



House of Commons
Home Affairs Committee

**Radicalisation: the
counter-narrative
and identifying the
tipping point**

Eighth Report of Session 2016–17



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*Report, together with formal minutes
relating to the report*

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Home Affairs Committee

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Publication

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/homeaffairscom and in print by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

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The current staff of the Committee are Carol Oxborough (Clerk), Phil Jones (Second Clerk), Harriet Deane (Committee Specialist), Adrian Hitchins (Committee Specialist), Kunal Mundul (Committee Specialist), Andy Boyd (Senior Committee Assistant), Mandy Sullivan (Committee Assistant) and Jessica Bridges-Palmer (Committee Media Officer).

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Key Facts

- 800 UK-linked fighters are estimated to have travelled to Syria and Iraq since the conflicts began in those countries. 50% of these foreign fighters are thought to have returned.¹
- Terrorism-related arrests in the UK were 35% higher in 2015 than in 2010.²
- The UK's annual counter-terrorism policing budget has risen from £594 million in 2015–16 to £670 million for 2016–17.³
- The Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit has secured the removal of more than 120,000 pieces of terrorist-related content between 2010 and 2016. On average about 100 removal requests per day contain Syria-related content, which would amount to 36,500 requests per year.⁴
- The EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) made over 500 referrals in the first 16 weeks after it was established in July 2015, of which 90% were successfully removed.⁵
- Between mid-2015 and February 2016, Twitter had suspended over 125,000 accounts globally that were linked to terrorists.⁶ Google removed over 14 million videos globally in 2014 which related to all kinds of abuse.⁷
- Over 90% of Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani Muslims living in the UK think of themselves as British—a higher proportion than in other ethnic groups. Over 80% believe it is possible to maintain both British and other cultural/religious identities effectively.⁸
- Less than 0.5% of UK journalists are Muslim, compared to almost 5% of the national population.⁹

1 Rt Hon John Hayes MP, Minister of State for Security ([CEX0049](#))

2 David Anderson Q.C., Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, [A question of trust: Report of the Investigatory Powers Review](#), June 2015, pp 42–43

3 Q823

4 Home Secretary ([HSE0001](#))

5 Home Secretary ([HSE0001](#))

6 Twitter ([CEX0051](#)) and [“Twitter deletes 125,000 ISIS accounts and expands anti-terror teams”](#), The Guardian, 5 February 2016

7 Q1007

8 Dr Saffron Karlsen, University of Bristol ([CEX0057](#)) para 2

9 [“Why the British media is responsible for the rise in Islamophobia in Britain”](#), The Independent, 4 April 2016

1 Introduction

1. The Government's counter-terrorism strategy aims to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, including through countering extremism. The range of measures used to challenge extremism in the UK include:

- Preventing “apologists” for terrorism and extremism from travelling to the UK.
- Giving guidance to local authorities and institutions on understanding the threat from extremism and the statutory powers available to them to challenge extremist speakers.
- Funding a specialist police unit which works to remove online content that breaches terrorist legislation, the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU).
- Supporting community-based campaigns and activity to rebut terrorist and extremist propaganda and offer alternative views to vulnerable target audiences, working with a range of civil society organisations.
- Supporting people who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist activity through Government strategies and programmes, including Contest, Channel and Prevent.¹⁰

2. In 2015, the Government launched a new counter-extremism strategy which sets out four principal areas of action:

- Vigorously countering extremist ideology.
- Actively supporting mainstream voices in faith communities and in civil society, and all those who want to fight extremism.
- Disrupting extremists and aggressively pursuing key radicalisers.
- Building more cohesive communities, and tackling segregation and feelings of alienation that can help provide fertile ground for extremist messages to take root.¹¹

In the Queen's Speech in May 2016, the Government announced its plans to introduce the Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill, to tackle extremism, prevent radicalisation and promote community integration.¹²

Background to the inquiry

3. The Home Affairs Committee has previously inquired into counter-terrorism and the UK's capacity to respond to the terrorist threat, most recently in May 2014 and March 2015.¹³ It was clear to us at the start of this Parliament that the level and impacts of

10 Home Office, [Policy paper: 2010 to 2015 government policy: counter-terrorism](#), 8 May 2015; and HM Government, [Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism](#), April 2015, p 3

11 Home Office, [Counter-Extremism Strategy, Cm 9148](#), October 2015, p 17. As the Government explains: “The strategy deals with devolved matters and we will work closely with the devolved Governments on how it should apply to Scotland and Wales. Where measures in the strategy deal with devolved matters and require legislative change this will be agreed with the devolved governments in accordance with the devolution settlements. The strategy will not extend to Northern Ireland at this stage.” (p 3)

12 “New Home Office legislation features in Queen's Speech”, [Home Office news story](#), 18 May 2016

13 Home Affairs Committee, Seventeenth Report of Session 2013–14, [Counter-terrorism](#), HC 231 and Home Affairs Committee, Nineteenth Report of Session 2014–15, [Counter-terrorism: foreign fighters](#), HC 933

radicalisation were increasing in the UK and that there was an urgent need for strong narratives to counter the evil but effective messages which terrorist organisations are disseminating, particularly Daesh. Our concern was that families and communities were being deeply affected by recruitment of young men and women to fight in Iraq and Syria. We therefore decided to examine the Government's strategy for tackling extremism to assess whether it is effective and reaches the members of society who are most vulnerable to radicalisation.

4. We issued a call for evidence in August 2015, seeking views on the following issues:

- The major drivers of, and risk factors for recruitment to terrorist movements.
- The effectiveness of the Prevent strategy and some of the key problems with it.
- How successfully the Government is collaborating with social media companies and civil society organisations to address online radicalisation.
- How an effective counter-narrative can be developed to dissuade people from being drawn to extremism.

5. We received over 60 submissions. We held 7 oral evidence sessions with a range of witnesses, including: mosques and Muslim community organisations; think-tanks, educational establishments and IT companies; Rt Hon Baroness Warsi; Mark Rowley QPM, Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations in the Metropolitan Police; Sir Charles Montgomery, Director General of Border Force; David Anderson QC, Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation; and Rt Hon John Hayes MP, the then Minister for Security.

6. We held a "Big Conversation" in Bradford in January attended by about 100 young people, most of whom were Muslim, and who were reflective of the communities in the local area. This was followed in April by an international conference on counter-terrorism in Cambridge attended by more than 100 delegates and distinguished speakers including: Lord Ahmad, the then Minister for Countering Extremism; Simon Cole QPM, Chief Constable of Leicestershire Police and NPCC Lead for Prevent; George Selim, Director, Countering Violent Extremism Task Force, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Aameena Blake, Assistant Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain; Rafat Al-Akhali, Fellow, University of Oxford and former Yemeni Minister for Youth and Sports; and Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol. We were particularly grateful to Lieutenant General Dambazau, Minister for Internal Affairs of Nigeria, for attending as a keynote speaker.

7. We have also visited Europol in The Hague in the Netherlands and the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) in central London. The Chairman of the Committee and Stuart McDonald MP, a Committee Member, also visited Shawlands Academy in Glasgow to discuss extremism and radicalisation with pupils there. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this inquiry, particularly the young people of Bradford who took the time to share their views with us in such an interesting and frank way.

8. In this report we have focused on extremism which affects Muslim communities (while recognising the differences between those communities in terms of integration, segregation and urban or rural status), and arising from the activities of terrorist organisations such as Daesh. We share the concerns about other forms of extremism, including political extremism. We are currently conducting a separate inquiry into anti-semitism. We have also issued a call for evidence on the effectiveness of current legislation and law enforcement policies for preventing and prosecuting hate crime and its associated violence; and the extent of support that is available to victims and their families and how it might be improved.

2 Radicalisation

9. The report in June 2015 from David Anderson QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, stated that terrorism-related arrests were up by 35% compared to 2010. He noted that the number of UK citizens who had travelled to Syria and undertaken terrorist training since 2012 was higher than had been seen in other conflict areas of the 21st century, such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, East Africa and Yemen. The number of UK-linked individuals who had been involved in or exposed to terrorist training and fighting was also higher than it had been at any point since the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

10. The report also concluded that the volume and accessibility of extremist propaganda had increased:

UK-based extremists are able to talk directly to Daesh/ISIL fighters and their wives in web forums and on social media. The key risk is that this propaganda is able to inspire individuals to undertake attacks without ever travelling to Syria or Iraq. Through these media outputs, Daesh has driven the increase in unsophisticated attack methodology seen in recent months in Australia, France and Canada.¹⁴

The Government estimates that over 800 UK-linked people have travelled to take part in the conflict in Syria and Iraq, and around half of those have returned to the UK.¹⁵

Factors contributing to radicalisation

11. Witnesses agreed that there does not appear to be any clear template for the factors which might lead to radicalisation. David Anderson described to us two possible contributory factors—grievances and ideals. The sources of grievances varied extensively but could include poor family relationships, bullying at school or within social groupings, and the UK’s foreign policy. David Anderson explained that, once this negative viewpoint had set in, in some people radical ideology then “battens on to the grievance and makes sense of the grievance and that makes sense of the person’s life”.¹⁶

12. Some other factors we have identified that may contribute to radicalisation include an element of brainwashing, and involvement in gang violence and low-level crime. Perceived grievances about UK foreign policy seem to relate particularly to matters involving Islamic countries. There may also be an issue for some young people around identity, and an inability for parents to pass on their views about the traditional practice of religion, or to enable their children to challenge beliefs, particularly where parents lack the necessary English-language skills.

13. A number of witnesses expressed doubt about the extent to which a feeling of alienation from mainstream UK society was a factor. Dr Saffron Karlsen of the University of Bristol pointed out in her written evidence that “empirical evidence does not support rootlessness and internal cultural conflict among the Muslim population in Britain as factors of radicalisation”. Her research found that over 90% of Bangladeshi, Indian and

¹⁴ David Anderson Q.C., Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, [A question of trust: Report of the Investigatory Powers Review](#), June 2015, pp 42–43

¹⁵ Rt Hon John Hayes MP, Minister of State for Security ([CEX0049](#))

¹⁶ Q926

Pakistani Muslims living here think of themselves as British—a higher proportion than in other ethnic groups. Over 80% believed that it was possible to maintain both British and other cultural/religious identities effectively. She concluded therefore that counter-extremism strategies based on assumptions of a lack of integration could risk reducing cooperation within these communities.¹⁷

14. Zulfiqar Karim, Senior Vice President of the Bradford Council for Mosques, agreed that there was not a problem with Muslim communities in the UK feeling British and showing allegiance to this country. He told us however that there had been a “vacuum in leadership” within these communities over the years.¹⁸ The community organisation Inspire (which states that it is independent of government) took a different view. Co-director Kalsoom Bashir described to us a generation brought up post-9/11 who were “defined by the media” and “viewed through the lens of counter-terrorism”. This group had listened to “hardening interpretations of religion”, to stories about how the Government wanted to stop Muslims from practising their religion, and to views that living in the UK was a temporary measure. This led them to feel that they had to “choose between being British and being Muslim”, in addition to the normal issues that teenagers have to deal with. This could then make it very attractive to some young people when an individual or organisation tells them that they can offer something much better.¹⁹

15. Other community organisations like Maslaha agreed; its director Raheel Mohammed said there is a whole matrix of different factors and different influences which vary from case to case.²⁰ Saleha Jaffer, director of Families Against Stress and Trauma (FAST), pointed to a breakdown in inter-generational communication, telling us that older people were increasingly unable to pass values on to the younger generation, at the same time as young adolescents wanting to imitate what they saw in the media and become “heroes”.²¹

16. Konika Dhar, sister of the radical extremist Siddhartha Dhar also known as Abu Rumaysah, told us she was uncertain when he started to become radicalised and that she was not aware of a specific trigger, rather it was a “long transition period”. She said that she found it hard to accept that it was her brother who was involved in committing the acts he was accused of because “he is my brother and as far as I am concerned I grew up with a different person”. When challenged about the statements she had made about wanting him to return home, she explained: “I don’t want to give up on him [...] I said I wanted him to come home because I am determined to have him return home as the person that I remember”. She acknowledged that she might have to accept that this could not happen “but I feel I have not reached that point yet”.²²

17. Radicalisation in prisons is also a significant issue. In September 2015, the Government asked Ian Acheson, a former prison governor, to conduct an independent review into Islamist extremism in prisons and probation. Mr Acheson’s report has not yet been published but he recently gave evidence to our colleagues on the Justice Committee. He said he had found that there was no “coherent strategy to deal with the emerging threat” of Islamist extremism in prisons, and that there was “far too much complacency” and “very poor understanding of the risk”. He identified inadequate training of prison

17 Dr Saffron Karlsen, University of Bristol ([CEX0057](#)) para 2

18 Q723

19 Q181

20 Q1104

21 Q1106

22 Qq833, 852, 871–2

staff, which meant they were not sufficiently confident to confront extremist ideology, and that the recruitment, training and supervision of prison imams was “seriously deficient”. He was also concerned about finding several examples of religious extremist literature in prison chaplaincies.²³

18. There is no evidence that shows a single path or one single event which draws a young person to the scourge of extremism: every case is different. Identifying people at risk of being radicalised and then attracted to extremist behaviour is very challenging. It also makes the task of countering extreme views complex and difficult. If the Government adopts a broad-brush approach, which fails to take account of the complexities, and of the gaps in existing knowledge and understanding of the factors contributing to radicalisation, that would be counter-productive and fuel the attraction of the extremist narrative rather than dampening it.

