big place in Prevent.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. Yes, when we think about cases like Shamima Begum, who was a child who was radicalised, that is absolutely a failure of safeguarding.

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): It has been found to be synonymous with safeguarding, and that is a good thing. When things have worked well, it has been. Prevent does a lot of different things and sometimes that is a challenge in itself. If you think about the different ends of the spectrum of Prevent delivery, at one end you have got Prevent working with a very young although vulnerable person, who perhaps has a number of vulnerabilities and safeguarding issues but has also potentially an association to radicalisation. It is entirely right to consider that as safeguarding work and vulnerability. At the same time, Prevent is trying to deradicalise hard-core terrorists, who are in prison, and under that lens "safeguarding" perhaps is less of an appropriate term. It is quite difficult to talk about all of that spectrum of work in one way. For much of what Prevent does, safeguarding is critical.

The review talks about changing the word from "safeguarding" to "susceptibility". To me, that is a synonym of "vulnerability" and I do not think that is a huge change in itself. There are instances where it is absolutely right to look at it as pure safeguarding, exploitation and manipulation. There are other instances where it will work with people who have more agency where it is about public protection and securitisation.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. We are moving into the questions that are coming up later.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Ahmad?

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you, Chairman, and good morning, panel. How does the MPS achieve the right balance between safeguarding vulnerable people, who are susceptible to radicalisation, and also protecting the public from dangerous extremists? Do you think you always get the balance right? Without naming names, it would be really useful if you could give a brief example of where you have got it right and what you learnt from that and where it maybe did not go right and what you learnt from that, please.

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): It is going to be really challenging to give you specific examples and case studies, although I am happy to make the offer for you to come and spend some time with Jane as a group to perhaps understand those case studies in a bit more detail. I am very happy to facilitate that and have you come and do that. It would be a much easier forum for you to understand that detail.

Do we get it right every time? The truth, of course, is we cannot get it right every time. We have a lot of people working in Prevent and a lot of partnerships in Prevent. I was just reflecting on the previous question. We are, in effect, using the ability to safeguard somebody as an extension of managing the threat and

potential harm to the public or that individual. That is really what we are talking about here and we have to take a decision that we will apply the Prevent and Channel Programmes to those people who we believe present the greatest risk, either to themselves or to the public. Frequently, referrals are escalated to our more serious casework and in London that number is particularly high. In fact, I think the number is around 6% of all referrals, and that is a high number compared to the rest of the country. I suppose it demonstrates to me that we are applying Prevent in those areas where there is risk. We are reliant upon those referrals and all of the information involved in this process to get that right every time and there will of course be challenges with that.

We have seen this in the case of Ali Harbi Ali and we have seen this in a number of other cases in the past where a subject, who goes on to commit a terrorist attack or be involved in a terrorist investigation, was the subject of Prevent. We are always open to a review of that process to understand what can be learnt from that individual's journey and our response to it and that is really important to point out.

Marina Ahmad AM: With the difficulties that you have identified, in your opinion how will the move from the language of "vulnerability" towards the language of "susceptibility" better identify those at risk? That is absolutely on the back of what you have just said.

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): It is really hard for me to draw a distinction between those two languages because it is such a small point in relation to how we deal with individuals. We need to understand who might be susceptible to those narratives but then who is vulnerable to actually taking that journey and that step. If we were to draw a defined line between those two things, we would end up restricting some our activity.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): As a real-life example of how I do not suspect that will make too much of a difference, we have the Vulnerability Assessment Framework, which is what is currently used by Prevent to look at all of this. One of the recommendations is that because Mr Shawcross would prefer to talk about "susceptibility", he does not think it should be called that anymore; that it should be called the Prevent Assessment Framework. However, at the same time he praises that framework for being quite sophisticated and really effective and is not suggesting any changes to it in that regard. I am not sure that change in language, as Commander Murphy said, will make a material difference at this stage. I may be wrong, of course, but until we see what the Home Office says that is our view at the moment.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you and my final question is for both agencies. There have been a number of reports in the last few years that a significant proportion of referrals to Prevent includes individuals struggling with mental illness and we have touched on this. Is that your experience widely and how does that change the way that Prevent actually views safeguarding? Perhaps we could start with MOPAC.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): We just agreed that the MPS would start there, but that is fine. Jane quoted a figure - was it about 40% of people --

