

Evaluating local **PREVENT** projects and programmes

**Guidelines for local authorities and
their partners**

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Contents

Contents	5
Introduction	7
1. Why evaluate PREVENT activities?	11
2. What are we evaluating?	14
3. What evaluation questions will we ask?	18
4. How will we assess success?	21
5. How will we collect data?	26
6. How will we analyse the data?	32
7. What will we do with the results?	34
8. What resources do we have available?	35

Introduction

It is important that local authorities monitor and evaluate their PREVENT projects and wider programmes of work. Effective evaluation of your activities will not only help you build and use evidence in reporting against National Indicator 35 (Building Resilience to Violent Extremism)¹, but will also help you to understand what is working so that you can make any necessary changes, replicate good practice and learn lessons for the future.

There are clearly challenges in evaluating local PREVENT activities: there may be sensitivities among local communities, it may take a long time for change to occur, and it is sometimes difficult to attribute a positive outcome to a specific activity. Despite these challenges there are a number of steps you can follow that will help you generate useful data and capture learning from your PREVENT work.

These guidelines are designed to help you think about the evaluation of your local PREVENT projects or programmes. They take you through a number of steps that help you to design and carry out an evaluation and collect evidence from a range of sources. Most importantly, they provide a framework for you to set criteria for success and to systematically evaluate your work.

Who is this for?

This document is targeted at **policy leads in local authorities** and **local partners** who manage and oversee projects to support work on PREVENT. It offers step-by-step guidance on how to evaluate your local PREVENT activities: providing support in conducting the evaluation or, if you commission contractors, helping you design and manage an evaluation with them. There is also advice on how to involve community-based partners in your evaluation.

How to use the guidelines

Each step starts with a question for you to consider, followed by a discussion of how you might answer the question, and often with an exercise for you to complete. We recommend you browse through all sections before going into each one in detail, in order to get a sense of how it all fits together.



These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the online resource pack, which provides more in-depth information and examples: www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/13060431.pdf

→ RESOURCE PACK

¹ The guidance for local partners on NI35 mentions evaluation reports as one source of evidence for the NI35 self-assessment process. See security.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications/publication-search/general/NI35_Guidance1.pdf?view=Standard&pubID=628130

Different levels of evaluation

There are a number of PREVENT activities going on at different levels. The following diagram will help you to see where the information that you collect fits into the overall picture.



- **Project-level evaluation:** this is the evaluation of individual projects.
- **Programme-level evaluation:** this is the evaluation of the PREVENT programme in your local area (i.e. multiple projects). The data that you collect from individual projects will contribute towards this.
- **National-level evaluation:** this is CLG's overall evaluation of the delivery of the PREVENT strategy at a local level. It is planned that this work will be commissioned shortly. Your local evaluation will provide important information and learning for the national study.

Monitoring and evaluation: the difference explained

Monitoring is the ongoing and regular record-keeping within your project. It is about collecting information at regular intervals about what is happening in your project. For example, the numbers of participants, project activities, staffing, characteristics of participants, and numbers of events run.

- You may already be monitoring your project e.g. monthly reports from partners, or quarterly reports to your Government Office or Steering Committee.

Evaluation is more than just describing what happened in your project: it is about analysing evidence and critically reflecting upon your project. It is about researching and analysing your project in-depth to assess the 'value' of your project and to use this to make improvements in the future.

- You are being asked by CLG to evaluate your local PREVENT work.

Support with your evaluation

Government provides a range of other support, including IDeA peer support and an online community of practice on PREVENT. These guidelines help with different stages of your evaluation, and are being published alongside a resource pack which provides information about:

- Where you can turn to for help with your evaluation
- Examples of evaluations that have been undertaken elsewhere
- Guidance on different types of data you might collect at different stages of your evaluation
- Different approaches to evaluation.

→ RESOURCE PACK
WHERE YOU CAN GET SUPPORT

Options for conducting your evaluation

You can either undertake the evaluation yourself or commission a contractor to help you. Your decision will depend on your available resources, your time commitments, your levels of expertise in evaluation, and the type of information you wish to obtain from your evaluation.

Option	Strengths	Weaknesses
Conducting the evaluation yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good option if you are experienced in conducting evaluations: using your existing skills and knowledge from working on the PREVENT project you have full control over the evaluation process and the questions it seeks to address. • The process may be more participatory (if stakeholders are involved in conducting the research). • Is useful if you have very limited resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a time consuming process and also labour-intensive. • It requires you to be skilled in evaluation and research methods, to ensure that you obtain reliable data. • The process may be open to bias as those directly working on your PREVENT initiative are also evaluating its impact.

