What is PREVENT?
PREVENT is part of the government’s strategy to prevent extremism. It means every doctor, nurse, teacher, university lecturer, social worker, and every other public service provider has to look for signs of extremism in members of the public. They are essentially spies for the government.

What is Extremism?
1) It is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values*
2) It can be violent or non-violent;
3) It can also be calling for the death of members of the British armed forces.

* ‘Fundamental British values’ = democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. There are many other things that are being added to this list as and when it suits the government.

Key problems with PREVENT:
1) It restricts any types of dissent or opposition to the government.
2) It breaks down the relationship of trust between doctor and patient, teacher and student, etc.
3) The intention is to prevent acts of terrorism, but there is no evidence to show that ‘extremist ideas’ lead to an individual committing an act of terrorism.
4) It criminalises Muslims as the government sees Islam as ‘extreme’ at its core. Anyone who practices Islam or ‘looks Muslim’ can therefore be seen as an extremist.
5) It does not account for the government’s own violence (e.g. in its foreign policy), which is often referenced by convicted terrorists as the main reason they are driven to their actions.
6) It creates fear within Muslim communities, further isolating them from wider society.

What happens if you are identified as at risk of engaging in extremism?
1) Your teacher/doctor/social worker/etc will contact your local PREVENT Officer. He or she will either work for your local council or be a police officer.
2) You will be contacted by the PREVENT Officer or a police officer. They may visit your home/workplace/school.
3) If your child is identified, the PREVENT Officer/police officer may make contact with your child at school without informing you first.
4) In all instances, they will want to ask you questions. They may ask you about your religion, your religious practices, what you think about Israel, what you think of terrorists, what you think of gay rights, etc. It will seem like a conversation rather than an interrogation.
5) If you/your child are deemed at risk then you/your child will be put through Channel. This is a non-compulsory deradicalisation programme, where you/your child will be monitored by the police, have regular meetings with your PREVENT Officer, possibly attend workshops.
Remember:

You have not committed an offence just because you have been singled out under the PREVENT programme, and therefore you do not need to engage with the PREVENT officer without a friend or lawyer present.

If you would like information about PREVENT or support in challenging it please contact us:

Islamic Human Rights Commission

202 Preston Road
Wembley HA9 8PA
T: 020 8904 4222
E: info@ihrc.org
www.ihrc.org.uk

What should you do if you are targeted?

1) If you are approached by a lawyer, lawyer etc. with you at the meeting, e.g. PREVENT Related issues, ensure that you have someone to informally discuss any education/institutional wishes.

2) Should a PREVENT Officer be at any meeting you are in, refuse to answer questions until you have spoken to a lawyer.

3) If your employer or union rep, friend, lawyer etc. contact IHRC for help with refusal to speak without a lawyer present.

4) Even if you have not been single out re: PREVENT details, if you are approached in the street by any PREVENT Officer referal if necessary, contact IHRC for a Nighting Human Rights.

Understanding PREVENT

Subject to change.

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