



CHANNEL PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE OF CHANNEL

- 1 Sections 36 to 41 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CT&S Act) sets out the duty on local authorities and partners of local panels to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.
- 2 Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people from radicalisation and extremism by:
 - Identifying individuals at risk
 - Assessing the nature and extent of that risk, and
 - Developing the most appropriate support plan for the individual concerned.

Channel may be appropriate for anyone who is susceptible to being drawn into any form of terrorism. Channel is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their susceptibilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity, including instances where there is an interest in extreme violence or mass casualty attacks.

- 3 It is acknowledged that in certain circumstances, a person may have engaged in activities to the extent that they have triggered an investigative response from law enforcement or committed a criminal offence under relevant terrorism legislation. Changes to Channel Duty Guidance reflect that there may be instances where continued support would be beneficial, if it does not impede the ongoing investigation or affect the integrity of a person's informed consent. Revised guidance will now allow concurrent Channel support to be offered to eligible recipients who are also the subject of an overt Counter Terrorism Pursue investigation.

GOVERNANCE

- 4 The County Durham Channel Panel sits under the CONTEST Board which is a sub-group of the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP). The SDP is a sub-group of the County Durham Partnership which provides the leadership for partnership working in County Durham. See Appendix 1 for the governance diagram.

- 5 Annual Reports/Presentations/ Briefings are provided to:
- Durham County Council's Corporate Leadership Team
 - Safe Durham Partnership
 - Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership
 - Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership

MEMBERSHIP

- 6 The Channel Panel meetings are set up and facilitated by the local authority. The core membership attending the monthly Channel Panel meetings are:
- Chair - Head of Adult Care, Durham County Council
 - Deputy Chair - Strategic Manager, Countywide Specialist Services, Durham County Council
 - CTPNE Prevent Team
 - Lead for Education Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups - Durham County Council
 - Operations Manager for Adult Care
 - Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (Mental Health Trust) – Senior Nurse Safeguarding Children
 - Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust – Named Nurse Child Protection
 - Peer Mentor Scheme (commissioned by Police & Crime Commissioner) – Manager
 - NHS County Durham ICB (For cases where direct input is necessary)

In addition, the Channel Panel is supported by:

- Durham County Council Prevent Coordinator – Partnerships Team Manager
- Senior Policy and Partnerships Officer (Notes)

If required, the reserve Deputy Chair is:

- Strategic Manager, Adults Safeguarding

- 7 Members are expected to attend each monthly meeting and where members are unable to attend, they should send a briefed representative or an update on actions.
- 8 Members are expected to undertake the following Prevent/Prevent Referrals/Channel e-learning when joining the Channel Panel:

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>
https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channel_awareness/01-welcome.html
https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/prevent_referrals/99-accessibility-script.html

OTHER CO-OPTED MEMBERS

- 9 Other co-opted members will depend on the individual cases on the Channel Programme and may include:
- Educational establishment safeguarding lead
 - The Probation Service
 - Youth Justice Service
 - Prison service
 - Armed Forces
- 10 Any observers will need to complete a confidentiality agreement prior to the meeting.

RESPONSIBILITIES

CHANNEL PANEL CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

- 11 Durham County Council's Channel Panel Chair, as appointed by the local authority Chief Executive, is responsible for:
- Ensuring they have the required mandatory training and other relevant training (as well as their deputy Chair)
 - Having oversight of all Channel cases in their area
 - Ensuring that the appropriate representatives are invited to each meeting as panel members
 - Establishing effective relationships across partners of the panel to ensure effective cooperation over information sharing, attendance at panel meetings and delivery of support
 - Highlighting the confidentiality agreement at each Channel Panel meeting
 - Ensuring the panel functions effectively address identified vulnerabilities
 - Ensuring that susceptibilities of persons at risk of being drawn into terrorism are assessed by the panel and accurately reflected in Channel minutes
 - Ensuring all decisions and the rationale for decisions are reflected within the Channel panel minutes
 - Ensuring an effective support plan is put in place, which takes account of wider family context and needs, and that consent is sought from the individual (or their representative) to take part in the Channel process and before support is accessed
 - Ensuring the most appropriate panel member is tasked to update individuals/ families on progress where appropriate
 - Ensuring individuals and/or organisations on the panel carry out their elements of the support plan, holding partners to account where necessary through proactive management of actions, enquiries and interventions
 - Ensuring appropriate information exchange occurs where individuals transfer between services / local authority transfer

- Actively addressing or escalating issues of non-engagement within partner organisations or concerns relating to local Channel form or function through local governance arrangements where needed
- Applying professional judgement and providing the casting vote on the adoption of cases where there is no consensus among panel members
- Ensuring information sharing arrangements are in place for the panel in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), in partnership with local information governance and legal teams. The GDPR and DPA 2018 are the principal legislation governing the process of data relating to individuals.
- Liaising with other local authority teams (such as child and adult protection) if appropriate, to ensure that Channel support is aligned and coordinated with other safeguarding processes
- Highlighting and requesting that identified gaps in local service provisions are considered by commissioners.