Commissioning a contractor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are not skilled in evaluation, using professional evaluators can improve the reliability and quality of the findings. • The process is less open to claims of bias. • Is useful if your time is very limited or you do not have the necessary expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a more costly option as separate funds will need to cover the external evaluation. • There may be difficulties in accessing and gaining the trust of stakeholders and communities: external contractors would need a good understanding of the communities involved. • Need staff time to procure and manage contractor: can be time-consuming to get a good product.
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Working with contractors: If you decide to work with an external contractor on your evaluation, we recommend that you still refer to these guidelines prior to commissioning a contractor (especially Sections 1 to 4). Contractors can vary in quality and it is important that you are satisfied that the methods they use will obtain the type of information you want to gain. In particular, it is useful to be clear on:

- Why are you evaluating your PREVENT work? Who will be the main people to use the results? Does the evaluation address the questions that are important to stakeholders?
- What are you evaluating? What are the aims of your PREVENT initiative? What short-term outputs, interim outcomes and long-term impacts does your initiative aim to achieve? What evaluation questions will you ask?
- How will your evaluation capture whether or not it has achieved these aims? How will success be measured?
- How will data be collected? Will the data sources proposed by the contractor answer your evaluation questions? Will it capture the outputs, outcomes and impacts?
- Does the contractor have experience of conducting similar evaluations in the past? Does the contractor fully understand the purpose and scope of the evaluation? Is the contractor able to meet your proposed project timetable? Does the contractor offer value for money?

1. Why evaluate PREVENT activities?

We recommend that all local authorities responsible for delivering PREVENT undertake an evaluation of their activities, but it is particularly important for those local authorities who receive funding from CLG through Area Based Grant. An evaluation of your local activities can help provide you with evidence and learning for:

- Your reports on National Indicator 35: *Building Resilience to Violent Extremism*. All local authorities are now required to report on NI35 as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)
- Your reports to local PREVENT partnerships and regional Government Offices.

Yet there are many other reasons for evaluating your PREVENT projects or programmes. For example, you might want to use an evaluation to:

- **Improve your programme of work, or individual projects:** using evaluation data to reflect on feedback and change your activities as you go along
- **Give feedback to funders and partners:** they have invested in your local programme, and will want to know what you have done with this investment. They may be particularly interested in how far activities funded represent value for money
- **Create a more robust evidence base** to support your assessment against NI35
- **Support an application** for further support or funding.

People usually carry out evaluations for a mixture of the reasons above. However, being clear about **who is going to use the results** of your evaluation and **for what purpose** helps to ensure that you design an evaluation and collect the right kind of data to meet these needs.

EXERCISE

Identifying the purpose of your evaluation and how it might be used

- Who do you think will be the main people to use your evaluation results? (yourselves, other people in your local authority, police and other partner organisations, the voluntary and community sector, faith groups and Muslim communities, others working in the field, policy makers in CLG and the Home Office, the IDeA, future funders of other relevant programmes.)
- What decisions will you or others be making that your evaluation might help with?
- What kind of information, or data, would be most useful – and be considered ‘valid’ – for this purpose?
- Who do you currently have to report to on PREVENT work? What different types of information or data do you have to gather for these reports? (For example, reports on NI35 for your Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), reports to a steering committee, reports to regional Government Offices.).

Involving community-based partners in your evaluation

As part of your PREVENT work, you may have already considered different ways to actively involve Muslim communities in your decision-making. The participation of community-based partners is also important when you are evaluating your project. For example, this can help to:

- **Improve the design of your evaluation:** by contributing to the mapping of your PREVENT activities, and by ensuring that you are focusing on the most important issues for the communities involved
- **Improve the quality of your data:** by ensuring you are asking the right questions in your evaluation, by advising on how best to reach and engage communities, and by ensuring that you use research methods that are culturally appropriate
- **Build capacity:** by promoting learning on evaluation and monitoring that can be used by community-based organisations in other projects
- **Address sensitivities:** by involving communities in decision-making on your evaluation, you can help to build trust, improve transparency and increase community buy-in
- **Improve dissemination:** by advising on ways to present the findings and ways in which they should be disseminated.

There are a number of ways in which you can involve community-based partners in your evaluation. For example, you could:

- **Adapt the guidance** or choose key sections where the views of community partners are particularly important.
- **Verbally work through key exercises** in this guidance with partners.
- **Hold small workshops or discussion groups** to talk through key issues in evaluating your PREVENT work.
- **Provide bespoke training on evaluation and research methods**, so they can become actively involved in data collection.
- **Set up a community-based advisory group**, which can give regular advice on every stage of your evaluation.

It is important to consider the funding and staff you have available when thinking about community involvement in your evaluation, as it is likely to be time-consuming. It is also important that community-based partners have a say in how they participate in your evaluation and that they are involved in a way that is agreeable to them.

