



HM Government

CONTEST

The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism 2023

July 2023

CP 903



CONTEST

The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism 2023

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for the Home Department
by Command of His Majesty

July 2023

CP 903



© Crown copyright 2023

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/official-documents.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at public.enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk.

ISBN 978-1-5286-4055-8

E02897889 07/23

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Global on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

CORRECTION SLIP

Title: CONTEST, The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism, 2023

Session: 2022-23

CP 903

ISBN: 978-1-5286-4055-8

Presented to Parliament on 18 July 2023

Correction:

Ministerial Foreword – Page 2, paragraph 2

Text currently reads:

Since we last published CONTEST in 2018, we have seen nine declared terrorist attacks, and 39 disrupted attacks – averaging almost eight attempted attacks per year.

Text should read:

Since 2018, when CONTEST was last updated, to the publication of this version, nine terrorist attacks have been declared in the UK. Since March 2017, our agencies and law enforcement disrupted 39 late-stage terrorist plots in the UK.

Date of correction: 22 September 2023

Contents

Ministerial Foreword	2
Executive Summary	4
Part One: Terrorism.....	8
Part Two: Response	24
Part Three: Implementation	51
Annex A: Roles and responsibilities	57
Annex B: Notable delivery since 2018	65

Ministerial Foreword



Every death and injury from terrorism is a tragedy and an outrage. Terrorists seek to spread fear, inflict pain and traumatise communities. They seek to erode our freedoms and values. It is through CONTEST that we ensure terrorists do not succeed.

The terrorist threat to the UK is unrelenting and evolving. Since 2018, when CONTEST was last updated, to the publication of this version, nine terrorist attacks have been declared in the UK. Since March 2017, our agencies and law

enforcement disrupted 39 late-stage terrorist plots in the UK. It is also increasingly unpredictable, making it harder to detect and investigate. We therefore judge that the risk is rising – and I will continue to do everything within my power to disrupt and curtail this threat.

We will not only continue to stop attacks, we will attack the threat at its source by disrupting the broader radicalising influence of those propagating extremist ideology. Through this updated strategy we will place greater focus on using all the levers of the state to identify and intervene against terrorists; we will build critical partnerships with the private sector and international allies to keep the public safe; and we will harness the opportunities presented by new technology.

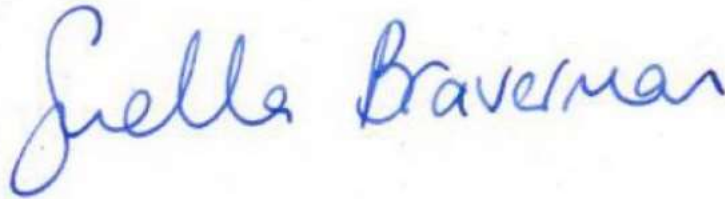
CONTEST is now 20 years old and has become a world-leading counter-terrorism capability. I am profoundly grateful to the men and women who work so tirelessly and bravely to stop these attacks and to bring perpetrators to justice. These are the people who keep us and our families safe.

We must regularly review and update CONTEST to ensure it matches the threat as it evolves and endures. We must be self-critical and self-aware to be as effective as possible. Independent and external scrutiny, from the Manchester Arena Inquiry to the Independent Review of Prevent, is essential in shining a light on where we can and must improve. I am committed to ensuring we take on these valuable lessons.

CONTEST has stood the test of time. Its robust framework enables us to analyse the threat; marshal an effective response; and communicate across government, to the British people and private sector, and to our international partners. These partnerships are the

core of our counter-terrorism efforts and successes. Efforts such as preventing radicalisation, investigating closed online spaces, and responding swiftly to events in the UK and around the world, cannot be done alone.

Keeping people safe is the first and most sacred duty of government. We will not flinch.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suella Braverman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP

Home Secretary

Executive Summary

1. The aim of CONTEST, the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, is to reduce the risk from terrorism to the UK, its citizens and interests overseas, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.

2. The government updated the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (IR), in March 2023.¹ That document sets out the UK's overarching national security and international strategy. Terrorism is one of the threats covered by that strategy and CONTEST outlines our response to it in further detail.

3. Since the last version of CONTEST in 2018, concerted counter-terrorism efforts by the UK and key allies have largely been successful in driving down risk by suppressing the most serious terrorist threats. This has enabled a rebalancing of finite national security resource into other areas of threat. The core CONTEST framework empowers government departments, devolved administrations, local authorities, frontline emergency services, intelligence agencies, and other partners, to work together to counter terrorism. Our global allies, and independent experts, recognise the core CONTEST Framework – Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare – to be a world leading counter-terrorism programme. A significant majority of people feel safe from terrorism and are confident in the government's ability to protect the UK from terrorism.²

4. However, the threat from terrorism is enduring and evolving. Despite a prevalence of lower sophistication attacks in the UK, the threat we see today and in the coming years, is more diverse, dynamic and complex:

- a domestic terrorist threat which is less predictable, harder to detect and investigate
- a persistent and evolving threat from Islamist terrorist groups overseas
- an operating environment where accelerating advances in technology provide both opportunity and risk to our counter-terrorism efforts

5. It is within this context that we judge that the risk from terrorism is once again rising. We will need to continue to balance our duty to protect the UK and its interests from terrorism against the need to respond to other national security threats within finite resource.

¹ [Integrated Review Refresh 2023: Responding to a more contested and volatile world - GOV.UK](#)

² See annex C. Based on polling rounds conducted between January 2022 and January 2023.

6. External scrutiny is improving our counter-terrorism response. Full implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Review of Prevent is delivering a step-change in our work to stop people becoming or supporting terrorists. We are committed to delivering Martyn's Law to improve security at public venues. And we continue to learn from past attacks, inquests and inquiries, including the Manchester Arena Inquiry, continuously improving our capabilities and closing vulnerabilities in our response to terrorist attacks.

7. Our counter-terrorism response will be even more agile in the face of an evolving threat, more integrated so that we can bring the right interventions to bear at the right time to reduce risk and more aligned with our international allies to ensure that we continue to deliver together against a common threat. We will:

- realise the full potential of the UK's world-leading Counter-Terrorism Operations Centre (CTOC), bringing together the right teams, data and technology to more effectively identify, investigate and disrupt terrorists
- ensure that counter-terrorism investigations draw on an increased range of expert advice and non-law enforcement interventions to mitigate the evolving terrorist threat. We will better connect the counter-terrorism system with expertise in healthcare, education, social services and the criminal justice system to respond to the complexity of the terrorist threat
- maintain investment in critical threat assessment capabilities, through the world-class Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC)
- support the public and private sector to be effective partners in preventing attacks and reducing loss of life in the event of an attack, transforming our communications effort to focus core messages in areas where the public has a critical role to play in our counter-terrorism response
- deepen our international counter-terrorism partnerships; aligning our strategic approaches and detecting and disrupting threats together, so that we can maximise the effectiveness of existing capabilities and develop new ones to protect our citizens
- further strengthen the UK Border as a critical line of defence against terrorism, taking advantage of new immigration tools, detection, targeting and biometric capabilities, to identify and block threats from entering the UK
- continue to invest in the identification of future threats and opportunities that derive from technology, working with international partners, the private sector, think tanks and academia
- build on our engagement with the tech sector, participating in the co-ordinated, international effort to suppress terrorist exploitation of the internet, including co-operation with companies on a bilateral basis and partnership with non-governmental organisations and multilateral forums

- enable crucial access to the data we need to investigate and disrupt terrorist activity through setting international data standards and the landmark UK/US Data Access Agreement

8. The Home Secretary leads the UK's counter-terrorism response and the implementation of CONTEST. The CONTEST Unit, based in the Home Office, produced this strategy, with input and challenge from government departments, devolved administrations, the police, the security and intelligence agencies, frontline practitioners, victims of terrorism and their families, the private sector, academics, community leaders, international partners and the public. CONTEST Unit will monitor and co-ordinate cross-government counter-terrorism performance, including where other Secretaries of State have responsibility for elements of the strategy.

9. CONTEST is a vital part of how we communicate the approach to this crucial area of work. The public play an essential role preventing and responding to attacks and taking action themselves where possible to reduce risks. While it is not always possible to be open about the specific threats or our response to them, CONTEST is a way of increasing the amount of information that is available to help both the public and the private sector play their part.



Part One: Terrorism

The use or threat of serious violence against a person or serious damage to property where that action is:

- i. designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public; and
- ii. for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.³

³ The definition of terrorism as set out in the Terrorism Act 2000 (as amended by Terrorism Act 2006 and Counter-Terrorism Act 2008). For full text see Terrorism Act 2000 (legislation.gov.uk)

Part One: Terrorism

The impact of terrorism

10. Since 2018, when CONTEST was last updated, to the publication of this version, nine terrorist attacks have been declared in the UK; these incidents killed six people and injuring 20.^{3 4} Twenty-four UK nationals have been killed in eleven attacks overseas.⁵ Since March 2017, our agencies and law enforcement disrupted 39 late-stage terrorist plots in the UK. These have included the targeting of public figures, such as MPs, specific communities and events, such as Pride, and public locations, such as iconic sites in London.⁶

11. Every death from terrorism is a tragedy. The impact on survivors, witnesses, and loved ones endures. The effects of a terrorist attack for these individuals can be felt in many ways, including life changing injuries, post-traumatic stress and anxiety, and financial hardship.^{7 8 9} Terrorist attacks can have profound consequences that extend across society, including geopolitical, economic and national security impacts.

12. In addition to the personal and societal costs of terrorism, the wider economic costs of terrorism are significant. The five terrorist attacks which took place across the UK in 2017 are estimated to have cost up to £172 million in direct costs.¹⁰ Separate analysis by

³ Manchester Victoria (Dec 2018), Stanwell (Mar 2019), Fishmongers' Hall (Nov 2019), HMP Whitemoor (Jan 2020), Streatham High Road (Feb 2020), Forbury Gardens (Jun 2020), Sir David Amess (Oct 2021), Liverpool Women's Hospital (Nov 2021) and Dover Migrant Centre (Oct 2022).

⁴ Unless otherwise stated, statistics in this document do not include Northern Ireland related terrorism (NIRT). CONTEST addresses all forms of terrorism that affect the UK and our interests overseas, with the exception of Northern Ireland related terrorism in Northern Ireland, which is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

⁵ South Africa Kidnapping (Feb 2018); Afghanistan G4S Compound (Nov 2018); Nairobi Hotel (Jan 2019); Sri Lanka Terrorist Attacks (Apr 2019); Asasey Hotel, Somalia (Jul 2019); Palma, Mozambique (Mar 2021); Kabul Airport Bombing (Aug 2021); Villa Rosa Hotel, Somalia (Nov 2021), Hayat Hotel, Somalia (Aug 2022); West Bank (Apr 2023).

⁶ Figures accurate as of July 2023.

⁷ García-Vera, M. P., Sanz, J., and Gutiérrez, S. (2016). A systematic review of the literature on posttraumatic stress disorder in victims of terrorist attacks. *Psychological Reports*, 119(1), 328-359.

⁸ Barker, A., and Dinisman, T. (2016). Meeting the needs of survivors and families bereaved through terrorism. *Victim Support*. www.victimsupport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/documents/files/Victim%20Support_Meeting%20the%20needs%20of%20survivors%20and%20families%20bereaved%20thro..._0.pdf

⁹ Counter Terrorism Preparedness Network. (2019). Humanitarian assistance and psychosocial support. www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ha_ps_report.pdf

¹⁰ 2021 prices. Home Office estimate – see Annex D for further detail.

RAND Europe estimates potential indirect impacts on GDP of up to £3.4 billion in the year of the 2017 attacks.¹¹

The threat from terrorism

13. The terrorist threat is enduring and evolving. We now face a domestic terrorist threat which is less predictable, harder to detect and investigate; a persistent and evolving threat from Islamist terrorist groups overseas; and an operating environment where technology continues to provide both opportunity and risk to our counter-terrorism efforts. We therefore judge that the risk from terrorism is once again rising.

14. We are in an increasingly challenging national security environment, as set out by the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (IR) refresh.¹² The most pressing national security priority is now the threat from Russia to European security. China poses an epoch-defining and systemic challenge. COVID-19 changed the behaviours of almost every person in the UK. On top of this, we see a pace of technological change that will impact all the threats we face, while providing new opportunities.

15. It is in this context that we must now view and manage the terrorist threat. Alongside our allies, we must ruthlessly prioritise finite resources to ensure that we understand terrorism and so that we can respond effectively. The increasing spectrum of national security threats means that this balance is and will remain a constant challenge over the coming years.

Terrorism in the UK

The terrorist threat in the UK today is dominated by individuals or small groups acting outside of organised terrorist networks. It is a trend which makes terrorists less predictable and harder to identify, investigate and disrupt.

16. In the UK, the primary domestic terrorist threat comes from Islamist terrorism, which accounts for approximately 67% of attacks since 2018, about three quarters of MI5 caseload and 64% of those in custody for terrorism-connected offences.¹³

17. Within Islamist terrorism in the UK, explicit affiliation and fixed ideological alignment with any one specific international terrorist organisation is diminishing. The relative decline in profiles of al-Qa'ida and, to a lesser extent, Daesh, the absence of mass-appeal individuals linked to these groups, and the continuing societal shift to an online world have led to issues and grievances from a wider range of sources becoming ideological

¹¹ European Parliamentary Research Service and RAND Europe (2018). The fight against terrorism: Cost of Non-Europe Report. [EAV assessment \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.eu). Figures adjusted to 2021 prices in Pounds Sterling by the Home Office – please see Annex D for further detail.

¹² [Integrated Review Refresh 2023: Responding to a more contested and volatile world - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/103122/Integrated_Review_Refresh_2023_Responding_to_a_more_contested_and_volatile_world_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

¹³ As of March 2023. [Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: Arrests, outcomes, and stop and search, Great Britain, quarterly update to March 2023 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/103122/Operation_of_police_powers_under_the_Terrorism_Act_2000_and_subsequent_legislation_Arrests_outcomes_and_stop_and_search_Great_Britain_quarterly_update_to_March_2023_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

influences and drivers.¹⁴ These can include radicalising influences that oppose the values and principles that underpin our society, such as those examples set out in the government's response to the Independent Review of Prevent, as well as long-standing proscribed groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah.¹⁵ This has resulted in a broader array of fragmented ideological narratives and unconventional belief sets which may sit alongside or be used to reinforce more traditional Islamist terrorist ideology.

“Our free, open, and inclusive society is something to cherish and protect from ideologies which seek to destroy it.” - Government Response to the Independent Review of Prevent¹⁶

18. The remainder of the UK domestic terrorist threat is driven almost exclusively by Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism (ERWT), which amounts to approximately 22% of attacks

¹⁴ Also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, ISIL, or the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham, ISIS. The UK government refers to the group by the Arabic acronym Daesh, which is used by opponents of the group because of its similarity to the Arabic verb 'da'asa', to trample underfoot.

¹⁵ Footnote 1 on page 7 of the Response to the Independent Review of Prevent states:

“Some groups publicly demonstrate behaviours that oppose the values and principles that underpin our society, the below examples exemplify this.

Hizb ut-Tahrir promote the Caliphate as the ultimate system of governance and express views that Islam is fundamentally incompatible with the Western liberal democratic system. In a 2021 article on their website entitled 'the global struggle & the inevitable return of the Khalifah', they state “Muslims have been damaged by unislamic ideas that are preventing the return of our unique authority. These ideas are not just surface level and obvious ones we see around us but deep rooted, fundamental concepts of nationalism, secularism, liberalism, feminism, and democracy”.

CAGE has campaigned on behalf of convicted terrorists, such as Afia Siddiqui and Munir Farooqi, and the group has published or invited al-Qaeda radicalisers to speak at its events, such as Abu Hamza in 2008, Anwar al-Awlaki in 2009, and Abu Qatada in 2015. Senior leaders in CAGE have advocated supporting violent jihad overseas in specific contexts, including in an interview published in 2020, where CAGE's Outreach Director asserted the position that jihad refers to military conflict and that Muslims will be religiously obligated to “rise to the call” in response to oppression. In 2015, in reference to an al-Qaeda affiliate's truck bombing in Syria, CAGE's Director told a parliamentary select committee that suicide bombings can be “a price worth paying”. In 2021, CAGE's Outreach Director described how “some positive changes have already been observed” since the Taliban had taken power in Afghanistan. Further, in 2015, CAGE's Research Director stated that ISIS executioner Mohammed Emwazi was “extremely gentle, kind” and a “beautiful young man”. CAGE has pejoratively labelled Muslims who work to counter Islamist extremism as “native informants”. In 2015, CAGE's Research Director refused to condemn violence such as female genital mutilation and stoning.

