

BIRKBECK
University of London

Meeting of the Governors

29 November 2023

Annual report on Prevent compliance 2022-23

Report prepared by: Katharine Bock, Deputy College Secretary, for the Prevent Working Group

Action required: Governors are asked to consider the attached Prevent duty risk register and action plan and annual data return and agree that the Chair of Governors can sign off the annual accountability declaration to OFS.

- 1 University governing bodies are responsible, under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, for preventing people from being drawn into terrorism. OFS is responsible for assuring Higher Education provider compliance with the requirements of the CTSA.
- 2 OFS has a Prevent monitoring framework in place. Under the framework universities are required to submit an accountability declaration of compliance with the Prevent requirements and a data return each year.
- 3 Birkbeck has a Prevent working group of senior staff: the DVC, Deputy College Secretary, Director of Student Services, Chief Information Officer and the Heads of Facilities, Communications, Organisational development, and Estates resources. The group oversees compliance with the Prevent duty, considers specific issues referred to it and maintains a risk register and action plan.
- 4 The risk register and action plan, updated in November 2023 is attached as Appendix A, the accountability declaration as Appendix B and the data return as Appendix C.
- 5 The return is due to be submitted to OFS by 1 December.

Birkbeck College: Prevent duty Risk Assessment and Action Plan

Birkbeck is a diverse and complex community whose members come from different backgrounds, have different experiences and are at different stages in life. We take our safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. This extends to students who are young, isolated, and possibly vulnerable to ideologies as well as members of our community experiencing mental health and wellbeing issues. Equally there are mature, professional local people in our community and many students and staff who are dedicated to sincerely held beliefs about politics, society and freedom.

As a community, we value being able to operate inclusively, with diverse views and expressions and vigorous debate. We seek to work collaboratively with the Students' Union and the Trade Unions in all areas of joint interest. Birkbeck values its own radical beginnings as a college specifically for working people and much of our academic culture is built on diverse concepts of radicalism.

We promote and support freedom of speech within the law. We have a duty of care to the students, staff and visitors who make up the College community, and a duty to safeguard vulnerable individuals.

The Prevent duty requires organisations to establish senior management oversight arrangements, carry out a risk assessment and develop an action plan. Since the duty was introduced the remit has expanded to cover general safeguarding and welfare matters. The College has a working group bringing together senior academic and operational staff and the Students' Union, which has developed the risk register and action plan set out below.

Birkbeck Prevent working group

Updated November 2023

	Risk	Indicators	Impact before	Mitigation	Impact after	Action	Owner	Update
I	<p>Support for violent extremism is expressed, or illegal statements made, at events on campus, online or via social media or at other venues with Birkbeck students and staff present</p> <p>Restricted ability for academic groups and student societies to exercise freedom of thought and expression and engage in enquiry and debate</p>	<p>Students, staff and others raise concerns about events or speakers</p> <p>Information about proposed speakers indicates that they advocate violent extremism</p> <p>Police, Prevent officers or other authorities raise concerns about speakers or events</p>	H	<p>Freedom of Speech Policy defines procedure for approval of externally booked events and external speakers, via an events panel to consider operational risk and a freedom of speech panel, with academic representation, to consider and confirm any decisions not to host events or speakers</p>	M	<p>Keep Freedom of Speech policy updated and implement it</p> <p>Convene events panel as needed</p> <p>Convene freedom of speech panel as needed</p> <p>Free Speech Policy and Procedure published on College website</p>	DCSG	<p>Israel Hamas conflict and Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act have increased the risk environment and the number of incidents we have needed to respond to particularly on social media.</p> <p>We have obtained specialist legal advice on lawful free speech</p> <p>We will review our free speech policy in 2024</p>
			M	<p>Room hire terms and conditions make reference to Freedom of Speech policy and require adherence to all College policies including Events/External Speakers procedures</p> <p>Room hire terms and conditions and procedures require bookers to define nature of event, speakers and risk assessment, and to identify an appropriately</p>	L	<p>Terms and Conditions for room bookings include Risk assessment/due diligence criteria and external speaker information disclosure, with training delivered to staff involved.</p>	Deputy Director Estates Resources	

	Risk	Indicators	Impact before	Mitigation	Impact after	Action	Owner	Update
				experienced individual to be present at and manage the event.				
				Procedures for managing internal and external communications if issues arise with specific events		Procedures and routes of escalation have been agreed	Head of Comms	
				Social Media Principles agreed and published		Referred to College Ethics Committee. Social Media Guidelines agreed and published on the website	Head of Comms	
2	Individual students, members of staff or visitors experience harm or distress , affecting their wellbeing and potentially the wellbeing of others	Complaints, feedback or concerns raised by students, staff or visitors	M/H	Agree and implement an effective safeguarding policy, aligned with the College Code of Student Discipline, Student Terms and Conditions and Fitness to Study policies and procedures, with appropriate contacts for referral to counselling, mental health and other support, via a safeguarding panel	M	Keep Safeguarding policy and procedure updated and implement it Publicise safeguarding policy and procedure to students and staff Safeguarding policy updated with information on front line contacts and how decisions are made.	Director of Student Services	Safeguarding policy on College website Wellbeing Services and Safeguarding on Student Services Connect site
				Agree procedure for referring individuals at risk of being drawn into violent extremism, in consultation with local Prevent officers		If an individual at risk is identified, the Director of Student Services on behalf of the safeguarding panel will contact local Prevent officers who will advise on	Director of Student Services	We are seeing more people experiencing mental health and wellbeing issues or unclear/mixed ideologies

