

<b>Institution:</b> University of Huddersfield		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 23 Education		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Shaping National and International Counter-Terrorism Policy through the Development of Effective Educational Approaches to Prevent Terrorism		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2013 - to date		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
1. Paul Thomas	1. Professor of Youth and Policy	1. 1999 – to date
2. Shamim Miah	2. Senior Lecturer in Education	2. 2008 – to date
3. Martin Purcell	3. Senior Lecturer in Education	3. 2014 – November 2020
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> August 2013 - December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No</b>		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Preventing terrorism is an international policy priority. The UK's counter-terrorism <i>Prevent</i> Strategy (2011) outlines important roles for educators and communities in averting terrorism. Professor Paul Thomas and colleagues conducted the first national research study about educators' experiences and implementation of the 2015 <i>Prevent Duty</i>. The research has had direct impact on how the <i>Prevent</i> strategy was delivered by Kirklees Council, how <i>Prevent</i> duty implementation in education was understood and evaluated at national UK Government level and informed the work on prevention of terrorism by civic organisations in the Flemish region of Belgium. Research findings about 'community reporting' have directly impacted on preventative, community-focused counter-terrorism policies being developed and led by the National Counter-Terrorism Policing Headquarters (NCTPHQ) in the UK, and have shaped the focus of research into counter terrorism commissioned by national governments in the USA and Canada.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The UK's <i>Prevent</i> counter-terrorism strategy gives prominent roles to educators and to the communities they work with. Since 2015, British educators have had a legal responsibility under the <i>Prevent Duty</i> to identify and report those vulnerable to radicalisation, whilst the vital role of communities in preventing extremism and terrorism has been repeatedly stressed. Thomas, Miah and Purcell of the <i>Huddersfield Centre for Research in Education and Society</i> (HudCRES) developed a programme of empirical, mixed methods research, providing ground-breaking data on the experiences of educators and communities [between 2013 and 2020]. This was underpinned by theoretical insights informed by the previous body of research that identified the need for educators to be better supported and resourced in developing effective anti-extremism educational approaches [3.1] and has resulted in recommendations for more effective policy. National-level research studies have been commissioned by national and international grant bodies and civil society organisations, whilst local/regional work has been both commissioned and co-created with local authorities and civil society bodies.</p> <p>The body of underpinning research builds on long-established research partnerships with local government in the north of England, focused on supporting effective practice around youth workers and young people, racial tension and extremism. Research included a qualitative review of the first year of the innovative <i>Kirklees 'Prevent Young Peoples' Engagement Team'</i> (2016/17). This was an action research project that supported and qualitatively evaluated the initial implementation and impacts of innovative anti-extremism educational activities in Kirklees, West Yorkshire [3.2]. The evaluation found that the <i>Prevent Engagement Team</i> was altering how sections of communities perceived the <i>Prevent</i> strategy by being overt about its purpose and through the nature and quality of their engagement. Alongside this was research commissioned by Calderdale and Kirklees [3.3] local authorities on <i>'Understanding concerns about community relations'</i> (2014/15). The research used mixed methods to explore community attitudes to ethnic diversity and to protest groups such as the English Defence League (EDL) in economically-marginalised and spatially-segregated 'White working class' communities (with a particular focus on young people/young adults). Findings showed significant negativity toward cross-community</p>		

contact but very limited support for the EDL and highlighted helpful directions for local policy and practice [3.3].

This long-standing programme of regional educational research around *Prevent* and extremism laid the ground work for two high-profile UK national research studies that have each attracted international policy interest and engagement. Research on the *Prevent Duty* in English schools and colleges (2016/17) [3.4;3.5], with Durham and Coventry Universities was commissioned by the Aziz Foundation, a Muslim civil society group. This national, mixed methods research (the first such study after the duty's introduction) found that educators:

- Are largely accepting of the *Prevent Duty* and have incorporated it within their wider 'Safeguarding' mechanisms.
- Recognise the dangers of *Prevent* stigmatising Muslim students but demonstrate effective strategies to avoid this in their own institution.
- Support pedagogical work around shared values but find the 'Fundamental British Values' requirement highly problematic, and also need support to initiate 'difficult conversations' around identity and extremism with students.