19. The Government must take a much more sophisticated approach both to identifying the factors which instigate radicalisation and in the measures it takes to tackle this. We recommend the Government work with a cross-section of academic institutions in the UK that work on radicalisation, to marshal existing intelligence and research and develop a more effective understanding of the factors leading to extremism. This should include speaking to the families of known extremists to draw on their experiences. Without such a solid foundation, the strategies in the proposed new Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill are likely to approach the issues and entire communities in an unfocussed manner, and therefore ultimately to be ineffective.

Role of technology and response of social media companies

20. Guidance issued by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office states that the internet has “transformed the way that terrorist organisations can influence and radicalise people”. It says that it has enabled groups such as Daesh to “reach a larger global audience, with broader and dynamic messages” which means that “vulnerable people can easily be exposed to extremist materials that are readily accessible online, and radicalised by extremist views”.²⁴

21. Baroness Shields, the Minister for Internet Safety and Security, has described Daesh and other groups as operating a “dispersed network of accounts” which means that they are capable of reconfiguring their internet content in response to sites being suspended. She said that the way in which they operated on the internet, which she termed as “swarm casting”, allows radical sympathizers “to rapidly and automatically respond and reorganise their communications to ensure a near persistent presence of their messages on social media platforms”.²⁵ Baroness Shields noted that the younger generation are “more technologically literate than their parents and teachers” and are particularly susceptible to online influences because they are “almost constantly connected to the digital world”. She stated that the extremists who influence them are from this same social media-connected peer group, and offer a “powerful, straightforward and simple” narrative: “join us and claim your place in history”.²⁶

23 Oral Evidence taken before the Justice Committee on [13 July 2016](#), HC 417, Q18

24 National Counter Terrorism Security Office, [Guidance: Online radicalisation](#), 26 November 2015

25 Home Office speech, [Beyond business: the responsibility of global players](#), 12 January 2016

26 Home Office speech, [Baroness Shields calls for united action in tackling online extremism](#), 23 May 2016

22. The media has reported on the methods that Daesh online recruiters use to assist potential foreign fighters to join them, including helping them to plan their travel, connecting them with “people who will take them to a safe house”, and then arranging for them to be “driven to a border crossing and smuggled into Syria”, where Daesh fighters would be “waiting to pick them up”. In February 2015, Daesh published a 50-page “how-to guide” for aspiring jihadis and potential recruits, circulated online in English, advising them how best to reach Syria, what to pack, and how to deal with Turkish border security. The manual advises potential recruits on gender-specific travel options, the packing of vital belongings, and suitable clothing.²⁷

23. The press has also described the way in which Daesh has moved away from the model used by earlier terrorist groups, of directly managing the planning of attacks carried out on their organisation’s behalf and the training of terrorists to commit the atrocities. Instead, Daesh has called on its supporters to act without seeking prior approval for attacks. Its broad internet reach means that anyone can simply announce their allegiance to the group on social media and carry out an attack in its name. A Daesh spokesperson has been quoted as saying “the smallest action you can do in the heart of their land is dearer to us than the largest action by us, and more effective and more damaging to them.”²⁸ The recent horrific incident in Nice, which resulted in the deaths of 84 people, including children, shows the danger of “lone wolves” or fixated individuals acting in the name of terrorist organisations (although no immediate connection to Daesh was established by the French authorities in relation to the perpetrator of these killings).

Tackling online extremism

24. In the UK, the public can report online content they suspect may be of a violent, extremist or terrorist nature direct to a specialist police unit hosted by the Metropolitan Police, the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU). Examples of the illegal terrorist or extremist content placed on internet sites, chat rooms or other web-based forums which the Unit aims to combat include videos of violence with messages of ‘glorification’ or praise for terrorists, and postings inciting people to commit acts of terrorism or violence. Specialist officers assess the information and, where appropriate, investigate the website or work with partners to remove it.²⁹

25. We visited CTIRU in March 2016 to see its operation for ourselves. Between its inception in February 2010 and the start of 2016, the CTIRU has secured the removal of more than 120,000 pieces of terrorist-related content. This includes action to suspend the accounts of those propagating terrorist or extremist views and taking down of websites promoting this type of content. Removal requests average 1,000 a week, of which around 100 items per day contain Syria-related content.³⁰

26. The UK also supports the work of European organisations involved in countering online extremism. The UK second staff to the EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) which was established in July 2015. In its first 16 weeks, it made over 500 referrals, of which 90% were successfully removed.³¹ In January 2016, Europol, the European Union’s law

27 [“How Foreign Fighters Joining ISIS Travel To The Islamic State Group’s ‘Caliphate’”](#), International Business Times, 3 March 2015

28 [“Lone-wolf attack illustrates Islamic State’s far reach”](#), The Wall Street Journal, 14 June 2016

29 National Police Chiefs Council, [‘The Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit,’](#) accessed 12 July 2016

30 Home Secretary ([HSE0001](#))

31 Home Secretary ([HSE0001](#))

enforcement agency, announced the launch of the European Counter Terrorism Centre, an “enhanced central information hub” to increase information sharing and operational coordination. We visited Europol in February 2016 and saw the excellent work being done by the Centre to remove graphic and hatred-filled content from the internet.³²

27. Previous Home Affairs Committees have long been proponents of international cooperation in this area. In their 2014 report on counter-terrorism, our predecessor Committee recommended that the Government work with Interpol and with other countries to create an international platform to support terrorist investigations. This would enable cross-checking of records, intelligence-sharing and the capacity to conduct transnational investigations across all Interpol member countries.³³

28. The use of the internet to promote radicalisation and terrorism is one of the greatest threats that countries including the UK face. We commend the work being carried out on a daily basis by security officials and the police to counter online extremism. The vital function which the Metropolitan Police’s Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) provides in combating online extremism has been invaluable to date but needs to be enhanced, extended and much better resourced to meet the scale of the ongoing threat. Its funding, equipment and operation should reflect the urgency and importance of its vital function in trying to protect the public from fanatics and criminals.

29. We need to win the cyber-war with terrorist and extremist organisations. We recommend that CTIRU is upgraded into a high-tech, state-of-the-art round-the-clock central Operational Hub which locates the perils early, moves quickly to block them and is able to instantly share the sensitive information with other security agencies. It is odd that when taking down dangerous and illicit material the CTIRU needs to waste time trying to establish contact with organisations outside the unit. Representatives of all the relevant agencies, including the Home Office, MI5 and major technology companies, should be co-located within CTIRU. This will enable greater cooperation, better information-sharing and more effective monitoring of and action against online extremist propaganda. We have also made recommendations about the role of internet companies in this respect. We further recommend that the security services address the lack of Arabic-speaking staff, and staff with Urdu, Kashmiri and Punjabi language skills.

30. EU organisations, such as Europol, are a vital resource for the UK in combating terrorism and extremism, and the UK makes a considerable contribution to European cooperation on these activities. We commend the leadership shown by Rob Wainwright as the British Director of Europol. It is imperative that the Government negotiates an ongoing effective relationship with these organisations, including continued access to and contribution to information-sharing, in the forthcoming discussions on the UK’s exit from the EU. The USA already has a high status in Europol, despite being outside the EU. The UK should aim to emulate this position on leaving the EU. Our predecessor Committee has previously said that platforms should be created with Interpol to deal more effectively with cross-border issues, particularly terrorism which is a key cross-

32 “Europol’s European Counter Terrorism Centre”, [Europol press release](#), 25 January 2016

33 Home Affairs Committee, Seventeenth Report of Session 2013–14, [Counter-terrorism](#), HC 231, paras 86–87

border challenge. Freedom of movement works just as well for terrorists as it does for law-abiding citizens, which the measures in place to tackle it need to fully recognise. The UK's exit from the EU makes our relationship with Interpol even more vital.

Industry response to online radicalisation

31. Baroness Shields has stressed that the internet industry needs to match the efforts made by the Government to tackle online extremism, which have included bringing experts and civil society groups together to develop and run more effective campaigns.³⁴ She called on technology companies to take the lead in ensuring that “positive, alternative voices” are heard on the internet and in helping community and civil society groups to “create, deliver and amplify alternative content that undercuts the Daesh and other extremist group proposition”. She also suggested that companies invest in improving technological solutions that “automate the identification and removal of dangerous extremist content”, and effectively combat the technological devices which support the propaganda software used by terrorists.³⁵

32. The then Prime Minister, Rt Hon David Cameron MP, made clear last year his view that technology companies need to go further in helping identify potential terrorists online:

Many of their commercial models are built around monitoring platforms for personal data, packaging it up and selling it on to third parties. And when it comes to doing what's right for their business, they are happy to engineer technologies to track our likes and dislikes. But when it comes to doing what's right in the fight against terrorism, we too often hear that it's all too difficult.³⁶

He was hopeful that if Parliament was clear about what was required, and worked with the social media companies to achieve this, a huge improvement was possible.³⁷

33. Mark Rowley QPM, Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations in the Metropolitan Police, and the national lead for counter-terrorism police operations, believed that some IT firms were deliberately “undermining” counter-terrorism investigations by refusing to hand over potential evidence or threatening to tip off suspects. He told us that experience of working with companies showed that their response was fragmented and cooperation levels varied.³⁸

34. We took evidence from the major social media companies—Twitter, Facebook and Google—to explore their views on their obligations in relation to countering extremism. They all told us that they took their responsibility in this area very seriously and cooperated with security agencies as necessary. Facebook and Google confirmed that they proactively notified law enforcement agencies about terrorist material which was a threat to life, whereas Twitter said they did not proactively do this because “Twitter is public, that content is available, so often it has been seen already”.³⁹

34 Home Office speech, [Beyond business: the responsibility of global players](#), 12 January 2016

35 Home Office speech, [United action in tackling online extremism](#), 23 May 2016

36 Prime Minister speech, [Extremism](#), 20 July 2015

37 HC Deb, 18 May 2016, [col 31](#)

38 [“Police losing track of terror plots because of ‘irresponsible’ social media firms”](#), The Telegraph, 5 October 2015

39 Q1059

35. They stressed that, while there was no easy way to identify extremist content on the internet, they all had teams of staff who manually search for potentially extremist content online and then make assessments on taking it down and suspending accounts. Twitter said its team who did this work consisted of “more than a hundred” staff, whereas both Facebook and Google declined to provide a number.⁴⁰ Twitter confirmed that between mid-2015 and February 2016, it had suspended over 125,000 accounts globally that were linked to terrorists,⁴¹ while Google told us it had removed over 14 million videos globally in 2014 (which related to all kinds of abuse).⁴² Google told us about YouTube’s “trusted flagger” programme which allows a group of frequent and approved users to report (or “flag”) content about which they have concerns, which then triggers a review by YouTube staff.⁴³ YouTube has worked with both government agencies and non-governmental organisations to create a better understanding of the guidelines and offer additional flagging tools. They confirmed that the accuracy rate for their trusted flaggers was around 90%, making it easier to prioritise their flags. Facebook and Twitter said they did not have similar programmes though they did have arrangements with government agencies.⁴⁴ We were also told that these companies had supported numerous community groups and non-government organisations with training to tackle online extremism, as part of their counter-radicalisation efforts.⁴⁵

