Cumbria Channel Escalation Protocol

**Background**

The Channel programme adopts a multi-agency approach to identify and provide early support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into any form of terrorism or supporting terrorist organisations, regardless of age, faith, ethnicity or background. Individuals can receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those who want them to embrace terrorism, or they become involved in criminal terrorist-related activity.

There is no fixed profile of a terrorist, so there is no defined threshold to determine whether an individual is at risk of being drawn into terrorism. However, signs that extremist views are being adopted are used to assess whether the offer of early support should be made. The process for undertaking assessments of risk and vulnerability informs this determination and is kept under review.

Consent is sought from the individual (or their representative) before support is accessed. If consent is not given or withdrawn at any time, they are exited from the programme. The police who own the counter terrorism risk may choose to undertake additional activity.

In Cumbria we have a Channel Panel for the county with representatives from all statutory agencies who meet on a monthly basis.

Cumbria are part of a national pilot which sees Local Authorities take the lead in administration of the programme with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council currently hosting a team of staff who undertake the case management of all Channel referrals for Lancashire and Cumbria.

Introduction

Whilst there are good working relationships between agencies, occasionally there will be a difference of views. This protocol is designed with the intention of clarifying the actions required where there is a professional disagreement. It is consistent with children and adult safeguarding arrangements.

What Happens when Agencies Cannot Agree?

*Stage 1:*

Panel consensus should be sought on all decisions regarding referrals and whether an individual should be adopted onto Channel or not. Where this cannot be achieved, the opinion of the panel majority should be sought, with the chair holding the casting vote.

If panel members have concerns relating to the form or function of the Channel panel or professionals are unable to reach agreement about the way forward regarding an individual issue then the disagreement must be addressed by more senior staff.

In most cases this will mean the first line managers of the agencies involved discussing the issue of dispute and seeking to reach a resolution. The Channel Chair and Cumbria Prevent Coordinator should be informed, and consideration given to them being involved in the discussion.

*Stage 2:*

If the issue cannot be resolved at stage 1 then the matter must be referred up through each agencies line management structure without delay to a Head of Service or equivalent (e.g. senior manager officer with responsibility for the Channel process.

The Chair of the Cumbria Prevent Board must be informed and consideration given to them being involved in the discussion. Where appropriate the Home Office Channel team must also be consulted and their views sought.

*Stage 3:*

If the issue cannot be resolved at stage two then consideration should be given to progressing the dispute through the further layers of more senior management

The Chair of the Contest Board must be informed and consideration given to them being involved in the discussion. The Home Office Channel team must also be consulted and their views sought.

* In situations where such senior officers have become involved in resolving disagreements between agencies and those disputes relate to the safeguarding needs of individual children, the CSCP (Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership) Team must be made aware of this.
* Where the dispute relate to the safeguarding needs of individual adults at risk, the CSAB (Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board) Team must be made aware of this
* It is recommended that an intermediary from CSCP /CSAB is invited to the meeting to provide advice and guidance

A record of all stage 3 escalations will be kept using *Appendix 1: Stage 3 Monitoring Information Form*

**Please note:**

* It is acknowledged that some organisations have flat management structures. Where this is the case, the same individual manager may have involvement in more than one of the above stages;
* Each stage (1, 2 or 3) should be completed within 5 working days (15 working days maximum);
* Where there is a need for intervention to prevent a life threatening episode (for example risk of suicide) immediate action to reduce the risk of harm will be required by all relevant parties whilst the dispute is ongoing. In such circumstances, where certain agencies maintain a position of non-involvement and other agencies disagree with this position, the CSCP/LSAB team should be informed at the earliest opportunity.
* Written records of all these discussions must be kept.

What happens when disagreements need to be resolved very quickly in order to safeguard a child's / adult’s welfare?

If there is a safeguarding concern where there is a belief that immediate action is required, then the police should be contacted. If it is not immediate but there is an urgent safeguarding situation that requires a statutory response then the Children’s Safeguarding Hub should be contacted for children and the Adults Safeguarding Team through the Single point of access for adults.

If there is a concern about the safeguarding response of an agency then this should be escalated via the usual routes

Appendix 1 - Stage 3 Monitoring Information

Channel: Resolving Inter-Agency Disagreements

The CSCP/ CSAB should be informed if a case reaches Stage 3 by returning this completed document to: [mark.clement@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:mark.clement@cumbria.gov.uk)

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| **Date of Referral:** |
| **Name of Referrer:** |
| **Job Title:** |
| **Address:**  **Email Address:**  **Telephone:** |
| **Individual Details**  **First name:**  **Surname:**  **DOB:** |
| **Family Details**  **Parents:**  **Children:**  **Family Address:** |
| **Agencies Involved:** |
| **Issues of Concern/Nature of Disagreement:** |
| **Dates and Outcome of Stages 1 and 2 *(brief summary)*:** |
| **Stage 3 Meeting/Discussion Date:** |
| **Names of Senior Officers involved at Stage 3** |
| **Name of CSCP/CSAB intermediary:** |
| **Meeting chaired by:** |
| **Outcome of Stage 3 meeting:** |