These research findings prompted specific *Prevent* policy responses and adjustments [text removed for publication].

Alongside this was research on 'Community Reporting Thresholds' (2016/17) [3.6], funded by the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST)/Economic and Social Research Council (£56,430; Thomas joint PI). A national qualitative study, it used in-depth, scenario-based interviewing with young adults (aged 18-26 years), community educators and Police Counter-Terrorism officers. It investigated whether respondents would report concerns about an 'intimate' becoming involved in terrorism and what policy approaches would support and enable people from marginalised communities to share such concerns. The study [3.6] found that:

- Young adults would report an 'intimate' but would want to do so via 'community brokers', such as youth and community workers.
- Community members wanted to report to Police on a face-to-face basis.
- In considering reporting, community members wanted more information, guidance and support to aid the very difficult task of sharing concerns about their 'intimate'

This UK 'Community Reporting Thresholds' study significantly developed pilot Australian research on 'community reporting' and was an international collaboration between Prof Thomas and Prof Grossman (Deakin University, Australia). Substantial international policy interest in this research led to two further open-call, internationally-commissioned replications and developments of the Community Reporting Thresholds study (Thomas Co-PI on both): in the USA (January 2019-onwards), funded by the USA Government's National Institute for Justice, a collaboration with University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), University of Illinois at Chicago and Deakin (£52,398); and in Canada (June 2019 onwards), with Ryerson University of Toronto and Deakin funded by Public Safety Canada (£48,582).

### 3. References to the research

Evidence of the quality of the research: These academic articles were all published in leading international peer-reviewed journals, and research reports were all peer-reviewed prior to publication. In addition, the CREST report [3.6] was downloaded around 950 times from the CREST website [31 December 2020] and the Aziz Foundation study [3.4] has around 70 citations on Google scholar [31 December 2020].

3.1 Thomas, P. (2016) 'Youth, terrorism and education: Britain's Prevent programme', *International Journal of Life-long Education* special issue: 'Youth, Social Crisis and Learning,' 35:2, 171-187. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2016.1164469>

3.2 Thomas, P., Miah, S. and Purcell, M. (2017) *The Kirklees Prevent Young People's Engagement Team – Insights and lessons from its first year*, Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield. <https://huddersfield.box.com/s/rkd7r6avwsbq90wbryq8ew051u9yxf2f>

3.3 Thomas, P., Busher, J., Macklin, G., Rogerson, M. and Christmann, K. (2018) 'Hopes and Fears: Community Cohesion and the 'White Working Class' in One of the 'Failed Spaces' of Multiculturalism', *Sociology*, 52:2, 262-281. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038516676775>

3.4 Busher, J., Choudhury, T., Thomas, P. and Harris G. (2017) *What the Prevent duty means for Schools and Colleges in England: An analysis of educationalist's experiences*, London: The Aziz Foundation.  
[https://pure.hud.ac.uk/files/6748615/The\\_Prevent\\_duty\\_in\\_Schools\\_and\\_Colleges\\_Report.pdf](https://pure.hud.ac.uk/files/6748615/The_Prevent_duty_in_Schools_and_Colleges_Report.pdf)

3.5. Busher, J., Choudhury, T., and Thomas, P. (2019), 'The enactment of the counter-terrorism 'Prevent duty' in British schools and colleges: Beyond reluctant accommodation or straightforward policy acceptance', *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 12:3, 440-462.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2019.1568853>

3.6 Thomas, P., Grossman, M., Miah, S. and Christmann, K. (2017) *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing information with authorities concerning violent extremist activity and involvement in foreign conflicts: A UK Replication Study*, Lancaster: Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST). <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/resources/community-reporting-thresholds-full-report/>