Patriotic Alternative call for the voluntary 'repatriation' of those of 'immigrant descent' including those who currently hold a British passport. They claim that only white people with ancestral links to the UK are to be considered British. As part of their 'plan', they state on their website that “the British people are made of the English, Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh. These are the indigenous peoples of the United Kingdom and only they have an ancestral claim to it”. They also state they will “overturn all policy that discriminates against the indigenous people” and “there will be a complete halt to all immigration unless under exceptional circumstances”.

British Nationalist Socialist Movement promote nationalist socialism as the most appropriate form of governance in the UK whilst rejecting democratic values and venerating Nazism. In 2019, the group posted on their website that “nationalist socialism provides a source of higher thinking and a cause to campaign for and a future alternative to decadent liberal democracy”. The group has also used its Telegram account to celebrate the birth of Adolf Hitler.” Independent Review of Prevent's report and government response - GOV.UK

¹⁶ Independent Review of Prevent's report and government response - GOV.UK

since 2018, about a quarter of MI5 caseload and 28% of those in custody for terrorism-connected offences.¹⁷

19. The threat from ERWT in Western countries is increasingly a transnational issue in terms of radicalising influence, inspiration and communication. Unlike Islamist terrorist groups, extreme right-wing terrorists are not typically organised into formal groups with leadership hierarchies and territorial ambitions, but informal online communities which facilitate international links. Fatal attacks have occurred in multiple countries, often inspired by previous attackers. The Oslo and Utoya attacks in Norway in 2011 inspired the Christchurch attack in New Zealand in 2019, which has in turn inspired further terrorist attacks in the UK, USA, Canada and Europe. In some countries – including countries with high numbers of UK nationals and visitors – the greatest threat from terrorism comes from ERWT. Extreme right-wing terrorist narratives are also exploited by hostile actors such as Russia, which is seeking to promote divisive and polarising narratives in the West, which is likely to increase in the future. Examples of ERWT radicalising influences were also set out in the government's response to the Independent Review of Prevent.¹⁸

20. Left Wing, Anarchist and Single-Issue Terrorism (LASIT) currently represents a significantly smaller terrorist threat to the UK than Islamist terrorism or ERWT and is not currently present in the UK at any significant scale (although there has been some activity that has met a terrorist threshold in recent years and MI5 investigations continue into such cases). The majority of related activity in the UK has consisted of lawful protest, and where these have involved violence, it has resulted in offences relating to public order.

¹⁷ As of March 2023. Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: Arrests, outcomes, and stop and search, Great Britain, quarterly update to March 2023 - GOV.UK

¹⁸ Footnote 1 on page 7 of the Response to the Independent Review of Prevent, which is reproduced in full above. Independent Review of Prevent's report and government response - GOV.UK

Ideologies motivating terrorism

A broad range of ideologies and narratives draw people into supporting or committing acts of terrorism. Adherence by terrorists to specific ideologies is in many cases less structured and coherent than a decade ago, reflecting in part the wide range of material available online from which individuals or small groups may draw.

We now need to manage a wider spread of narratives and beliefs that may be used to motivate and support terrorist violence. These include radicalising influences which operate below the threshold of terrorism but seek to encourage others to cross this threshold while fragmenting and dividing communities. Whether they claim to be against violence or not, extremists can create spaces in which others can be inspired to violence and terrorism. We use ideological labels, such as those set out below, to articulate beliefs and ideas regularly cited as underpinning terrorism, but these are, to varying degrees, increasingly descriptions for a spectrum of narratives and beliefs rather than a clear, structured ideology.

Islamist terrorism is the threat or use of violence as a means to establish a strict interpretation of an Islamic society. For some this is a political ideology which envisions, for example, the creation of a global Islamic caliphate based on strict implementation of shari'ah law, drawing on political and religious ideas developed in the 20th century by Sayyid Qutb and Abdallah Azzam. Many adherents believe that violence (or jihad as they conceive it) is not only a necessary strategic tool to achieve their aims, but an individual's religious duty. In the UK the Islamist terrorist threat comes overwhelmingly from those inspired by, but not necessarily affiliated with, Daesh and/or al-Qa'ida, but they operate within a wider landscape of radicalising influences as set out in the government's response to the Independent Review of Prevent. Al-Qa'ida's approach is gradualist, with a view that removing Western influence and perceived 'apostate' regimes from Muslim majority countries are necessary conditions for establishing a caliphate. Daesh attempted to advance its objective more quickly than al-Qa'ida, declaring a caliphate as soon as it held significant territory in Syria and Iraq.

Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism (ERWT) describes those involved in Extreme Right-Wing activity who use violence in furtherance of their ideology. These ideologies can be broadly characterised as Cultural Nationalism, White Nationalism and White Supremacism. Individuals and groups may subscribe to ideological tenets and ideas from more than one category.

Left Wing, Anarchist and Single-Issue Terrorism (LASIT) encompasses a wide range of ideologies. It includes those from the extreme political left-wing as well as anarchists who seek to use violence to advance their cause in seeking to overthrow the State in all its forms.

21. Across ideologies, the domestic terrorist threat is dominated by individuals or small groups who may sometimes be inspired or encouraged by organised terrorist groups but are acting without their direction or material support.¹⁹ For more than a decade, every terrorist attack in the UK has been from such individuals. This trend is seen across Europe and the West. Encouraging susceptible individuals to commit acts of terrorism on their own initiative is a deliberate strategy of terrorist groups in their propaganda.²⁰ This is exacerbated by online environments which bring together and facilitate individuals sharing and validating thoughts and ideas.^{21 22}

“The wicked problem of self-initiated lone actor terrorists, fiendishly hard to detect and disrupt.” – DG MI5 Ken McCallum – Threat Update, November 2022

22. This makes it more difficult to identify, investigate and disrupt potential terrorists. Individuals or small groups acting outside of an established terrorist network offer fewer avenues for detection and intervention. Without clear organisational links, an individual's radicalisation journey may be more challenging to understand. Once an individual has taken a decision to conduct an attack, and has the means available, they may do so quickly and without warning. Although the signs may be more difficult to identify, there may still be opportunities. It is clear that individuals and small groups do frequently display some indicators of their terrorist intent, both online and in person.²³

23. Conspiracy theories can act as gateways to radicalised thinking and sometimes violence.^{24 25 26} They often make unevidenced claims about the causes of social and political events, attempting to explain them by blaming groups or powerful actors. Many conspiracy theories aren't new, they adapt old narratives to fit current circumstances and are not explicit to any one ideology. Common themes include religious or ethnic superiority, antisemitism, misogyny, anti-establishment and anti-LGBT grievances. Conspiracy theories can become a pathway to more extreme views and behaviour by introducing believers to radical content or increasing sympathy to extreme ideas and engagement with political violence. The increasing sophistication and scale of disinformation operations presents real challenges for democratic states, increasing the

¹⁹ For example, provision of specific direction, training, money, weapons or expertise.

²⁰ While complex, directed attacks orchestrated by Islamist terrorist groups overseas presented an enduring challenge to counter-terrorism efforts, Daesh also encouraged individuals to conduct low sophistication attacks in their home countries, without the need for the group's guidance or specific endorsement. This was not the first time this approach had been promoted (e.g., Anwar al-Awlaki for al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula) but this call resonated particularly with Islamist terrorists in the West.

²¹ Mølmen, G. N., and Ravndal, J. A. (2021). Mechanisms of online radicalisation: how the internet affects the radicalisation of extreme-right lone actor terrorists. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 1-25

²² Marwick, A., Clancy, B., and Furl, K. (2022). Far-right online radicalization: A review of the literature. *The Bulletin of Technology & Public Life*. <https://doi.org/10.21428/bfcb0bff.e9492a11>

²³ Dudenhofer, A., et al. (2021). Leaking in terrorist attacks: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 58, Article 101582. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2021.101582>

²⁴ Rottweiler, B., and Gill, P. (2022) Conspiracy beliefs and violent extremist intentions: The contingent effects of self-efficacy, self-control and law-related morality. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 34(7), 1485-1504

²⁵ Bartlett, J. and Miller, C. (2010) The Power of Unreason Conspiracy Theories, Extremism and Counter-terrorism, *Demos*.

²⁶ Basit, A. (2021). Conspiracy Theories and Violent Extremism. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 13(3), 1-9.

risk of terrorism, inciting violence between groups with pre-existing tensions and posing longer term risks for public trust.²⁷ Governments themselves are increasingly the focus of conspiracies, which emphasises the importance of transparent, democratic values being protected and upheld, and government's work to robustly challenge disinformation about our counter-terrorism efforts.

“It is not always straightforward to draw lines demarcating what is and is not terrorism. In cases of previously-unknown attackers, who make no claim of responsibility, it takes time to assemble the facts – and even once they are assembled, they are often a confused mix of factors.” – DG MI5 Ken McCallum, Threat Update, November 2022

24. Understanding motivation and intent is why in some cases it can take time after an incident to be declared terrorism or not, and why sometimes it remains unclear. Counter-terrorism efforts encounter a range of personal and ideological motivations to violence, where a traditional terrorist narrative may only be part of a much more complex picture. Terrorists can hold a range of personal grievances alongside the primary ideology for committing an attack. Individuals increasingly adopt a mix of ideas from different ideologies into their grievance narratives. This contributes to the increasing challenge of assessing the motivation behind an individual's violence, determining the most appropriate mitigations to put in place and judging whether or not that violence constitutes an act of terrorism. It is possible that violent adherents to movements and subcultures, such as Involuntary Celibacy (Incels), could meet the threshold of terrorist intent or action, should the threat or use of serious violence be used to influence the government, or to intimidate the public.²⁸

25. The internet continues to make it simpler for individuals and groups to promote and to consume radicalising content. The barriers to entry that existed with in-person terrorist group activity in the past have been removed to be replaced with an online environment which is built for ease of access, and unrestricted by geographical location. This has increased the accessibility for everyone to spaces populated by radicalisers and terrorist content, including groups such as minors or those with mental ill-health or neurodiversity conditions.²⁹

“Being a ‘convicted terrorist’ is not a status to be wished on children if reasonably avoidable” – Jonathan Hall KC, Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, March 2023³⁰

²⁷ James A. Piazza. (2022). Fake news: the effects of social media disinformation on domestic terrorism, *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 15:1, 55-77.

²⁸ George Glover, 'The Challenge of Understanding Terrorism in a New Era of Threat', *The RUSI Journal* (Vol.168, No. 4, 2023), pp. 1-9, p.5.

²⁹ George Glover, 'The Challenge of Understanding Terrorism in a New Era of Threat', *The RUSI Journal* (Vol.168, No. 4, 2023), pp. 1-9, p.5.

³⁰ K.C. Hall, J., (2023). Terrorism Acts in 2021, Report of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation on the Operation of the Terrorism Acts 2000 and 2006, and the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011. *Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1140911/E02876111_Terrorism_Acts_in_2021_Accessible.pdf

26. In recent years there has been a small increase in the number of minors investigated and arrested by Counter Terrorism Police.³¹ Most adverse activity conducted by minors has occurred online; over half of under-18s convicted of terrorism offences over the past five years were charged with non-violent offences (the collection or dissemination of terrorist publications). While a small number of minors continue to engage in attack planning and pose a credible threat, there have not been any completed terrorist attacks carried out by a minor in the UK. The majority of minors investigated for engaging with terrorism are male and aged 15 to 17, although younger children have also been investigated. A number of minors who engage with terrorism also have additional complex needs.

27. Overall, there is limited evidence to support a direct causal link between mental ill-health or neurodivergence and an individual's terrorist threat or susceptibility to radicalisation. Generally mental ill-health is no more prevalent among terrorism cases than the general population. But the relevance such conditions play in the threat varies by case. Mental ill-health can contribute to the radicalisation of some individuals, acting as a risk factor, while in other cases it may act as an inhibitor.^{32 33}

28. Where these additional risk factors are present in counter-terrorism casework they can significantly complicate risk assessment and management. Investigators must consider both national security and safeguarding responsibilities in parallel in order to meet the challenges of investigating children and vulnerable adults. There are also challenges in sharing highly classified information outside of law enforcement and security agencies, and with sharing sensitive personal information with counter-terrorism investigators.

29. Those convicted of terrorism, or a related offence, may continue to pose a threat; four of the nine declared terrorist attacks in the UK since 2018 were perpetrated by serving or recently released prisoners. Individuals convicted of non-terrorism offences may also hold a terrorist mindset or develop one during their time in prison. The attacks by prisoners inside HMP Whitemoor, the 2019 Fishmongers' Hall and 2020 Streatham and Reading attacks by those on probation, demonstrate the significant threat that offenders may continue to pose both in custody and on release – one of the HMP Whitemoor attackers and the Reading attacker were convicted of non-terrorism offences.

30. As of March 2023, there were 232 persons in custody for terrorism-connected offences.^{34 35} Despite ongoing efforts to mitigate the terrorist risk posed by individuals in custody, the vast majority will require long term risk management which may last for

³¹ As of March 2023. [Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: Arrests, outcomes, and stop and search, Great Britain, quarterly update to March 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

³² Brooks, S. K., and Greenberg, N. (2021, November). Mental health, complex needs and vulnerability to radicalisation. *Department of Health and Social Care*. [DHSC Radicalisation Report - pdf.pdf \(nih.ac.uk\)](#)

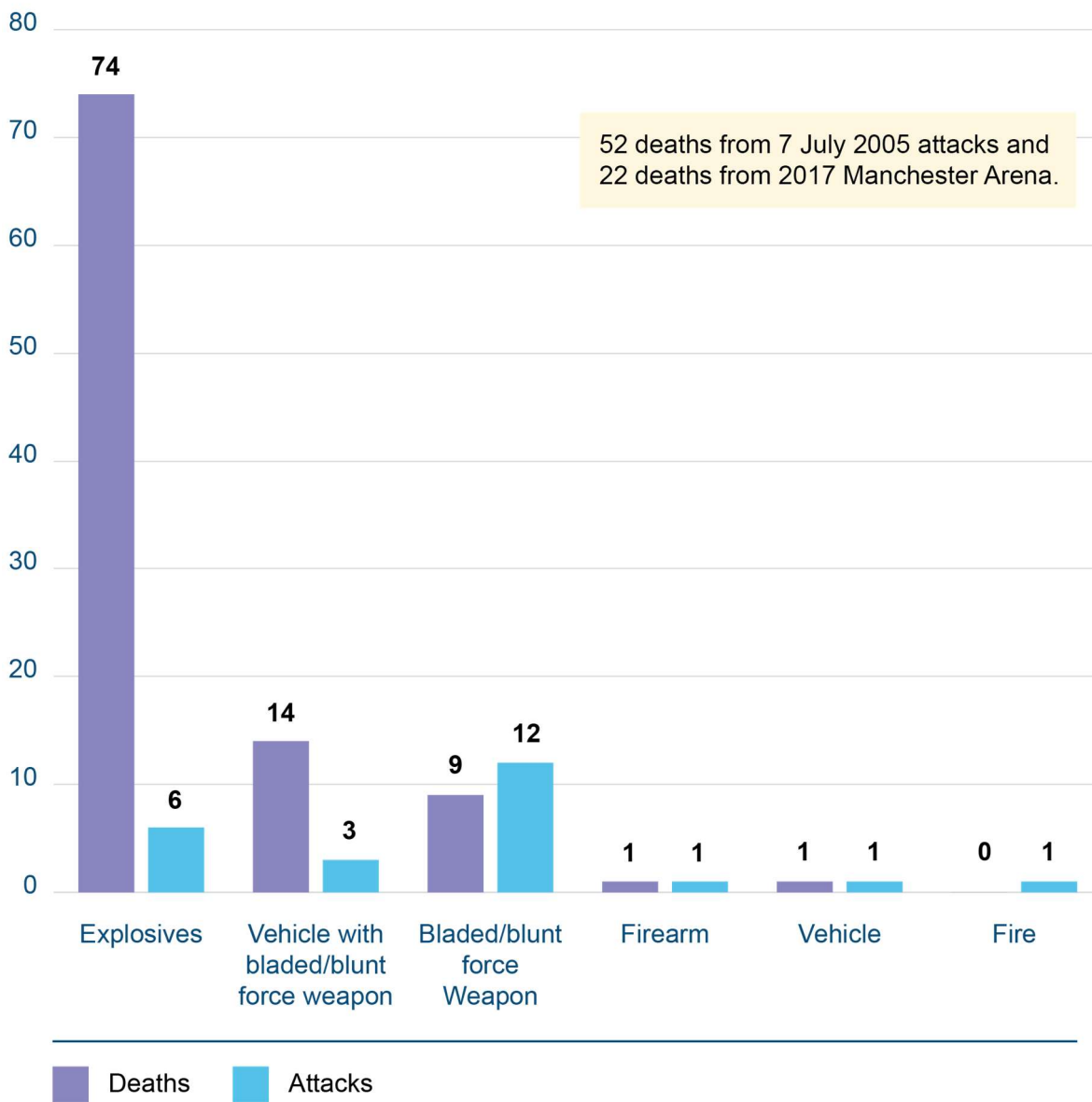
³³ Copeland, S., & Marsden, S. (2020, November). The relationship between mental health problems and terrorism. *Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST)*. [The Relationship Between Mental Health Problems and Terrorism \(crestresearch.ac.uk\)](#)

³⁴ [Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: Arrests, outcomes, and stop and search, Great Britain, quarterly update to March 2023 – GOV.UK](#)

³⁵ This includes those convicted of being engaged in terrorist activity – either through TACT or through other specified offences which the court has determined have a 'terrorist connection' – and those being held on remand (held in custody until a later date when a trial or sentence hearing will take place).

decades post release.³⁶ His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service, police and other agencies work closely in partnership under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) framework to assess, manage and mitigate the risk posed by individuals at all stages through conviction, custody, release and post-sentence notification requirements. The long period of notification requirements represents an enduring demand for Counter Terrorism Policing who lead post sentence management, with the cohort of individuals subject to such requirements expected grow year on year for the foreseeable future.

