



All-Party Parliamentary University Group meeting and summer reception

23 June 2015



Agenda: Meeting and summer reception

The subject of the first meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group for the new Parliament is radicalisation, the impact of counter-terrorism and counter-extremism measures on universities, and the challenge of protecting academic freedom of speech.

- 6.00pm** **Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods MP**, Co-Chair of APPUG, welcome and introductions.
- 6.05pm** **Professor Colin Riordan**, Vice-Chancellor of the Cardiff University
Professor Riordan will introduce the Prevent agenda, and how universities are responding to new and emerging duties placed upon them.
- Dr Noémie Bouhana**, Lecturer in Security and Crime Science at University College London.
Dr Bouhana will speak about the interaction of individual and ecological factors in the radicalising process, illustrating her points with findings from her research amongst the UK prison population about the role that socio-physical spaces play in enabling or suppressing radicalising activity.
- Dr Chris Allen**, Lecturer in Social Policy in the Institute of Applied Social Studies, School of Social Policy at the University of Birmingham
Dr Allen will speak about his research into extremism as a discourse and the issues facing contemporary Muslim communities in today's Europe, before talking about the topic from a more personal perspective from the recent campus attacks in Birmingham to the impact of legislation on the academic community.
- Jodie Ginsberg**, Chief Executive of Index on Censorship
Ms Ginsberg will speak about concerns that counter-terror and counter-extremism measures are increasingly making freedom of speech within an academic setting increasingly challenging for staff, students and external speakers.
- 6.45pm** Questions, comments, and discussion with university leaders, MPs and Peers.
- 7.30pm** Speaker meeting concludes. Guests move to the **Churchill Room** for APPUG summer drinks reception.
- 8.00pm** Brief speeches: Welcome to the group and plans for APPUG in 2015.



Speaker biographies



Professor Colin Riordan has been President and Vice-Chancellor at Cardiff University since September 2012.

He is a Vice-President of Universities UK and in 2013 he became chair of Universities Wales, the body which represents the interests of Higher Education Institutions in Wales. As chair of the UK Higher Education International Unit, he is active in promoting and advancing the role of UK universities abroad.

Professor Riordan has published widely on post-war German literature and culture, including writing and editing books on the writers Jurek Becker, Uwe Johnson and Peter Schneider. Other research interests include the history of environmental ideas in German culture.

At today's meeting Professor Riordan will speak about how universities are responding to the Prevent agenda, and outline some of the actions undertaken by Cardiff University, as well as some of the challenges for the sector.



Dr Noémie Bouhana is Lecturer in Security and Crime Science at University College London, where she directs the MSc in Countering Organised Crime and Terrorism and leads the Terrorism and Organised Crime Research Group. She holds a PhD in Criminology from the University of Cambridge.

Dr Bouhana's research interests centre around the systemic and ecological processes involved in the emergence of radicalising settings, and the role that these settings play in individuals' development of a terrorist propensity. She is Principal Investigator of the £2.15 (€3)M EU PRIME Project on preventing lone actor terrorism and has just been selected to receive a £0.64 (\$1)M US DoD Minerva grant for an international study on the ecology of radicalisation.

At today's APPUG meeting, Dr Bouhana will speak about the interaction of individual and ecological factors in the radicalising process, illustrating her points with findings



from her research amongst the UK prison population about the role that socio-physical spaces play in enabling or suppressing radicalising activity.

Dr Chris Allen is a Lecturer in Social Policy. He is based in the Institute of Applied Social Studies, School of Social Policy at the University of Birmingham where he is the Acting Director of Undergraduate Social Policy Programmes and Programme Lead on the Policy, Politics & Economics (PPE) programme.