#### 4. Details of the impact

Preventing terrorism is an international policy priority and the UK's counter-terrorism *Prevent* Strategy (2011) outlines important roles for educators and communities in averting terrorism. The ongoing relationship with partner local authorities, such as Kirklees and Calderdale in West Yorkshire meant research had direct impact on their implementation of the Prevent strategy. By involving police and local authority staff as members of the 'Community Reporting Thresholds' project Advisory Group formative and summative research findings were shared with the National Counter-Terrorism Policing Headquarters (NCTPHQ) and directly fed into their preventative, community-focused counter-terrorism policies being developed in the UK. Similar meetings with government officials from Canada and the USA have shaped the focus of research into counter terrorism commissioned by national governments in the USA and Canada.

#### Influencing implementation of UK Prevent counter-terrorism policy

The Kirklees *Prevent* review [3.2] led to Kirklees Council in 2017 agreeing to continue funding for this preventative educational initiative, as well as to the Home Office increasing their support for this aspect of Kirklees's *Prevent* work. The Kirklees Head of Communities regards the research as key to developing understanding and practice in Kirklees: *'The work provided staff with a good understanding of the concepts of radicalisation, key community challenges to the terminology and they were able to take this into their practice. The community relations work [3.3] contributed to the development of the council strategy on community cohesion and altered our understanding of how resilient our communities were'* [5.1].

The national policy relevance and impact of Thomas' research on youth, terrorism and *Prevent* [3.1] is evidenced by Thomas's contribution to a closed doors review of the government's 'CONTEST' counter-terrorism strategy held at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in June 2016, and presentation of underpinning research [3.4;3.6] at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office *'International Conference on Desistance and Disengagement'* for EU partner governments and Whitehall departments, 26 June 2018. In 2018, the Huddersfield research into the operation of the Prevent Duty in schools [3.4] was quoted in evidence to a Parliamentary Select Committee inquiry around counter-terrorism policy by a former Independent Reviewer of Terrorism [5.2]. The 2016 Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology POSTnote on Addressing Islamic Extremism [5.3] also included reference to Thomas' research [3.1].

In response to [3.4], the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned research on *Prevent* and counter extremism in Further Education colleges and the subsequent report published in 2018 [5.4] extensively quotes the 2017 research on educationalists' experiences [3.4].  
[text removed for publication]

The research [3.4] continues to be influential in government research, featuring in the 2019 report by the *Commission for Countering Extremism* on extremism in England and Wales [5.6]. The UK Government's new 'CONTEST' counter-terrorism strategy was launched in June 2018 and it included specific mention of Community Reporting *'to help them know what to do if they have concerns that someone may have been radicalised'* [5.7]. A 2019 independent review of impact of the research projects conducted through the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST) interviewed senior NCTPHQ Police and government counter-terrorism officials and identified that: *'Paul Thomas and Michele Grossman's work on Community Reporting Thresholds has become a central element of delivering the UK PREVENT strategy, influencing a number of work-streams led by the national PREVENT team. This includes the development of a public safeguarding campaign...which is based on the research findings'* [5.8].

Thomas made formal presentation of these findings [3.6] at the National Local Policing Conference and to the National Counter-Terrorism Policing Community Advisory Group (both in February 2018). The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead on *Prevent*, said: *'I believe that to be an influential piece of work [Research on Community Reporting Thresholds] that was seen, presented or read by, a number of significant officials within the government and senior police colleagues... I believe that this research influenced large-scale decisions about Police budgets'* [5.9].

Prior to and since the report's publication in 2017 [3.6] there have been active discussions with the National Counter-Terrorism Policing Headquarters, including a briefing for senior Counter-Terrorism Police staff (New Scotland Yard, London, February 2018), and a personal briefing by PIs for the UK Police's national lead officer on counter-terrorism in July 2018. These discussions have focused on implementing its policy recommendations, with a national public messaging campaign based directly on research findings titled, *'ACT Early'* launched on 18 November 2020. The NCTPHQ National lead for Prevent identified the significant role the research has had, and continues to have, in how new national policy and practice is being developed: *'Responding to Paul's findings, we are developing a national Prevent advice line to encourage community referrals; working with new charities, community groups and sectors to reduce barriers to reporting; developing a national communications campaign to encourage those most likely to spot vulnerability to make referrals; and developing a new engagement strategy and toolkit for frontline officers'* [5.10].