EXERCISE

When you are first starting to think about your evaluation, you could identify a small group of community-based stakeholders who represent different interests and have a discussion about their involvement.

- Who are the community-based partners that may be interested in being involved? (For example, delivery partners, members of your Local Strategic Partnership, faith groups, and local community organisations.)
- What are the different ways in which community-based partners could be involved?
- Would any support or training be needed to enable their active involvement?
- What limitations are there to the involvement of community-based partners? (For example, finance and resource limitations, the risk of raising expectations that cannot be met, disagreement between stakeholders, sensitivities around involvement, and need to build trust.)

2. What are we evaluating?

The obvious answer is that you are evaluating your local PREVENT programme or a project that has been set up as part of this.

However in order to plan your evaluation, it is helpful to first outline all the different components of your PREVENT programme and projects in order to develop a 'map' that explains how the aims and objectives will be achieved.

EXERCISE

Mapping your PREVENT project or programme

One way of thinking about your strategy as a whole is to draw up a 'map' of what you plan to do at different stages, and how these are linked to the outcomes and impacts that you hope to achieve.

A	B	C	D	E	F
If...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...
Initial issue / context	Rationale for intervention	Inputs and actions taken	Short-term outputs	Interim outcomes	Long-term impacts

Initial issue or context

This is both the reason for setting up your programme in your particular situation, and also any other factors that might affect the way you deliver your programme, and its outcomes. It is the (local or sub-local) situation that has motivated you to set up your PREVENT activity.

Rationale for the intervention

This describes your understanding of how this particular use of the PREVENT strategy will bring about the changes you aim to achieve. The rationale for your PREVENT activities should link to the initial issue or context that motivated you to develop your PREVENT activities.

Inputs and actions taken

This is the nature of your programme, including who you are hoping to reach, what partner organisations will be involved, what local authority staff will be involved, what activities will take place, where you will be delivering programme activities, how you will engage with local Muslim communities. The resources required to implement your strategy will also be an important consideration.

Short-term outputs

This is the immediate results of the work, for example, numbers of people reached and their characteristics, or number and types of activities completed (such as training courses, forums or other events).

Interim outcomes

This is the assessment of progress made by participants; for example, in terms of increased confidence, and improved listening and debating skills. It might also involve immediate impacts on the organisations in which your programme is located.

Long-term impacts

This relates to the ultimate aims and objectives of what you are hoping to achieve: either for the participants (for instance, security of one's identity as British Muslim), for your organisation, or wider social aims (such as increasing sense of belonging and positive community relations).

The example below illustrates what such a map might look like for the example of the PREVENT Pathfinder programme run by the West London Alliance.

EXAMPLE

Map of an example activity in the West London area²

The table below uses information from the evaluation of the PREVENT Pathfinder programme run by the West London Alliance to illustrate what the mapping of a programme could look like.

A	B	C	D	E	F
If...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...
Initial issue / context	Rationale for intervention	Inputs and actions taken	Short-term outputs	Interim outcomes	Long-term impacts
Feelings of alienation and social exclusion can leave some individuals at risk from extremist ideologies.	Involving 'at risk' and/or potentially radicalised Muslims in diversionary activities involves them in positive support networks and can redirect their attention away from extremist ideologies.	Diversions activities: Social groups for young Muslims. Sporting activities, such as football or cricket clubs. Skills development, such as team building or improved communication.	Participation of young people and potentially 'at risk' individuals in the project.	Young Muslims 'at risk' develop interests and/or skills that divert them from extremist ideology.	Those 'at risk' reject violent extremist ideology. Muslims within our communities support diversionary activities for those 'at risk'.

 **RESOURCE PACK**
EVALUATION CASE STUDIES

² Authors' own development, drawing on information from the West London Alliance PREVENT Pathfinder evaluation conducted by the Office for Public Management (OPM), 2008.

EXERCISE

Involving community-based partners

You might find it useful to draw up or discuss this map with some of your community-based partners and stakeholders. You may find they have a different picture of the different steps and how these might lead to the kind of outcomes and impacts that you are hoping to achieve. It will also be useful to discuss with them which aspects of your PREVENT work they would like to see the evaluation focus on, and what kind of data they would like to see gathered at each stage.

Deciding what to include in your evaluation

There will probably be a number of different elements to your local PREVENT work, and it will be important to be clear from the start about which elements you are particularly interested in evaluating. It is rarely possible to evaluate everything, particularly when resources are limited.

For example:

- **You** might be interested in the success of the activities and organisations you funded to find out how successful these were and whether these offered value for money
- **Others** in your organisation might be interested in how PREVENT activities contribute to other agendas, for example community safety, empowerment and cohesion in your local area
- **Practitioners** delivering your PREVENT activities might want to know what activities work well, and which ones work less well, and how they can best go about implementing their PREVENT activity
- **Policy makers** will be interested in knowing what types of projects are effective and the resources that are required to support them.