36. These companies, along with Microsoft, have also recently signed up to new EU rules on taking down illegal hate speech. The companies have agreed to meet several requirements including: clear processes to review illegal hate speech and clearly promote guidelines prohibiting promotion of violence and hateful conduct; reviewing the majority of valid hate speech notifications within 24 hours, and removing or disabling such content if necessary; improving the speed and effectiveness of communication between the EU state authorities and the IT companies through better awareness of correct procedures; providing regular training to staff on current societal developments; intensifying cooperation with other platforms and social media companies to share best practice; and continuing their work in supporting civil society counter-narratives and new initiatives. The rules are the first attempt to codify how major technology companies are required to deal with hate speech across the EU.⁴⁶

37. Significant progress has been made in another online struggle—that of combating child sexual exploitation content—through a partnership approach between the Government, law enforcement and the technology industry. The Internet Watch Foundation uses its expertise to work with these partners to protect children and remove criminal content from the internet.⁴⁷

38. The internet has a huge impact in contributing to individuals turning to extremism, hatred and murder. Social media companies are consciously failing to combat the use of their sites to promote terrorism and killings. Networks like Facebook,

40 Qq 1025–1033

41 Twitter ([CEX0051](#)) and “[Twitter deletes 125,000 ISIS accounts and expands anti-terror teams](#)”, The Guardian, 5 February 2016

42 Q1007

43 YouTube Help, ‘[The YouTube Trusted Flagger Programme](#)’, accessed 19 July 2016

44 Qq1086–1089

45 Twitter ([CEX0051](#)), Google ([CEX0052](#)), Facebook ([CEX0053](#))

46 “[European Commission and IT companies announce code of conduct on illegal online hate speech](#)”, [European Commission press release](#), 31 May 2016

47 The Internet Watch Foundation, ‘[About us](#)’, accessed 12 July 2016

Twitter and YouTube are the vehicle of choice in spreading propaganda and they have become the recruiting platforms for terrorism. They must accept that the hundreds of millions in revenues generated from billions of people using their products needs to be accompanied by a greater sense of responsibility and ownership for the impact that extremist material on their sites is having. There must be a zero tolerance approach to online extremism, including enticement to join extremist groups or commit attacks of terror and any glorification of such activities. Manuals for terrorists and extremists should be removed from the internet. It is therefore alarming that these companies have teams of only a few hundred employees to monitor networks of billions of accounts and that Twitter does not even proactively report extremist content to law enforcement agencies. These companies are hiding behind their supranational legal status to pass the parcel of responsibility and refusing to act responsibly in case they damage their brands. If they continue to fail to tackle this issue and allow their platforms to become the ‘Wild West’ of the internet, then it will erode their reputation as responsible operators.

39. The EU rules introduced in May are a first step towards the internet companies assuming more responsibility. The UK Government should now enforce its own measures to ensure that the large technology companies operating in this country are required to cooperate with CTIRU promptly and fully, by investigating sites and accounts propagating hate speech, and then either shutting them down immediately, or providing an explanation to CTIRU of why this has not been done. This activity would be facilitated by the companies co-locating staff within the upgraded CTIRU and we recommend that this be part of its enhanced operations. We do not see why the success of the Internet Watch Foundation cannot be replicated in the area of countering online extremism.

40. The Government must also require the companies to be transparent about their actions on online extremism; instead of the piecemeal approach we currently have, they should all publish quarterly statistics showing how many sites and accounts they have taken down and for what reason. Facebook and Twitter should implement a trusted flagger system similar to Google’s and all social media companies must be more willing to give such trusted status to smaller community organisations, thereby empowering them in the fight against extremism. In short, what cannot appear legally in the print or broadcast media, namely inciting hatred and terrorism, should not be allowed to appear on social media. This is all the more necessary when one takes into account Daesh’s view that inciting individuals to take action “in the heart” of countries is “more effective and damaging” to those countries than action taken by Daesh itself.

Role of media

41. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) has highlighted the negative impact that misleading portrayals of Muslims in the media have had. It cited recent research which showed that media reporting about Muslim communities is contributing to an atmosphere of rising hostility toward Muslims in Britain. This includes articles that conflate Islam with criminality, and scaremongering and sensationalism about the threat presented by

Muslims which risk weakening community cohesion.⁴⁸ We heard from the young people in Bradford about how Islamophobia was a major factor in Muslim youth feeling detached from mainstream society.

42. In response to our request to newspapers to explain their approach to reporting extremism, *The Times* told us it takes its responsibility seriously, by “sifting fact from fiction through robust news reporting and publishing a range of voices to inform and generate public debate”.⁴⁹ Our request followed the erroneous reporting on the front page of *The Sun* on 23 November 2015 that a recent survey on the views of British Muslims towards young Muslims who leave the UK to join fighters in Syria found “1 in 5 Muslims’ sympathy for jihadists”. It was reported that the Press watchdog the Independent Press Standards Organisation (Ipsos) received “an unprecedented 3,000 complaints” about the article. *The Sun* published the IPSO adjudication in March 2016 that it had “failed to take appropriate care in its presentation of the poll results, and as a result the coverage was significantly misleading”.⁵⁰

43. Farooq Aftab, National Spokesperson for the Ahmadiyya Youth Association, told us he believed that the portrayal of Islam in the media was generally “sensational”.⁵¹ A study conducted on behalf of the Association found that one in three British adults agreed that Islam promotes violence in the UK, and 56% disagreed that Islam was compatible with British values. The Association has blamed the media for “linking any type of violence or crime by Muslims to Islam [which] has skewed public perception so that they believe Islam condones or encourages violence and extremism”.⁵²

44. The Counter Extremism Project, a not-for-profit international organisation that combats the threat from extremist ideology, argued in its written evidence that the “UK media and its partners have a responsibility to ensure that commentary and reporting on world events and domestic extremism do not perpetuate the perception amongst British Muslims that they are unwelcome in the UK”.⁵³ Raheel Mohammed of Maslaha told us that, since 2001, a generation of young Muslims has grown up being portrayed in the media in a particular way. He noted that the mainstream media maintained that it was planning to employ Muslim journalists with knowledge of Islamic affairs but the situation has changed very little in this respect.⁵⁴ The huge under-representation of Muslims in the media is borne out in research which showed that less than 0.5% of UK journalists are Muslim, compared to almost 5% of the national population. This lack of diversity is likely to be further magnified at more senior positions.⁵⁵

45. The media have a responsibility to avoid contributing to negative views of particular groups in society through unbalanced or unsubstantiated reporting. This is particularly important in relation to stories about extremism and terrorism involving people professing to be Muslims, and in reports about views held by Muslims, because of the impact it can have in creating hostility towards Muslim communities and

48 Q9 and “[Why the British media is responsible for the rise in Islamophobia in Britain](#)”, *The Independent*, 4 April 2016

49 John Witherow, *The Times* (CEX0032)

50 “[Sun forced to admit ‘1 in 5 British Muslims’ story was ‘significantly misleading’](#)”, *The Independent*, 26 March 2016

51 Q586

52 “[Police and faith alliance attacks counter-extremism bill](#)”, *The Guardian*, 21 May 2016

53 Counter Extremism Project (CEX0003) para 4e

54 Qs1118 and 1126

55 “[Why the British media is responsible for the rise in Islamophobia in Britain](#)”, *The Independent*, 4 April 2016

alienating people from those communities, particularly young people. Islamophobia contributes to young Muslims feeling alienated from mainstream society, as we heard in Bradford and Glasgow, thereby potentially leading to them becoming more susceptible to radicalisation. It is not clear to us that all news editors are taking sufficient care in their handling of these stories and some continue to prioritise sensationalism over facts. They should refrain from using the term 'so-called Islamic State', and should instead refer to 'Daesh'. We also recommend that they do not identify terrorists as Muslims, but as terrorists and followers of Daesh.

3 The Government's approach to countering extremism

The Prevent Strategy

46. Prevent is one of the four elements of CONTEST, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It has three specific strategic objectives:

- To respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it.
- To prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support.
- To work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that need to be addressed.

The Home Office says that it works with the police, local authorities, and a wide range of government departments and community organisations to deliver the Prevent strategy. The second Prevent objective is delivered through Channel, which was first piloted in 2007 and then rolled out across England and Wales in April 2012. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by: identifying individuals at risk; assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.⁵⁶

Concerns about Prevent

47. The Prevent strategy has been subject to much criticism. The Muslim Council of Britain told us their perception of the strategy from community members was that it was not working and that there was a lot of suspicion around it. They cite one of the reasons for this to be a lack of engagement at the community level in which they work and network.⁵⁷

48. Baroness Warsi, a former Minister for Faith and Communities, criticised the strategy for lacking a community cohesion aspect. She told us that she felt quite frustrated by the lack of proper engagement by the Government and “the number of people the Government refuses to speak to”; she did not understand how somebody's views could be changed without speaking to them. If there were individuals or organisations which the Government felt it was inappropriate to include in discussions about countering extremism, then that list needed to be “in the public domain”, along with the reasons for those organisations being on the list. She believed that some of the evidence on which the Government was basing its decisions not to engage with certain groups was “concerning”.⁵⁸

49. David Anderson, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, agreed that wider engagement would be beneficial; otherwise there was a risk of ending up with a dialogue which only involved the Government and “people who think just like them”,

⁵⁶ HM Government, [Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism](#), pp 3–5

⁵⁷ Qq4, 17

⁵⁸ Qq103, 111

and the mainstream “Muslim community talking to each other” but neither side really engaging with each other.⁵⁹ He suggested to us that the Muslim community felt “under siege” and, though he did not agree there was any reason to believe Prevent was not well-motivated, there was a risk that some parts of the Muslim community saw Prevent as “a sort of spying programme” when it was already feeling pressurised.⁶⁰ He has therefore called for an independent review of the Prevent strategy.⁶¹

50. The young people we discussed these issues with in Bradford were clear that there was a breakdown in trust and Prevent was not working. A recent study has found that Muslim parents are so worried about a lack of support, and so mistrustful of the security services, that they are reluctant to report radicalisation. They feared “informing on their children might lead to other family members being arrested”.⁶² Haras Rafiq, Managing Director of think-tank Quilliam, said to us he believed it would not be easy to foster trust in the current environment, but that genuine dialogue with the communities—and engagement that was not carried out “through the lens of security and legislation”—would help.⁶³ Another think-tank, Averroes, suggested to us that the Government’s Muslim Engagement Forum (MEF) should be open to a broader spectrum of organisations and its discussions more transparent.⁶⁴

51. Faith Matters, a not-for-profit organisation which also runs the Tell MAMA Islamophobia monitoring service, expressed concern that the strategy was “too strongly” controlled by central Government rather than local government, which meant that the “input of Muslim communities” was excluded. It was also concerned about the Home Office defining extremism “without sufficient consultation” leading to “a risk that the current strategy might define key partners as potential extremists due to their political stances”.⁶⁵

52. Some commentators believed that the lack of diversity at senior level in the security forces exacerbated the lack of trust in the wider Muslim community. Former Metropolitan Police Chief Superintendent Dal Babu said in March 2015 that the Prevent strategy was a “toxic brand” run by “mainly white officers with little understanding of Islam, gender or race”. He argued that a lack of Muslims amongst staff implementing Prevent was hampering efforts to stop vulnerable young people, particularly women, from travelling to Syria to join Daesh.⁶⁶ Chief Constable Simon Cole, the national police lead for Prevent, said he did not recognise the concerns about these aspects of police involvement in Prevent but accepted that police forces working with Prevent should be transparent about what they do and why.⁶⁷

53. The proposed Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill provides an opportunity to address some of these issues. However, concerns have already been expressed about its possible impact. A multi-faith alliance of 26 organisations and individuals have raised concerns that the impact will be to alienate communities and undermine free speech

59 Q934

60 Q944

61 David Anderson ([CEX0041](#)) para 13

62 “[Lack of trust stops Muslim parents telling police about children travelling to Syria, research finds](#)”, Independent, 11 July 2016