Domestic terrorist attacks and deaths by attack methodology between January 2005 and July 2023



Attacks only include those in which at least one person was killed or injured

³⁶ Marsden, S. and Copeland, S. (2020). Managing terrorism-related offenders in prison. *Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST). Managing Terrorism-Related Offenders in Prison (crestresearch.ac.uk)*

31. Terrorist attacks target a wide range of people and places. These include high-profile public figures and representatives of the state who are seen as responsible for the relevant ideological grievance, such as MPs or members of the armed forces. Terrorists often seek high impact by targeting crowded places, such as Borough Market and Manchester Arena in 2017; and places of worship or specific communities who are targets of their ideological grievance, such as Finsbury Park Mosque in 2017 or foiled plots in 2017 and 2019 to attack Pride events in the UK. Terrorist groups also retain ambitions to attack iconic targets and locations that could involve large scale casualties, for example Westminster is a repeated target for terrorism. This may also include aviation targets, or public transport hubs.

32. In the UK, in part due to measures to control access to explosive precursors and strict controls on firearms, terrorists have long adopted more easily accessible attack methods, such as knives and vehicles. Almost 80% of UK domestic terrorist attacks since 2018 have been carried out with bladed or blunt force weapons. Such low sophistication attacks are still able to create significant numbers of casualties, for example the 2016 Bastille Day attack in Nice, France which used a vehicle as a weapon, killing 86 people and injuring 434.

33. Explosive devices remain a critical concern given the potential damage; since January 2005, 75% of deaths from terrorism in the UK have occurred in attacks involving explosives.^{37 38} The attack on the Liverpool Women's Hospital in 2021 was fortunately without fatalities (except for the terrorist) but served as a reminder of the continued capability of terrorists to use explosives. The internet has continued to provide the availability of instructional material and access to the components needed to construct an improvised explosive device, also known as an IED. Terrorists continue to exploit wider advancements in mainstream technology and seek novel attack methodologies.

Islamist terrorist groups

The threat from Islamist terrorist groups based abroad is persistent and has evolved. Sustained counter-terrorism pressure from the UK and its allies has suppressed the most serious terrorist threats. But groups such as Daesh and al-Qa'ida have evolved and adapted their approach and are now active in more countries than ever before. Although their capabilities remain far below earlier peaks there are signs of resurgence. Both continue to inspire, enable and direct radicalised individuals and groups and maintain their intent to attack the UK.

34. Whilst sustained counter-terrorism pressure from the UK and its allies has suppressed the most serious terrorist threats, the UK and our key allies are now operating in a context where national security resources must be rigorously prioritised against a broader range of threats. Islamist terrorist groups such as Daesh and al-Qa'ida have also evolved and adapted. Despite very significant losses of territory and personnel which have

³⁷ First Domestic Death from Islamist Terrorism, ERWT or LASIT since 2000.

³⁸ Accounted for by two attacks, July 7 2005 and 2017 Manchester Arena.

reduced their capability, the threat they pose to the West and Western interests overseas is almost certainly now on an upward trajectory from its lowest point 12-24 months ago.

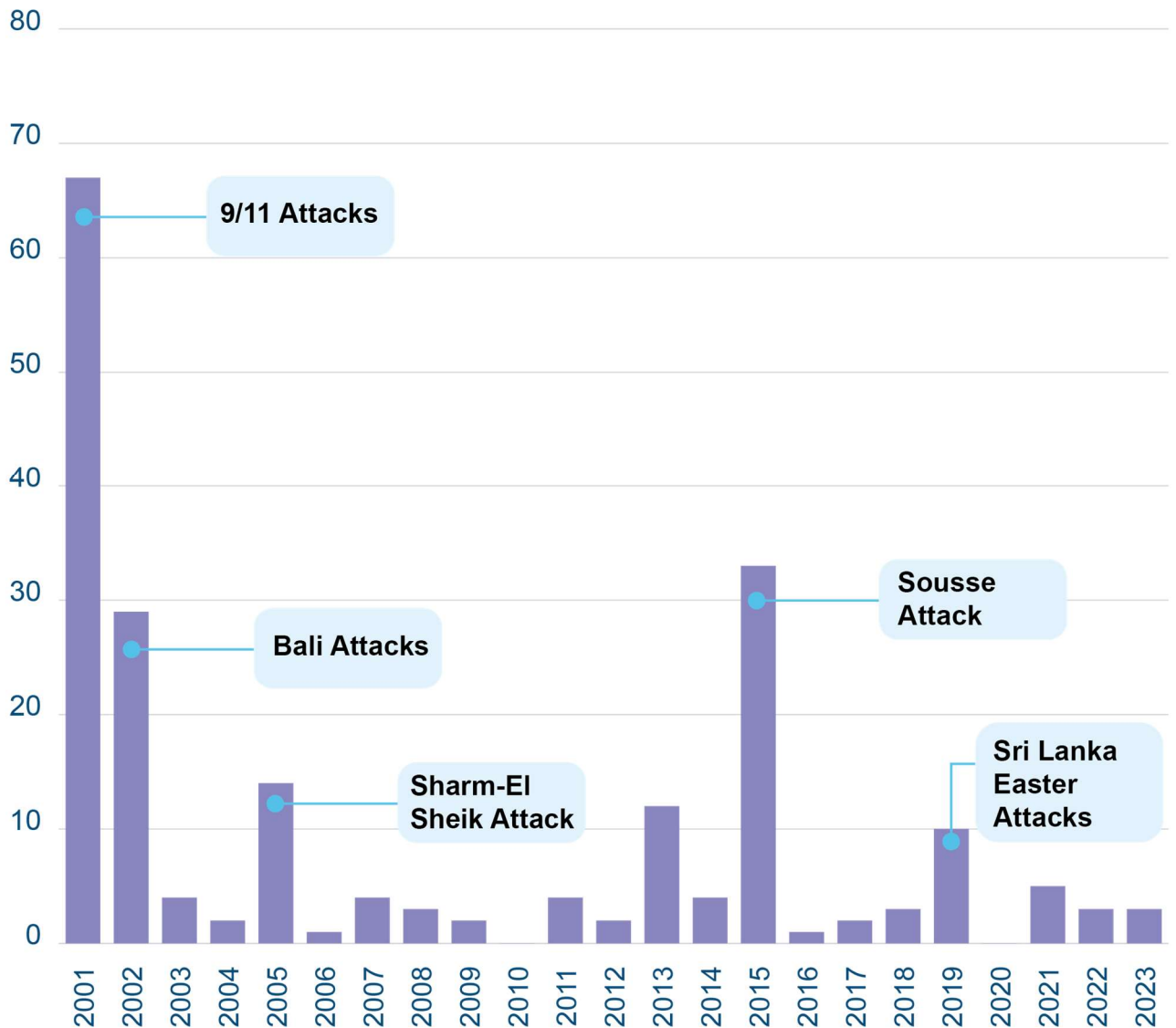
35. In the past Islamist terror groups have trained, directed and deployed operatives, as demonstrated by the al-Qa'ida attacks in London in 2005 and the Daesh attacks in Paris in 2015. Sustained, multi-faceted counter-terrorism efforts by both the UK and our allies, including 20 years of focused collective effort in Afghanistan, have significantly degraded al-Qa'ida and Daesh in their core operating theatres, denying them permissive space from which to plan and direct attacks, and weakening their ability to direct threats into the West. As a result, there has been no successful plot in the UK directed from overseas since the 7/7 bombings in 2005.

36. More recently both al-Qa'ida and Daesh have focused on consolidating and embedding in local insurgencies and upskilling small cells. Most Islamist groups overseas are focused on local aims, which could include attacking UK and Western interests, rather than projecting threats directly into the West. More UK nationals have died from terrorist attacks overseas than in the UK since 2001.³⁹ In April 2019 a series of Daesh-linked suicide bombings in Sri Lanka targeted churches, hotels and housing complexes, killing over 260 people, including eight UK nationals.

37. But Islamist terrorist groups, including Daesh and al-Qa'ida, continue to seek to plan and enable attacks in Western countries, including the UK. Counter-terrorism pressure has led to the evolution of looser and more fragmented terrorist networks, but these still contain many individuals of concern including those with the training and motivation necessary to conduct attacks. As well as terrorist propaganda materials designed to inspire attacks, we also see more targeted efforts to provide encouragement, advice and guidance to individuals or small groups who may already be present in a target country. We anticipate that both Daesh and al-Qa'ida will take advantage of reduced counter-terrorism pressure to attempt to strengthen their ability to carry out complex, directed attacks.

³⁹ 208 UK nationals have been killed in terrorist attacks overseas since 2001. Attacks within the UK have killed 99 people (67 UK nationals) in the same time period.

UK national deaths overseas caused by terrorism between 2001 and July 2023



38. Daesh retain the ability and the intent to enable and encourage mass casualty attacks and still provide ideological inspiration for individuals to carry out attacks. In Syria and Iraq, thanks to a sustained military campaign by the Global Coalition and its partners on the ground, 7.7 million people have been liberated from Daesh rule, denying Daesh control of territory and significantly reducing the group's ability to plan and inspire attacks against the UK. Daesh maintain a presence in Syria and Iraq despite their military defeat there, and the conditions that gave rise to Daesh in 2013 are largely still present. The conflict has left tens of thousands of former Daesh fighters and supporters in camps and detention facilities in north-eastern Syria. While the group's media output is at historic lows, their propaganda still has the potential to inspire, incite and encourage attacks outside of their areas of operation.

39. Al-Qa'ida also remains a potent and resilient threat, despite the loss of key leadership figures, including the group's global emir, Ayman al-Zawahiri, in July 2022. The

group will likely seek to take advantage of the Western withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, exploiting enduring personal relationships with Taliban leaders.⁴⁰ The group will likely prioritise re-establishing Afghanistan as a permissive operating environment over using it as a platform from which to launch external attack operations in the near-term. The threat from al-Qa'ida to the UK and our citizens overseas primarily manifests in attacks by its global affiliates. These are predominantly focused on the regions the affiliates operate in, with al-Qa'ida leadership acting as a strategic and ideological guide to these groups. While the volume and impact of al-Qa'ida's propaganda has reduced, historic content – including al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula's English-language *Inspire* magazine – still contributes to the threat to the UK, because of its ideological and instructional content.

40. Groups affiliated with al-Qa'ida and Daesh now operate with relative freedom in more territory than ever before. This development has been driven by their exploitation of global trends, response to counter-terrorism pressure and deliberate strategy. State fragility and conflict have spread in recent years, driven by the global pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, energy and food insecurity, economic downturns and democratic backsliding, as well as local and regional political factors. These conditions create legitimate grievances and dissatisfaction with governments that groups like Daesh and al-Qa'ida can exploit to build support, often co-opting pre-existing insurgencies under their banner. Affiliate groups allow them to maintain their resilience and amplify their global resonance. The objective of both groups is to establish a global caliphate and expanding the reach of their global affiliates is an integral part of their strategies.

41. Affiliated groups are becoming more capable and deadly. Daesh's affiliate in Afghanistan, Islamic State Khorasan Province, has been re-energised by the Western withdrawal. In 2022, Daesh affiliates were responsible for almost twice as many claimed attacks as the 'core' group in Iraq and Syria, with attacks in sub-Saharan Africa making up approximately half of the total claimed by the group.⁴¹ Al-Shabaab is the most potent example of the threat al-Qa'ida poses; it is the greatest terrorist threat in Somalia and the Horn of Africa. It has killed UK nationals and targeted aviation.

42. While today the primary risks to UK citizens from affiliates are in groups' local regions, some have shown a desire to attack the West directly – often encouraged or aided by their relevant 'core' groups. Affiliate groups can work together to share resources or bridge gaps in their capability, leading to a more networked and resilient threat. Remaining vigilant to how and where this more dispersed threat evolves will be a key challenge for the UK and our allies in the coming years.

Northern Ireland Related Terrorism

43. Northern Ireland Related Terrorism (NIRT) remains a serious threat, particularly in Northern Ireland. CONTEST does not address the threat from NIRT in Northern Ireland, which is managed by a separate strategic approach, led by the Northern Ireland Office.

⁴⁰ Thirtieth report of the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2610 (2021) concerning Daesh, Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities <https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=S/2022/547&Lang=E>

⁴¹ Data taken from SITE intelligence

CONTEST does cover the threat from NIRT in mainland Great Britain. It is important that the threats to Northern Ireland and to Great Britain are not considered in isolation.

44. Despite the significant political progress in Northern Ireland in the last 25 years, some dissident republican groups continue to carry out terrorist attacks. Between 2018 and April 2023, there were eight national security attacks in Northern Ireland. Police and prison officers, as well as members of the armed forces, continue to be primary targets of dissident republican groups. Violent dissident republican groups do not represent mainstream opinion across Northern Ireland, and support for them and their actions is low.

45. The NIRT threat is primarily concentrated and directed against targets in Northern Ireland. While NIRT activity in the rest of the UK is uncommon, dissident republican groups likely retain an ambition to conduct attacks in Great Britain. In recent years, this ambition has been limited to occasional batches of crude postal IEDs such as those sent to transport infrastructure targets in London and a military-linked target in Glasgow in March 2019. While crude and small-scale, these IEDs still have the capacity to cause serious injury and disruption to the intended recipients and members of the postal service.

Technology

Accelerating availability of new technologies and online platforms provides both opportunity and risk to our counter-terrorism efforts. Terrorists exploit technology to hide their networks, spread their propaganda and enable their attacks. Technology is a critical enabler of our counter-terrorism efforts, where careful and proportionate use of cutting-edge techniques can make our response more efficient and effective.

46. More than ever before the communities we live in and the lives we lead are interwoven with and reliant on technology. Technological innovations, new products and services continue to be developed at pace globally which bring both opportunities and potential threats. Our counter-terrorism response is enabled by technology at every stage, from detection and data acquisition through to surveillance, communications and analysis.

47. Technology can also be exploited by terrorists to publicise and glorify their attacks, radicalise people with their ideologies, and acquire resources such as weapons and money to enable attacks. It is essential that we continue to understand the rapidly evolving technological landscape and maintain the agility required to reduce the terrorism risk as the world changes.

48. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the fastest growing deep technologies in the world, with the potential to transform all areas of life within the UK and reshape the way entire industries operate.⁴² ⁴³ AI has implications for both our approach to counter-

⁴² Deep technologies are based on significant advances or engineering innovations, but which require a longer period of development and/or considerable capital investment before commercial application. Transformative technologies are those that have the potential for impact across many sectors of the economy, not just within a single sector.

⁴³ HM Government National AI Strategy 2021. [National AI Strategy - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94222/national-ai-strategy.pdf)

terrorism and the threats we face, with the potential for terrorist activity to become more sophisticated with less effort. While it could radically speed up the process of threat detection, terrorists are likely to exploit the technology to create and amplify radicalising content, propaganda and instructional materials, and to plan and commit attacks.

49. The rapid proliferation of terrorist content on multiple online services continues to play a significant role in exposing individuals to online spaces and communities glorifying and encouraging violent acts. Live stream videos of attacks, watched in real time with copies proliferating across online services, are especially potent and harmful.