Which aspect you focus your evaluation on will be closely linked to the purpose you have in mind and the answers of the questions in the first exercise in Section 1. The views of your partners can also help you to prioritise what is important for your local context.

EXERCISE

Considering which aspect of your PREVENT work you want to evaluate

Given who you thought might be the main users of your evaluation, which aspect of your PREVENT work do you think they would be most interested in?

It is also important to consider the NI35 criteria that you will need to report on when deciding which aspects of your PREVENT work to evaluate:

- **Understanding of, and engagement with, Muslim communities**
Key evaluation areas: data collection of initial context, engagement and participation mechanisms, capacity building of community organisations.

- **Knowledge and understanding of the drivers and causes of violent extremism and the PREVENT objectives**

Key evaluation areas: use of data to develop local understanding of violent extremism, information sharing mechanisms.

- **Development of a risk-based PREVENT action plan, in support of the PREVENT objectives**

Key evaluation areas: multi-agency partnership arrangements, strategies to promote a positive image of Islam, capacity building of community organisations, training and leadership development, mechanisms to address grievances.

- **Effective oversight, delivery and evaluation of projects and action**

Key evaluation areas: engagement and participation mechanisms, project delivery and management, risk management, financial planning, oversight and scrutiny functions.

EXERCISE

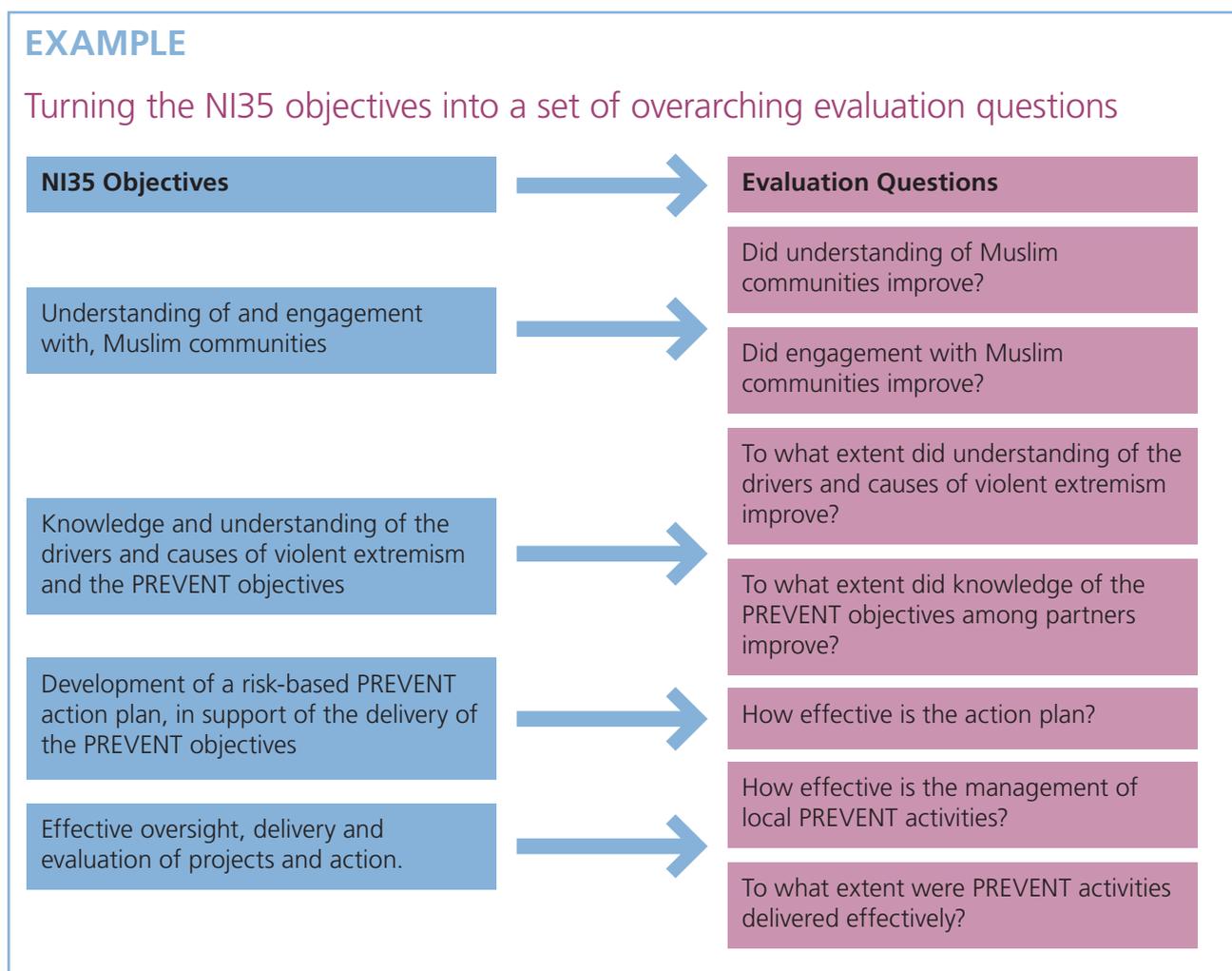
After discussion with your community-based stakeholders, and your reflection on the main users of your evaluation and the NI35 criteria, you will have a clearer idea of what aspects are most important to evaluate. Go back to your project or programme map and highlight all the areas that are a priority.