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): -- who are referred in have mental health issues there, who need to be dealt with. I read with interest that Mr Shawcross said that this was potentially a way for some people of being referred in to then get quicker access to services. I am not sure, unless my MPS colleagues say otherwise from here, but we have seen a huge amount of evidence of that being one of the reasons for referral within London.

What I would say though is that there is clearly a wider debate happening at the moment about the provision of mental health services across the country, including in London. There is certainly a move within the MPS moving to a model called Right Care, Right Person, which is being brought down from Humberside [Police]. That is a move to making sure that people do get the right treatment in the right place. If the people who have those mental health issues do need to be referred into either Prevent or to Channel, that should happen regardless of whether those have those mental health incidents. What should not happen, if it is happening, would be through the wider system is that people are referred in there simply so that they can get that help, even though there is no wider threat to citizens as the result of that.

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): I manage the Vulnerability Support Hub, which covers South England, and that is made up of psychiatrists, psychologists and nursing staff, who work alongside Counter Terrorism colleagues and we have three hubs nationally. That is to help us navigate the really complex world of mental health and to make sure that we are treating people fairly with respect and understanding how their mental ill-health condition might impact their offending or their behaviour, and whether or not there is a correlation or a causation between the two.

What I would say is that Prevent goes through a range of assessments to decide whether or not somebody is going to get an intervention or a support. The first thing is deconfliction where we make sure that it is not already being investigated by any of our services. The next thing is it has to pass their suspicion test where we have to suspect that there is a Counter Terrorism relevance for that case to progress. For example, if you referred somebody in today, it would go through deconfliction and then we would have to look at it and say, "Do we suspect there is a Counter Terrorism relevance?" If it hits that suspect position, as 75% of our cases in London do, then we reach out to partners to get all that information and then we make a decision as to whether or not we now believe that there is a Counter Terrorism relevance. It is at that point that it gets referred into Channel for that multiagency support.

We cannot say that somebody with mental ill-health, who is referred in because somebody wants to get them support, will automatically reach that kind of suspicion and then that belief stage. However, we are of course mindful of making sure that we really understand how a mental ill-health condition is impacting and whether there is anything that we can do practically to support that individual to divert them away from terrorism.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Pidgeon.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It is all very interesting. I want to pick up a couple of specific questions around the Dovetail model so probably to the MPS, I do not know. Jane, you are nodding. Maybe I should come to you first. What impact has that Dovetail model had on the MPS' ability to gather information on individual cases at risk of extremism? The Dovetail model is about bringing local authorities in.

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): Dovetail was basically where the local authorities take ownership of Prevent. At the moment, for example, referrals come into the police whereas in the Dovetail model they get the referrals, they make the assessment and then they make a decision in terms of progression into Channel. It is what we call the Section 36 decision. However, all the while that is done in conjunction with us and it is not done independently.

I have not seen anything but really good work from our two Dovetail sites, which are in [the London Boroughs of] Haringey and Croydon. I have seen them work really, really well, our partnership is very good, and I certainly think there will be some loss when we lose that Programme. What I would also say about those areas is that we probably see a higher conversion into Channel, and we see a higher percentage of cases hitting that threshold where people are given that kind of intervention and support. There is a question for us in policing in terms of "Is our bar too high in terms of referrals?"

