

SANDWELL PREVENT TEAM NEWSLETTER

Prevent & COVID-19

Welcome everyone to November's Prevent newsletter. We continue to be available for support and keep you up to date for key information and guidance in relation to Prevent. Please do contact us for any queries.

With COVID-19 cases rising across the UK, the Government recently introduced new [national restrictions](#) in effect from 5/11. Please continue to follow [Government advice](#) on how to prevent the spread of the virus. The webpage has information to stay safe.

Recent Incidents

Sadly, this month, there have been a number of terrorist incidents in Europe and worldwide, including; France, Vienna, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan. We have included more details on these attacks in our 'recent news' section below.

Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu, UK head of Counter Terrorism Policing, statement following the attack in Vienna (3/11):

"Overnight, we heard the terrible news of another terrorist attack in Europe – this time in Vienna, where four people were killed. Our thoughts are with all the victims, their families and loved ones of the recent attacks both in Austria and France, as well as all of the emergency service personnel who continue to respond to and investigate these atrocities. At this time, there is no intelligence to link any of these attacks to the UK, and officers from Counter Terrorism Policing continue to work closely with our international partners and will of course provide any assistance where we can."

Our thoughts are with the victims and their families. We know that these awful attacks will have an effect on many of us.

As always, the Sandwell Prevent team wanted to offer their support to anyone affected. If you are aware of any colleagues, friends or communities who need support, please contact any of us. If you have been affected in any way by a terrorist attack, emotional and practical support is available here victimsoterrorism.campaign.gov.uk.

Recent news

Terror attacks - Sadly, on one day alone on 2/11 in Afghanistan, 22 students and professors were killed at a University campus. This comes as tensions between ISIS and the US have resurfaced after militant groups and the Afghan government (the latter supported by the US) had began peace talks back in February. France were sadly the recipient of three attacks with two people being wounded in the first attack on 25/09 outside the former offices of the controversial Charlie Hebdo magazine. On the 16/10 a teacher was killed in a horrific attack in Paris, and three people were tragically killed in Nice on 29/10 with a stabbing incident occurring outside the French consulate in Saudi Arabia.

Rugby 'Nazi' teenager guilty of right-wing terror offences

A 17-year-old, from Rugby, Warwickshire, has been found guilty of preparing for acts of neo-Nazi terrorism. The teenager, arrested last September, previously pleaded guilty to nine charges in relation to possessing documents likely to be useful to a terrorist. The prosecutor said the boy had praised the Christchurch attacker and "came to believe in an ideology which thinks a race war is coming". The court was told the boy had researched how to convert a blank-firing gun, offered advice to members of neo-Nazi chat groups and was admitted to an online neo-Nazi group after completing a "test" survey in which he expressed a hatred for Jewish people.

DfE Coronavirus helpline: 0800 046 8687

Available: Monday – Friday (8am – 6pm)

Email address: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have issued [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Staying Safe Online guidance](#).

UK Terrorism threat level change

Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu, continued with his statement to describe the increase of the UK terrorism threat level:

"Today, the threat level from terrorism has changed from SUBSTANTIAL to SEVERE as a precautionary measure in response to the events in France and Austria. This threat level moving to SEVERE means it is highly likely that a terrorist attack could happen in the UK, but I want to stress that the change is not based on a specific threat. I do, however urge the public to remain vigilant and to report any suspicious activity to police. Now, more than ever, we need communities to stand together and reject those who seek to sow division and hatred between us. We need communities and families to bring to our attention anyone they perceive may be vulnerable, a danger or escalating towards terrorism. Anyone with information is urged to contact police by calling 0800 789 321 or by visiting <https://act.campaign.gov.uk/>."

"Whilst we want the public to remain alert, they should not be alarmed by this change in threat level. We have a variety of established operational tactics that are tried and tested, to ensure that the UK is both well prepared and protected from the threat of terrorism. Since 2014, when the threat level was last changed from substantial to severe, we have continued to build on our capability and enhance security arrangements against the backdrop of a consistently high level of threat. Officers work day and night to protect the public and keep them safe from the threat of terrorism and this will not change."

"As I have previously said, our efforts can only succeed where we have the support of the public – it is communities standing together that defeats terrorism."

Facts

- **The Counter Extremism Strategy, 2015 says:** Extremism is "the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including; democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs".
- Did you know that ISIS has a presence in several countries in Africa?



[We are live on Twitter!](#)



Please follow us [@preventsandwell](#) for our latest updates and news.

Conspiracy Theories

Throughout COVID-19, we've reported on a number of conspiracy theories which have also showed their hand in the recent US presidential election. There were claims from Trump backers and President Trump himself that Joe Biden has cheated his way to victory. Marianna Spring, a Specialist disinformation reporter at BBC news, described how in the early stages this started with Trump's re-election campaign running hundreds of Facebook advertisements pushing a theory that Joe Biden cheated during the first US presidential debate. The adverts apparently showed Joe Biden with an earpiece, and say that he refused to have his ears checked for devices prior to the debate. Although unfounded, the advert circulated on several social media outlets and Facebook said they had reached over 10 million users. Trump has also yet to provide evidence to his claims that the voting process and vote counting were fraudulent. This weekend, thousands of supporters of the president turned out in Washington DC to back his unsubstantiated claims. Trump gave the protestors, described as being from an array of backgrounds and reportedly including members of Far Right group, the Proud Boys and also a pro militia group, the thumbs up as a conspiracy theorist addressed the crowd.

ONLINE SAFETY

We are delivering a Child Online Safety for Parents & Prevent Awareness webinar as part of the council-wide #Safer6 initiative. Parents and community members can join the session and find out more information on the council [website](#).

Report Suspicious Activity

Counter Terrorism Policing's [ACT campaign](#) is for reporting anything you've seen or heard that could potentially be related to terrorism.

Your actions could save lives...

For information, support or guidance on Prevent in Sandwell, you can email:

Prevent_Inbox@sandwell.gov.uk

If you would like to talk to someone about any queries, concerns, or a referral do not hesitate to make contact with anyone from the Prevent Team:

Strategic Prevent Coordinator: Pardeep_Brar@sandwell.gov.uk

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