50. The increased application of end-to-end encryption and availability of anonymisation tools is expanding the environment in which terrorists can communicate without the risk of detection or identification. As other nations increasingly seek to control the international flow and storage of data, and companies develop their own data policies, it may become more difficult to access the data we need to protect the public.

51. Technological advancements can be weaponised by terrorists as a means of carrying out attacks. The rapid development of technologies enable activity that might have previously been the preserve of an expert or professional, lowering barriers to more sophisticated methodologies. Similarly, financing technologies such as cryptocurrency may also be exploited to finance terrorist activity and attacks.



Part Two: Response

Building on the legacy of CONTEST we will transform our counter-terrorism response to be more *agile* in the face of an evolving threat, more *integrated* so that we can bring the right interventions to bear at the right time to reduce risk and more *aligned* with our international allies to ensure that we continue to deliver together against a common threat.

Part Two: Response

The CONTEST framework

52. The aim of CONTEST is to reduce the risk from terrorism to the UK, its citizens and interests overseas, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence. Our efforts to manage this risk must be balanced with the freedoms inherent to a democratic society and the need to respond to an increasing range of threats to UK national security. In that context CONTEST cannot reduce this risk to zero, and we recognise that we cannot prevent all terrorist attacks.

53. The core CONTEST framework, which has long been recognised as world-leading, remains unchanged from earlier iterations of this strategy. Our work to **Prevent** people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism and **Pursue** terrorists to disrupt their plots is designed to reduce the threat. Our efforts to **Protect** against a terrorist attack reduce our vulnerability, and efforts to **Prepare** to mitigate the impact of any attack are designed to reduce the impact.

54. CONTEST remains an ideologically agnostic approach. Islamist terrorism is currently the largest terrorism threat faced by the UK in terms of volume and severity, but our tools and powers are flexible and agile to respond to all forms of terrorism.⁴⁴ Our counter-terrorism efforts have also been instrumental in developing approaches and capabilities which are now finding broader application in the response to state threats and serious organised crime. In turn our counter-terrorism efforts are supported by work to develop national resilience, emergency response and other capabilities.

55. This chapter sets out how we will continue to deliver and adapt our response across all four work strands of CONTEST and where we will make significant cross-cutting improvements, transforming our counter-terrorism response to meet the challenge of a terrorist threat which is enduring and evolving. These steps are essential to ensure that our counter-terrorism response remains agile, integrated and aligned, maximising the benefits of partnership between policy departments, operational agencies and international allies in the face of an increasingly challenging national security context.

56. The UK's counter-terrorism response must be proportionate to the threat and the broader national security context. Alongside our allies, we must ruthlessly prioritise finite resources. We will need to continue to balance our duty to protect the UK and its interests from terrorism against the need to respond to an increasing spectrum of national security threats, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

⁴⁴ CONTEST addresses all forms of terrorism that target the UK and our interests overseas, with the exception of Northern Ireland related terrorism in Northern Ireland, which is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

A learning system

57. CONTEST is a flexible and adaptable framework; learning from incidents, exercises and external scrutiny is at the heart of our work. While the core CONTEST framework has remained effective and unchanged since 2003, we continuously adapt and improve our delivery in response to incidents, inquests, inquiries and reviews. A detailed list of notable developments since the last iteration of CONTEST in 2018 is available at annex B. Key examples include:

58. The Independent Review of Prevent, William Shawcross, carried out a review of Prevent which was published alongside the government response in February 2023. Much work has already been done to strengthen Prevent. This includes improving the referrals process, professionalising case management and learning from terrorist incidents where an attacker may have previously been referred to Prevent. However, there is still much to do, and we must strive to continuously improve Prevent. We welcome William Shawcross' review and are working at pace to implement all of his recommendations, including refocusing Prevent on tackling the ideological causes of terrorism.

59. The Manchester Arena Inquiry is a stark reminder of the devastating impact terrorism can have, the importance of our work to counter it, and the need to keep working to improve our approach to terrorism across the board. The government has already taken steps to implement learning from the attack, to ensure we learn from and act on the more than 150 recommendations made by Sir John Saunders in all three volumes. Specific changes are already underway, such as Martyn's Law, which will keep people safe by introducing proportionate new security requirements for certain public venues to ensure preparedness for, and protection from, terrorist attacks. We have improved joint working between the emergency services when responding to terrorist attacks, and the government's oversight will ensure a renewed focus to further embed the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP), to ensure they underpin the emergency services' joint response to all incidents, including terrorism.

60. A reoccurring theme from inquests, inquiries and reviews, most notably the Operational Improvement Review in 2017 independently assured by Lord Anderson KC, is the requirement to strengthen our ability to work operationally across departmental boundaries. A key part of this transformation, CTOC, is a generational opportunity to shift operational collaboration between policing, intelligence agencies and other partners to the next level. We will bring together the right teams, data and technology to enable a more agile and flexible response to the terrorist threat.

61. Following the Fishmongers' Hall attack in 2019, we invested heavily to raise the level of our counter-terrorism capabilities and reduce the national security risk posed by those under His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) supervision. In response to the lessons learned from the attack we strengthened the law, including to end automatic early release of terrorist offenders and introduce a 14-year minimum jail term for the most serious offences. We also strengthened controls and interventions for terrorist offenders, and improved information sharing with partners.

The role of the public

62. The public is a key partner in the successful delivery of CONTEST, and plays an essential role in preventing attacks and reducing loss of life in the event of an attack. The public makes approximately 120,000 reports a year in response to our well established 'See It, Say It, Sorted' campaign on British railways, and in 2022/23, Counter Terrorism Policing received over 13,000 reports from the public, nearly 2,000 of which provided useful intelligence to the police.

63. As the challenge of detecting and disrupting potential terrorists increases, the role of the public has become increasingly important. The public plays a vital role in keeping themselves and others safe, whether:

- seeking to Prevent individuals becoming terrorists by reporting concerns of radicalisation
- supporting law enforcement to Pursue potential terrorist activity by calling the anti-terrorist hotline
- helping to Protect others through flagging suspicious items or behaviour
- following Prepare advice on the nature of terrorist threats overseas communicated through Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice as well as advice on how to respond safely in the event of a terrorist incident in the UK or overseas

64. In turn, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure the public has the information they need to fulfil this role.

The role of the private sector

65. Terrorism is a major threat for businesses. We collaborate with the private sector, supporting them to protect the public from terrorism, by helping organisations understand the threats they face and what they can do to minimise their risk through how they operate day to day. We also partner with the private sector through consulting, funding research and supporting cross-sector collaboration to develop innovative solutions to help keep the public safe. Examples include:

- the National Protective Security Authority (NPSA) – part of MI5, which works with partners in the private sector and academia to identify risk and vulnerabilities to the UK's national infrastructure and offers ways to recognise and mitigate them, through campaigns, training and guidance
- Secure Innovation guidance – a joint initiative with the NPSA and National Cyber Security Centre that provides security advice for businesses on emerging technologies

- ProtectUK – a collaboration between the Home Office, Counter Terrorism Policing and Pool Re that provides guidance and support to businesses and the wider public on mitigating the threat from terrorism⁴⁵
- the DfT Transport Security Innovation programme – the programme builds on the previous Future Aviation Security Solutions programme, which works closely with other government agencies and a range of industry stakeholders, to improve security across transport through the development of innovative science and technology⁴⁶

66. Working with industry in the UK and overseas will continue to be critical in protecting public venues, infrastructure and online spaces, driving innovation in protective security, resilience and technology, and keeping pace with the terrorist threat as it continues to shift and evolve.

The role of international partnerships

67. The threat from terrorism is a global challenge and international co-operation is essential. The risk from terrorism cannot be significantly reduced by any one country operating on their own. Working with our international partners is therefore an essential element of CONTEST.

68. Our global relationships provide a foundation from which we can jointly address the threat from international terrorism. By sharing best practice and intelligence, we can understand where we can provide the greatest impact against the most acute threats. We will continue to work particularly closely with the US, other Five Eyes members (Australia, Canada, New Zealand) and our European partners.⁴⁷

69. Our work overseas is led by the FCDO's Counter Terrorism and Extremism Network (CTeN). They lead engagement with international partners to jointly address the terrorist threat.

70. We have also developed strong partnerships with allies in the regions where the risk to UK nationals is greatest. We use our counter-terrorism expertise when working with partner governments to understand and help strengthen key counter-terrorism capabilities and capacity. Our work is supported by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund's (CSSF) Counter Terrorism Portfolio (CTPf), in addition to wider CSSF country programmes.⁴⁸

71. In addition to bilateral partnerships, we will continue to prioritise work through multilateral fora – principally the United Nations – to reinforce and amplify our work and

⁴⁵ Pool Re is one of the UK's largest terrorism reinsurers.

⁴⁶ The Future Aviation Security Solutions programme was a five-year joint initiative between the Department for Transport and the Home Office, established following the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR 2015).

⁴⁷ Intelligence sharing partnership with Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

⁴⁸ The UK Integrated Security Fund (UKISF) will formally replace the existing Conflict, Stability and Security Fund from April 2024, with an expanded remit to fund projects domestically and overseas to tackle some of the most complex national security challenges facing the UK and its partners www.gov.uk/government/news/new-fund-announced-to-support-uks-national-security-priorities. In line with the Integrated Review, countering terrorism will remain a focus of the UKISF.

share best practice. In this, the UK remains a global leader, able to draw on our global diplomatic reach, and our military, intelligence and development capabilities. This is demonstrated by the Global Coalition against Daesh, which brings together 85 partners. The UK has led the Counter Daesh Communications Cell since 2015 and is running communications campaigns in Syria, Iraq and now in Africa and Afghanistan.

72. The UK's armed forces help to prevent the emergence of new terrorist groups overseas by working with partners to bolster regional security and aid stabilisation efforts. Through this wider focus on assisting allies to counter violent extremist organisations, the UK helps to counter the regional security vacuums in which terrorism thrives.



Prevent

The aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Our Prevent work also extends to supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism.

Prevent

73. The aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Our Prevent work also extends to supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism.

74. The objectives of Prevent are:

- tackling the ideological causes of terrorism
- intervening early to support people susceptible to radicalisation
- enabling people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate

75. In the UK, delivery of early intervention support to people susceptible to radicalisation begins with referrals to Prevent. Anyone can make a Prevent referral and under the Prevent Duty, institutions including schools, colleges, universities, health authorities, local authorities, police, and prisons must consider the risk of radicalisation as part of their day-to-day safeguarding work.⁴⁹ This includes referring individuals susceptible to radicalisation to Prevent for support.

76. Where the police assess a radicalisation risk following a Prevent referral, a Channel panel - chaired by the local authority, and attended by multi-agency partners such as police, education professionals, health services, housing and social services - will meet to assess the risk and agree a tailored package of support.⁵⁰ Channel is a voluntary process, and individuals must give their consent before they receive support. Where risks cannot be managed in Channel, they will be kept under review by the police.

77. Since the introduction of the Prevent Duty in 2015, over 3,800 referrals have resulted in individuals receiving support to move away from radicalising ideologies. In the year ending 31 March 2022, there were 6,406 referrals to Prevent.⁵¹ 13% of referrals to Prevent were adopted as a Channel case (804 of 6,406). Of the Channel cases that were closed in the year ending March 2022, 89% of individuals exited with no further radicalisation concerns. Our publication of annual Channel statistics will continue, and we will examine further means of ensuring maximum transparency in our published data.

78. The Desistance and Disengagement Programme provides tailored interventions that support individuals to stop participating in terrorism-related activity (desist) and move away from terrorist ideology and ways of thinking (disengage).⁵² Specialist providers deliver interventions in prisons and in the community including theological, ideological and practical mentoring, to reduce the offending risk.

⁴⁹ Introduced in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

⁵⁰ Or Prevent Multi-Agency Panels (PMAP) in Scotland.

⁵¹ As of March 2022 in England and Wales. [Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2021 to March 2022 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/104444/individuals-referred-to-and-supported-through-the-prevent-programme-april-2021-to-march-2022-gov-uk.pdf)

⁵² The Desistance and Disengagement Programme (DDP) is to help manage the risk of individuals who have been involved in terrorism or terrorism-related activity. The programme works to reduce the risk they pose to the UK by providing one-to-one rehabilitative support using specialist intervention providers. DDP does not currently apply in Scotland.

79. Our efforts to counter radicalisation include work across academia, civil society, government and industry. For example, we engage in multi-stakeholder forums such as the Christchurch Call to Action and the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), and partner with organisations like Tech Against Terrorism to reduce the availability of terrorist content and reduce the influence of radicalisers on susceptible audiences.^{53 54}

Transforming Prevent

80. We are transforming our approach to Prevent by swiftly implementing the recommendations of the Independent Review of Prevent:

- We will ensure Prevent goes back to first principles and will reassert its overall objective of stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. In line with this recalibration, the Prevent Duty will be redefined, the statutory guidance updated and the Prevent vulnerability framework tightened
- We will ensure that all aspects of Prevent are delivered to a consistent threshold that is proportionate to the threat. This will include research, identification, assessment, prioritisation and decision-making, and will be applied at national, regional and local levels
- We will ensure the Prevent system develops expertise and instils better levels of understanding of ideology and radicalisation by improving training and providing clearer guidance and information to frontline practitioners. This will ensure those delivering Prevent possess the skills needed to spot the signs of radicalisation and the ideologies that drive it
- We will transform the Prevent delivery model by heavily investing in our regional footprint to ensure all local authorities receive expert advice and support to deliver the Prevent Duty effectively
- We will encourage public trust by improving transparency and establishing better oversight of how Prevent is implemented. This includes publishing findings from independent evaluations, creating a new standards and compliance unit, and strengthening ministerial oversight

81. We will further enhance our approach to tackling terrorism in prisons and probation by taking a more robust approach to separating the most influential radicalisers from the wider prison population, overhauling our counter-terrorism training offer for HMPPS staff, and improving research, development and delivery of rehabilitative interventions through our Counter-Terrorism Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre.⁵⁵ Counter Terrorism Policing, HMPPS and MI5 will continue to develop their integrated operational response to

⁵³ The Christchurch Call to Action is a community of over 120 governments, online service providers, and civil society organisations acting together to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online.

⁵⁴ The GIFCT brings together the technology industry, government, civil society, and academia to foster collaboration and information-sharing to counter terrorist and violent extremist activity online.

⁵⁵ Prisons are devolved in Scotland and the offer from the Counter-Terrorism Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre does not have effect in Scotland.

releases, providing whole system assessment and oversight to manage releases and focus on those of the highest risk.

82. We will gain royal assent for the Online Safety Bill and establish Ofcom as the independent online safety regulator with robust enforcement powers on illegal content and child safety. Under new legal duties of care, technology companies will need to prevent, identify and remove illegal content and activity online.

83. Overseas we will continue to work closely with our allies to share best practice on our approach to prevention, supporting and enhancing the delivery of Prevent in the UK. We will also continue to undertake targeted preventative activity in priority countries overseas, including capability building, to support partners to develop preventative approaches to tackling terrorism and reduce the effectiveness of radicalising influences from overseas on communities in the UK.

84. Beyond CONTEST, our efforts will dovetail with wider government efforts to counter broader radicalising narratives and behaviours and boost social cohesion and resilience. Integration, social cohesion and counter-extremism initiatives led by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities seek to preserve British values, strengthen our social cohesion and tackle extremism. In addition, the Levelling Up Agenda supports communities across the UK to thrive, making them great places in which to live and work.

A person with dark hair is seen from behind, sitting in a black office chair. They are looking at several large monitors in a control room. The monitors display various data, including a detailed map of a city and the letters 'CTO' repeated on a white background. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the screens.

Pursue

The aim of Pursue is to stop terrorist attacks happening in this country or against UK interests overseas.

Pursue

85. The aim of Pursue is to stop terrorist attacks happening in this country or against UK interests overseas.

86. The objectives of Pursue are to:

- detect and understand terrorist activity
- investigate terrorist activity
- disrupt terrorist activity

87. Our Pursue work is delivered across government departments and agencies, domestically and overseas, working in close collaboration to disrupt terrorist activity. This work is enabled by a strong, independent oversight regime that scrutinises the significant powers, tools and capabilities that are available and ensures that they are used proportionately and appropriately to stop terrorist attacks.

88. In the UK, Counter Terrorism Policing, MI5 and the wider intelligence community work closely and collaboratively using a range of capabilities to investigate, detect and disrupt terrorist activity working alongside the criminal justice system and other vital parts of the Pursue system such as local and devolved functions.