3. What evaluation questions will we ask?

Evaluations generally start with an evaluation question or set of questions. These are not the questions that you will be asking, for example, in interviews or questionnaires for participants in your programme, but the overarching question(s) that your evaluation is seeking to answer.

One useful way of arriving at the evaluation question(s) is by writing out the objectives of your project or programme, then turning these around into a set of questions. The 'SMARTer' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) your objectives, the easier it will be to turn these into evaluation questions.

It may also be helpful to refer back to the NI35 objectives that you have to report on. In the example below we have turned the NI35 objectives in a set of evaluation questions.



However, you may have more specific objectives in your PREVENT work that are more appropriate for your particular local context. For example, your objectives might be slightly different depending on whether you want to evaluate a single project (or activity) or a programme consisting of several projects (or activities).

Project-level

Projects might have very specific objectives, looking to effect change through a single measure for a clearly defined target group. Your evaluation questions might therefore focus on exploring whether the measure, as designed and delivered, was effective in addressing this objective.

EXAMPLE

Faith awareness and community cohesion training, London Borough of Waltham Forest

An example of a PREVENT project is faith awareness and community cohesion training delivered to 150 beneficiaries who are engaged in practical delivery of services at the local and neighbourhood level in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The evaluation took the form of feedback forms administered after each training session to capture learning and offer opportunities for ongoing improvement of the activity.

Project objectives

To improve the interface between communities and public services

To develop a better understanding of the needs of the community

To provide effective support for workers at the frontline

Evaluation questions

What changes in understanding and practice were achieved from the training?

Is the training content fit for purpose?

Programme-level

Programmes of activity often have wider objectives that go beyond what an individual measure can achieve. Programmes tend to combine different types of activities, often run in different locations and delivered by different organisations.

EXAMPLE

The West London Alliance PREVENT Pathfinder

An example of a PREVENT programme is the work done by the West London Alliance. This programme of work included a range of activities run at both sub-regional and borough level which collectively aimed to: promote British “shared values”; build capacity and engagement; promote democracy and citizenship; develop Muslim role models and leadership; and challenge negative media messages about Islam. The diagram below shows how two of the programme’s objectives were turned into questions for the evaluation:

Programme objectives

Promoting British shared values



Building capacity and engagement



Evaluation questions

To what extent did [the programme] help to develop a community in which Muslims *identify themselves as a welcome part of a wider British society and are accepted as such by the wider community?*

To what extent did [the programme] help to develop a community in which Muslims *develop their own capacity to deal with problems where they arise and support diversionary activity for those at risk?*

 **RESOURCE PACK**
EVALUATION CASE STUDIES

EXERCISE

Matching objectives with evaluation questions

List the objectives of the project or programme you wish to evaluate on the left, and write the evaluation question related to this on the right.

Objective	Evaluation question

4. How will we assess success?

Aims and objectives for programmes are often broad and general, and it can be hard to know whether they have been achieved. Some things go well, others go less well. Assessing whether your programme is a success or a failure means setting some criteria – or a set of benchmarks – for what constitutes success.

The mapping of your programme (Section 2) will be particularly useful here. By setting criteria for each step in the map, you can identify whether the programme went to plan, as well as whether or not it achieved its final outcomes and impact. After all, you may have done everything according to plan but still failed to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts – in which case it was the wrong model. Or lack of impact may have been because the programme wasn't implemented fully – in which case the model may be right, but you need to change some aspects of the way in which it has been implemented.

Criteria for your inputs, action and short-term outputs

A	B	C	D	E	F
If...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...
Initial issue / context	Rationale for intervention	Actions taken	Short-term outputs	Interim outcomes	Long-term impacts

Most projects or programmes have some of these criteria built in from the start, in the action plan and budget. One set of criteria is whether activities were set up on time, and whether the programme came in on budget³. You might also have indicated, for example, the number of times you would hold discussion forums or workshops, and the numbers you hoped to take part; these all provide useful benchmarks against which you can assess whether your programme went to plan and are sometimes called operating or process criteria.

