



Prevent - Venue Hire Guidance

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Introduction

Offering a service for room hire is an invaluable commodity that provides a facility to allow people and groups to come together for sharing experiences, knowledge or celebration. It's an important part of creating communities that support each other, but in thankfully rare occasions you may find groups attempt to hire venues whose intentions are reprehensible and not necessarily for the good of the community.

This guidance is to help you in your decision-making processes about who you allow to rent out your property or part of it. There may be a possibility you would be allowing extremist groups to have a platform to spread messages of hate and division. To avoid this, when you have concerns regarding a possible booking, we recommend following this guidance.

UK terrorism

The five threat levels are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of a terrorist attack:

LOW means an attack is highly unlikely

MODERATE means an attack is possible, but not likely

SUBSTANTIAL means an attack is likely

SEVERE means an attack is highly likely

CRITICAL means an attack is highly likely in the near future

The current threat from international terrorism in the UK, as highlighted by MI5 Security Service on since February 2022, is classed as **substantial** which means an attack is likely. This judgement is dynamic and so threat levels increase and decrease in regard to available intelligence, terrorist intentions and possible timescales.

In the year ending 31 December 2022, there were 166 arrests for terrorist-related activity in Great Britain.

How can you help to fight terrorism?

Asking how you can help to fight terrorism can seem like a rather strange question. After all terrorism, at least how we often see it, is in the act of terror itself, with images of 9-11 or the Christchurch terror attack coming to mind - events that appear random and unstoppable. Nevertheless, well before these acts take place, terrorism has its roots in all communities and often starts with the exploitation of vulnerable individuals and the spreading of propaganda.

Considering this, and your role of providing a venue for meetings and events, it is always prudent to consider the purpose of events/meetings and whether they could lead to issues around radicalisation and terrorism. In following the guidance and method shown below, it is hoped that not only can we safeguard the reputation of your organisation, but we can prevent vulnerable people being exploited and prevent possible terror attacks.

About this guidance

This guidance is designed to be a practical guide to support you in your role as facilities manager (or similar) when taking bookings for events and assessing whether there are any associated risks that would need to be identified and managed **before** you confirm an event booking at your venue. The principles of the guidance can also be applied to other decision-making processes such as those for commissioning and contracting services to third party organisations or groups.

The decision with regards to who at your venue should comply with this guidance document is your responsibility.

This guidance will not apply to all events but provides a helpful start to doing something if you have concerns or are unsure about a group or individuals' wishing to use your venue - your judgement on such events is important.

The decision with regards to when to follow this guidance document is your responsibility. We advise that if you take the decision to follow the guidance document the booking is not confirmed until you have reached a decision based on your findings.

This guidance document should be used alongside your existing policies and procedures for booking events and speakers.

You may not have all the information required to complete the booking guidance when you first receive a request to use your venue and you may need to contact the requestor for further information. Should you receive requests to use your venue at short notice and wish to discuss any issues/concerns you may have, please refer to the key contacts listed at the end of this document.

The decisions regarding whether to accept a booking and take any further action is your responsibility. In order to allow fair and transparent decision making, basic information should be obtained and considered when booking events.

Not all these things will apply to all events, and it will become apparent very quickly that many events will not cause any concerns whatsoever.

This guidance has been broken down into four key areas for you to consider when reserving and booking an event at your venue:

1. Booking an event - Who wants to use your venue and what wording to use in any rental/venue hire agreement.

- **Recommended wording** - The hirer acknowledges that this venue cannot be used as a platform for the dissemination of extremist views, access to facilities will be refused if it is found that any proposed content is thought to be harmful in any way, by way of inciting violence, hatred or extremism of any kind.

2. Wider considerations and research.

- If any concerns are raised, consider checking the list of proscribed organisations. This is a list of banned organisations under UK law.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>
- If the organisation is listed as a proscribed organisation, you should not proceed with the booking. Do not agree to the event as it is likely to breach the law - please contact Durham Constabulary via 101 or emailing Counter Terrorism Police North East: FIMUNorth@CTPNE.police.uk
- If concerns are raised, but the organisation is not proscribed, consider conducting an internet search to research the

organisation, topics or speakers to inform your decision making process. To ensure that your search is proportionate make sure that you consider all the information and its credibility.

- If a charity is booking the event, you can check if it is registered on the Charity Commission website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>.
- Are there concerns that this event could fall outside your organisations code of values, or breach UK law, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010?
- In your opinion is there a chance this event could cause community tension or impact on community cohesion / relations?
- Is there a chance that this event could attract counter protest groups?
- Is there a risk to the facilities' reputation?
- Are there Health and Safety issues to be addressed or security required?

3. Decision making.

- It is important to document your decision making and communicate this clearly.
- Ensure that you store any information in line with your venues' records management policy and your data protection arrangements.
- Make it clear that you reserve the right to refuse or cancel any booking, particularly where groups or individuals are dishonest with the information they provide.
- Ensure that the event is in line with your organisations code of values, or that it doesn't breach UK law, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.
- Where an event is to proceed, consider additional conditions to ensure it is managed correctly and make it clear that breaching these conditions could lead to the cancellation of the event.
- Such conditions could include:
 - Making an event open to the public.
 - Mandatory attendance of persons who can provide an alternative voice to ensure fair debate.
 - Giving guidelines regarding language or topics that will not be tolerated.

- Insisting upon an independent chairperson or observer.
- Restricting the sale of alcohol or other products.
- Asking speakers to provide copies of presentations in advance and agree not to deviate from this.
- Restricting what banners, placards, leaflets, electronic materials, etc are allowed at the event.
- Insisting that the event is recorded in case of future complaint.

4. Useful contacts.

For further advice, contact:

Andy Bailey, Partnerships team leader and Prevent Support officer - e-mail safedurhampartnership@durham.gov.uk

If you believe there is a crime committed call 101 or immediate risk of harm or loss of life then call 999.

5. Acknowledgement.

This guidance was produced with assistance of Bury Council who developed the original guidance document.