89. Counter Terrorism Policing have had approximately 800 ongoing investigations at any one time in 2023. These are increasingly complex as the threat continues to diversify. There were 169 arrests for terrorism-related activity in the year 1 January to 31 December 2022. In the same period, 232 persons were in custody for terrorism-connected offences in Great Britain.⁵⁶ We continue to see frequent disruptions of terrorist activity; MI5 and the police have disrupted 39 late-stage attack plots from 2017 to July 2023. We have taken strong action against terrorist groups, restricting their access to finance, disrupting their activity, and banning them from the UK, with six groups proscribed since 2018, including extreme right-wing terrorist groups such as Feuerkrieg Division, Atomwaffen Division and The Base.

90. Using terrorist groups and criminal organisations as proxies remains an attractive tactic for hostile states, offering a degree of deniability. Proxies, including terrorist groups, are likely to continue to be used by states, including Iran, who want to project power in an increasingly contested world, posing a threat to individuals, our interests and allies.⁵⁷

91. Our work overseas is critical to this effort. Attack plots in the UK have been directed or supported by terrorists based overseas, or UK individuals have been radicalised while they have been overseas. We work with international partners to disrupt the threat before it manifests itself in the UK, or before UK nationals are targeted in third countries (e.g. tourists).

92. We work closely with our partners, especially Five Eyes partners (the US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand), to deliver and enable counter-terrorism investigations which

⁵⁶ As of March 2023. [Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: Arrests, outcomes, and stop and search, Great Britain, quarterly update to March 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

⁵⁷ DG MI5 Ken McCallum – Threat Update, November 2022.

disrupt plots that threaten the UK or our citizens and interests overseas. The successful disruption and prosecution of terrorists depends on effective international collaboration, underpinned by the rule of law and human rights. Sustained political and diplomatic engagement is often key.

93. Our work overseas includes information sharing with our partners and exchange of investigative best practice to counter the threat, with precautions in places to minimise the risk that information received has resulted from or will result in Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment. We supplement this with carefully targeted capacity building in countries where the risk to the UK, our citizens and interests overseas is highest, for example working with host country judicial systems to ensure that terrorists face the full force of the law.

94. The military play a vital role internationally, delivering counter-terrorism training and assistance to partner forces overseas to increase their ability to pursue the terrorist threat in their own territories, and contributing military capabilities to disrupt terrorist groups' activity. The military also contributes a range of unique capabilities to the Pursue mission. Where there is an imminent terrorist threat to the UK from overseas, and where all other options have been exhausted, we are prepared to use lethal force to prevent UK nationals coming to harm. This would always be done in accordance with international law, and we would report to Parliament after we have done so.

95. And we continue to invest in world-class forensic laboratories, which provide the police with the necessary capabilities to analyse evidence associated with a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive event.

The future of counter-terrorism investigations and disruption

96. We will maximise the opportunities created by CTOC as it becomes fully operational.⁵⁸ This is a generational opportunity to significantly enhance operational collaboration between investigators and partners such as the Home Office, HMPPS and the Ministry of Defence (MOD). We will bring together the right teams, data and technology to deliver counter-terrorism operations in the UK and overseas and enable a more agile and flexible response to the terrorist threat than ever before.

97. As part of broader efforts to align our strategic counter-terrorism approach with key allies we will deepen our close work with international partners to detect, investigate and disrupt the most serious terrorist threats.⁵⁹ Our more agile approach is increasing understanding of countries' capabilities and human rights standards, and developing more targeted capability building activity which supports the sharing of information within our existing human rights frameworks. We will make use of the full range of tools and interventions, adapting our approach to the shifting environment and increasingly fragmented threat. We are increasingly situating our Pursue work in the wider political and development space, reducing terrorist ability to exploit local conditions including control of territory and local influence.

⁵⁸ As set out in paragraph 60.

⁵⁹ As set out in paragraph 145.

98. We will ensure that our overseas Counter Terrorism and Extremism Network remains agile and acts upstream. The terrorist threat can emerge and grow rapidly, including in places where we have not previously had counter-terrorism relationships. Strong partnerships will remain at the heart of our international work to counter terrorism. We are building relationships with more countries' counter-terrorism systems which give us the links we need as the global risk picture changes. We will continue to ensure that the network evolves to the current and future threat, adapting locations as threats change, and developing our overseas toolkit in partnership with key allies and the multilateral system. The overseas network will act as a trip-wire should a threat develop, and a foundation that we can build on rapidly if needed.

99. We will invest in data, analysis and technology capabilities, building on and creating new partnerships to accelerate their enhancement, to ensure early detection of terrorism threats to the UK and our interests overseas.⁶⁰ This will enable rigorous prioritisation of our resources against the most significant threats to the UK and ensure that we are alert to emerging threats as they develop. As part of this, we will improve the way data is obtained and analysed by forming cutting-edge partnerships and valuing the input of other experts such as data scientists and engineers.

100. We will continue to work together to identify indicators of terrorist threat and where and how they are likely to be observed, reflecting the increasing challenge of identifying potential terrorists. We will use this understanding to drive improvements to threat detection work which will provide better insight and understanding.

101. We will focus on the nexus between terrorism and state threats, utilising our counter-terrorism powers, capabilities and expertise, where appropriate, to protect the UK against state threats and other emerging national security threats. The modern national security threats the UK faces are more complex and diverse than ever before. Alongside our counter-terrorism toolkit, the powers in the National Security Act 2023 will help to keep the UK safe by making it even harder for those states who seek to conduct hostile acts against the UK. But the lines between the threats we face – terrorism, hostile state activity, serious and organised crime – are becoming increasingly blurred and will often overlap. As part of our efforts to detect, investigate and disrupt national security threats and break down silos in how we tackle these threats, we are prepared to use all of the tools and resources at our disposal.

102. We will continue to ensure that legislation reflects the nature of the terrorist threat and wider national security context. Since 2018 a range of counter-terrorism powers have been introduced or amended to keep pace with the threat, including the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019, the Terrorist Offenders Act 2020, the Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Act 2021, and the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Act 2021. A full list of legislation impacting counter-terrorism, enacted since 2018, is available at annex B. The Home Secretary's statutory report on the operation of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) and the subsequent independent review of the Act found that whilst in high level terms the Act has broadly achieved its aims, there is a

⁶⁰ This includes the Foundation Model Taskforce, which will develop the safe and reliable use of this AI across the economy. [Initial £100 million for expert taskforce to help UK build and adopt next generation of safe AI - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/initial-100-million-for-expert-taskforce-to-help-uk-build-and-adopt-next-generation-of-safe-ai)

case for urgent legislative change to limited parts of the Act. This recalibration will support law enforcement and the intelligence agencies to stay ahead of and across national security threats, to seize intelligence opportunities and take advantage of developing technology, while continuing to protect individuals' rights.

103. We will continue to work closely with industry, including the tech sector and telecommunication providers, to ensure that our investigatory capabilities keep pace with changes in technology and the police and intelligence agencies can access the data they need to detect, investigate and disrupt terrorist threat. Where necessary and proportionate to keep the country safe, we will continue to drive access to, and value from, digital communications-related data. As part of this we will:

- build operational edge, developing capabilities that maintain appropriate services, safeguarding against capability degradation, and realise the potential of future digital communications-related data sources
- cohere data initiatives across operational partners to maximise mission value, putting operational beneficiaries at the heart of development activities
- work as one dynamic ecosystem, leveraging our individual and collective strengths to develop and use new cutting-edge capabilities

12

↑  Gates

Protect

The aim of Protect is to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack.

Protect

104. The aim of Protect is to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack.

105. The objectives of Protect are:

- reduce the physical risk to people as they go about their lives
- reduce the vulnerability of public venues, transport, and our Critical National Infrastructure⁶¹
- reduce the ability of terrorists to access and use materials and technology of concern
- identify and manage individuals and goods of terrorist concern through the migration and border system

106. Protect is delivered through government departments, devolved administrations, operational experts, intelligence agencies, the private sector, the public, and international allies. Our extensive network of police Counter-Terrorism Security Advisors and the NPSA provide high quality advice to business and communities, grounded in risk, intelligence and scientific research.⁶²

107. Protective security approaches are continuously reviewed to ensure that they take account of the latest research and intelligence on terrorist targets and attack methodologies. As technology changes and is adopted, it is vital to both ensure that opportunities are harnessed, as well as future threats are identified, understood, and mitigated. For example, research into use of vehicles as a weapon informed development of the Rental Vehicle Security Scheme which includes a voluntary programme which supports vehicle rental companies in better protecting their vehicles from being used for terrorist purposes.

108. Our Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme and Jewish Community Protective Security Grant provide protective security measures at places of worship and associated faith community centres that are particularly vulnerable to religiously motivated hate crime. A new Faith Security Training scheme is aimed at raising security awareness amongst faith communities.

109. We promote the ongoing improvement and full implementation of international aviation and maritime security standards through co-operation with international partners, multilateral bodies and industry.⁶³ We will continue to work with our partners in priority countries internationally to assess vulnerabilities and with industry and partners to improve aviation and maritime security standards. We also work with the transport industry to ensure the UK's own transport security system remains robust. This includes work to identify and tackle insider threat through background checks, security vetting and improved data sharing between the sector and law enforcement.

⁶¹ [Critical National Infrastructure | NPSA](#).

⁶² From the Police National Counter-Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO).

⁶³ Such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and International Maritime Organisation.

110. Reducing the ability of terrorists to access and use materials and technology of concern includes measures to restrict access to materials which could be used to construct home-made explosives. Research and development, including essential partnerships with online retailers and updates to legislation, is critical to reducing the risk from explosives.⁶⁴ Suspicious Activity Reports identify activity of concern, on the purchase of precursor chemicals, and have led to arrests and prosecutions.

111. Internationally, the FCDO and Home Office's Joint Overseas Protect and Prepare unit is working in partnership with host countries and funding capacity-building to increase protective security standards around tourist locations. Working with partners in public and private sectors, the focus is on long-term sustainable change such as developing expertise in protective security cadres and training tourist industry personnel.

112. Mitigating the risk of the assassination of a high-profile public figure through protective security measures continues to be a core element of our Protect strategy. Working closely with key delivery partners, we will ensure our response continues to reflect the threats faced by high-profile public figures, using technological improvements and tactical developments to deliver proportionate mitigations.

Enhancing protective security

113. We will pass Martyn's Law to improve security at public venues. The draft Bill, published on 2 May 2023, would, if agreed, place a requirement on those responsible for certain premises and events to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures. Responsible persons will consider and take forward better protection, delivered through enhanced security systems, staff training, and clearer processes.

114. To support duty holders and those who support protecting the public from the threat of terrorism, the Home Office and its partners will continue to make free guidance, advice and training available through ProtectUK. ProtectUK is the new, central platform for those products and launched in spring 2022. It has grown significantly since then and will continue to evolve as the bill passes through parliament. Alongside those resources, we are also considering options on how to better support local authorities and their responsibilities with regard to protecting the public. This follows two years of pilots and trials. We will continue to undertake and fund research and development across the protective security space.

115. We will work with UK airports to upgrade screening capabilities. The Next Generation Security Checkpoint programme will further enhance airports' ability to detect threats and keep passengers safe. We will continue to seek to develop novel detection technologies that might transform the protection of publicly accessible locations, as well as support the identification of harmful materials at the border.

116. Our migration and border system provides a critical opportunity to identify and manage individuals and goods of terrorist concern. We will work with international partners to mutually increase both our capabilities and knowledge of individuals of

⁶⁴ Such as the 2023 amendments to the Poisons Act designed to further strengthen the controls on explosives precursors and poisons.

[The Control of Explosives Precursors and Poisons Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

concern. We will invest in our biometrics, detection and targeting capabilities to open new opportunities and allow us to realise a key opportunity of EU Exit by enabling exploitation of new advance goods data from the EU for counter-terrorism purposes.

117. We will upgrade the existing radiological and nuclear border detection equipment, continue to enhance screening coverage at the border through Cyclamen and procure new detection equipment to upgrade the radiological and nuclear inland capability.⁶⁵

118. Overseas, we will ensure that our Protect efforts are focused on the areas of greatest risk to the UK, including those areas with the highest number of UK tourists. Working together with the Counter Terrorism and Extremism Network and local partners, we fund activities to reduce the risk to UK tourists in high-risk areas. By working with governments, emergency services, hoteliers and airport and port operators, capabilities to deter potential terrorists are enhanced. For example, following the Sousse attack of 2015 we have worked in Tunisia to improve protection for UK tourists. The focus has been human rights compliant capacity-building by improving technical, leadership and incident command skills. Between 2016 and 2025 we will have spent almost £3.5million on Protect and Prepare activities in Tunisia. As part of our efforts to better align our strategic counter-terrorism approach with key allies, we will ensure that we develop and draw on shared capabilities to protect UK tourists overseas most effectively.

⁶⁵ Cyclamen is the name for the radiological and nuclear detection capabilities deployed at points of entry to the UK.



Prepare

The aim of **Prepare** is to minimise the impact of an attack and reduce the likelihood of further attacks.

Prepare

119. The aim of Prepare is to minimise the impact of an attack and reduce the likelihood of further attacks.

120. The objectives of Prepare are to:

- build proportionate responses to a range of attack methodologies, wherever they might occur
- in response to an attack, deploy a systemised, effective, and co-ordinated multi-agency response, using specialist and non-specialist capabilities, to save lives, mitigate harm, and prevent further attacks
- enable recovery, including the long-term care of victims and survivors and the mitigation of any ongoing hazard
- adapt and improve by identifying and sharing learning from research, training, testing, exercising, and previous incidents

121. Training, testing, exercising, and ensuring that effective cross-organisational systems are in place to capture and act on lessons is critical to Prepare. Learning from past attacks, inquests, and inquiries, including the findings of the Manchester Arena Inquiry, also play a central role.

122. The principles of Prepare are the same as the response to any major incident and apply at the national, devolved, regional, and local levels, across the UK. We also reach overseas to share learning, and to ensure that where there are close connections with other countries, the response is co-ordinated. Our activity supports and is supported by wider work on resilience, major incident response and national security preparedness.

123. Often the first to be aware of an incident are control room staff, and the first on scene tend to be non-specialist first responders. The response will be co-ordinated between the emergency services and founded on the Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles (JESIP). We ensure that the response to terrorism is a core skill, that JESIP is embedded in the mindset of every frontline responder, and that these skills are regularly tested, exercised, and improved.

124. In the earliest stages, those affected by an attack need to know what to do until the emergency services arrive. We equip civil society with the tools to react safely, through training and education.⁶⁶ Some parts of industry are also required by legislation or regulation to be prepared for an attack, and this is regulated. Legislation is also being brought forward to require owners and operators of public venues to be prepared, as part of Martyn's Law.

125. The response to some incidents will require additional specialist assets, training, and guidance to deal with attacks involving complex methodologies or challenging environments. We support the development of specialist counter-terrorism response

⁶⁶ The NPSA and ProtectUK (a collaboration between the Home Office, CT Policing and Pool Re) provide guidance and support in preparedness for an attack [About | ProtectUK](#).

doctrine and required capabilities. We ensure these specialist capabilities are resourced effectively and ready for use. This includes armed police officers, specially trained fire officers and paramedics, explosives experts, and counter-drones measures.

126. It also includes teams trained to deal with chemical, biological, radioactive, or nuclear materials and devices, and enables operation in difficult or contaminated environments. We also oversee the development and readiness of specialist kit and equipment and the specific operational procedures that support them.

127. Should the scale or severity of an incident exceed the capacity of civilian responders, a Military Aid to the Civil Authority request can be made to seek further support from the armed forces, including the backfill of armed police. The UK's armed forces play an integral and vital part of the Prepare system in their own right. For example, mitigating potential airborne terrorist incidents (e.g., hijackings), or the provision of render safe capabilities for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive devices by Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD).

128. We also work closely with the NHS to plan for the rapid triage and treatment of casualties, including at specialist treatment centres.

129. The response to a terrorist attack in the UK or on UK interests overseas may be co-ordinated at the strategic level by COBR, but the immediate impacts will be mitigated most effectively by the early on-scene actions. Taking the right actions early on in a response can also significantly improve the recovery challenges from a chemical, biological radiological or nuclear incident.

130. Departments and organisations with a role in recovery play an important part in Prepare. Recovery focuses on understanding and mitigating any outstanding risk and managing the consequences of an attack. This includes dealing with any residual hazards, preserving evidence, and supporting investigative processes. It also includes the provision of support for victims and survivors.