Dr Chris Allen's research into Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred has had a direct influence on the political thinking and emerging policy developments of the UK central government. He was the first academic to put forward a full theoretical exposition of Islamophobia in his 2010 book, and in 2011 published a widely acclaimed report challenging perceptions of Muslim communities following the Birmingham riots. He has worked with the House of Lords Select Committee on Religious Offences, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate Crime, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

At today's APPUG meeting Dr Allen will speak about his research into extremism as a discourse and the issues facing contemporary Muslim communities in today's Europe, before talking about the topic from a more personal perspective from the recent campus attacks in Birmingham to the impact of legislation on the academic community.



Jodie Ginsberg joined Index on Censorship as Chief Executive from the think-tank, Demos. A former London Bureau Chief for Reuters, Jodie worked for more than a decade as a foreign correspondent and business journalist.

She was previously Head of Communications for Camfed, a non-profit organisation working in girls' education.

At today's meeting Ms Ginsberg will speak about concerns that counter-terror and counter-extremism measures are increasingly making freedom of speech within an academic setting increasingly challenging for staff, students and external speakers

Briefing: Universities and the Prevent agenda

Prepared for members of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues.

This briefing document has been produced by Universities UK which provides the Secretariat for the APPUG.

What is Prevent?

Prevent is one of four strands of the government's CONTEST counter terrorism strategy, introduced in 2003 and most recently revised in 2011. Prevent aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism by:

- responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced by the UK from those who promote it
- preventing people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support
- working with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, the internet and health) where there are risks of radicalisation which need to be addressed

Education was identified, along with a range of sectors and the internet, as a priority area with regard to tackling radicalisation in the government's [2011 Prevent strategy document](#).

How does Prevent apply to higher education institutions?

Engagement with Prevent has until recently been voluntary. However, the new **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015** places a '**statutory duty**' (the '**Prevent duty**') on a range of public bodies, including higher education institutions, to engage with Prevent.

Institutions must now have '*due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism*' (s26). The Act also gives the secretary of state power to '*issue guidance to specified authorities [including higher education institutions] about the exercise of their [Prevent] duty*' which they '*must have regard to*', and to '*give directions to the authority for the purpose of enforcing the performance of that duty*' where authorities have failed to do so (s30).

During the passage of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill, a range of interested parties – not only higher education institutions and sector organisations but also individual academics, politicians and the Joint Committee on Human Rights – raised a number of concerns and challenges to the provisions of the Act and the planned guidance, particularly as they related to freedom of speech. Many of these concerns focused on the inclusion of non-violent extremism in the exercise of the statutory duty. As a result of the concerns expressed, the Act now states that in carrying out the statutory duty, higher education institutions:

(a) must have particular regard to the duty to ensure freedom of speech, if it is subject to that duty

(b) must have particular regard to the importance of academic freedom, if it is the proprietor or governing body of a qualifying institution

It also states that the secretary of state in issuing guidance to higher education institutions and in giving directions to them:

(a) must have particular regard to the duty to ensure freedom of speech, in the case of authorities that are subject to that duty

(b) must have particular regard to the importance of academic freedom, in the case of authorities that are proprietors or governing bodies of qualifying institutions.

In March 2015, following a public consultation, the Home Office issued guidance on the Prevent duty (one version for England and Wales and another for Scotland). It states that it 'does not prescribe what appropriate decisions would be – this will be up to institutions to determine'. However, it sets out a range of actions it expects to see from higher education institutions for them to be considered compliant with the Prevent duty. These include:

- 'Active engagement from senior management of the university ... with other partners including police and BIS regional higher and further education Prevent co-ordinators'
- 'use of internal mechanisms to share information about Prevent across the relevant faculties of the institution'
- '[for] institutions to have regular contact with the relevant Prevent co-ordinator'
- 'Risk assessment[s] ... [of] where and how ... students might be at risk of being drawn into terrorism. This includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism'
- Prevent action plans to mitigate risk
- A willingness to 'undertake Prevent awareness training and other training that could help the relevant staff prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and challenge extremist ideas which risk drawing people into terrorism'
- 'sufficient chaplaincy and pastoral support available for all students'
- 'clear and widely available policies for the use of prayer rooms and other faith-related facilities'
- 'policies relating to the use of university IT equipment ... contain[ing] specific reference to the statutory duty'
- 'clear policies and procedures for students and staff working on sensitive or extremism-related research'
- In relation to students' unions, 'clear policies setting out the activities that are or are not allowed to take place on campus and any online activity directly related to the university'

- For 'student unions and societies to work closely with their institution and co-operate with the institutions' policies'.