63 Q632

64 Averroes ([CEX0013](#)) para 39

65 Faith Matters ([CEX0055](#)) para 2

66 “[UK anti-radicalisation Prevent strategy a toxic brand](#)”, The Guardian, 9 March 2015

67 Chief Constable Simon Cole QPM, Leicestershire Police ([CEX0060](#)) p 5

rather than tackle extremism.⁶⁸ This coalition includes the Jewish Council for Racial Equality, the Muslim Council of Britain and the former police lead for Prevent, Sir Peter Fahy. Critics are also concerned that, if people feel alienated, this could affect information gathering about possible terrorist threats as well as feed the extremist narrative about Muslims being picked upon.⁶⁹

54. Home Office officials are also reportedly struggling to find a definition of ‘extremist’ to be used in the Bill that will not immediately be challenged in court. A definition in the Government’s strategy which focuses on ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values’ is believed to be regarded as too broad and could be legally challenged as constraining freedom of speech.⁷⁰ The national police lead, Chief Constable Simon Cole, is also concerned that the plans may not be enforceable and risk turning police officers into “thought police”. He said “unless you can define what extremism is very clearly then it’s going to be really challenging to enforce.”⁷¹ Shami Chakrabarti, the former director of Liberty, was concerned that there had been too much anti-terrorism legislation over the past 12 years, some of which, in her view, had proved to be counter-productive.⁷²

55. The concerns about Prevent amongst the communities most affected by it must be addressed. Otherwise it will continue to be viewed with suspicion by many, and by some as “toxic”. We have heard calls for Prevent to be brought to an end (although notably not from Inspire or the families of those who had travelled to join Daesh). Even the Government’s Independent Reviewer of Terrorist Legislation has recommended a review of Prevent, because of it becoming such a huge source of grievance. Rather than being seen as the community-led approach Prevent was supposed to be, it is perceived to be a top-down ‘Big Brother’ security operation. Allaying these concerns and building trust will require full and wide engagement with all sections of the Muslim community, including at grassroots level—and not just with groups which already agree with the Government. The focus of the strategy should be around building a real partnership between community groups and the state. The concerns of parents about the lure of radicalisation, and their desire for support and advice, should be heeded. If stakeholders buy into such a strategy it can be successful, but unfortunately that is not what is currently happening.

56. The Government must be more transparent about what it is doing on the Prevent strategy, including by publicising its engagement activities, and providing updates on outcomes, through an easily accessible online portal. This will help communities to understand what Prevent is seeking to achieve and help to avoid it being seen as threatening to their culture and religion. As our predecessors have said in previous reports, we also recommend that the Government abandons the now toxic name ‘Prevent’ for the strategy and renames it with the more inclusive title of ‘Engage’.

Concerns over the Prevent Duty

57. Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain bodies (“specified authorities”) in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the

68 [“Police and faith alliance attacks counter-extremism bill”](#), The Guardian, 21 May 2016

69 [“Anti-radicalisation chief says ministers’ plans risk creating ‘thought police’”](#), The Guardian, 24 May 2016

70 [“Cameron terror strategy runs aground on definition of extremism”](#), The Guardian, 3 May 2016

71 [“Anti-radicalisation chief says ministers’ plans risk creating ‘thought police’”](#), The Guardian, 24 May 2016

72 Qq 957–958

need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The list of specified authorities is set out in Schedule 6 to the Act. Guidance on the Prevent Duty was issued to these authorities under section 29 of the Act. The Act states that the authorities subject to the provisions must have regard to the Guidance when carrying out the Prevent Duty.⁷³

58. The specified authorities include local authorities, schools, prisons, police and health bodies. The Duty commenced on July 2015, except for specified authorities in the further and higher education sectors whose duty commenced in September 2015.⁷⁴

59. The Government has said it has worked with the sectors affected to ensure they are aware of their new responsibilities, are able to recognise the signs that someone may be being drawn into terrorism, and know how to access help and support.⁷⁵

60. The UN’s special rapporteur on the right to freedom of assembly, Maina Kiai, has warned that the strategy could end up promoting extremism by stigmatising and alienating segments of the population and affecting the discussion of terrorism. He said that he had been told that some families “are afraid of discussing the negative effects of terrorism in their own homes, fearing their children would talk about it at school and have their intentions misconstrued.”⁷⁶

61. Dr Sarah Marsden from Lancaster University was concerned that the duty to protect those at risk of radicalisation would stifle classroom debate and lead to an “overly cautious approach to referrals”.⁷⁷ Raheel Mohammed from Maslaha, which works with schools, told us that teachers are concerned about not being able to create “safe spaces” within schools where different opinions could be voiced without fear, leading to a more restrictive school environment.⁷⁸ Miqdaad Versi, Assistant Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, told us that the Prevent Duty had created “discriminatory practices” for young students at school. He cited the example of a Muslim student asking their physics teacher about nuclear fission, and then being referred to the counter-terrorism team.⁷⁹ Young people who spoke to us at our youth forum in Bradford echoed these concerns about comments being misinterpreted and feeling stigmatised and unfairly under scrutiny. A recent media survey about Prevent among teachers found opinion was divided, with some believing that concerns about students were better managed by teachers rather than being passed on to the police, and others feeling it helped them to spot signs of vulnerability in a child so that they could assist in preventing them going down the path of potentially criminal activity.⁸⁰

62. The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) told us that, while they were “broadly supportive” of the Duty, they were concerned about a lack of sufficient “guidance, support and training for schools” to understand and implement it. NAHT reported that

73 HM Government, [Prevent duty guidance](#), p5

74 Home Office, [Prevent duty guidance](#), 23 March 2016

75 “*Nation’s institutions step up effort to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*”, [Home Office news story](#), 1 July 2015

76 “[Prevent strategy could end up promoting extremism](#)”, The Guardian, 21 April 2016

77 Dr Sarah Marsden Lancaster University, (CEX0058) para 2.4

78 Q1126

79 Q5

80 “[Legal duty to refer students under Prevent strategy divides teachers](#)”, The Guardian, 12 July 2016

their members were finding it difficult to access training, and possibly having to source training on the open market. They believed that that would raise concerns about quality and appropriate accreditation.⁸¹

63. We took evidence from Mark Keary, Principal, and Alison Brannick, former Deputy Principal, of the Bethnal Green Academy. This is the school attended by four young women who left the UK to travel to Syria to join Daesh, one in December 2014, followed by three more in February 2015. Mark Keary told us that the Prevent Duty focussed on the stereotype of an angry young man, but that the stereotypes needed to be updated to include the evolving nature of radicalisation, with young girls being groomed to travel to Syria.⁸² Alison Brannick agreed, adding that Prevent materials needed to move away from the stereotype that young people may be radicalised because they have been previously involved in criminality, and have that as a vulnerability.⁸³ We believe that an additional concern is that the Prevent materials do not show sufficient understanding of the lure for young girls raised in conservative homes, with little freedom, who then choose to embrace their notion of faith and travel to a war zone.

64. Raheel Mohammed of Maslaha told us that teachers only receive about an hour's training on the Prevent Duty. He believed that the training was not holistic and did not extend to the broader school environment. Rather than a check-list of vulnerabilities for teachers to keep an eye out for, he would suggest a programme about broadening schoolchildren's understanding of the wider issues around terrorism and radicalisation.⁸⁴

65. Sara Khan, co-director of Inspire, also told us about some feedback that the training was short and there was no provision for further questions and answers. She said schools appeared to be confused about what constituted "socially conservative practices" and what were "extreme ones". However both of Inspire's co-directors, Sara Khan and Kalsoom Bashir, told us their overall experience from delivering training to staff had been very positive. Kalsoom Bashir told us that teachers had been reassured that the Duty is part of their safeguarding policies; and Home Office facilitators behind the training had promised to continually refresh the case studies.⁸⁵

66. Faith Matters is concerned about a lack of clarity about the guidance to schools around Prevent training. They wrote to us about uncertainty around whether local authorities were able to choose training providers that suited them or if the Home Office had an approved list of providers. They also felt there was very little oversight of the quality of training.⁸⁶

67. Ofsted's recent report into how further education providers are complying with the Prevent Duty found that not all staff had received sufficient training, and there was a reliance on online training which was "often too superficial to help staff understand the nature of specific risks". Training was found to be more effective when education providers had worked with external partners. The report also found that support from local authorities, Prevent coordinators and the police was inconsistent.⁸⁷

81 National Association of Head Teachers ([CEX0005](#)) paras 3 and 6

82 Q141

83 Q150

84 Qq1128, 1131, 1136

85 Qq210–212

86 Faith Matters ([CEX0055](#)) para 7

87 Ofsted, [How well are further education and skills providers implementing the Prevent Duty](#), July 2016, pp 4–6

68. Professor Julius Weinberg, Vice-Chancellor of Kingston University, said that the Government was putting universities in an impossible position by expecting them to ban speakers for extremism without defining extremism in sufficiently clear terms.⁸⁸ Megan Dunn, the then President of the National Union of Students, was concerned that the Prevent Duty required the risk of being drawn into terrorism to be completely mitigated. She said that: “while we are all working towards that aim, how can that possibly be proven?” She also believed that there had been a breakdown in trust and told us that black and Muslim students feel that they are more likely to be referred to Prevent because of the use of profiling.⁸⁹

69. The Prevent Duty has placed a responsibility on educational establishments and other public bodies which they are finding very hard to fulfil. We are concerned about a lack of sufficient and appropriate training in an area that is complex and unfamiliar to many education and other professionals, compounded by a lack of clarity about what is required of them. We recommend that the Home Office appoint an independent panel to reassess the Prevent training being provided to education and other professionals, to ensure they have the confidence to be able to deliver their Prevent Duty in the context of the environment in which they work, and the need to continue to deliver their primary function. The review team should include frontline staff and should aim to issue new guidance on delivering Prevent, including the provision of clear definitions of extremist behaviour; and to specify the length of training which professionals receive and when there should be follow-up training. Finally, the independent body should be asked to report on the advantages and disadvantages of placing the Prevent duty on a statutory basis and the range of institutions which are subject to the duty.

70. We have consistently heard strong criticisms about Prevent both from grassroots organisations and from community members. The Government must do more to explain its approach to any new measures aimed at countering extremism in advance of them being implemented. There has been a great deal of counter-terrorism legislation over the past 12 years, some of which has been counter-productive, as the former Director of Liberty told us.

71. The Government plans to introduce a new Countering Extremism and Safeguarding Bill shortly. It is imperative that this does not turn out to be another Bill that fails to achieve its objectives. Concerns have already been expressed about the approach the Bill is expected to take, including from the former and current national police leads on Prevent (Sir Peter Fahy and Chief Constable Simon Cole of Leicestershire Police) and a multi-faith alliance of 26 organisations and individuals. The Home Office has itself acknowledged that finding meaningful definitions is proving problematic. The Government must ensure that the Bill includes a clear definition of what extremist behaviour is and a full explanation of what the Government is and is not seeking to achieve through its provisions. This information should be made available before the Bill receives detailed consideration in Parliament.