131. Overseas, the UK funds capacity building training for partners, which supports local response. This has included training thousands of emergency service personnel and tourism sector workers in counter-terrorism awareness, first response, crisis management and first aid. We also ensure that the diplomatic and operational network overseas has the right skills and capabilities to respond to terrorist incidents and kidnaps, wherever they occur. The FCDO maintains a 24/7 response function to be able to respond to terrorist threats or incidents wherever they take place across the globe. This includes ensuring Embassies and High Commissions are regularly trained and exercised, and have in place robust, up-to-date Crisis Management Plans, focused primarily but not exclusively, on regions and countries with the greatest UK presence. We draw on a range of information sources to monitor current and emerging threats to ensure our response is rapid and agile.

Preparing for future terrorist attacks

132. We will place victims and survivors at the heart of counter-terrorism policy, by fully understanding their lived experiences and by reviewing and reforming the support we give them. Victims and survivors need compassionate and timely support to help them recover practically and emotionally. We will make it easier for victims and survivors to access

services, by improving public messaging and providing dedicated contact points. We will work to strengthen the support for children and young people and improve access to mental health and financial support, ensuring these services better meet the diverse needs of victims and survivors.

133. Recognising the clear recommendations of the Manchester Arena Inquiry, we will strengthen our ability to test and exercise the end-to-end response to a terrorist attack, from first responders through to national government. To support this, we will improve the systems we have in place to capture, share, and act on the lessons we learn, including from past incidents. We will make better use of technology to improve our testing and exercising programme, including the use of virtual reality and artificial intelligence.

134. We will ensure that the Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles are embedded in the mindset and muscle memory of every emergency responder by supporting the emergency services to deliver enhanced training and more opportunities to improve and practise an effective multi-agency response.

135. We will continue to develop and maintain specialist capabilities to respond to low likelihood, high impact, and other national security threats. Informed by continuous assessment of the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threat, this will include reviewing and enhancing the specialist response, and ensuring the emergency services are equipped to mitigate the impacts of such attacks. This joins an ongoing review of bomb disposal capabilities. We will support this by investing in science and technology to develop solutions to meet future threats.

136. We will pilot local resilience reform by 2025 and implement changes nationally by 2030. This will strengthen Local Resilience Forum leadership, accountability, and the integration of resilience, including counter-terrorism, across local policy making.⁶⁷

137. Internationally, we will build our capability to respond to terrorist attacks and kidnaps overseas by investing in the training of our overseas network, and ensuring all Posts have in place robust, regularly exercised, terrorism response plans. In some countries we have supported the development of new, co-ordinated national crisis response policy and infrastructure, which can be deployed to ensure an effective response to terrorist attack and a range of other emergencies. These draw on lessons learned from previous incidents overseas.

⁶⁷ Local Resilience Forums (LFRs) are multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and others. These agencies are known as Category 1 Responders, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act. LRFs aim to plan and prepare for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies. They work to identify potential risks and produce emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on their local communities. Local arrangements differ in Scotland and Wales.

An aerial night view of a city, likely Boston, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous buildings, streets, and a prominent church spire on the left. The scene is illuminated by city lights, creating a blue and white color palette. A dark purple semi-transparent box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the main title and a paragraph of text.

Transforming Counter- Terrorism

To respond to the challenge of an enduring and evolving terrorist threat, our efforts will go beyond continuous improvement within each work strand of CONTEST. We will work across the whole of CONTEST to make transformational improvements to our counter-terrorism response designed to meet the key challenges of the current and future terrorist threat and national security context.

Transforming counter-terrorism

138. To respond to the challenge of an enduring and evolving terrorist threat, our efforts will go beyond continuous improvement within each work-strand of CONTEST. We will work across the whole of CONTEST to make transformational improvements to our counter-terrorism response designed to meet the key challenges of the current and future terrorist threat and national security context:

- a domestic terrorist threat which is less predictable and harder to detect and investigate
- a persistent and evolving threat from Islamist terrorist groups overseas
- an operating environment where technology provides both opportunity and risk to our counter-terrorism efforts

139. As set out above, full implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Review of Prevent is delivering a step-change in our work to stop people becoming or supporting terrorists. We are committed to delivering Martyn's Law to improve security at public venues. And we continue to learn from past attacks, inquests and inquiries, including the Manchester Arena Inquiry, continuously improving our capabilities and closing vulnerabilities in our response to terrorist attacks.

140. The additional specific measures set out below will ensure that we continue to improve our counter-terrorism response to be more agile in the face of an evolving threat, more integrated so that we can bring the right interventions to bear at the right time to reduce risk and more aligned with our international allies to ensure that we continue to deliver together against a common threat. We will:

141. Realise the full potential of our world-leading Counter-Terrorism Operations Centre (CTOC), bringing together the right teams, data and technology to more efficiently and effectively identify, investigate and disrupt terrorists. Recognising data sharing as a critical enabler of CTOC we will take steps to drive forward this capability including the recently introduced Data Protection and Digital Information (No.2) Bill which will allow for law enforcement and the intelligence services to form joint processing under a single data protection regime where joint processing of data is required for specified national security purposes.

142. Ensure that counter-terrorism investigations draw on an increased range of expert advice and non-law enforcement interventions to mitigate the evolving terrorist threat. We will better connect the counter-terrorism system with expertise in healthcare, education, social services and the criminal justice system to respond to the complexity of terrorist threat. This will include access to a broader range of interventions which can be employed to divert people away from terrorism or mitigate the threat posed by a potential terrorist. Where necessary we will change legislation, data access and government policy, working across local, devolved, and national partners to enable more effective counter-terrorism operations.

143. Continue to invest in our world-class counter-terrorism assessment capability to enable early detection of emerging threats to the UK and our interests overseas. The Joint

Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) was founded in 2003 and remains a critical component of the UK's counter-terrorism response, providing independent assessment of the terrorist threat including the National Terrorism Threat Level.⁶⁸ We will enhance JTAC's ability to detect emerging risks as they develop, including through open source, forecasting, and data analysis. This will be vital to ensuring that we make appropriate use of our resources and are able to respond efficiently to the evolving terrorist threat.

144. Support the public and private sector to be effective partners in preventing attacks and reducing loss of life in the event of an attack, transforming our communications effort to focus core messages in areas where the public has a critical role to play in our counter-terrorism response. We will invest in our public messaging to raise the prominence of the public's role, and to ensure the public has the information they need to make decisions on reporting potential terrorism, keeping themselves safe and responding to incidents, at home and abroad.⁶⁹ We will streamline our reporting mechanisms, advice and guidance on how to respond to an attack, so that they are clear, accessible and easy for the public to use. We will also review how we communicate terrorism risk in travel advice and how we can use new technologies to maximise its reach and impact, to ensure we have a robust, consistent and proportionate approach.

145. Deepen our international counter-terrorism partnerships, aligning our strategic approaches so that we can maximise the effectiveness of existing capabilities and develop new ones to protect our citizens and disrupt common threats. This will maximise efficiency and effectiveness, allowing us to target our efforts appropriately and understand how emerging threats can be best tackled alongside our partners. We will seek to influence the international counter-terrorism response across the full range of the CONTEST framework, including by working with like-minded partners around the world to identify areas for engagement, build alliances and to detect, disrupt, and tackle the threats directed at the UK or our people and interests. The UK will partner with all who are willing to work with us on the basis of respect, reciprocity, the UN Charter and international law, in a way which complies with our human rights obligations.

146. Further strengthen our border as a critical line of defence against terrorism. The Future Border and Immigration System Programme will transform the migration and borders system, improving customer service whilst enhancing the security of the UK. Introduction of a universal 'permission to travel' for all those wishing to come to the UK (with the exception of British and Irish citizens) will give the UK more control of our borders, allowing us to block threats from entering the UK. Investment in improved detection and biometrics capabilities and our approach to targeting will strengthen our ability to identify and prevent the travel to the UK of people or goods of concern.

147. Continue to invest in the identification of future threats and opportunities that derive from technology. We will work with international partners, the private sector, think tanks and academia to ensure that the impact of new technologies on the terrorist threat is understood. We will adapt our policies to mitigate emerging technology enabled threats

⁶⁸ www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels

⁶⁹ Public polling has shown that although individuals are largely confident knowing where to report suspicious activity or concerns, knowledge is inconsistent across different situations (see annex C for further detail).

and we will in turn seize new opportunities to ensure that our counter-terrorism response is enabled by technology at every stage.

148. Build on our engagement with the tech sector, participating in the co-ordinated, international effort to suppress terrorist exploitation of the internet. This includes co-operation with large and small companies on a bilateral basis to improve their policies and capabilities to reduce the availability and credibility of terrorist and violent extremist content online, as well as partnership with non-governmental organisations like Tech Against Terrorism and multilateral forums such as the Christchurch Call to Action and the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. Following royal assent of the Online Safety Bill, we will look to Ofcom as the independent online safety regulator to hold technology companies to account for how they prevent, identify and remove terrorist content and activity online, while upholding freedom of expression.

149. Enable crucial access to the data we need to investigate and disrupt terrorist activity where necessary and proportionate. Through setting international data standards and the landmark UK/US Data Access Agreement, UK law enforcement and intelligence agencies can now request data from US telecommunications providers that will help them to detect, investigate and prosecute serious crime, including terrorism. This critical element of operational work to understand and mitigate threats relies on the co-operation of the companies whose services are exploited by terrorists and serious criminals.



Part Three: Implementation

The Home Secretary leads the UK's counter-terrorism response and the implementation of CONTEST. CONTEST Unit, a cross-government unit based in the Home Office, monitor and coordinate counter-terrorism performance, including where other Secretaries of State have responsibility for elements of the strategy.

Part Three: Implementation

Ministerial responsibilities

150. The Prime Minister chaired National Security Council (NSC) will continue to be the main forum for collective agreement of the government's objectives for counter-terrorism. It will continue to oversee CONTEST, monitoring its progress, considering emerging risks, agreeing our response, and overseeing the allocation of resources for counter-terrorism work.

151. The Home Secretary is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the government's counter-terrorism response, and is supported in this role at Cabinet by the Minister of State for Security. The Director General of MI5 is accountable to the Home Secretary for the organisation's contribution to the government's counter-terrorism response alongside its other functions. The Home Secretary also oversees Counter Terrorism Policing and the National Crime Agency.

152. The Foreign Secretary is responsible for UK foreign policy and UK government activity overseas. This includes the international aspects of CONTEST. The Foreign Secretary also has oversight of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ).

153. The Defence Secretary is responsible for the UK's armed forces and the global contribution of Ministry of Defence to counter-terrorism activity, including defence-specific capacity building and individual operations.

154. The Justice Secretary is responsible for the risks posed by terrorists across the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales, covering the Ministry of Justice's and its agencies' interaction with the courts, management of terrorist risk in custody, and supervision on licence.

155. The Transport Secretary is responsible for transport security policy and leads on security arrangements for land, aviation and maritime transport to mitigate the risk from terrorism to the transport system.

156. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) have overall responsibility for UK sanctions, however HM Treasury (HMT) and the Chancellor are responsible for financial sanctions policy. HMT is responsible for financial sanctions enforcement and implementation. This includes international counter-terrorism sanctions under the two FCDO owned counter-terrorism regimes. The Chancellor is also responsible for the UK's domestic counter-terrorism sanctions regime, which is owned by HMT. HMT and Home Office are jointly responsible for economic crime policy. HMT also represents the UK at the Financial Action Task Force which sets international standards on AML/CTF.

Oversight

157. The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) is the committee of Parliament with statutory responsibility for the oversight of the security and intelligence activities of the UK. The ISC oversees the policies, expenditure, administration and respective operations of MI5, SIS, GCHQ, Defence Intelligence, the Joint Intelligence Organisation, the National Security Secretariat and the Homeland Security Group. Separate arrangements exist for oversight of MI5 by the ISC, under the Justice and Security Act 2013.

158. The Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) is a cross-party committee of MPs which scrutinises the work of the Home Office and its associated bodies. Although none of its current inquiries relate to counter-terrorism, it has a watching brief on the issue, holding evidence sessions with senior officials and other relevant individuals. The Home Secretary and Security Minister both regularly appear in front of the committee, where they are often asked about counter-terrorism policy and spending decisions.

159. The Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation provides robust, independent challenge to the government and the police and to inform the public and political debate on anti-terrorism law in the UK.

160. The Investigatory Powers Commissioner independently oversees the use of investigatory powers by the secret intelligence agencies, ensuring they are used in accordance with the law and the public interest.

161. The Investigatory Powers Tribunal provides a right of redress for anyone who believes they have been a victim of unlawful action by a public authority improperly using covert investigative techniques. The Tribunal considers allegations of unlawful intrusion by public bodies, including the UK intelligence services, the police and local authorities and investigates alleged conduct by or on behalf of the UK intelligence services whether or not it involves investigatory powers.

162. The Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE) provides the government with impartial, expert advice and scrutiny on the tools, policies and approaches needed to tackle extremism. The CCE has become the government's independent 'centre of excellence' on counter-extremism, and its work will continue to inform policymaking.

Devolved administrations

163. Counter-terrorism – like all issues of national security – is a reserved matter, meaning that legislative powers related to counter-terrorism are retained by the UK Parliament. Despite this, many of the mechanisms through which counter-terrorism is delivered are devolved in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Delivery of Prevent is devolved in Scotland.

164. The UK government works together with the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on a shared strategic response to the threat of terrorism posed across the UK. Close collaboration is vital to ensure that we are collectively able to fulfil the objectives of CONTEST across the UK. Devolved administrations are critically important in the delivery of the counter-terrorism mission.

165. CONTEST addresses all forms of terrorism that affect the UK and our interests overseas, with the exception of Northern Ireland related terrorism in Northern Ireland, which is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The Home Secretary is responsible for the response to Northern Ireland related terrorism in Great Britain. The Home Office work closely with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to share best practice.

British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies

166. The UK has responsibilities to British Overseas Territories (BOTs) and the Crown Dependencies (CDs), stemming from international law and from its constitutional relationships with the BOTs and CDs. This was reaffirmed in the 2023 Integrated Review Refresh which committed the UK to protect the sovereignty, security and prosperity of the British people and ensure the UK and its BOTs and CDs are free from coercion, protected from harm, and able to maximise economic and social wellbeing. Whilst an affected BOT or CD would normally mount the response to any terrorist incident, the UK may provide technical expertise and/or specialist resource to enhance and support an effective, expeditious, locally-led response and recovery where practicable and appropriate.

Cross-government co-ordination

167. At official level, the counter-terrorism system is led by the Director General for Homeland Security in the Home Office. As the lead official they are responsible to the National Security Council on behalf of the various departments and agencies responsible for delivery of CONTEST. The senior official may also delegate co-ordination and leadership of specific elements of CONTEST.

168. To ensure effective monitoring and oversight of the government's work to counter terrorism, we have a robust governance structure that ensures the accountability of the strategy and supports the effective co-ordination of work across departments.

169. The CONTEST Board – which is chaired by the lead official – is a senior officials board that monitors the implementation of CONTEST and ensures that we maintain collective decision-making and effective co-ordination across government. It brings together senior operational and policy leaders from each of the government departments included in CONTEST, Counter Terrorism Policing and the security and intelligence agencies.

170. In addition, there are separate international and operational boards, oversight groups and the Prime Minister chaired NSC that provide scrutiny and accountability.

171. Oversight of the delivery of CONTEST is delegated to 'P' Directors for each of the four core work strands: Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare. The 'P' Directors establish and oversee co-ordination mechanisms including all delivery departments and agencies, monitor performance, identify critical risks and ensure that critical system improvements are being delivered. Each work strand has a senior cross-government governance board to ensure effective co-ordination and oversight of the work strand.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

172. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are critical to how we deliver CONTEST. We need a range of different perspectives and skills to challenge the established way of thinking, recruit the best people and to have a sound understanding of the country we're protecting. We are committed to ensuring inclusive approaches throughout our work. Each member department of the counter-terrorism system recruits under fair and open competition, with EDI at its forefront. We will continue to engage, listen to, and work in partnership with stakeholders with a diverse range of characteristics and backgrounds. We are embedding challenge functions and diversity of thought in our work to help us respond to the threats we face and ensure that everyone is treated fairly by the counter-terrorism system, leading to a safer society overall.

173. All overseas counter-terrorism programmes funded via the Counter Terrorism Portfolio (CTPf), part of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, are covered by the Public Sector Equalities Duty. Ahead of delivery we must be able to articulate within programme documentation the impact of programming on groups defined by any of the Protected Characteristics, which must be accounted for and monitored. At a minimum, programming must do no harm, and this is managed through active mitigation measures. Gender sensitivity is implemented and monitored in all aspects of the CTPf; we use a Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion score for our monitoring and evaluation of key international projects.