The published guidance did not include any section on external speakers and events as the coalition government could not agree its content prior to the General Election 2015 purdah period. However, this section is due to be published imminently.

The statutory duty will be applied to most public bodies from 1 July 2015. However, it is widely understood that it will not apply to higher education institutions until the external speaker section has been agreed and added to the published guidance.

What have higher education institutions been doing?

Universities take the issue of violent extremism very seriously. The university sector has engaged extensively with the government's Prevent agenda for a number of years and there are strong partnerships already in place with the police and security services.

Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive of Universities UK, has reiterated that universities understand they have a role to play in tackling the spread of violent extremism, adding: "We do not believe that we must choose between either taking steps to tackle violent extremism on the one hand, or promoting freedom of speech on the other. The reality is that we need to do both."

In September 2014 Universities UK contacted its 133 members (vice-chancellors) seeking input on (i) the challenges institutions currently face in countering violent extremism, (ii) the action they are taking to minimise the risk of violent extremism developing on campus and (iii) what additional resources and support are needed to assist them further.

Ninety-eight per cent of respondents highlighted activity undertaken by their institution. This varied from institution to institution depending on size, demographics, location, structure (eg multi-site or campus-based) and so on, but it included the following:

- Forging and maintaining strong relationships with:
 - students' unions and student groups
 - local community leaders, including religious institutions
 - the police

- Engaging positively with regional Prevent coordinators on training, development of institutional strategies, facilitation of local-level dialogue conferences, etc
- Participating in multi-agency, regional/county/city-wide anti-terrorism or Prevent groups (involving schools, local authority, police, local religious leaders, NHS, prison service, probation service, Prevent regional coordinators)
- Hosting or supporting inter-faith activities (organised by multi-faith advisers, chaplains or imams)
- Holding training and workshops for student-facing staff to acquire and maintain awareness of the signs of violent extremism, disaffection and isolation
- Developing Prevent Action Plans and Prevent Strategy Delivery Plans
- Ensuring extensive oversight of external speaker requests
- Implementing IT policies and measures (eg enhanced firewalls) to screen out illegal or undesirable web browsing, including increased monitoring of social media

While evidencing their institutions' efforts to understand the risk of violent extremism and to mitigate the chances of it developing on campus, UUK members also pointed to a number of challenges. They reported that it is hard to get the balance right between being an open and diverse community and ensuring that this is not exploited by those who seek to propagate terrorist views or recruit to violent organisations. Universities are large, diffuse organisations – they and their students do not operate in isolation.

Related to this, it is very difficult to monitor if a student is being influenced by extremists unless this is taking place on campus – with online radicalisation being particularly difficult for institutions to identify or act on.

Also, building awareness of the issues within the institution is challenging as universities have large numbers of staff who have contact with students. It is difficult to ensure that all of them are aware of the potential indicators of involvement in violent extremism (and difficult to coordinate activity across so many departments).

Institutions will continue to work with and take advice from regional Prevent coordinators, and to make use of the various resources and guidance available to them (see below). They will look to ensure that all activities they undertake and policies they implement are proportionate and appropriate to their particular size, location and the demographics of their student body.

What advice is available?

Higher education institutions have long worked to address, offer guidance on and share information about how to identify and prevent violent extremism. Much of this considers the delicate balance that needs to be struck between the competing legal obligations to ensure and promote free speech and academic freedom while tackling and preventing violent extremism.

Universities UK (UUK) hosts www.safecampuscommunities.ac.uk (launched in 2013), which includes information about the Prevent agenda, and case studies and guidance for higher education institutions on issues relevant to countering terrorism and violent extremism.