³ We have indicated where gathering cost data would be useful. However, a full economic evaluation is more complex and needs expert advice. For more information about this see www.nationalschool.gov.uk/policyhub/evaluating_policy/magenta_book/chapter1.asp

EXAMPLE**Operating criteria for PREVENT activities⁴**

- We will recruit 15 young boys age 16-25
- We will engage up to 80 Muslim women and girls in our workshops
- We will organise one two-day training programme
- We will deliver weekly football and boxing sessions
- We will deliver 30 action plans for local Muslim organisations
- We will establish a regional forum on the PREVENT agenda.

If you use general statements such as ‘a significant number’, you might find disagreement between your stakeholders as to what represents a significant number. Putting an actual figure to this can help ensure that you all share a similar picture of what constitutes success. Setting a ‘cautious’ number may give you a pleasant surprise.

Criteria for your outcomes and impacts

A	B	C	D	E	F
If...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...
Initial issue / context	Rationale for intervention	Actions taken	Short-term outputs	Interim outcomes	Long-term impacts

However, process criteria tell you little about the quality or impact of your work. For this, you should set additional criteria about, for example, levels of satisfaction with the project or programme, or numbers of participants achieving a significant improvement in their confidence levels and ability to speak out against violent extremism, or changes in attitude towards violent extremism.

⁴ Authors’ own development, drawing on information from the West London Alliance PREVENT Pathfinder evaluation, conducted by the Office for Public Management (OPM), 2008.

EXAMPLE

Outcomes and impacts connected to your NI35 criteria

The NI35 criteria can provide a key basis for thinking about your outcomes and impact criteria. The NI35 criteria are helpful to measure your performance and effectiveness in implementing PREVENT locally.

Below we have taken the four NI35 objectives and given some examples of outcomes and impacts.

- Understanding of and engagement with, Muslim communities:
 - Increased knowledge and understanding of local Muslim communities
 - Increased knowledge of resilience or vulnerability to violent extremism
 - Increased civic and political participation of Muslim communities.
- Knowledge and understanding of the drivers and causes of violent extremism and the PREVENT objectives:
 - Increased knowledge of the drivers and causes of violent extremism
 - Improved information flow between local communities and local authorities
 - Rigorous information sharing arrangements are established and working effectively.
- Development of a risk-based PREVENT action plan, in support of the PREVENT objectives:
 - Strong multi-agency partnership arrangements are established and working effectively
 - Positive images of Islam are widely promoted
 - Community organisations have increased support for their capacity-building needs
 - Individuals 'at risk' benefit from a range of support services.
- Effective oversight, delivery and evaluation of projects and action:
 - Appropriate risk management strategies in place and working effectively
 - Local projects are delivered effectively and within budget.

There will be other outcomes and impacts that are relevant to your particular local PREVENT work.

EXAMPLE

Outcomes and impacts criteria

- Those 'at risk' develop interests and/or skills that reduce the likelihood of them engaging in violent extremism
- Those 'at risk' feel less isolated and better supported by local communities
- People are referred to other services relevant to their needs (for example, housing, employment, training)
- Confidence to speak out against violent extremism is improved
- Changes in attitudes towards violent extremism among participants
- Community members are better able to reach out to and engage young people
- Improved ability to articulate arguments against violent extremism
- Local people are more likely to think they can influence local decisions
- Communities are actively engaged in the PREVENT agenda
- Project ideas emerge organically from within local communities
- Ability to discuss violent extremism openly and sensitively with communities is improved
- Trust between local communities and local authorities is improved
- Local authorities and their partners are better trained to identify those 'at risk' from violent extremism
- Improved understanding of effective activities to prevent violent extremism.

 **RESOURCE PACK**
EXAMPLES OF SOURCES OF DATA RELATING
TO EACH STAGE IN THE MAP

EXERCISE

Involving community-based partners

It is useful to ask community-based stakeholders about their criteria for a successful project.

Examples of questions to ask include:

- What would represent success in this project or programme?
- What criteria can we use to measure this?
- What will you be looking for in order to know if the project has fulfilled its aims?

Recognising the limitations of your evaluation

Evaluating your local PREVENT work is an extremely challenging process: it may take a significant time for outcomes and impacts to emerge, and building trust with communities can be a fragile process.

Measuring the impact on individuals participating in PREVENT is the most difficult aspect. Many individuals taking part in PREVENT activities will be 'hard to reach', and may be hesitant to get involved in your evaluation. Similarly, to date there are no validated scales to measure the levels of support for violent extremism in individuals. It is therefore important to be aware of the limitations to your evaluation.

The next section and the resource pack give detailed advice on data collection methods including the strengths and limitations of these.