I would say Dovetail was good. What I would say is what we need to do in London is take forward the recommendation by [the] Parsons Green [train bombing review], which is to introduce the National Referral Form. It is something that not all London boroughs have done. For me, that is a risk because nobody has ever died when we have shared information, but they have when we have not. The National Referral Form is about making sure that the right agencies are aware of the referral at the right time and that people are not doing their own individual screening of cases to make their own assessment. The problem with that is that that could be just one piece of the jigsaw.

What I would like to reassure Members about is that we are not about gathering information on people unnecessarily. We are busy and we really are only interested in people that we can support and divert away from terrorism.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Then the next step is looking at creating a hybrid model for referrals, risk assessment, information gathering and so on. What would this mean for the MPS? Have you started to develop that and are you able to take some of the good things from the Dovetail model into this?

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): To be honest with you, I am not sure whether or not that is going to be taken forward because it has been agreed by Ministers that Dovetail will cease. In London, it is not so impactful. In the Counter Terrorism [Policing] North West region, it is extremely impactful because all of their sites are Dovetail sites.

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): One of the things is what do we do moving forward now then if we are losing --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, the hybrid.

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, into the hybrid model. We are going to need to think about what greater levels of co-ordination across all local authorities means for London and that is going to be really challenging for us. There are some boards in place already, but we might just need to think about how we use those boards slightly differently to fill that space. We are now going to have to come together in a different way to try to

have the same effect, with the regionalisation model potentially having fewer resources. It is a challenging period ahead. We can do it; the engagements are in place and already there is some work going on now across London to try to bring everyone together to share some of the information and create a process that has assurance around it for us all.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, there is a lot of uncertainty. I will leave it there. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): We are going to move on to Prevent duty and that is going to be started by my colleague Assembly Member Sahota.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thank you, Chairman, and this is about the Prevent duty. Simply, is it working or not working and what is the evidence for your statement? Over to you, whoever wants to take it first.

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): I would say the Prevent duty is a good thing, it is something we need and it comes alongside other activity. However, for me and for our execution of Prevent, we need it to be socialised more. We need there to be more information on it and we need to understand how it is embedded much better in all of those people who come into contact with those who might be vulnerable to radicalisation and can then refer to us. Jane mentioned earlier about General Practitioner (GP) and other locations and we still have low referrals here in London from schooling generally in comparison to the rest of the country. Therefore, we need to understand how we have got the information about the Prevent duty out there and how we can make the best value of that requirement.

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): I would just add that I have certainly asked Homeland Security group if the refresh that is currently ongoing in relation to the Prevent duty guidance is going to take into consideration Mr Shawcross' recommendations within that Prevent duty guidance. I see that as a really good opportunity to strengthen it, particularly when we move from that prioritised to regionalised approach. Then that duty guidance in my view will need to have some teeth and some clear guidance around how we test how effective we are in delivering Prevent.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: When I was sitting here, I was very worried that I did not know the pathway into Prevent as a GP but relieved when Jane said that doctors were not covered. Is this true? I thought that the 2015 [Counter-Terrorism and] Security Act had placed a duty on health boards to do so.

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): It is for health boards, but GPs are not included. We have one lead for London, Paul McCann, who represents the National Health Service (NHS), we certainly do work with doctors and surgeries, and in some London boroughs we attend forums that you have to raise awareness. However, there is not the same duty placed on you. Obviously, if you would like to represent London and say, "We, as a GP network, would be keen to adopt the National Referral Form", then we would be delighted.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: It is a big challenge because the conflict would be between the duty of care to the patient and the extra; that is a debate which needs to be had. You thought that it would be good to extend it to the GPs, did you?

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): Absolutely. As I say, we work with the NHS very closely, I have NHS employees who work directly within my teams, and we can tell you exactly what the information sharing protocols are. Again, this is not about persecuting somebody; this is about keeping people safe, both the individual and the public.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thank you. Do you think that the duty to Prevent should be extended to Border Force, [UK Visas and] Immigration and the Department for Work and Pensions?

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, I do. Yes.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: That is short. Is there any disagreement?