In 2013 UUK published guidance on [External speakers in higher education institutions](#), which provided institutions with advice on securing freedom of speech within the law. This built on earlier guidance on [Freedom of speech on campus: rights and responsibilities in UK universities](#) (2011).

NUS has published guidance for students' unions on [Managing the risks associated with external speakers](#) (2011).

UUK guidance on [Oversight of security-sensitive research material](#) is also available.

There is also a wide range of advice available on fostering good campus relations, including the Equality Challenge Unit's [Guidelines for fostering good relations, preventing hate crime and managing intolerance on campus](#) (2013).

Freedom of speech within the law on campus

Higher education institutions are, rightly, places where controversial and extreme views can be heard, considered, debated and contested. Not only is this fundamental to the role of universities, it is also enshrined in law. Universities and other higher education institutions (and their students' unions) have a legal duty *to 'take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students and employees ... and for visiting speakers'* (Education (No.2) Act 1986, s43). They also have a duty to ensure that use of university premises *'is not denied to any individual or body of persons on any ground connected with [their] beliefs or views'* (Education (No 2) Act 1986, s43).

Furthermore, they should have regard to the need *to 'ensure that academic staff have the freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing*

themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges they may have at their institutions' (Education Reform Act 1988, s202).

However, as these excerpts state, freedom of speech is not an *absolute* right, but rather a freedom '*within the law*' – that is, criminal and civil law can set limits on its lawful exercise. This means institutions must comply with laws governing public order (eg they must ensure that meetings or speakers do not threaten violence or cause fear, alarm or distress), and the prevention of discrimination (Equalities Act 2010) and religious and racial hatred (Public Order Act 1986). They also have a duty of care to their students, staff and visitors.

The existing competing legal obligations are already being balanced by institutions relatively effectively. However, the issue is that the new duty introduces another factor that needs to be considered and muddies the waters by referring to non-violent extremism (which in itself is not illegal). It is this development that caused many of the concerns during the passage of the act (see *Further information*, below).

There is a very difficult balance to be struck between ensuring and promoting freedom of speech and academic freedom, and preventing this from being exploited by people with extremist views. This difficulty has become still more acute in light of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the associated guidance and the new statutory duty. The challenge now is for higher education institutions to comply with the new duty while upholding their duty to ensure and promote freedom of speech within the law, and continue to be places where difficult and controversial ideas can be debated and challenged.

Further information

www.safecampuscommunities.ac.uk

UUK (2013) *External speakers guidance in higher education institutions*

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2013/ExternalSpeakersInHigherEducationInstitutions.pdf>

NUS (2011) *Managing the risks associated with external speakers*

<http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/asset/News/6013/Hate-Speech-Guidance-Web.pdf>

UUK (2011) *Freedom of speech on campus: rights and responsibilities in UK universities*

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2011/FreedomOfSpeechOnCampus.pdf>

2011 Prevent strategy

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents/enacted>

Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417943/Prevent_Duty_Guidance_England_Wales.pdf

Prevent Duty Guidance for Scotland

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417941/Prevent_Duty_Guidance_for_Scotland.pdf

House of Commons Library (2015) *Briefing paper: Freedom of speech and preventing extremism in UK higher education institutions*

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7199/CBP-7199.pdf>

Future events

Wednesday 1 July 2015

AGM

Room M, Portcullis House

Meeting 16.00-17.00

Tuesday 20 October 2015

Meeting followed by dinner

Dining Room B

Meeting 18.00 - 19:30

Dinner 19.30- 22.00

Tuesday 24 November 2015

Meeting followed by dinner

Dining Room B

Meeting 18.00 - 19:30

Dinner 19.30- 22.00

Tuesday 8 December 2015

Breakfast meeting

Dining Room B

Meeting 08:30 - 10:30

For more information about the group please email
parliamentaryofficer@appg-universities.org.uk