 **RESOURCE PACK**
DIFFERENT METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

5. How will we collect data?

If you have followed the steps outlined so far you will already have some ideas about the kind of information that would help you to answer your evaluation questions. This data might be:

- **Existing data:** often basic management data which would be collected anyway, whether or not you were undertaking an evaluation
- **New quantitative data:** collected using methods such as a questionnaire completed at the start of the programme, a survey on identity and belonging, or an assessment tool for participants about confidence levels, listening skills, abilities to engage with young people, understanding of cultural practices and religion
- **New qualitative data:** collected using methods such as interviews with participants, descriptions of activities or discussions with faith leaders and community groups.

Using existing data

Before collecting any new data, it is a good idea to make a careful assessment of any information that is already easily available. This may be an important resource for your evaluation and save you a lot of time and effort. Existing data might include:

- The original project or programme plans or applications (including budgets)
- Monitoring data that you are collecting on projects or programmes
- Data you are submitting to your Government Office or government departments (such as your action plan, tracker information and cost data)
- Information already collected from participants when they engage in the programme
- Data from stakeholders and partners such as information about relevant programmes previously run by partners; data from community and faith groups; police data (access to which may be subject to security clearance)
- Local authority-level data such as unemployment rates; crime levels; education results; benefits data; social housing data; take up of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes; demographic characteristics of local population (such as ethnicity and religion). Sources include the Census, the Labour Force Survey, and the Index of Multiple Deprivation
- Minutes of meetings
- Evidence drawn from other existing studies and databases.

 **RESOURCE PACK**
 EXAMPLES OF SOURCES OF DATA RELATING
 TO EACH STAGE IN THE MAP

EXERCISE

Working out whether you already have the information you can use

Evaluation question	Data already available	New data required	Notes

What gaps does this leave? How might you be able to fill these gaps?

It is important to consider data sharing arrangements at the start of your evaluation, both within your local authority and between partners.

- The Information Commissioner's Office has guidance on data sharing within and across local authorities (www.ico.gov.uk)
- The archive website for the former Department of Constitutional Affairs also has some useful guidance on data-sharing (www.foi.gov.uk/sharing/toolkit/infosharing.htm)

It may be useful to consult with other departments in your local authority or with partners (for example, the police) when first planning your evaluation, to ascertain what data is available and whether you can access this.

Collecting new data

There are many different ways of collecting new data, which will be influenced by the nature of the evaluation questions. Specifically, the evaluation questions will determine the most appropriate methodology to employ. This might be quantitative (involves numbers and statistics, tests theory and relationships), or qualitative (descriptive, non-numerical, concerned with meanings and explaining). You and your stakeholders might have a preference for one kind of data rather than another.

Type of data	Strengths	Weaknesses
Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces statistical data. • Can measure the extent, prevalence, size and strength or observed characteristics, differences, relationships and associations. • Can determine the importance of factors influencing outcomes. • Uses standardised procedures and questioning, enabling reproducibility of results. • Generally seen as authoritative, relatively straightforward to analyse and present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be costly, particularly if the population is 'hard to reach', or there is a need for translation. • Structured interviews and surveys hinder the detailed exploration of reasons underpinning decisions or views. • Reduces complexity, is pre-structured, meaning there is little flexibility. • Requires key concepts to be clearly defined prior to research taking place, therefore 'fuzzy concepts' are difficult to measure. • To date, there are no validated scales for measuring violent extremism, and it may be difficult to obtain a representative sample in some populations (e.g. Muslim communities) as there is no sampling frame.
Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible. • Enables exploration of the meaning of concepts and events. • Produces valid data as issues explored in sufficient depth to provide clear understanding. • Enables study of motivations and patterns of association between factors. • Provides a detailed understanding of how individuals interact with their environment, cope with change etc. • Naturalistic, captures complexity and subjective experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing methods rely on respondents being reasonably articulate. You also need to consider issues such as translation. • Analysis of data to generate findings is not always transparent or replicable. • Need to be able to anticipate factors associated with issues to be studied, to design 'good' sampling strategy. • May be dismissed as biased, unrepresentative or unscientific.

Selecting data collection methods

Similarly, your methods of data collection will also be shaped by the types of evaluation questions you will be asking.

EXAMPLE

Choosing quantitative or qualitative techniques

Below are some example research questions that can be answered with either quantitative or qualitative methods.

Research question	Quantitative or qualitative?
How many 'at risk' individuals have been participated in your PREVENT activities?	Quantitative
How many different types of activities have you delivered?	Quantitative
Did individuals 'at risk' find an activity helpful?	Qualitative or Quantitative
Why has an activity worked or not worked?	Qualitative

As shown above, quantitative methods are useful for numerical questions, or those that test relationships, whereas qualitative methods are concerned with meaning and explanation.

Some of the best evaluations collect a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data. In the resource pack there is further guidance on different data collection methods, and their advantages and disadvantages.