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): I would not disagree, but there is an element of importance around transparency as to why that is happening. If you do it without the transparency and the evidential base, then you are talking about potentially creating fuel for the people who are in the anti-Prevent lobby, talking about the stigmatisation of immigration and the stigmatisation of economic disadvantage. There are lots of very good reasons to do it, but let us be transparent about what they are and let us bring the evidence to the table.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. We are now going on to Assembly Member Devenish.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you, Chairman, and good morning, everybody. I am asking the question we always ask in these sessions about joined up Government, that wonderful expression. If I start with the MPS first, please, the question is: do you welcome the Government's proposal to launch a Prevention Partnership Forum? How do you envisage this will strengthen London's approach to sharing information amongst partners and build understanding of the threat of extremism and radicalisation in the capital?

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): I am going to pass to Jane, who will have a lot more detailed knowledge on this than me. However, the short answer to your question is any opportunity that brings together the sharing of information and our ability to take a joined up approach, to use your language, to how we do this is welcome. We cannot deliver any aspect of Counter Terrorism, irrespective of what it is, without those partnerships and Government, MOPAC and all of our partners in local government are critical to almost every aspect of what we deliver. Yes, to any forum to bring together people who can do that and clearly, we will need to understand the sharing protocols. Counter Terrorism is frequently quite challenging in terms of sharing information because of the national security nature of what we do. Focus in the right areas though of vulnerability and particularly in the area of Prevent, yes, is a good thing.

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): I will agree with Dom, but for London it is a challenge. This is where we will rely on the London Prevent Board to get the local authorities to work together, support each other and learn from each other. In principle, yes, it is a great idea. Certainly, some of the work that we have done with

MOPAC in collaboration around some key projects act as diversionary opportunities and, once that has a good evaluation process in place, then it is a worthwhile investment.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you. Kenny? I feel like I am going to ask you to produce an org chart on this.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): No. I absolutely agree with everything that has been said to date. I would say the devil will be in the detail of ensuring that it is not, as can sometimes be, something imposed from on high but takes account of the local knowledge and local circumstances. Again, you cannot really argue with something if the aim behind it is to increase sharing of relevant information and keep people safe. In principle, I am supportive, but we just need to work through the detail of it, would be where we stand.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Assembly Member Garrett?

Neil Garratt AM: Yes, it is something that has come up in conversation a bit and it might be one where you need to write to us with an answer. I am just interested. Do we have a breakdown of where referrals come from? You mentioned earlier that London disproportionately has fewer from schools. It is not an opportunity now to reel all of those off, but it might be useful if you could write to us with the breakdown of where they come from in London and how that compares with the national picture.

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): We do have all that information. When you come to see us, we will be able to share that information in a bit more detail and perhaps go into some of the detail behind the information as well if that is helpful.

Neil Garratt AM: Thank you very much. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. We are now moving on to organisations funded by Prevent, starting off with my colleague, Assembly Member Prince.

Keith Prince AM: Thank you, Chairman, and this is first of all to MOPAC. The Independent Review of Prevent expressed concern that Prevent funding is often given to ineffectual organisations and even to some promoting extremist views. How confident are you that MOPAC and the Shared Endeavour Fund do not engage with or fund extremists and what oversight arrangements does MOPAC have in place to ensure this?

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): We are as confident as we can be, would be my answer. We do due diligence and it is not outsourced to a third party firm, as Mr Shawcross criticised the Government for. We do look at their social media and we do speak to previous people who have worked with them. We are confident that no money has gone to people whom the police would describe as extremist in that way.

On his point about the efficacy of some of the organisations who get Prevent funding, there is always a risk. You have to accept there is a risk if you go out and you fund small, grassroots organisations to do really, really difficult work that not everything is going to work all of the time. That is not to say that it was wrong to give those people the money. That is to say that when you work in difficult areas like this, you are necessarily

going to have to experiment and you are necessarily going to have to try things and build an evidence base as you go.