88 Qq659–662 and “Kingston VC says Government’s counter-terrorism legislation is impossible for universities”, River Online, 16 March 2015

89 Q691

4 The security context and counter-terrorism

Counter-terrorism funding and policing

72. The counter-extremism strategy is being implemented against the backdrop of a very high terrorism threat level. The then Home Secretary, Rt Hon Theresa May MP, told us in March that the threat level was under constant review by the independent Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, but had remained unchanged at ‘severe’, which means an attack is highly likely.⁹⁰

73. Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, the national lead on counter-terrorism, told us that terrorist threats had never been as joined up or as agile as they were now. This meant that the need to share detailed information at speed was greater than ever, and that while a lot of progress had been made there was still more to do.⁹¹ Europol plays a key part in the dissemination of information for countering terrorism. After the Paris attacks, Europol assigned up to 60 officers to support the French and Belgian investigations. The significant exchange of information which followed resulted in 800 intelligence leads and more than 1,600 leads on suspicious financial transactions. Its European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) is an enhanced hub for the sharing of information, analysis of ongoing investigations and coordinating operations within the EU. By providing this central expertise, ECTC is expected to help combat issues such as foreign fighters, terrorism financing, online extremism and propaganda, and arms trafficking.⁹²

74. Assistant Commissioner Rowley confirmed to us that the UK’s annual counter-terrorism policing budget has risen from £594 million for 2015–16 to £670 million for 2016–17. The main priorities for the budget included increased counter-terrorism investigative capacity, such as the capability to monitor online activity and digital evidence, and making significant deployments internationally.⁹³

75. The then Home Secretary told us in December that, since the attacks in Paris in November 2015, the Home Office had looked again at police response and the provision of armed police in armed response vehicles, and that it was ensuring there was sufficient funding for an increase in these resources.⁹⁴ When she updated the House on the counter-terrorism response in January 2016, Mrs May pointed out that the counter-terrorism policing budget had been protected since 2010 and that there would be “an additional 1,900 officers—an increase of 15%—at MI5, MI6 and GCHQ to better respond to the threat we face from international terrorism, cyber-attacks and other global risks.” She also said that the powers available to the police and security and intelligence agencies had been strengthened.⁹⁵

90 Oral evidence taken on [22 March 2016](#), HC (2015–16) 299, Q216

91 Qq425, 784

92 “*Europol’s European Counter Terrorism Centre*”, [Europol press release](#), 25 January 2016

93 Q823

94 Oral evidence taken on [16 December 2015](#), HC (2015–16) 299, Q168

95 HC Deb 5 January 2016, [cols 56–68](#)

76. Despite the Government's aim to provide more armed police officers, the Police Federation of England and Wales has warned that there is a national shortage of firearms officers with "worrying" inconsistencies across forces.⁹⁶ The figures for 2015 show the number across England and Wales has fallen to 5,647, the lowest level since at least 1987.⁹⁷ In response to the fall in numbers the Home Office has agreed to fund an additional 1,000 firearms officers for a period of five years. A further 500 armed officers are to be funded by local forces themselves, from within their existing budgets. Che Donald of the Police Federation said that, while major cities like London had sufficient firearms officers, other large towns and cities did not.⁹⁸

77. According to Steve White, Chair of the Police Federation, funding is not the only issue. He told the Press Association that officers' concerns about the level of protection they would receive if they discharged their firearms was also a contributory factor: "officers don't want to carry firearms because they are concerned that if they discharge it, they are going to get arrested for murder".⁹⁹ The National Police Chiefs' Council lead for armed policing, Chief Constable Simon Chesterman, agreed that potential recruits were being deterred by fears they could spend years under investigation after a decision to fire on a suspect.¹⁰⁰

Border security

78. The Director General of Border Force, Sir Charles Montgomery, told us in December that the UK border is "among the strongest of all the liberal democracies of the free world. I would even say that totalitarian states would never declare their borders utterly impermeable."¹⁰¹ After the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, Border Force instituted increased checking of both freight and passengers on selected routes into and out of the UK.¹⁰²

79. Sir Charles explained to us how Border Force staff carry out specific checks to identify 'persons of interest' as they leave the UK and when they return, which rely on studying patterns of behaviour and travel, based on profiling, and then intervene to stop people travelling when necessary. In the case of "hundreds" of individuals each month, checks lead to searches for more information about their intentions. Similar checks are carried out on inbound travellers in close cooperation with counter-terrorism police. On a weekly basis an average of over 100 people were referred from the checking process to counter-terrorism forces, although "the vast majority" proved not to be of interest.¹⁰³

80. The then Home Secretary confirmed to us that, during 2015, full exit checks were introduced in relation to various modes of travel out of the UK. New powers also include the ability to remove a passport temporarily at the border where the security services have concerns about an individual. This enables them to carry out further investigations,

96 ["Police federation sends warning over shortage of firearms officers"](#), The Independent, 15 May 2016

97 ["Do police have the firepower to tackle gun menace?"](#), BBC, 17 May 2016

98 ["Police chiefs struggling to recruit armed officers over conviction fears"](#), The Guardian, 15 May 2016

99 ["Police federation sends warning over shortage of firearms officers"](#), The Independent, 15 May 2016

100 ["Police chiefs struggling to recruit armed officers over conviction fears"](#), The Guardian, 15 May 2016

101 Q502

102 Q505

103 Qq516–521

which could lead to further disruptive action, including use of the Royal Prerogative to remove a passport. The prerogative had been exercised 30 times between the change in the law in 2013 and the end of 2014.¹⁰⁴

81. However, radical extremists such as Siddhartha Dhar (also known as Abu Rumaysah) have managed to leave the country, escaping even while being under investigation for encouraging terrorism. Dhar was released on bail in September 2014, banned from travelling and ordered to surrender his passport. Nevertheless, he is said to have travelled to Paris via coach from London, with his family. Several weeks later he posted a photograph of himself in Syria holding a rifle and his newborn baby, tweeting “What a shoddy security system Britain must have to allow me to breeze through Europe to IS”.¹⁰⁵

82. The then Security Minister, John Hayes MP, acknowledged to us in November 2015 that the UK faced a challenge at smaller airports and ports across the country, and that the more security was strengthened at the largest points of entry, such as Heathrow and Gatwick, the more would-be terrorists were being drawn to use other locations. He confirmed that the Government had initiated a fresh review into potential vulnerability at these points.¹⁰⁶

83. Assistant Commissioner Rowley told us that his specialist team had a joint system with Border Force. His data centre was constantly monitoring data from sea and airports—who had booked travel, where they were going to—and matching that information against indices which flagged warnings about people who were under scrutiny.¹⁰⁷ In relation to people attempting to return to the UK, the then Home Secretary told us in December that the introduction of temporary exclusion orders had enabled a “managed return of people” who had been in Syria. The UK has re-joined the Schengen Information System (SIS II) and is working with other countries across Europe to maximise the sharing of knowledge so border guards can access enhanced information about individuals coming through UK borders.¹⁰⁸

84. The Director General of Border Force has assured us that the UK has one of the strongest borders in the world and additional measures have been put in place since the horrific attacks in Paris in November 2015. However, we are not convinced that border exit checks operate at the 100% level which the Home Office has set, which would mean that every person leaving the country by whatever mode of transport was checked. Known terrorists like Siddhartha Dhar have been able to exit the country by avoiding the major points of departure and instead using smaller airports, ports and Eurotunnel, which employ weaker, purely digital processes. We call on the Government urgently to report to the House the conclusions of its review into security at smaller airports and ports. Even at the major airports it is the airlines, rather than the Government, which are operating as guarantors of our safety. Until 100% exit checks are fully in place, UK citizens under suspicion for encouraging extremism and prohibited from leaving the country will continue to be able to do so undetected, and could end up joining terrorist organisations in Syria and Iraq.

104 Oral evidence taken on [16 December 2015](#), HC (2015–16) 299, Qq148–151

105 “[Who is Siddhartha Dhar?](#)”, BBC, 4 January 2016

106 Q449

107 Qq789–790

108 Oral evidence taken on [16 December 2015](#), HC (2015–16) 299, Qq152, 155

Seizure of travel documents

85. Another important step to prevent potential terrorists travelling from the UK to join Daesh is to ensure that passports are removed from suspects. We were very concerned to learn how seemingly easy it is for those who are on police bail to leave the country. Assistant Commissioner Rowley told us in January that police bail was a weak provision and needed to be tightened. If court bail conditions were breached, the court could take stronger action, including holding someone in custody until the passport was surrendered. Mr Rowley therefore believed that breach of police bail should be made a criminal offence. He also told us that if someone on police bail failed to produce their passport, the police would simply write to them to remind them to do so, in order to create an audit trail “for the legal process with solicitors”.¹⁰⁹

86. In response to questions from the Committee Chairman during a Liaison Committee oral evidence session in January, the then Prime Minister, Rt Hon David Cameron MP, made clear the Government’s intention to do more to address this issue. This was followed by a Government amendment to the Policing and Crime Bill which makes it a criminal offence for an individual released on pre-charge bail following an arrest for a terrorism offence to breach any conditions of that bail that prohibit them from leaving the country. These conditions include the requirement on an individual not to leave the UK, a requirement to surrender travel documents, and a requirement not to be in possession of any travel documents, even if they belong to someone else.¹¹⁰

87. We were appalled to hear from Assistant Commissioner Rowley, the UK counter-terrorism police lead, about the apparent ease with which Dhar and others arrested for terrorism offences could breach bail conditions and flee the country, despite being asked to hand in their passports. It seemed incredible to us that the only follow-up action for failure to comply was a polite reminder letter from the police. We welcome the Government’s acknowledgement of the importance of seizing the travel documents of suspected terrorists subject to police bail to prevent them travelling abroad. We were very pleased that the former Prime Minister’s interest in this issue, in response to our concerns, led to the then Home Secretary tabling an amendment to the Policing and Crime Bill currently before Parliament to make breach of certain pre-charge bail conditions relating to foreign travel a criminal offence, where the person has been arrested in relation to terrorism offences. The Government should ensure that the new legislation requires automatic notifications about individuals suspected of terrorism offences to be sent to HM Passport Office and the CTIRU, and that the handing in of a passport is made a pre-condition of bail.

109 Qq763–767

110 Home Office announcement, [6 April 2016](#), “Home Secretary announces new offence of breach of pre-charge bail”. The Policing and Crime Bill is currently going through the Lords stages of its consideration. See [Policing and Crime Bill](#) on the Bills section of the parliamentary website

5 Countering the extremist narrative

Challenging extremism together

88. The former Prime Minister said in October that everyone has a role to play in confronting extremism:

I want to build a national coalition to challenge and speak out against extremists and the poison they peddle. I want British Muslims to know we will back them to stand against those who spread hate and to counter the narrative which says Muslims do not feel British.¹¹¹

89. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), which seeks to represent the Muslim community, confirmed to us that it routinely issued statements to condemn acts of terrorism carried out in the name of Islam and assisted the police with information about extremist material.¹¹² In contrast, organisations such as CAGE told us that they did not think it was necessary for them to publicly condemn acts of terrorism. CAGE also objected to the use of the term ‘religious fascism’.¹¹³

90. MCB also told us that they were working within Muslim communities to try to understand and articulate their concerns about terrorism, and focus on how they could effectively tackle the radicalisation of young people in these communities.¹¹⁴

Support to families

91. In their 2015 report on counter-terrorism, our predecessors expressed concern about the support available to parents and other family members concerned about radicalisation of loved ones and those affected by family members travelling abroad to join terrorist organisations. They were also concerned about whether the “anti-terrorist helpline” was the most appropriate channel for encouraging people to report their concerns, particularly as its name alone might act as a deterrent for worried people feeling able to contact the authorities.¹¹⁵ We considered what progress had been made in addressing these issues. As we have set out, there are many different factors which contribute to a person becoming radicalised rather than just two or three triggers. Similarly, there is no single set of signs or “symptoms” which families concerned about radicalisation can look out for.

