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Inspecting policing
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POLICE AND PARTNERS NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO DELIVER THE 'PREVENT' STRATEGY

Preventing the violent extremism that can create “home grown” terrorists is a responsibility shared between police, their partners and the community working together – according to Denis O'Connor, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary.

HMIC's report, *'Prevent - Progress and Prospects'*, highlights the critical role played by the police in delivering 'Prevent', which is part of the government's counter terrorism strategy.

HMIC Chief, Denis O'Connor, said: “The Police Service has identified the importance of Prevent to the long term security of this country. But it is still early days and we've found forces are at different stages of maturity. More needs to be done to understand the vulnerability of local communities from the violent extremist message. All forces need to integrate 'Prevent' into day to day business, working closely with communities and key organisations to prevent vulnerable people becoming terrorists.”

HMIC found that police forces have made good progress in recruiting specialist staff to engage with local communities and work with vulnerable people in order to protect the public. All forces are on track to deliver 'Prevent', with some further along than others.

The report emphasises the importance of police working effectively with communities, local authorities and other agencies to stop terrorist activity taking hold, and to raise public confidence. In particular HMIC says the police and other agencies must do more to understand the risk of violent extremism, and that future funding should be targeted at areas of greatest vulnerability.

HMIC found that forces with well developed relationships and processes to support 'Prevent' have had greater success against those with extremist views – "radicalisers" – who groom and exploit vulnerable people.

Mr O'Connor concluded: "Terrorists pose a very real threat to public safety. People need to be confident that the police are working with others to prevent violent extremists exploiting vulnerable people. Police and their local partners, working with government, are learning more about what works in 'Prevent'. Progress has been made, but there is still more to do."

HMIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prioritise additional funding, resources and support to highest risk force areas to ensure maximum safety for the public.
- Improve understanding about what can be done to prevent vulnerable people becoming terrorists.
- Police Service to define what forces should be doing according to their level of risks from violent extremists, by September 2009.
- All forces to ensure appropriate minimum levels of capability in place by March 2010.
- Guidelines on the use of vetting to ensure greater sharing of security information in the interests of public safety.
- Establish mechanisms to measure the success of "Prevent" activity in order to reassure the public that change has been made.

Ends -

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The report “Prevent – Progress and Prospects” is published on 24th June 2009, and can be viewed at www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic

2. The report looks at progress made against the “Police Prevent Strategy and Delivery Plan” - written by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and issued to the Police Service in April 2008, to outline how the police service can support the government’s Prevent strategy.

3. The government’s strategy for fighting terrorism, and protecting the UK, is divided into four key strands, known as the four P’s:

Protect - strengthening our defences against terrorist attacks.

Prevent - stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.

Prepare - lessening the impact of terrorism attacks.

Pursue - disrupting plots and bringing terrorists to justice.

4. Denis O’Connor was appointed Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCIC) in May 2009. He took over the role from Sir Ronnie Flanagan.

5. HMIC is an independent inspectorate. It is a fierce advocate of the public interest and rigorously examines the effectiveness of police forces and authorities to tackle crime and terrorism, and raise public confidence.

6. HMIC inspects and regulates all 43 police forces in England and Wales together with other major policing bodies such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the British Transport Police.

7. Further information on the role of HMIC can be found at www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic

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