What I would say is that the Government has not been good at producing and publishing any evaluations of the work which is done in that regard. I would compare that with the work that Oliver's team does quite unfavourably where they have produced work independently done by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, which has looked at the work. It has not been universally saying that everything that we have funded has been absolutely perfect. It has given us recommendations year-on-year for ways in which we should improve the programme, which we have then acted on. If you look at the metrics which they use individually, that would say that the effectiveness of the programmes has improved as we have learnt the lessons as we have gone on.

That gets back to one of the points we talked about earlier in relation to Prevent, which is about transparency, and we do think that is really important. Hence the reason that Oliver's team does, and has, commissioned that and does have a theory of change, which is out there in public for why we think that works. Obviously, it is never going to be 100% right, and nobody is ever 100% right. If you have got a programme that is saying it is 100% right, you know somebody is lying to you, is my basic point. However, it is important to put the stuff out there, to act on it and to be transparent about what has been and what has not been working well and what steps you are therefore taking to improve it. That is something which Mr Shawcross recommends to the Government and we would fully support that.

Keith Prince AM: Thank you for that, Kenny. Oliver, do you want to add to that?

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Kenny has pretty much comprehensively covered that. He has not mentioned some of the other things that we do around due diligence and I am not going to mention them either because that would help people circumvent our due diligence strategy.

There is just one final point maybe. The Independent Review of Prevent talks a lot about the importance of challenging ideology. That is a critical feature of countering extremism and terrorism, but it is not the only feature as far as we are concerned. There are other important ways and important outputs and important strategic objectives that allow you to do that. For example, just providing critical thinking or online safety skills plays a role in countering extremism and terrorism. There are psychosocial outputs and achievements that you can create, which reduce the risk of somebody being radicalised like increasing their sense of belonging, increasing their sense of purpose, increasing their empathy towards others or people of different views and decreasing their sense of cultural threat. Those are really important components, we think, of a rounded portfolio to counter extremism and safeguard people who are vulnerable to radicalisation and that is how we embody our work in this area.

Keith Prince AM: Thank you. Dom or Jane, do you want to add to that?

Commander Dom Murphy QPM (Head of Counter Terrorism Command SO15, Metropolitan Police Service): The only thing I would say is that in this territory more than in any other, sometimes we need to engage with people whose views are counter to our own and which we might consider extreme. However, we need to do those engagements because we need to understand where they are coming from. We need to understand what their circle of influence is, and we need to understand the risk or danger they pose to society as a result of their views. Sometimes, that means us being in a room with somebody whose views might be quite challenging for us; not illegal, I should say, because we have got another recourse to those who express

illegal views in meetings that we are in, which is not quite so engaging, I should say. Still nonetheless we will not always get that right, but we do need to be in those locations to be able to speak to those people.

Keith Prince AM: Jane, did you want to add to that at all?

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): No, just to say it is really difficult. Due diligence is a really challenging area for us all and it would be good for Government to have some thought around what due diligence looks like because really it is about information sharing to keep people safe.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you. Chairman, back to you.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. If I can just ask Oliver really, the review said that Prevent funding “too often goes towards generic projects dealing with community cohesion and hate crime” and instead should be directed to those that “challenge extremist and terrorist ideology via counter-narratives and activities”. Will MOPAC apply this to the Shared Endeavour Fund?

Oliver Levinson (Head of Countering Violent Extremism, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): We already do and we would absolutely agree that there has to be some connectivity to extremism and radicalisation for us to fund work for, but we do not agree that that has to be ideology, ideology, ideology. We do not think it is practical to just deliver a project portfolio that only delivers ideology. If it is delivering work which in some way is rooted in countering hate, intolerance, countering ideas of supremacy, then we are interested in it.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): How do you vet those recipients of money from that fund?