Thomas is a member of the Academic Advisory Group of the Government's Desistance and Disengagement Programme (DDP) for terrorist offenders and people returning from Syria (the first such academic advisory group established within the UK's counter-terrorism policy portfolio). Thomas was also a commissioned academic advisor on three national government-funded (Home Office) Prevent evaluations, led by the Tavistock Institute and the RAND Corporation. These focussed on local *Prevent* projects (2017/18), on the Police role in the local 'Channel process' (2017/18), and on the effectiveness of the DDP (2020-).

### **Shaping international policy debate and strategies for counter-terrorism**

The Community Reporting research [3.6] received significant policy interest from international governments. Formative meetings were held in 2016/17 with representatives of Public Safety Canada and USA's NIJ/Homeland Security during and at the end of the UK project. The meetings held with government officials led directly to each country including a specific focus on the 'Community Reporting' topic in their next open funding call for counter-terrorism research and the research team was personally encouraged to apply. Both applications with in-country partners were successful.

The Research Team Manager for the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and the Prevention of Violence (established in 2017), said: *'Work led by Professor Thomas out of Huddersfield University has had significant impact even before the establishment of the Canada Centre...we sought to bring him and his co-lead from Deakin on the heels of the completion of the Community Reporting Thresholds study in September 2017. Based on the strong response and interest from domestic partners... we identified community reporting as a priority...With the recent*

*launch of Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy we are finding even more interest in Community Reporting Thresholds from government partners who work in areas like diversity and inclusion.'* [5.11]. Additionally, research briefings were given by Thomas in a speech at the Australian Home Affairs department (September 2019), and by Thomas and Miah to the Australian Federal Government's Attorney General's office and Queensland State officials (both November 2017).

Thomas's research around effective educational approaches to extremism [3.1] has also led to writing commissions from governments (2016/17). Thomas was commissioned a) by the German Federal Government to write a chapter on *Prevent* for a book aimed at German educationalists, local policy officials and police; and b) by the Flemish regional government to write a book chapter on *Prevent* approaches to young people. This International impact came through Thomas' presentations at the University of Frankfurt (July, 2015) and at the Flemish regional Parliament (March, 2017), with subsequent commissioned book chapters for educators and officials. Flemish officials identified that: '*Many key actors in the field in Belgium are using the book. It is often referred to as an introductory guide in the field of countering violent extremism*'. [5.12].

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- 5.1. Testimonial from Head of Communities, Kirklees Council.
- 5.2. Oral evidence by David Anderson QC, Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation from 2011 to 2017. 30 Jan 2018. Special session of Parliament's Home Affairs Select Committee. Research from Huddersfield mentioned in Q23.
- 5.3. *Addressing Islamic Extremism*. Houses of Parliament Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. PostNote Number 526 May 2016. Research is referenced on page 5.
- 5.4. *Prevent and counter-extremism in general further education colleges*. Dec 2018.
- 5.5. [text removed for publication]
- 5.6. Independent report: *Challenging Hateful Extremism. Commission for Countering Extremism report on extremism in England and Wales*. 7 Oct 2019. Research report [3.4] is referenced on page 87, footnote 278.
- 5.7. UK Government's 'CONTEST' counter-terrorism strategy. Pages 33-34. (June 2018).
- 5.8. *Impact Review A review of impact of the research projects conducted through CREST* (2019). Report produced by Dr Jo Edwards, Lucidity Solutions Ltd.
- 5.9. Testimonial from Chief Constable NPCC lead for Police Chiefs on Prevent.
- 5.10. Testimonial from National Policing Counter-Terrorism HQ Coordinator on Prevent.
- 5.11. Testimonial from Research Team Manager, Public Safety Canada.
- 5.12. Testimonial from Senior Researcher, Flemish Peace Institute.