Funding

174. The Spending Review 2021 (SR21) set departmental budgets up to 2024-2025 and reflected the government's commitment to counter-terrorism, with a spend of more than £3 billion per year. By maintaining funding for Counter Terrorism Policing in England and Wales and continuing to invest in the intelligence agencies, the government will maintain and develop world-leading capabilities to counter national security threats to the UK.

175. Since CONTEST was last published, the government has committed to the delivery of CTOC which co-locates the intelligence agencies, Counter Terrorism Policing and other partners. This new, fully-integrated approach will keep the public safer from terrorism by enhancing the government's ability to discover and prevent attacks and improve the speed of response.

176. We have also continued to invest in Counter Terrorism Policing to support ongoing investigations and continued funding for both armed policing and CTOC. Counter Terrorism Policing funding totalled over £1 billion in 2022-23 and this will continue in 2023-24.

177. The government also provided the UK intelligence community with a £700 million cash increase at SR21, to £3.7 billion by 2024-25. This represents a 4% real terms growth

rate per year on average over the same period to support the delivery of CTOC and the priorities set out in the Integrated Review.⁷⁰

178. Overseas, we will continue to deliver targeted programming and partnership engagement through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund CTPf, with a forecast spend of over £95 million between 2022-25. The CTPf will continue to fund and cohere global Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare delivery through the FCDO, Home Office, DfT and Counter Terrorism Policing against key overseas counter-terrorism objectives. The CTPf will be co-ordinated with other Conflict, Stability and Security Fund delivery, as well as with the activities of international partners, including the US.

Assessing delivery, performance and the impact on risk

179. CONTEST will rightly be judged by its impact on the risk to the UK and UK interests overseas from terrorism. But assessing the direct impact of our programmes is challenging: the threat from terrorism and the UK's vulnerability to this threat are complex, and they are influenced by a wide range of factors which cannot always be identified and over which we do not always have control.

180. Since the previous strategy was published in 2018, we have developed an effective performance and risk assessment process covering the whole counter-terrorism system which helps us to understand what is working and what needs further work, identify evidence gaps which can be addressed through our evaluation programme, and inform where we prioritise our efforts to tackle terrorism in all its forms.

181. Embedding evaluation practice into the counter-terrorism system is integral for understanding the long-term impact of our activities on counter-terrorism outcomes. We will develop an evaluation programme aligned with the government's recommended evaluation strategy, ensuring activities, policies and interventions adhere to best practice set out in the Magenta and Green Book.^{71 72 73} Our programme involves adopting a proportionate approach focusing evaluation efforts on major programmes, areas of high spend or evidence gaps. A systematic evaluation programme will help build an evidence base on what works in counter-terrorism, aiming to inform future decision-making to improve efficacy, efficiency, value for money and better account for unintended consequences.

182. Counter-terrorism projects delivered overseas through CTPf, as part of Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, have a robust monitoring, and evaluation and learning framework, based on the theory of change and assessed against National Security Council priorities and CONTEST strategic overseas outcomes.

⁷⁰ The Single Intelligence Account (SIA) provides funding for the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) and the Security Service (Mi5). Resource is allocated against priority, which includes counter-terrorism and broader national security threats.

⁷¹ HM Government. (2022, November). *The evaluation task force strategy 2022 – 2025*. [The Evaluation Task Force Strategy 2022 - 2025 \(HTML\) – GOV.UK](#)

⁷² HM Treasury. (2020, March). *The magenta book*. [The Magenta Book – GOV.UK](#)

⁷³ HM Treasury. (2022, November). *The green book*. [The Green Book \(2022\) – GOV.UK](#)

183. As well as assessing the overall performance of CONTEST against the objectives set out in this strategy, we also monitor progress in delivering key improvement activity that will help to support delivery of our overall objectives and drive down risk. These priority deliverables address key commitments in this strategy and are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by the relevant board to ensure successful delivery.

Annex A: Roles and responsibilities

Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office supports the work of the National Security Council through the National Security Secretariat, which also has oversight of the Single Intelligence Account. The Cabinet Office's Joint Intelligence Committee, supported by the Joint Intelligence Organisation, delivers independent, strategic intelligence assessments. The Resilience Directorate, in the Economic and Domestic Secretariat, is responsible for driving forward the government's longer-term work to enhance national resilience. It manages the resilience system, core legislation and guidance, produces the National Security Risk Assessment and other cross-government risk products, incorporating threat information from the intelligence agencies, which informs emergency planning and preparedness. It also leads the Resilience Capabilities Programme, a cross-Whitehall initiative that oversees the strategic development and maintenance of the standard capabilities required for any crisis response; the Cabinet Office Emergency Planning College; and co-ordinates the National Exercise Programme. The Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) is the government's central crisis response mechanism for terrorist attacks. The COBR Unit, which also sits within the National Security Secretariat, leads on preparing for near-term acute manifestations of risks.

CONTEST Unit. A cross-government Unit based in the Home Office, is responsible for co-ordinating the departments and agencies across the government, known as the counter-terrorism system, to deliver CONTEST. This enables the counter-terrorism system to provide a singular view to ministers on the performance of CONTEST and the critical challenges and risks.

Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) leads the police contribution to CONTEST across all four work strands:

Prevent: CTP works with local forces and frontline policing to safeguard individuals and communities vulnerable to radicalisation. It is a multi-agency approach and CTP supports Local Authorities and other partners in delivering their statutory duty under Prevent. Along with frontline police, CTP disrupts those who seek to radicalise.

Pursue: CTP, working jointly with MI5, collects and develops intelligence, runs counter-terrorism investigations to disrupt terrorist activity through arrest and prosecution with UK prosecuting authorities.

Protect: CTP delivers protective security for the public, private sector and publicly accessible locations, Royalty and VIPs. The National Counter-Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) is responsible for developing specific guidance and support to a network of around 200 Counter-Terrorism Security Advisors (CTSAs) nationally,

who deliver protective security advice and guidance in support of government policy.

Prepare: CTP delivers specialist response capabilities, such as armed policing, and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear response to protect the public. The network provides testing and exercising and organisational learning capabilities to provide assurance of all policing's capability to respond to terrorism.

CTP is an alliance within which all UK police forces co-operate to detect, deter and investigate terrorist activity in the UK to protect the public and our national security. Through this operating model Chief Officers vest authority in both the National Police Chiefs' Council's (NPCC) Lead for counter-terrorism and the Senior National Co-ordinators (one covering Pursue and Prevent and one covering Protect and Prepare), who have strategic oversight of CTP. For forces in England and Wales this construct runs formally under a Section 22a Police Act 1996 Collaboration Agreement and under a Memorandum of Understanding, replicating the essence of the Section 22a Collaboration Agreement, between the Chief Constables of Police Scotland and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), and the NPCC Lead. This framework ensures that CTP can essentially operate as a single entity whilst remaining anchored and connected to the local communities they serve through local policing. Like the rest of policing, it is overseen by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), under its Counter-Terrorism Co-ordination Committee.

CTP Headquarters supports local operational delivery via regional CTP units across England and Wales, and closely with Police Scotland and PSNI. The headquarters also provides important oversight of the network, monitors performance and provides a strategic oversight of threats and capabilities within the network as well as setting policy and strategy for CTP.

CTP therefore operates as a 'virtual force' which, at a national level, is integrated with intelligence partners, most notably MI5, and wider partners within the national security system. At a local level CTP works closely with policing, local authorities and other agencies. Comprised of around 10,000 police officers and staff across the UK, CTP also provides a presence overseas delivering a vital link with international law enforcement partners to help counter threats emanating outside of the UK. In addition to proactive operational work, CTP can be mobilised in response to single or multiple terrorist incidents, surging and flexing resources across the UK in accordance with where the threat is greatest.

Frontline police play a crucial role across all CONTEST strands. They are often the first on the scene of a terrorist attack and for this eventuality CTP carries out local and national testing and exercising of the preparedness of frontline policing in support of the CTP response. In the wake of an incident where their links with communities are vital they provide reassurance and assist in managing the community impact of an attack. Through interaction with the public on a daily basis they are also the aspect of policing who are most likely to see first-hand those tell-tale signs that indicate a person could be moving towards terrorist activity, something that is reflected in the volume of Prevent referrals received from frontline policing annually. This makes frontline police a major partner in

CTP's work to counter terrorism and we continue to work closely with them to deliver against our commitments as set out in CONTEST.

CTP also leads the policing response to state threats, including investigative and disruptive activity, the provision of security advice and support to those (communities, people and companies in the UK that may be the target of malign state sponsored activity. Additionally, CTP also leads investigations into war crimes, including support to the International Criminal Court on war crimes. It manages these growing missions utilising many of the same capabilities used for countering terrorism.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL). DSTL, a part of MOD, is the UK's leading government agency in applying Science and Technology (S&T) to the defence and security of the UK. DSTL brings together the defence and security S&T community, including industry, academia, wider government and international partners, to provide sensitive and specialist S&T services to MOD and wider government.

The Department for Education (DfE). DfE is responsible for children's services and education in England, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships, and wider skills. The department is responsible for work to ensure that all learners are protected from the risk of radicalisation and extremism through the development of national policy and practice. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) support this work through an inspection, regulation, and reporting framework. Ofsted inspect organisations and individuals providing education, training, and care – from childminders to training providers, schools to local authorities. The Office for Students monitors what higher education providers do to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. The department has a role in supporting local authorities to comply with their statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children including within children's services. The department has a role in supporting institutions to implement Prevent and aspects of Protect and Prepare by helping to ensure that the educational estate is secure and that effective crisis response arrangements are in place.

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). DHSC is responsible for the health sector's contribution to CONTEST in England. This includes maintaining and building our capability to respond to mass casualty incidents, including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear events; and the implementation of the Prevent Duty in the health sector.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). DLUHC leads the government's Levelling Up agenda in England, to level up opportunities for everyone and deliver DLUHC's goal to establish socially and economically stronger communities. Working with local partners and other parts of government, DLUHC is focused on strengthening societal resilience through leading work on counter-extremism, cohesion/integration, and tackling religious hatred. These work strands support, but are separate to, the delivery of Prevent and CONTEST. DLUHC helps local areas prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, and provides Government Liaison Officers as the link between local responders and COBR.

The Department for Transport (DfT). DfT leads UK land, aviation and maritime transport security policy both in the UK and in respect of UK transport entities operating abroad.

This includes setting and enforcing the protective standards that operators of railways and trains, airports and aircraft, and ports and ships in the UK and abroad are required to comply with (with regards to the compliance of standards in the aviation sector in the UK, this process is assured and enforced by the Civil Aviation Authority), and providing security guidance to the bus and coach, and commercial vehicle sectors. DfT works with the transport industry, law enforcement, and the security agencies to ensure that risks are understood and that mitigation measures are targeted, proportionate and practicable. DfT also work with partner countries and multilateral institutions, through our network of overseas staff, to improve transport security standards internationally.

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). DSIT leads on positioning the UK at the forefront of global scientific and technological advancement. This includes leading the government's work to tackle harmful activity online. The department is also responsible for the government's overall relationship with the tech industry.

Devolved administrations. The devolved administrations are responsible in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales for the functions which have been devolved to them according to their different devolution settlements. Counter-terrorism is a reserved matter, but many of the local delivery mechanisms, such as policing and justice in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and health, education and local government in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are devolved.

It should also be noted that Scotland and Northern Ireland are separate legal jurisdictions from England and Wales, and Scotland operates a different system of law. In Scotland, the Lord Advocate has primacy for the investigation and prosecution of all crime and deaths that occur in Scotland, including acts of terrorism with the police being subject to the direction of the relevant Procurator Fiscal and, in the context of a major incident, this would involve personal direction by the Lord Advocate. The devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales are responsible for consequence management following an attack, and for services and sectors who deliver aspects of Prevent, Protect and Prepare in an appropriate and proportionate fashion.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The Foreign Secretary is responsible for UK foreign and development policy and delivery overseas, including international elements of CONTEST. FCDO and its overseas Counter-Terrorism and Extremism Network leads on the delivery internationally of the government's counter-terrorism strategies. The Foreign Secretary leads on behalf of the UK government in the event of a terrorist incident involving UK nationals overseas. The FCDO leads on overseas threat and crisis response, including informing the public of risks overseas through maintaining up to date travel advice to UK citizens. The FCDO helps countries escape cycles of conflict and violence and the conditions that give rise to terrorism overseas through support to open societies and efforts to tackle conflict and instability, including through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. It also provides leadership for the Global Coalition Against Daesh's Communications Cell which counters Daesh's propaganda. The Foreign Secretary has oversight of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and GCHQ and is accountable to Parliament for their activities through the Intelligence and Security Committee.

Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). GCHQ specialises in the collection, analysis and reporting of electronic communications and signals (SIGINT). GCHQ is a key partner in the National Cyber Force, which provides offensive cyber capabilities to help keep the UK and its interests safe. GCHQ also plays a pivotal role in the UK's cyber security – the National Cyber Security Centre is the industry-facing part of GCHQ, helping protect the UK and its citizens from cyber-attack.

Home Office. The Home Secretary has responsibility for CONTEST and the Home Office is the lead department for counter-terrorism as part of the government's Outcome Delivery Plan. The Homeland Security Group (HSG) in the Home Office leads on supporting the Home Secretary in delivery of their counter-terrorism responsibilities. It also provides oversight of Counter Terrorism Policing and enables Home Secretary oversight of MI5; and co-ordinates the response to terrorism-related crises.

Prevent: HSG leads on the management and operational delivery of Prevent, in partnership with Counter Terrorism Policing, other government departments, devolved administrations, local authorities and civil society organisations. It collaborates with technology companies, international partners and multi-stakeholder organisations, including the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, to understand and counter terrorist narratives and reduce online radicalisation.

Pursue: HSG owns the policy for, and oversees the exercise of, a suite of disruptive counter-terrorism powers including proscription, the Designated Area Offence and Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures, as well as some immigration powers that can be used for counter-terrorism effect, such as exclusion and deprivation. HSG is also responsible for managing and mitigating the risk posed to the UK by people planning to travel overseas for terrorism purposes, and those seeking to return from the conflict. HSG supports the Home Secretary in their oversight of the Security Service and scrutiny of warrants, and owns the overall policy for ensuring the police, intelligence agencies and other public authorities have the investigatory powers necessary to protect the public and safeguard national security. HSG also develops, implements (as appropriate) and reviews counter-terrorism legislation.

Protect: Homeland Security Group is responsible for overseeing cross-government work on Protect. It manages the policy for protection of people and places, including the protection of Royalty and VIPs, sites of critical national importance, security at crowded places and management of hazardous substances. It also co-ordinates border and aviation security with police, Border Force, Department for Transport and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Prepare: Homeland Security Group co-ordinates and has overall responsibility for the preparedness and response to an attack. This includes ensuring that there are tested plans and capabilities in place to respond to the terrorism and national security related risks set out in the National Risk Assessment, which cover a range of different scenarios and environments. Homeland Security Group also oversees the counter-terrorism Science and Technology programme, which seeks to identify innovative science and technology solutions in support of CONTEST.

Through Border Force, UK Visas and Immigration, Immigration Enforcement and HM Passport Office, the Home Office is responsible for border security, with police support.

As the challenge of detecting and disrupting potential terrorists increases, the role of the public and industry has become increasingly more important – working alongside partners, Home Office Communications play an increasingly important role communicating about CONTEST and supporting the public and private sector's capability and willingness to contribute to the collective response. Home Office Communications does this by maintaining oversight and co-ordination of communications activity to ensure consistency and quality of messaging reaching the public and private sector.

To further support the public and private sector in their role, Home Office Communications will strengthen its co-ordination and delivery of public communications related to counter-terrorism – this includes new communications initiatives on Prevent reaching the public and sectors, supporting further synergies and improvements across communications campaigns to ensure their effectiveness with audiences, and championing improvements to information sources and reporting touchpoints for the public and private sector.

HM Treasury (HMT). HMT agrees counter-terrorism funding and budgetary protections with Departments at spending reviews and works closely with departments to ensure value for money in counter-terrorism spending, including approval of any in year adjustments to spending. It works with the Cabinet Office and Home Office on the annual counter-terrorism mapping exercise and counter-terrorism performance. The Treasury owns the government's relationship with Pool Reinsurance Company (Pool Re). Pool Re was established in 1993 to provide reinsurance for terrorism risk following a series of terrorist attacks in Great Britain. The 2019 Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act enabled Pool Re to extend insurance cover to include business interruption losses not contingent on property damage, following the coverage gaps highlighted in the 2017 London Bridge and Manchester Arena attacks. This benefits businesses and helps to mitigate the financial impact of a terrorist attack.