	Risk	Indicators	Impact before	Mitigation	Impact after	Action	Owner	Update
						referral.		
				Training and briefing for staff and SU officers on applying the safeguarding policy and supporting vulnerable individuals		Draw up and implement awareness training plan, tailored for different staff categories according to their level of contact with students and visitors Training team attends courses run by DFE Prevent Co ordinator Include safeguarding in new staff induction	Head of Organisational Development & Change	Safeguarding training to be made part of compulsory online training for all staff Categories of staff who undertake specific Prevent training updated and expanded
	Violent incident occurs on our premises			Preparation for the Protect duty (Martyn's Law) to ensure we are prepared for an incident and able to respond effectively		Work on the Protect duty to continue in 2024	Director of Estates and Facilities	
3	Reputational damage Poor communication with media and stakeholders	Media enquiries Social media mentions Internal information External information from stakeholders	M	Procedures for managing internal and external communications if issues arise with specific issues or events	M	Procedures and routes of escalation established	Head of Comms	As in x above Israel Hamas conflict and Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act has raised the risk environment
				Monitoring of media/social media		Establish mechanisms for monitoring media/social media	Head of Comms	
	Decision making in relation			Agreed procedures in		Annual report via	Director of	


	Risk	Indicators	Impact before	Mitigation	Impact after	Action	Owner	Update
	to safeguarding, events and external speakers is not justified or sufficiently transparent			Freedom of Speech / External speaker /safeguarding policy and procedures		Academic Board	Student Services	
4	College IT facilities used to receive, research or communicate inappropriate content	Complaints by students, staff or visitors	L/M	College Computing Regulations set out acceptable and unacceptable computer use		College Computing Regulations revised to rule against downloading, creating, transmitting or storing material that is indecent, threatening or discriminatory. Updated policies agreed October 2022	CIO	The threat landscape has changed with the risk of cyber incidents as well as incidents on our premises, linking this area with IT security. There is a risk of threat from State actors as well as individuals Information Services frontline staff will be included in future Prevent training
				Consideration given to filtering internet access		Considered SPC 2016; agreed costs outweigh benefits	CIO	
				Ethics procedures to protect those conducting approved security sensitive research		Included in Responsibilities and Procedures for Ethical Review document	DCSG	We will consider risk to individuals from online bad actors (eg via Linked In) in 2024
5	Impact of events or issues in nearby or partner organisations	Events in the Bloomsbury area Complaints; negative		Sharing information on current risks and developments with neighbours, including		Ensure contacts, areas of responsibility and routes of communication are established and agreed	Head of Facilities	

	Risk	Indicators	Impact before	Mitigation	Impact after	Action	Owner	Update
		media interest Information from neighbouring/partner institutions Information from local police/Prevent officers		Bloomsbury Colleges and UEL.		Use security network contacts		
	External organisations using our premises or misleadingly linking us to their views	As above		Management of specific issues and events in line with risks 2 and 3 above, including events and free speech panels as needed		As in risks 2 and 3 above	Deputy Director Estates Resources	This has also become a cybersecurity risk
				Regular monitoring of the Multi Faith Room to ensure use policy is followed and the facility is accessible to all		Regular checks by staff		
				Raise awareness of Multi Faith Room policy		Expectations of use are posted on the website		
				Faith, Philosophical Belief and Religion statement for students		Policy posted on website		

Prevent annual accountability declaration

Throughout the year and up to the date of approval, [**Provider name**]:

- has had due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent duty)
- has provided to OfS all required information about its implementation of the Prevent duty
- has reported to OfS in a timely way all serious issues related to the Prevent duty, or now attaches to this document any reports that should have been made, with an explanation of why they were not submitted
- has reviewed, and where necessary, updated its Prevent risk assessment and action plan

Name	Sir Andrew Cahn
Role	Chair of Governors
Signed	
Date	29 November 2023

I confirm that I have the authority to sign on behalf of the governing body, or proprietor where there is no governing body.

Declarations should be signed by the chair of the governing body or proprietor (where a governing body does not exist) or a person within the provider who has received delegated authority to sign such declarations on behalf of the governing body or the proprietor. This declaration would be treated as confirmation that the provider has had due regard to the Prevent duty.

Office for Students Prevent monitoring

Accountability and data return 2023

Validation passed

Provider: Birkbeck College

UKPRN: 10007760

In all cases this data should cover the year from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023.

Table 1: Welfare

Question	Islamist radicalisation	Extreme right-wing radicalisation	Mixed, unclear or unstable ideology	Other radicalisation	Total (automatically generated)
i) Number of Prevent-related cases escalated to the point at which the Prevent lead has become involved	0	0	0	0	0
ii) Number of Prevent-related cases which led to informal external advice being sought from Prevent partners	0	0	0	0	0
iii) Number of formal external Prevent referrals	0	0	0	0	0

For each Prevent-related case, please add information about how the case originated (e.g concerns identified from behaviour online, or through accessing material online, through external speakers or as a result of a welfare issue). Maximum 300 words.

--

Table 2: Events & external speakers

Question	Total	Health and safety	Procedural matters	Reasons related to Prevent risk	Other matters
i) Total number of events or speakers approved through the external speakers process (estimate to nearest 10 permitted)	384				
ii) Total number of events or speakers approved subject to any mitigations or conditions	0				
iii) Number of events or speakers approved subject to any mitigations or conditions due to Prevent-related risks	0				
iv) Total number of events or speakers rejected	0	0	0	0	0

For each case, please add information about the reasons for rejection. Maximum 300 words.

--

Table 3: Training

Description	Total
i) Number of staff identified as key in relation to the Prevent duty	85
ii) Number of key staff receiving induction Prevent training	11
iii) Number of key staff receiving refresher Prevent training	40