92. Nor is there always effective support for families affected by relatives joining terrorist organisations. We took evidence from Konika Dhar, the sister of Siddhartha Dhar, who despite having been through the emotional trauma of losing her brother, was not aware of any organisation that could help her nor the right process to follow.¹¹⁶ She was also the victim of unwanted media attention. A greater focus should be placed on the effect on

111 “I want to build a national coalition to challenge and speak out against extremism”, [Prime Minister’s Office press release](#), 13 October 2015

112 Qq35–39

113 Qq266–268, 271–5

114 Qq15–16

115 Home Affairs Committee, Nineteenth Report of Session 2014–15, [Counter-terrorism: foreign fighters](#), HC 933, para 19

116 Q842

families of their loved ones' decision to join Daesh. While small community organisations like Families Against Stress and Trauma (FAST) who do assist families exist, they can find it difficult to promote their avenues of support.¹¹⁷

93. We were pleased to hear from Alison Brannick, former deputy principal of the Bethnal Green Academy, that there appears to be a clearer process in place at that school. She told us that concerns are first referred to the safeguarding team, who assess the situation and then make a referral to a social inclusion panel, where a decision is made on the next steps to support the student. The school also worked with the local authority's parents' advice centre, organising sessions for parents to help them better understand the risks of extremism, and identify signs of radicalisation, so they knew exactly what support was available if needed.¹¹⁸ Witnesses representing the East London Mosque, who denied any knowledge of radicalisation and were unable to clarify the ideology of their Imams, told us that they were approached for support by the families of the girls from the Bethnal Green Academy when they felt "let down by the police", and who were "very vulnerable and needed a lot support".¹¹⁹

94. **The support made available to families of individuals who travel abroad to join terrorist organisations is lamentable. We were concerned to hear from Konika Dhar that she received no support from the Government or statutory agencies. Our predecessor Committee previously recommended that there needs to be an easily accessible advice and counselling service, particularly for parents, but also for other family members and friends, who wish to raise concerns and ask for help when worried about their loved ones being radicalised. We reiterate the recommendation for such a counselling service which would provide much needed support to families. We know that identifying the route to radicalisation and the tipping point where individuals start embracing extremism is complicated. By constructively engaging with the families and friends of people who have been radicalised, lessons can be learned, which is crucial to better identifying the tipping point for their transition to extremism. As a minimum, the Government must change the name of the 'anti-terrorist helpline' which can be seen as too stigmatising and makes people apprehensive about expressing their worries.**

95. **We are never going to combat terror effectively unless the communities themselves take on a leadership role. It is these communities that stand to lose the most when atrocities occur. We were deeply concerned to hear CAGE's views on not condemning terrorist acts, which we believe simply increases the sense of isolation from society that some individuals within the community feel. We also note CAGE's sensitivity about the use of the term 'religious fascism'. We commend the speed of organisations like the Muslim Council of Britain in condemning atrocities, but feel they could do more to expose and remove those who preach or advocate race hate and intolerance, and particularly those who draw young people into extremism. Such large community organisations must also show more effective leadership in supporting families concerned about their loved ones. It would be hugely beneficial for the new advice service which we have recommended be established to be staffed by trained members of community organisations. The Home Office should also provide support for existing**

117 Q1115

118 Qq161-162

119 Qq50-51, 53, 57-59, 61-63, 65

community initiatives such as Families Against Stress and Trauma (FAST), including publicising their activities, to ensure that people are clearly aware of who they can turn to for support.

Rehabilitation

96. Dr Marsden of Lancaster University told us in her written evidence that even though people who were once radicalised might wish to move away from extremism, it can be very difficult to do so, particularly if they are publicly known as extremists. They have to deal with factors like social stigma and family tension, less access to jobs as they are perceived as less desirable, possible ongoing contact from extremist groups, and likely emotional trauma. She stated: “To rehabilitate former extremists one must recognise that reintegration is a two-way process: society has to permit and support the individual’s rehabilitation as much as the person has to want to do so.”¹²⁰

97. Ian Acheson, the former prison governor who conducted an independent review of Islamist extremism in prisons for the Government, expressed his concerns to the Justice Committee recently about the readiness of the prison service to deal with returning fighters. He said that a senior National Offender Management Service (NOMS) director told him “quite blithely” that:

[...] the service had made no provision at all to forecast the return of jihadi fighters from Afghanistan or from ISIS-controlled territory or anywhere else because the service was big enough to absorb that. I found that quite astonishing, frankly. That is an example of the level of complacency that I observed.¹²¹

98. The French government has announced a plan to set up a dozen deradicalisation centres across the country. French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has said these sites would hold young people who might have stepped back from extremism, and their willingness to reintegrate into mainstream society would be tested.¹²² Denmark has been running a rehabilitation programme for returnees since 2014. They are first screened by the Danish police and security agencies. The programme then offers medical treatment for physical injuries as well as psychological trauma, and also assists with finding work or further education.¹²³

99. **The Government needs to have a more effective strategy to help those who have genuinely moved away from extremism and wish to reintegrate into society, just as it should also seek to support those families who have reported radicalisation by individuals or community groups. Indeed, ways should be found to harness their knowledge and experience in the fight against radicalisation if this can be done safely. The UK should look at the experience of other countries, including Denmark, which has developed a specialist approach to dealing with returning foreign fighters. There is no monopoly of wisdom on these life and death issues. We will look in greater detail at the “detoxification process” for extremists as part of our ongoing work on this subject.**

120 Dr Sarah Marsden, Lancaster University ([CEX0058](#)) para 3.6

121 Oral Evidence taken before the Justice Committee on [13 July 2016](#), HC 417, Q23

122 “[France to set up a dozen deradicalisation centres](#)”, The Guardian, 9 May 2016

123 “[Denmark: Extremism & Counter-extremism](#)”, Counter Extremism Project, 15 February 2015

Building resilience

100. The then Security Minister, Rt Hon John Hayes MP, has said it is essential to equip young people with an awareness of the dangers of terrorist and extremist propaganda and the skills they need to protect themselves from it. He stated that: “The Home Office funds local projects that encourage young people to think critically about potentially harmful or extremist views presented on the internet through addressing all forms of radicalisation.”¹²⁴ We believe that young people’s lack of ability or awareness of the need to critically challenge their beliefs is also central to the problems we have found.

101. The Counter Extremism Project suggested in its written evidence that the first step is to train the educators, social workers and leaders of the local community to ensure they can recognise and engage with young people who might be at risk of grooming.¹²⁵ The think-tank Demos also believes young people are not equipped to distinguish between truths and lies online and agrees it is imperative that they are taught how to protect themselves—through training on identifying manipulation and grooming efforts and being able to challenge lies and misrepresentation. Education is therefore key to countering extremism in the longer term.¹²⁶

102. The PSHE Association wrote to us about how Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education provides an ideal opportunity to discuss extremism within a safe classroom setting. The training can be developed to help students better understand how extremists think to identify the “myths, misinformation and manipulative techniques” they use. It can also assist young people in deciding what to do if they are worried about friends, including “when to keep and when to break a confidence”.¹²⁷

103. Engaging with and empowering young people is a critical element of the effort to counter extremism and provide an effective counter-narrative. From our engagement with young people who are most affected by these issues, it is clear that they are willing to discuss their concerns and share their views, and they should be given a safe space to do so. The Government must move urgently to develop a programme that helps these young people better develop the critical skills required to be conscious of manipulation and grooming and to actively question information they receive—both offline and online. It is only when they are equipped with these skills that they will be able to develop the resilience and tenacity necessary to deal with the complex issues of faith, identity and aspiration, as well as mental health, the role and power of women, the role of prisons, English-language skills and urban pressures. This is also why we have recommended a hotline that is not led by the security services. This resilience programme would best be developed through working with education experts, community organisations, social media companies and policing bodies, including Police and Crime Commissioners and senior police officers, which must all take steps to encourage young Muslims to challenge extreme interpretations of their faith.

124 HC Deb, 3 November 2015, [14632](#)

125 Counter Extremism Project ([CEX0003](#)) para 2.1

126 “[There’s no silver bullet to prevent radicalisation](#)”, Demos, 16 May 2016

127 PSHE Association ([CEX0023](#)) para 12

Developing and communicating alternate messages

104. Baroness Shields referred to a study by UK think-tank Demos which concluded that not enough is being done to promote “counter-speech”. (We prefer the term “counter-narrative”.) The study suggested that governments should support civil society to develop counter-narrative programmes, to give them “a platform and a greater share of voice”.¹²⁸

105. While many governments are active in direct counter-messaging, they are not seen as credible in terms of prevention or deradicalisation. The then Security Minister has said that the Government is working in partnership with civil society organisations to confront extremist narratives and provide alternatives.¹²⁹ However, this does not yet appear to have been hugely effective in preventing young people from being radicalised and travelling abroad to fight.

106. The Home Office’s Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU), which works on producing counter-radicalisation messages, has been criticised for the implementation of programmes through campaigns which do not always seem to acknowledge that they are supported by the Government. Critics say this could cause serious damage to the relationship between the Government and Muslim communities. For example, the vice-chair of the Institute of Race Relations has stated that people discovering that programmes are backed by the Government can undermine the trust of Muslim civil society organisations, which she blamed on the “toxicity” of the Prevent strategy.¹³⁰

107. In contrast, the Counter Extremism Project, while setting out how civil society should work with Government and the private sector to find the best way to counter the extremist narrative, believed it was important for them to have clear information on what operational and financial support is available from the Government, and what training can be accessed.¹³¹ Quilliam agreed that counter-narrative campaigns work best when Government enables a partnership approach because civil society organisations can lack funding, whereas the private sector lacks knowledge of extremism and community engagement.¹³² Other witnesses, including Baroness Warsi and Inspire, were in agreement that it was better for the source of the counter-narrative to be community-led and non-government.¹³³

108. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue, a think-tank which has experience in organising partnerships of civil society networks and the private sector within the countering extremism field, stated that governments could be very effective in facilitating networks behind-the-scenes and also in removing any legal barriers that could make many former violent extremists reticent to speak out.¹³⁴ The Institute advocates working with former extremists, defectors, and affected communities to find creative ways of tackling recruitment by extremist organisations.

109. Similarly David Anderson, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, told us counter-extremist messaging would be much more effective if it came from people who

128 Home Office speech, “[Beyond business: the responsibility of global players](#)”, 12 January 2016

129 HC Deb, 3 November 2015, [14632](#)

130 “[UK’s covert propaganda bid to stop Muslims joining ISIS](#)”, The Guardian, 2 May 2016

131 Counter Extremism Project ([CEX0003](#)) para 2f and 6

132 Quilliam ([CEX0025](#)) paras 13–18

133 Qq104, Q227

134 Institute for Strategic Dialogue ([CEX0039](#)) paras 3.4, 3.6

were viewed by young people as “one of their own”. He cited the Abdullah-X YouTube channel, where a reformed extremist has created a series of cartoons aimed at preventing young British Muslims from joining jihadist groups, and stated: “The testimony of people who have come back from Syria and said it is not like they say, is likely to be much more powerful than something that the Government says”.¹³⁵

110. FAST has also produced a YouTube film with testimonies from parents whose children have travelled to Syria, and designed an online guide for parents on the dangers of radicalisation.¹³⁶ The short film was commissioned by the National Police Chiefs’ Council and focuses on three Syrian refugee mothers speaking directly to mothers in the UK about the realities of living in a war zone like Syria. It is complemented by letters from the women urging mothers here to prevent their daughters from travelling to Syria.¹³⁷

111. The approaches to counter-terrorism of successive governments have not so far achieved the success we would all have desired (although the success of the UK’s security services in preventing tragedies on the scale which have been seen elsewhere should be noted). Instead, in some circumstances, they have created suspicion and alienation amongst the very people they need to reach. Most of the communities that one might expect to say that radicalisation was present within them gave little evidence that they believed it was on their doorstep. This raises suspicions that the extent to which Prevent has reached those it needs to is limited. This is exacerbated by the fact that families who identify radicalisation may tend to retreat, making them even harder to reach, and is a failure of so-called community groups.

112. The success of Abdullah-X’s YouTube channel in appealing to young people shows how, if done sensitively and in collaboration with community organisations, Government involvement can be effective in engaging with the target audience. The UK has the brightest and the best talent in the creative industries in the world, including in video-games. We should be using this talent to ensure that every sophisticated piece of extremist propaganda is countered by even more sophisticated anti-radicalism material. The Government must facilitate regular meetings of the leaders of the UK’s Muslim communities, while also recognising that many communities have no leadership and taking the necessary proactive steps to reach out to them. These regular meetings should also include think-tanks with expertise in the field and the private sector, to begin to build a bank of best practice counter-narrative case studies that will help civil society and business to implement effective counter-narrative programmes. Its scope should include training for community organisations and working with former extremists to develop and target online counter-narratives.

113. Terrorism is an overwhelming global crisis, and violent extremism is what fuels it. Countering it involves the portfolios of education, health, justice, home affairs, foreign affairs and international development. Local communities in the UK are ready and willing to enter the fray and defend the British way of life. The Government must not squander any opportunity to harness this beneficial force. It must forge and disseminate strong counter-narratives that will address the wilful blindness and blame-games of vested interests and combat the lies and deceit that the extremists want to feed to our young people in order to send them to their deaths.