CTPNE (COUNTER TERRORISM POLICING NORTH EAST) PREVENT TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- 12 The Channel Chair should only receive a briefing on a case by the CTPNE Prevent Team prior to the main Channel Panel in exceptional complex cases. This should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 13 The CTPNE Prevent Team will initiate the information gathering process for Channel across County Durham. This 'gateway assessment' draws upon police databases and other resources to determine the level of vulnerability and risk around the referred individual.
- 14 The CTPNE Prevent Team Sergeant is the decision maker on section 36 (3) threshold test regarding a cases suitability to be heard at Channel.
- 15 The CTPNE Prevent Team will also:
 - Manage referrals and cases through the Channel process in accordance with the Channel guidance and case management principles.
 - Ensure that referrals are dealt with swiftly, and where appropriate, brought to the attention of the Channel Chair and the panel as soon as possible but no more than 20 days.
 - Increase understanding of Channel amongst panel partners and others including through a Prevent Champions network.
 - Complete a Prevent assessment framework document (PAF) which includes multi-agency information and identifies engagement, intent and capability. The PAF and support plan will be reviewed for each meeting by the Channel Case Officer and updates of the susceptibility assessment will be undertaken every three months as a minimum, to ensure that the progress being made in supporting the individual is being captured and decision making is based on the most up to date position.

- A closing PAF should be completed by the Channel Case Officer as soon as possible setting out the reason for the panel's recommendations.
 - Managing any risk associated with the individual's potential involvement in terrorist-related activity.
- 16 The CTPNE Prevent Team are responsible for liaising with the Intervention Providers, updating the susceptibility assessment and for assessing progress made with the Channel Panel in conjunction with the Chair.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN CHANNEL AND COUNTER TERRORISM PURSUE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 17 Where there is a concurrent Pursue investigation, and in consultation with the Counter Terrorism Case Officer (CTCO), the chair should also consider the value of having the Counter Terrorism Policing Pursue Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) or a representative of the SIO, present to add investigative context and aid deconfliction. In such circumstances the emphasis of Channel must be in its specific functions set out in section 36(4) of CTSA 2015. That is to provide a multi-agency approach to:
- identify people at risk,
 - assess the nature and extent of that risk,
 - develop the most appropriate support plan for the person concerned.
- 18 The SIO or representative, if present at Channel panel should not interfere unduly with the panel or Chair's responsibilities in delivering Channel support. The Chair will retain the casting vote on the adoption of cases and panel decisions where there is no consensus and no clear majority among panel members. The inclusion of investigative contingents/representatives from Counter Terrorism Policing should not cause an imbalance in decision making. The CTCO will typically represent Counter Terrorism Policing in partnership discussions and provide input into decisions requiring a vote.
- 19 The SIO will retain operational autonomy for investigative (Pursue) matters, which are distinct from Channel processes. The CTCO will provide the conduit through which Counter Terrorism Police, pursue and prevent activities are complementary and coordinated.

OTHER CHANNEL PANEL MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- 20 Panel members have a responsibility to work collaboratively with the chair and panel partners to aid the mitigation of identified risk and susceptibilities. This includes:

- Attending monthly Channel Panel meetings or sending an appropriate named deputy from their agency or provide action updates to the Council's Prevent Coordinator
- Members and any deputies sent in their absence must have enough seniority to be able to make operational decisions for their organisations
- Sharing information necessary and proportionate to the effective working of the panel (in line with the panel's locally agreed information sharing agreement). Partners are expected to respond to the Channel Case Officer within five working days of receipt of any information requests
- Contributing towards the support plan
- Record and hold information securely – Panel members should not store Channel minutes or other Channel documentation on their own organisational systems. A central repository exists within the local authority for Channel Panel minutes
- Contribute to information sharing, risk assessment and decision-making about the most appropriate intervention to address identified vulnerabilities
- Represent and act as a SPOC - Single Point of Contact for their organisation. Channel Panel members will be expected to raise awareness around this agenda and promote the necessity to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. It is expected as SPOC, Panel members will promote their position and responsibility, providing advice and guidance to practitioners within their organisation.
- Attend and contribute to Channel development sessions.

INFORMATION SHARING

- 21 Partners may be requested to provide information about an individual to the police during the information gathering stage to ascertain the level of risk and vulnerability.
- 22 The Safe Durham Partnership 'Information Sharing Protocol' has been revised to include Prevent and Channel. This will expedite the appropriate sharing of information in a timely and legal way.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING ARRANGEMENTS

- 23 The Channel Panel will review cases **adopted** onto the Channel programme at least at six months and again at 12 months from the point at which an individual exits the process. This process will be managed by Durham County Council's Prevent Coordinator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- 24 Meetings are confidential and documents cannot be disclosed without the consent of the Chair.
- 25 Confidential items will be restricted and circulated to Panel Members only via secure email. If not secure, the information will be circulated via Egress.

- 26 Minutes are classified as Official Sensitive.
- 27 Channel data will be stored for six years from the date the case is no longer on the programme. Following the closure of the case, all Channel cases are reviewed at six months and 12 months. Individuals are no longer on the programme once the 12-month review is complete. Local authority Channel data will be deleted six years from the date of the 12-month review.
- 28 A confidentiality agreement template is produced for those attending each panel meeting.

QUORACY

- 29 A Quorum for core membership will consist of the Chanel Chair and Chanel Police Practitioner as a minimum and at least two other core members.

Version record

Version No.	Amendments made	Authorisation
1	First version – Andrea Petty/Andy Bailey	For Channel Development session January 2021
2	FINAL version – shared with Channel Panel 27.1.21	Following Channel development session
3	Final Version – following Durham Constabulary Prevent Team re-structure into NECTU and the inclusion of Harrogate and district NHS Foundation Trust as a co-opted shared with Channel Panel 6.6.22	Following Channel development session
4	Final version – following changes to Channel Duty guidance to support subjects of terrorism-related investigations – shared with Channel Panel 13.11.25	Following Channel development session.

APPENDIX 1: CHANNEL PANEL STRUCTURE CHART