HMT co-leads on counter-terrorism financing alongside the Home Office. They lead the UK delegation to the Financial Action Task Force, which sets international standards for counter-terrorism financing. HMT also owns the domestic counter-terrorism sanctions regime, as well as being responsible for the implementation of all financial sanctions, including those under the UK's further two counter-terrorism sanctions regimes owned by the FCDO. FCDO leads on submitting counter-terrorism designation proposals at the UN, including under the Daesh and al-Qa'ida sanctions regime.

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) helps to ensure that financial sanctions are properly understood, implemented and enforced in the UK (including all UN and UK counter-terrorism sanctions). OFSI owns the implementation and review process for the consideration of new designations for the UK domestic counter-terrorism sanctions regime (Counter Terrorism (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019).

Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC). JTAC is the UK's independent authority for all-source terrorism assessment. JTAC is at the heart of the UK's counter-terrorism system and plays a vital role in supporting the prioritisation of critical counter-terrorism resources. It draws on open and covert sources to deliver insights to operational and policy customers

that shape government's counter-terrorism response across CONTEST, at home and overseas. JTAC sets the UK national threat level, informing Protect and Prepare measures, and provides analysis which underpins the UK's global counter-terrorism efforts. JTAC's multi-agency composition allows it to draw on a wide range of knowledge and experience in order to share expert threat advice across government and industry and to support partnerships in the UK and abroad.

Local authorities. With their wide-ranging responsibilities and democratic accountability, local authorities are vital partners to achieve CONTEST's objectives. Local authorities engage in multi-agency work to co-ordinate CONTEST activity and manage local risk. Every local authority should also use the existing counter-terrorism local profiles assess individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

Ministry of Defence (MOD). The MOD is a key contributor to CONTEST through its military capability. It supports Pursue through its capability to disrupt terrorist groups overseas, such as Daesh in Syria and Iraq, as well as through counter-terrorism capacity building for partner nations across the globe, and support to overseas law enforcement and security agencies. Its support for conflict prevention work also contributes to CONTEST objectives. In the event of a terrorist attack that exceeds the capability or immediate capacity of the UK civilian authority response, the MOD could provide support to Prepare through the Military Aid to the Civil Authorities process. The Ministry of Defence also provide a 24/7, 365 days a year air counter-terrorism response to respond to potential hijackings within UK airspace.

MI5. MI5's job is to keep the UK safe from national security threats. Its work focuses primarily on countering terrorism and hostile activity by other states. Working closely with the police, other intelligence agencies and overseas partners, MI5 uses a variety of methods – both covert and overt – to investigate and disrupt those who mean to cause the UK harm.

Ministry of Justice (MOJ). The MOJ contributes to CONTEST primarily across England and Wales by working with its agencies and partners to manage the risks posed by terrorists across the Criminal Justice System: from interaction with the courts, through managing terrorist risk in custody, to subsequent supervision on licence. At any one time, MOJ's executive agency, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), can be dealing with more than 200 terrorist offenders in prisons, as well as a similar number otherwise assessed as posing a terrorist risk. The vast majority will eventually be released from custody, and so the work of probation teams is crucial in keeping the public safe.

Since a series of terrorist attacks at Fishmongers' Hall, Streatham, HMP Whitemoor and Reading in 2019-20, all carried out by offenders, the MOJ has overhauled its approach to tackling terrorism. For example, MOJ has strengthened the law to ensure terrorists spend longer in custody; set up a new joint intelligence hub to co-ordinate quicker and better intelligence sharing between HMPPS, the police and MI5, improving our assessment of the threat; and every terrorist offender released on licence now receives enhanced monitoring and management through the new National Security Division. They continue to drive reforms to meet the evolving threat, including through an ambitious and wide-ranging set of commitments in response to the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation's recent review of terrorism in prisons.

Northern Ireland Office (NIO). The NIO supports the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and is responsible for coordinating the strategic approach to tackling the threat from Northern Ireland related terrorism in Northern Ireland.

National Protective Security Authority (NPSA). The NPSA is part of MI5 and develops the palette of counter measures and provides protective security advice, campaigns and training to business that organisations can use to protect themselves, and the country, making them less vulnerable and more resilient to national security threats, including terrorism.

Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). SIS, or MI6, uses a secret network of agents and partners overseas to penetrate terrorist groups, detect threats to the UK and our interests, and disrupt those in a lawful way. They work covertly to degrade terrorist organisations and deny them safe operating space overseas.

Annex B: Notable delivery since 2018

Prevent delivery since 2018

1. We have firmly embedded Prevent in the education sector in England through the provision of training, guidance and support that has built the confidence of school senior leaders to handle safeguarding incidents related to terrorism.
2. We have improved the consistency and effectiveness of Channel delivery nationwide by launching improved Channel Duty Guidance in 2020 and developing quality assurance processes.
3. In 2021, we published additional non-statutory advice for education settings on managing radicalisation risk, drawing on good practice developed in recent years. The government's Educate Against Hate website – which equips the sector with guidance and resources on tackling radicalisation – has been utilised by over one million people since 2018, with over 250,000 downloads of its resources.
4. We expanded the Desistance and Disengagement Programme to include support for prisoners as well as individuals subject to Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIMS) and Temporary Exclusion Orders (TEOs), more than doubling the number of participants receiving support since 2018.
5. We transformed our approach to tackling terrorism in prisons and probation by strengthening the law and investing in our capabilities. This includes a more robust approach to separating the most influential radicalisers from the wider prison population, and enhanced monitoring and management for terrorist offenders released on licence through our new National Security Division.
6. We have worked with a range of governments and international and multilateral partners to develop targeted Prevent capabilities overseas, including through providing UK funding to The Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund and Hedayah to deliver overseas programming. For example, in Tunisia following the 2015 Sousse attacks in which 30 UK nationals died, we worked in partnership with the Tunisian government to develop an early intervention system for people susceptible to radicalisation.
7. We have worked with tech companies and civil society organisations to reduce the availability of terrorist and violent extremist content online. This has included engaging companies bilaterally, working through the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism and the Christchurch Call to Action to drive forward a more robust and co-ordinated cross-industry response. We have worked in close partnership with Tech Against Terrorism to launch a Knowledge Sharing Platform, providing tech companies with the capabilities to tackle and prevent terrorist exploitation of their services.

8. Additionally, since 2015 the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit has secured the removal of over 124,349 pieces of terrorist content and has taken part in Europol co-ordinated Referral Action Days to combat terrorist content online.

Pursue delivery since 2018

9. We, along with our partners and allies, have routed Daesh from the territory they controlled in Syria and Iraq. Although the threat from Daesh has not gone away, the sustained counter-terrorism pressure applied by the armed forces of the UK and our partners and allies has denied the group the permissive space and physical infrastructure that they used to project threat into the UK at the height of their power. Since 2018 the RAF have conducted over 130 strikes against Daesh targets in Syria and Iraq, directly reducing the risk from terrorism to the UK and our interests. The UK retains a continued commitment to Operation INHERENT RESOLVE, the international coalition to defeat Daesh, and has a number of personnel and capabilities deployed to that mission.

10. We have strengthened our ability to work across departmental boundaries including opening CTOC. CTOC brings together partners from Counter Terrorism Policing, the intelligence agencies, and the criminal justice system, as well as other government agencies focused on tackling the threat from terrorism. In response to the OIR's recommendations for MI5 to share intelligence more widely, and work with partners such as local authorities on how to manage any continued risk, the government established the Multi Agency Centre (MAC), bringing together expertise from outside the counter-terrorism community by working with non-traditional partners to reduce the risk posed by individuals subject to national security investigations.⁷⁴ The Manchester Arena Inquiry highlighted the importance of a joined-up emergency response following terrorist attacks. Through increased investment following the 2019-20 terrorist attacks, we also established a new joint counter-terrorism prisons and probation hub to improve intelligence sharing between HMPPS, the police and MI5. This new co-ordinated approach improves our assessment of the threat from those presenting terrorist risk within the prison estate.

11. We have continued to develop our global reach and insight through sustained working with allies, particularly the Five Eyes relationship and European partners. This has increased our access to use shared capabilities and enabled burden sharing, amplifying our collective ability to act. We continue to work with foreign partners to strengthen their counter-terrorism capabilities and criminal justice systems to better deal with terrorism effectively and in line with human rights standards, enabling more effective terrorist prosecutions and, in the process, facilitating the development of operational relationships between the UK and host countries.

12. We have taken strong action against terrorist groups, restricting their access to finance, disrupting their activity, and banning them from the UK, with six groups proscribed since 2018, including extreme right-wing terrorist groups such as Atomwaffen Division and The Base.

⁷⁴ The Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) works by providing a multi-agency approach targeted at reducing the likelihood of individuals engaging and or re-engaging in terrorism, by sharing information with a wider range of partners to identify and delivery multi-agency risk control and interventions.

13. We have ensured that our counter-terrorism legislation is evolving to maintain our ability to disrupt constantly changing terrorist threats:

- a. The Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 closed gaps in legislation to ensure that it is fit for the digital age and reflects contemporary patterns of radicalisation
- b. Following the terrorist attacks at Fishmongers' Hall and in Streatham, the government acted swiftly to bring into force the Terrorist Offenders (Restriction of Early Release) Act 2020 which retrospectively ended automatic early release for all terrorist offenders
- c. The Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Act 2021 implemented the largest overhaul of terrorist sentencing and monitoring in decades, including measures to ensure terrorist offenders spend longer in prison and on licence
- d. The Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Act 2021 put on a statutory basis the long-standing ability of public authorities, predominantly the intelligence agencies and law enforcement bodies, to authorise criminal conduct by CHIS
- e. The Police, Crime, Sentencing, and Courts Act 2022, which contained provisions to strengthen the management of terrorist and terrorist risk offenders on licence, based on recommendations made by the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation (IRTL) following his independent review of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- f. Through the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, the government revised Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, to expand Counter Terrorism Police powers so that they can apply to illegal entry, such as small boats arrivals, processed inland
- g. We have recently included measures through the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency (ECCT) Bill to amend both the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 (ATCSA) and Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT) to include cryptoassets and cryptoasset-related items as 'terrorist assets'. This will enable law enforcement agencies to seize, freeze, detain and forfeit cryptoassets which they consider to be intended for terrorist purposes, as they currently can for terrorist cash and other assets

14. We have reinforced our investigative capabilities and powers, so that we can identify and disrupt terrorists more effectively. In April 2020, MI5 took over full primacy for ERWT from Counter Terrorism Policing as recommended in the Operational Improvement Review. In October 2022 we entered into the UK-US Data Sharing agreement to ensure that law enforcement has prompt and efficient access to the data it needs to disrupt terrorist activity.⁷⁵ The agreement allows UK law enforcement agencies to directly request data from US telecommunications providers to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute serious crime, including terrorism.

⁷⁵ [Data Access Agreement: joint statement by the United States and the UK - GOV.UK](#)

15. Following attacks by prisoners inside HMP Whitemoor, the 2019 Fishmongers' Hall and 2020 Streatham and Reading attacks by those on probation, we have invested in significant new capabilities in offender management, rehabilitation, and joint working.⁷⁶ We established a new joint counter-terrorism prisons and probation hub to improve intelligence sharing between HMPPS, the police and MI5. This new co-ordinated approach improves our assessment of the threat from those presenting terrorist risk within the prison estate. HMPPS takes a precautionary stance on managing those released from prison; every terrorist offender released on licence now receives enhanced monitoring and management by specialist regional units within our new National Security Division. We have doubled the number of specialist counter-terrorism probation officers, made all terrorist offenders on probation subject to electronic monitoring and introduced polygraph testing providing a powerful new tool in monitoring behaviour. However, we remain vigilant and continuous improvement is required to keep pace with the ever-evolving threat.

Protect delivery since 2018

16. We have taken steps towards enhancing the safety of public venues. In December 2022, the government announced proposals to enhance security at public venues: A direct response to the lessons from the Manchester Arena attack. Martyn's Law will keep people safe by introducing proportionate new security requirements for certain public venues to ensure preparedness for, and protection from, terrorist attacks. Public venues will be better prepared, ready to respond, and their staff will know what to do in the event of a terrorist attack. Martyn's Law will clarify who is responsible for security activity at locations in scope, increasing accountability.

17. We have enhanced funding to protect communities at risk from terrorism and hate crime. In March 2023, the Home Secretary announced the continuation of the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant for 2023-24 and increased funding to a total of £15 million. This grant provides protective security measures at Jewish schools, colleges, nurseries and some other Jewish community sites, as well as a number of synagogues. In May 2022, new funding of up to £24.5 million was allocated to provide protective security at mosques and Muslim faith schools. Mosques have also been able to apply for the installation of physical security measures, guarding, or both, through the 2022-23 Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme. Over the last seven years of the Places of Worship Scheme, the Home Office has approved 523 grants worth over £19 million for the installation of protective security measures at places of worship across England and Wales. The government announced further funding to four organisations in 2022 that provide practical and emotional support to those affected by terror attacks.

18. We have worked to improve security of Members of Parliament. Following the tragic murder of Sir David Amess MP the Home Office continues to work with the Parliamentary Security Department and the police to implement the recommendations agreed by the Home Secretary and the Speaker, following the review of MP security. Work includes delivering a dedicated multi-agency hub that will assess the threat, vulnerability and risk to which individual MPs are exposed and recommend the right measures to mitigate this.

⁷⁶ [Fact Sheet: Desistance and Disengagement Programme - GOV.UK](#)

19. We have developed the first UK police counter-drone capability to address the increasing potential for small drones to be used as weapons or to facilitate crime. The refreshed UK Drone Security Strategy will be published later this year and will highlight the work to improve our response capabilities; reduce vulnerabilities through improved protective security; and ongoing research and development to secure the technology we need. The UK is co-leading with the US an international initiative through the Global Counter Terrorism Forum to counter terrorist use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS). This aims to operationalise commitments made in the GCTF's Berlin Memorandum.⁷⁷

20. We have enhanced capabilities to detect terrorist attempts to make or buy homemade explosives. Under the Poisons Act, we have strengthened the controls around access to explosives precursors. In 2018 we regulated sulfuric acid and in 2023 we have laid secondary legislation which will improve how Suspicious Activity Reports are made and used by law enforcement to better protect the public. This legislation, which will commence in October 2023, also increases the number of regulated explosives precursors and poisons and the number of dangerous substances retailers are required to report on. Businesses will also be required to record certain information when selling regulated explosives precursors to professional users.

21. We have improved explosive detection capabilities, particularly around explosive detection dogs, both in the public and private sector, with an accreditation scheme ensuring the quality of provision. The National Canine Training and Accreditation Scheme – Private Security Industry (NCTAS-P) provides the operators of sites procuring and using explosives detection dog services with confidence in the quality of those services.

22. We have increased awareness of the obligations under the Poisons Act by delivering a communications package to retailers and industry partners and we continue to work closely with them to improve the way in which they identify suspicious transactions and provide Suspicious Activity Reports. We continue to improve the system in place for Suspicious Transaction Reports and since 2017, a new platform was implemented which has improved the process by which retailers provide precursor suspicious activity reports which in turn facilitate faster assessment and investigation of suspicious transactions by a dedicated Counter Terrorism Policing team.

Prepare delivery since 2018

23. Between 2016 and 2021, the number of armed officers in England and Wales increased by around 1,500. This delivered an additional 41 Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs) and increased Counter-Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officer (CTSFO) numbers. In 2022, we launched 'ProtectUK' a freely available, central online hub for counter-terrorism information, advice and training.⁷⁸ Since 2018, the MOD has invested over £120 million in new remote control and specialist vehicles to support military bomb disposal.

24. We have improved our protection of communities and victims of terrorism. Since 2020, over £1.6 million has been provided to third sector and healthcare providers to increase the practical and emotional support for victims and survivors of terrorism.

⁷⁷ Global Counter-Terrorism Forum: Berlin Memorandum on Good Practices for Countering Terrorist Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems - www.theGCTF.org

⁷⁸ ProtectUK is a collaboration between Home Office, Counter Terrorism Policing and Pool Reinsurance.

25. In 2021, a £22 million 3-year funding settlement for Local Resilience Forums (LRF) in England was agreed starting in the 2022/23 financial year. This funding complements the contributions of partners and enables LRFs to build new capacity and capability. The Government Resilience Framework was published in December 2022 committing the government to strengthen LRF leadership, accountability, and the integration of resilience across local policy making. This reform of local resilience will be piloted by 2025 and implemented nationally by 2030.

E02897889

978-1-5286-4055-8