135 Qq948, 952

136 Home Office, [Guidance: The use of social media for online radicalisation](#), 1 July 2015, p3

137 “*Plea from Syrian refugee mothers*”, [National Police Chiefs’ Council press release](#), 12 January 2016

Conclusions and recommendations

Background to the inquiry

1. In this report we have focused on extremism which affects Muslim communities (while recognising the differences between those communities in terms of integration, segregation and urban or rural status), and arising from the activities of terrorist organisations such as Daesh. We share the concerns about other forms of extremism, including political extremism. We are currently conducting a separate inquiry into anti-semitism. We have also issued a call for evidence on the effectiveness of current legislation and law enforcement policies for preventing and prosecuting hate crime and its associated violence; and the extent of support that is available to victims and their families and how it might be improved. (Paragraph 8)

Factors contributing to radicalisation

2. There is no evidence that shows a single path or one single event which draws a young person to the scourge of extremism: every case is different. Identifying people at risk of being radicalised and then attracted to extremist behaviour is very challenging. It also makes the task of countering extreme views complex and difficult. If the Government adopts a broad-brush approach, which fails to take account of the complexities, and of the gaps in existing knowledge and understanding of the factors contributing to radicalisation, that would be counter-productive and fuel the attraction of the extremist narrative rather than dampening it. (Paragraph 18)
3. The Government must take a much more sophisticated approach both to identifying the factors which instigate radicalisation and in the measures it takes to tackle this. We recommend the Government work with a cross-section of academic institutions in the UK that work on radicalisation, to marshal existing intelligence and research and develop a more effective understanding of the factors leading to extremism. This should include speaking to the families of known extremists to draw on their experiences. Without such a solid foundation, the strategies in the proposed new Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill are likely to approach the issues and entire communities in an unfocussed manner, and therefore ultimately to be ineffective. (Paragraph 19)

Role of technology

4. The use of the internet to promote radicalisation and terrorism is one of the greatest threats that countries including the UK face. We commend the work being carried out on a daily basis by security officials and the police to counter online extremism. The vital function which the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) provides in combating online extremism has been invaluable to date but needs to be enhanced, extended and much better resourced to meet the scale of the ongoing threat. Its funding, equipment and operation should reflect the urgency and importance of its vital function in trying to protect the public from fanatics and criminals. (Paragraph 28)

5. We need to win the cyber-war with terrorist and extremist organisations. We recommend that CTIRU is upgraded into a high-tech, state-of-the-art round-the-clock central Operational Hub which locates the perils early, moves quickly to block them and is able to instantly share the sensitive information with other security agencies. It is odd that when taking down dangerous and illicit material the CTIRU needs to waste time trying to establish contact with organisations outside the unit. Representatives of all the relevant agencies, including the Home Office, MI5 and major technology companies, should be co-located within CTIRU. This will enable greater cooperation, better information-sharing and more effective monitoring of and action against online extremist propaganda. We have also made recommendations about the role of internet companies in this respect. We further recommend that the security services address the lack of Arabic-speaking staff, and staff with Urdu, Kashmiri and Punjabi language skills. (Paragraph 29)

Europol

6. EU organisations, such as Europol, are a vital resource for the UK in combating terrorism and extremism, and the UK makes a considerable contribution to European cooperation on these activities. We commend the leadership shown by Rob Wainwright as the British Director of Europol. It is imperative that the Government negotiates an ongoing effective relationship with these organisations, including continued access to and contribution to information-sharing, in the forthcoming discussions on the UK's exit from the EU. The USA already has a high status in Europol, despite being outside the EU. The UK should aim to emulate this position on leaving the EU. Our predecessor Committee has previously said that platforms should be created with Interpol to deal more effectively with cross-border issues, particularly terrorism which is a key cross-border challenge. Freedom of movement works just as well for terrorists as it does for law-abiding citizens, which the measures in place to tackle it need to fully recognise. The UK's exit from the EU makes our relationship with Interpol even more vital. (Paragraph 30)

Social media industry response to online radicalisation

7. The internet has a huge impact in contributing to individuals turning to extremism, hatred and murder. Social media companies are consciously failing to combat the use of their sites to promote terrorism and killings. Networks like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are the vehicle of choice in spreading propaganda and they have become the recruiting platforms for terrorism. They must accept that the hundreds of millions in revenues generated from billions of people using their products needs to be accompanied by a greater sense of responsibility and ownership for the impact that extremist material on their sites is having. There must be a zero tolerance approach to online extremism, including enticement to join extremist groups or commit attacks of terror and any glorification of such activities. Manuals for terrorists and extremists should be removed from the internet. It is therefore alarming that these companies have teams of only a few hundred employees to monitor networks of billions of accounts and that Twitter does not even proactively report extremist content to law enforcement agencies. These companies are hiding

behind their supranational legal status to pass the parcel of responsibility and refusing to act responsibly in case they damage their brands. If they continue to fail to tackle this issue and allow their platforms to become the ‘Wild West’ of the internet, then it will erode their reputation as responsible operators. (Paragraph 38)

8. The EU rules introduced in May are a first step towards the internet companies assuming more responsibility. The UK Government should now enforce its own measures to ensure that the large technology companies operating in this country are required to cooperate with CTIRU promptly and fully, by investigating sites and accounts propagating hate speech, and then either shutting them down immediately, or providing an explanation to CTIRU of why this has not been done. This activity would be facilitated by the companies co-locating staff within the upgraded CTIRU and we recommend that this be part of its enhanced operations. We do not see why the success of the Internet Watch Foundation cannot be replicated in the area of countering online extremism. (Paragraph 39)
9. The Government must also require the companies to be transparent about their actions on online extremism; instead of the piecemeal approach we currently have, they should all publish quarterly statistics showing how many sites and accounts they have taken down and for what reason. Facebook and Twitter should implement a trusted flagger system similar to Google’s and all social media companies must be more willing to give such trusted status to smaller community organisations, thereby empowering them in the fight against extremism. In short, what cannot appear legally in the print or broadcast media, namely inciting hatred and terrorism, should not be allowed to appear on social media. This is all the more necessary when one takes into account Daesh’s view that inciting individuals to take action “in the heart” of countries is “more effective and damaging” to those countries than action taken by Daesh itself. (Paragraph 40)

Role of media

10. The media have a responsibility to avoid contributing to negative views of particular groups in society through unbalanced or unsubstantiated reporting. This is particularly important in relation to stories about extremism and terrorism involving people professing to be Muslims, and in reports about views held by Muslims, because of the impact it can have in creating hostility towards Muslim communities and alienating people from those communities, particularly young people. Islamophobia contributes to young Muslims feeling alienated from mainstream society, as we heard in Bradford and Glasgow, thereby potentially leading to them becoming more susceptible to radicalisation. It is not clear to us that all news editors are taking sufficient care in their handling of these stories and some continue to prioritise sensationalism over facts. They should refrain from using the term ‘so-called Islamic State’, and should instead refer to ‘Daesh’. We also recommend that they do not identify terrorists as Muslims, but as terrorists and followers of Daesh. (Paragraph 45)

Concerns about the Prevent Strategy and Duty

11. The concerns about Prevent amongst the communities most affected by it must be addressed. Otherwise it will continue to be viewed with suspicion by many, and by some as “toxic”. We have heard calls for Prevent to be brought to an end (although notably not from Inspire or the families of those who had travelled to join Daesh). Even the Government’s Independent Reviewer of Terrorist Legislation has recommended a review of Prevent, because of it becoming such a huge source of grievance. Rather than being seen as the community-led approach Prevent was supposed to be, it is perceived to be a top-down ‘Big Brother’ security operation. Allaying these concerns and building trust will require full and wide engagement with all sections of the Muslim community, including at grassroots level—and not just with groups which already agree with the Government. The focus of the strategy should be around building a real partnership between community groups and the state. The concerns of parents about the lure of radicalisation, and their desire for support and advice, should be heeded. If stakeholders buy into such a strategy it can be successful, but unfortunately that is not what is currently happening. (Paragraph 55)
12. The Government must be more transparent about what it is doing on the Prevent strategy, including by publicising its engagement activities, and providing updates on outcomes, through an easily accessible online portal. This will help communities to understand what Prevent is seeking to achieve and help to avoid it being seen as threatening to their culture and religion. As our predecessors have said in previous reports, we also recommend that the Government abandons the now toxic name ‘Prevent’ for the strategy and renames it with the more inclusive title of ‘Engage’. (Paragraph 56)
13. The Prevent Duty has placed a responsibility on educational establishments and other public bodies which they are finding very hard to fulfil. We are concerned about a lack of sufficient and appropriate training in an area that is complex and unfamiliar to many education and other professionals, compounded by a lack of clarity about what is required of them. We recommend that the Home Office appoint an independent panel to reassess the Prevent training being provided to education and other professionals, to ensure they have the confidence to be able to deliver their Prevent Duty in the context of the environment in which they work, and the need to continue to deliver their primary function. The review team should include frontline staff and should aim to issue new guidance on delivering Prevent, including the provision of clear definitions of extremist behaviour; and to specify the length of training which professionals receive and when there should be follow-up training. Finally, the independent body should be asked to report on the advantages and disadvantages of placing the Prevent duty on a statutory basis and the range of institutions which are subject to the duty. (Paragraph 69)
14. We have consistently heard strong criticisms about Prevent both from grass-roots organisations and from community members. The Government must do more to explain its approach to any new measures aimed at countering extremism in advance of them being implemented. There has been a great deal of counter-terrorism legislation over the past 12 years, some of which has been counter-productive, as the former Director of Liberty told us. (Paragraph 70)

15. The Government plans to introduce a new Countering Extremism and Safeguarding Bill shortly. It is imperative that this does not turn out to be another Bill that fails to achieve its objectives. Concerns have already been expressed about the approach the Bill is expected to take, including from the former and current national police leads on Prevent (Sir Peter Fahy and Chief Constable Simon Cole of Leicestershire Police) and a multi-faith alliance of 26 organisations and individuals. The Home Office has itself acknowledged that finding meaningful definitions is proving problematic. The Government must ensure that the Bill includes a clear definition of what extremist behaviour is and a full explanation of what the Government is and is not seeking to achieve through its provisions. This information should be made available before the Bill receives detailed consideration in Parliament. (Paragraph 71)

Border security

16. The Director General of Border Force has assured us that the UK has one of the strongest borders in the world and additional measures have been put in place since the horrific attacks in Paris in November 2015. However, we are not convinced that border exit checks operate at the 100% level which the Home Office has set, which would mean that every person leaving the country by whatever mode of transport was checked. Known terrorists like Siddhartha Dhar have been able to exit the country by avoiding the major points of departure and instead using smaller airports, ports and Eurotunnel, which employ weaker, purely digital processes. We call on the Government urgently to report to the House the conclusions of its review into security at smaller airports and ports. Even at the major airports it is the airlines, rather than the Government, which are operating as guarantors of our safety. Until 100% exit checks are fully in place, UK citizens under suspicion for encouraging extremism and prohibited from leaving the country will continue to be able to do so undetected, and could end up joining terrorist organisations in Syria and Iraq. (Paragraph 84)

Seizure of travel documents

17. We were appalled to hear from Assistant Commissioner Rowley, the UK counter-terrorism police lead, about the apparent ease with which Dhar and others arrested for terrorism offences could breach bail conditions and flee the country, despite being asked to hand in their passports. It seemed incredible to us that the only follow-up action for failure to comply was a polite reminder letter from the police. We welcome the Government's acknowledgement of the importance of seizing the travel documents of suspected terrorists subject to police bail to prevent them travelling abroad. We were very pleased that the former Prime Minister's interest in this issue, in response to our concerns, led to the then Home Secretary tabling an amendment to the Policing and Crime Bill currently before Parliament to make breach of certain pre-charge bail conditions relating to foreign travel a criminal offence, where the person has been arrested in relation to terrorism offences. The Government should ensure that the new legislation requires automatic notifications about individuals suspected of terrorism offences to be sent to HM Passport Office and the CTIRU, and that the handing in of a passport is made a pre-condition of bail. (Paragraph 87)