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): That is what I just addressed before. The way that we look at that is - I am not going to go into all of them - we do look at their social media and we do speak to people, including the Home Office, they have worked with before. As I say, we are reasonably confident that we have not given money to anybody that the police would have any concerns about.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Good. That is all good news. I have two people who want to ask very, very quick questions. Assembly Member Russell?

Caroline Russell AM: Yes, just building on this, recommendation 9 from Shawcross is:

“Restrict Prevent funding to groups and projects which challenge extremist and terrorist ideology via counter-narratives and activities. [Then it says] Prevent budgets should not be allocated towards general youth work or community initiatives that do not meet these criteria.”

Do you think there is a risk that there are some groups that do deep community engagement, particularly with young people, where they may not be specifically engaged in challenging extremist and terrorist ideology in their work but that they could be very effective referrers and identifiers of young people who might be in need of support through the Prevent Programme to avoid radicalisation?

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Yes.

Caroline Russell AM: I just wondered what you felt about that particular recommendation.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): Yes, basically. I agree with what you are saying there. This goes back to what Oliver was saying earlier about there being a spectrum of things which Prevent covers. I do not think we are going to be in the place within MOPAC, for example, of dealing with Terrorism Act (TACT) prisoners or people who are at that far harder end of the stuff where you are really looking at ideology and all of the other issues around them. Any sensible programme and any sensible cohort of things which you can look at is going to include some, I suppose Mr Shawcross would see as being, at the softer end of the spectrum as well as stuff at the harder end of the spectrum. As Oliver said, we absolutely do think stuff about critical thinking and building a sense of cohesion is important and that is an important bit of the work.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. Jane, you looked like you wanted to chip in.

Detective Superintendent Jane Corrigan (Head of SO15 Local Operations and Lead for Prevent, Metropolitan Police Service): Very observant. It is back to my earlier sports example; that we often use as a diversionary programme some organisations that are not there to tackle extremism, but it is what the individual needs in terms of support. I do not think we should lose that. That said, we work very closely with MOPAC in terms of sharing of the information as to what we know about London, the terrorism risk and the Prevent profile so that we can then tailor our approach and hopefully influence where they might want to spend the money.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Desai?

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Chairman, I will be very brief. I hope I am not straying away from the main topic of discussion today, which is the Independent Review of Prevent report. It is more about monitoring of outputs. A fair bit of resource money is going into this very important area of work, which I welcome and I welcome the political will here. It is about looking at the positive side. What are the outputs and how do you monitor them? Can you share some good practices with this Committee and how are people changed? I would like more concrete details.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime): We will send you the evaluations which we do on this. It is very difficult in this space to do longitudinal studies for the obvious reasons that people may have engaged with us. We use a system where it is been developed with our Evidence and Insights Team and with the Institute of Strategic Dialogue in that. It is a kind of self-assessment process that people go through at the end of their interventions, but we can send you all of the reports. As I said, we are in no way pretending that we get absolutely everything right in this space and those reports will show and do show that there is lots there to improve call-on-call if that makes sense. That has got to be the right way of doing this. Some form of independent evaluation, us trying to learn the lessons from that and us continuing to improve it as it goes on, is one of the areas where there is no equivalent that I can see from central Government and where I do think the wider Prevent Programme could benefit from that.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Chairman, some of the outputs are not difficult to quantify and the work is over a long period of time. What I am looking at, to put it very simply is, project A: how much money

was given, this is what we achieved for the three, four, five individuals or 50/60 that we managed to put on the right path.

Kenny Bowie (Director of Strategy and MPS Oversight, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime):

Absolutely and we will send you the links to those reports.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): That would be very helpful and we absolutely will take you up, Detective Superintendent [Jane Corrigan] on a visit to see you because I am more than aware there are things that you cannot say in public and we must respect that. I have to say I am a massive one for sharing information and my favourite quote today has been "Nobody has ever died when we have shared information, but they have when we have not". I love that because that says it all. Thank you.

I really would like to thank you all so much for attending the meeting today and answering the Committee's questions.