Support to families

18. The support made available to families of individuals who travel abroad to join terrorist organisations is lamentable. We were concerned to hear from Konika Dhar that she received no support from the Government or statutory agencies. Our predecessor Committee previously recommended that there needs to be an easily accessible advice and counselling service, particularly for parents, but also for other family members and friends, who wish to raise concerns and ask for help when worried about their loved ones being radicalised. We reiterate the recommendation for such a counselling service which would provide much needed support to families. We know that identifying the route to radicalisation and the tipping point where individuals start embracing extremism is complicated. By constructively engaging with the families and friends of people who have been radicalised, lessons can be learned, which is crucial to better identifying the tipping point for their transition to extremism. As a minimum, the Government must change the name of the ‘anti-terrorist helpline’ which can be seen as too stigmatising and makes people apprehensive about expressing their worries. (Paragraph 94)
19. We are never going to combat terror effectively unless the communities themselves take on a leadership role. It is these communities that stand to lose the most when atrocities occur. We were deeply concerned to hear CAGE’s views on not condemning terrorist acts, which we believe simply increases the sense of isolation from society that some individuals within the community feel. We also note CAGE’s sensitivity about the use of the term ‘religious fascism’. We commend the speed of organisations like the Muslim Council of Britain in condemning atrocities, but feel they could do more to expose and remove those who preach or advocate race hate and intolerance, and particularly those who draw young people into extremism. Such large community organisations must also show more effective leadership in supporting families concerned about their loved ones. It would be hugely beneficial for the new advice service which we have recommended be established to be staffed by trained members of community organisations. The Home Office should also provide support for existing community initiatives such as Families Against Stress and Trauma (FAST), including publicising their activities, to ensure that people are clearly aware of who they can turn to for support. (Paragraph 95)

Rehabilitation

20. The Government needs to have a more effective strategy to help those who have genuinely moved away from extremism and wish to reintegrate into society, just as it should also seek to support those families who have reported radicalisation by individuals or community groups. Indeed, ways should be found to harness their knowledge and experience in the fight against radicalisation if this can be done safely. The UK should look at the experience of other countries, including Denmark, which has developed a specialist approach to dealing with returning foreign fighters. There is no monopoly of wisdom on these life and death issues. We will look in greater detail at the “detoxification process” for extremists as part of our ongoing work on this subject. (Paragraph 99)

Building resilience

21. Engaging with and empowering young people is a critical element of the effort to counter extremism and provide an effective counter-narrative. From our engagement with young people who are most affected by these issues, it is clear that they are willing to discuss their concerns and share their views, and they should be given a safe space to do so. The Government must move urgently to develop a programme that helps these young people better develop the critical skills required to be conscious of manipulation and grooming and to actively question information they receive—both offline and online. It is only when they are equipped with these skills that they will be able to develop the resilience and tenacity necessary to deal with the complex issues of faith, identity and aspiration, as well as mental health, the role and power of women, the role of prisons, English-language skills and urban pressures. This is also why we have recommended a hotline that is not led by the security services. This resilience programme would best be developed through working with education experts, community organisations, social media companies and policing bodies, including Police and Crime Commissioners and senior police officers, which must all take steps to encourage young Muslims to challenge extreme interpretations of their faith. (Paragraph 103)

Developing and communicating alternate messages

22. The approaches to counter-terrorism of successive governments have not so far achieved the success we would all have desired (although the success of the UK's security services in preventing tragedies on the scale which have been seen elsewhere should be noted). Instead, in some circumstances, they have created suspicion and alienation amongst the very people they need to reach. Most of the communities that one might expect to say that radicalisation was present within them gave little evidence that they believed it was on their doorstep. This raises suspicions that the extent to which Prevent has reached those it needs to is limited. This is exacerbated by the fact that families who identify radicalisation may tend to retreat, making them even harder to reach, and is a failure of so-called community groups. (Paragraph 111)
23. The success of Abdullah-X's YouTube channel in appealing to young people shows how, if done sensitively and in collaboration with community organisations, Government involvement can be effective in engaging with the target audience. The UK has the brightest and the best talent in the creative industries in the world, including in video-games. We should be using this talent to ensure that every sophisticated piece of extremist propaganda is countered by even more sophisticated anti-radicalism material. The Government must facilitate regular meetings of the leaders of the UK's Muslim communities, while also recognising that many communities have no leadership and taking the necessary proactive steps to reach out to them. These regular meetings should also include think-tanks with expertise in the field and the private sector, to begin to build a bank of best practice counter-narrative case studies that will help civil society and business to implement effective counter-narrative programmes. Its scope should include training for community organisations and working with former extremists to develop and target online counter-narratives. (Paragraph 112)

24. Terrorism is an overwhelming global crisis, and violent extremism is what fuels it. Countering it involves the portfolios of education, health, justice, home affairs, foreign affairs and international development. Local communities in the UK are ready and willing to enter the fray and defend the British way of life. The Government must not squander any opportunity to harness this beneficial force. It must forge and disseminate strong counter-narratives that will address the wilful blindness and blame-games of vested interests and combat the lies and deceit that the extremists want to feed to our young people in order to send them to their deaths. (Paragraph 113)

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 19 July 2016

Members present:

Keith Vaz, in the Chair

Victoria Atkins	Tim Loughton
James Berry	Stuart C McDonald
David Burrowes	Naz Shah
Nusrat Ghani	Mr David Winnick
Mr Ranil Jayawardena	

Draft Report (*Radicalisation: the counter-narrative and identifying the tipping point*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 113 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Eighth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 20 July at 2.00 pm.]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 27 October 2015

Question number

Harun Rashid Khan , Deputy Secretary General, Miqdaad Versi , Assistant Secretary General, and Ameena Blake , Assistant Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain	Q1–43
Habibur Rahman , Chairman, Sufia Alam , Women's Projects Officer, and Salman Farsi , Media Officer, East London Mosque Trust	Q44–85
Rt Hon Baroness Warsi	Q86–119

Tuesday 17 November 2015

Mark Keary , Headteacher, Bethnal Green Academy, and Alison Brannick , former Deputy Headteacher, Bethnal Green Academy	Q120–174
Sara Khan and Kalsoom Bashir , Directors, Inspire	Q175–243
Dr Adnan Siddiqui , Director, CAGE Advocacy Ltd, Ibrahim Mohamoud , Communications Officer, CAGE Advocacy Ltd, and Mohammed Umar Farooq	Q244–382

Tuesday 24 November 2015

Mark Rowley QPM , Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations, Metropolitan Police	Q383–428
Rt Hon John Hayes MP , Minister for Security, and Charles Farr , Director General, Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism, Home Office	Q429–501

Tuesday 1 December 2015

Sir Charles Montgomery , Director General, Border Force	Q502–574
Haras Rafiq , Managing Director, Quilliam, and Farooq Aftab , Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association UK	Q575–642
Megan Dunn , President, National Union of Students, and Professor Julius Weinberg , Vice-Chancellor, Kingston University	Q643–722

Tuesday 12 January 2016

Zulfiqar Karim , Senior Vice President, Bradford Council for Mosques, and Fazal Dad , Senior Imam, Abu Bakr Mosque Bradford	Q723–762
Mark Rowley QPM , Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations, Metropolitan Police	Q763–832

Tuesday 19 January 2016

Konika Dhar	<u>Q833–925</u>
David Anderson, QC , Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation	<u>Q926–956</u>
Shami Chakrabarti CBE	<u>Q957–982</u>

Tuesday 2 February 2016

Dr Anthony House , Head of Public Policy Strategy, Google Europe, Middle East and Africa, Simon Milner , Policy Director for UK and Ireland, Middle East and Turkey, Facebook, and Nick Pickles , UK Public Policy Manager, Twitter	<u>Q983–1103</u>
Saleha Jaffer , Director of Families Against Stress and Trauma (FAST), and Raheel Mohammed , Director, Maslaha	<u>Q1104–1140</u>

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

CEX numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Abdus Sabur Qutubi ([CEX0026](#))
- 2 Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'At Islam Lahore (UK) ([CEX0036](#))
- 3 Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association UK ([CEX0019](#))
- 4 Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association UK supplementary ([CEX0048](#))
- 5 Alison Jamieson ([CEX0047](#))
- 6 Averroes ([CEX0013](#))
- 7 Border Force supplementary ([CEX0031](#))
- 8 CAGE Advocacy UK Ltd ([CEX0006](#))
- 9 CAGE Advocacy UK Ltd supplementary ([CEX0016](#))
- 10 Charity Commission ([CEX0007](#))
- 11 Chief Constable Simon Cole QPM, Leicestershire Police ([CEX0060](#))
- 12 Claystone ([CEX0014](#))
- 13 Community Safety Forum ([CEX0054](#))
- 14 Community Security Trust ([CEX0002](#))
- 15 Council for Mosques Bradford ([CEX0044](#))
- 16 Counter Extremism Project UK ([CEX0003](#))
- 17 David Anderson Q.C. (Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation) ([CEX0041](#))
- 18 Dialogue Society ([CEX0001](#))
- 19 Dr Francis Lankester ([CEX0015](#))
- 20 Dr M. A. Fazal ([CEX0043](#))
- 21 Dr Saffron Karlsen, University of Bristol ([CEX0057](#))
- 22 Dr Sarah Marsden, Lancaster University ([CEX0058](#))
- 23 East London Mosque ([CEX0017](#))
- 24 East London Mosque ([CEX0050](#))
- 25 East London Mosque further supplementary ([CEX0022](#))
- 26 European Council on Tolerance and Reconciliation ([CEX0010](#))
- 27 Facebook ([CEX0053](#))
- 28 Faith Matters ([CEX0055](#))
- 29 Google ([CEX0052](#))
- 30 Green Spring Education Trust ([CEX0021](#))
- 31 Index on Censorship ([CEX0045](#))
- 32 Inspire further supplementary ([CEX0046](#))
- 33 Inspire supplementary ([CEX0030](#))

- 34 Institution for Strategic Dialogue ([CEX0039](#))
- 35 John Witherow, Editor, The Times ([CEX0032](#))
- 36 Maggie Beirne ([CEX0011](#))
- 37 Mark Rowley QPM, Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police ([CEX0035](#))
- 38 medConfidential ([CEX0059](#))
- 39 Moonshot CVE ([CEX0034](#))
- 40 Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board ([CEX0056](#))
- 41 Mr Fadel Soliman ([CEX0028](#))
- 42 Mr Michael Gallagher ([CEX0020](#))
- 43 Mr Mohammed Akunjee ([CEX0018](#))
- 44 Muslim Council of Britain supplementary ([CEX0029](#))
- 45 NAHT ([CEX0005](#))
- 46 National Union of Students supplementary ([CEX0027](#))
- 47 Naz Shah MP ([CEX0037](#))
- 48 Nick Pickles, Head of Public Policy, Twitter UK ([CEX0051](#))
- 49 Professor David Miller and Dr Narzanin Massoumi ([CEX0062](#))
- 50 Professor James Nazroo and Dr Bridget Byrne ([CEX0061](#))
- 51 PSHE Association ([CEX0023](#))
- 52 QC David Anderson ([CEX0009](#))
- 53 Quilliam supplementary ([CEX0025](#))
- 54 Rt Hon John Hayes MP, Minister of State for Security ([CEX0049](#))
- 55 Rt Hon Theresa May MP, Home Secretary ([CEX0042](#))
- 56 Stig Abell, Managing Editor, The Sun ([CEX0040](#))
- 57 The Henry Jackson Society ([CEX0004](#))
- 58 Tony Blair Faith Foundation ([CEX0012](#))
- 59 Universities UK ([CEX0008](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2015–16

First Report	Psychoactive substances	HC 361 (HC 755)
Second Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q2 2015)	HC 512 (HC 693)
Third Report	Police investigations and the role of the Crown Prosecution Service	HC 534
Fourth Report	Reform of the Police Funding Formula	HC 476
Fifth Report	Immigration: skill shortages	HC 429 (HC 857)
Sixth Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q3 2015)	HC 772 (HC 213)
Seventh Report	Police and Crime Commissioners: here to stay	HC 844
First Special Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates: Calais: Government Response to the Committee's Eighteenth Report of Session 2014–15	HC 380
Second Special Report	Out-of-court Disposals: Government Response to the Committee's Fourteenth Report of Session 2014–15	HC 379
Third Special Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q2 2015): Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2015–16	HC 693
Fourth Special Report	Psychoactive substances: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2015–16	HC 755
Fifth Special Report	Immigration: skill shortages: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2015–16	HC 857

Session 2016–17

First Report	Police diversity	HC 27 (HC 612)
Second Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q4 2015)	HC 22
Third Report	Prostitution	HC 26
Fourth Report	College of Policing: three years on	HC 23
Fifth Report	Proceeds of crime	HC 25
Sixth Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q1 2016)	HC 151

Seventh Report	Migration Crisis	HC 24
First Special Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q3 2015): Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2015–16	HC 213
Second Special Report	Police diversity: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2016–17	HC 612