→ **RESOURCE PACK**
DIFFERENT METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Different kinds of data for different stages

This is where the map of your project or programme is particularly helpful. The map divides up your PREVENT work into a series of stages and indicates what you expect at each stage. You can also use this to think about the kind of data you want to collect at different stages of the programme.

It is important to be aware that in a relatively short programme, it can often be difficult to make an assessment of long-term impacts, especially given the sensitivities related to PREVENT. Realistically you may only be able to collect data that indicates future long-term impacts – the fact that you have moved along an anticipated path towards long-term impacts is also a useful evaluation finding.

EXERCISE

Mapping the information you need for different stages in your strategy map

Stage of project	If...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...
	Initial issue / context	Rationale for intervention	Actions taken	Short-term outputs	Interim outcomes	Long-term impacts
Information you need						

→ RESOURCE PACK

EXAMPLES OF SOURCES OF DATA RELATING TO EACH STAGE IN THE MAP

Sensitivities in collecting data

Collecting data to evaluate your PREVENT work will be a sensitive process. Many individuals may be reluctant to speak openly about their views concerning violent extremism and PREVENT-related activities, and some communities may feel under scrutiny. Building trust with communities can be a slow and fragile process, so it is important to collect data in a way that is appropriate and sensitive to your particular local circumstances.

Any data collection instruments you use (e.g. interview questions, questionnaires, topic guides for focus groups) will need to be framed and worded very carefully. It is useful to pilot these with a small sample of individuals before using them more widely. Similarly you will need to give strong reassurances about confidentiality and anonymity.

You also need to be aware of any cultural issues when collecting data; for example, some women may not be comfortable with male interviewers or facilitators, and vice versa. You will need to be flexible when gathering data in terms of timing, venue, childcare and the provision of transport. It may also be necessary to provide translation or interpretation services.

- Actively involving community-based stakeholders in your evaluation can be a helpful way to build trust and ensure you are approaching aspects such as data collection sensitively. Community-based stakeholders can also take a role in data collection, if you provide appropriate training and support.
- Alternatively you may want to commission contractors specialising in research with minority and faith groups.

Ethics and confidentiality

Before conducting any data collection you need to carefully consider any ethical issues related to your evaluation. The four key ethical principles to consider are:

- **Harm to participants:** Will your research cause harm or distress to those involved? Are there adequate support mechanisms in place, if a participant experiences harm or distress?

- **Informed consent:** Are participants fully aware of the implications of the research? Do they fully understand the consequences of their participation? Do they feel they have a choice whether or not to participate? Do they feel they can freely withdraw from the research at any time?
- **Invasion of privacy:** Do participants feel that they can freely refuse to answer any questions that are uncomfortable or too personal? Is the research completely confidential and anonymous?
- **Transparency:** Have you been explicit about the aims of your research? Are you researching the areas you stated you would (and not covertly gathering other data)?

When collecting data you should ask participants to sign informed consent forms to ensure that they fully agree to take part in your evaluation. Similarly you should provide them with written and oral guarantees about confidentiality and data protection. The Social Research Association (SRA) has detailed guidance on ethics in research and evaluation: www.the-sra.org.uk/ethical.htm

- **Data protection:** If you collect personal information in your evaluation you are legally obliged to comply with the data protection act. Detailed guidance on this is provided by the SRA: www.the-sra.org.uk/documents/pdfs/sra_data_protection.pdf
- **Safeguarding children:** If working with children aged under 18, you are legally obliged to have Criminal Record Bureau checks.

6. How will we analyse the data?

Any data you have collected needs to be analysed to draw conclusions about whether or not your PREVENT initiative has met its aims and objectives. In particular, analysing your data will determine to what extent your project or programme has achieved its desired short-term outputs, medium-term outcomes and long-term impacts.

Before beginning to collect your data it is important to consider the time and resources you have available for analysis. Therefore any decisions about analysis need to be made **before** data methods are selected and the data is collected.

- **Time:** What are your time limitations? Do you have sufficient time to undertake an in-depth analysis of all your collected data? For example, qualitative analysis is frequently time-consuming; have you made provision for this process?
- **Who will be involved:** Who will be involved in analysing the data you have collected? Will you, a colleague, your stakeholders, or a contractor be undertaking this?
- **Software:** What databases or statistical software do you have that may help your analysis? Do you need training in this software?

EXERCISE

Refer back to the mapping of your project or programme

Refer back to the mapping exercise you undertook in Section 2. This should be used as a benchmark to detail the short-term outputs, interim outcomes and long-term impacts that you hoped to achieve.

A	B	C	D	E	F
If...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...
Initial issue / context	Rationale for intervention	Actions taken	Short-term outputs	Interim outcomes	Long-term impacts

Also, refer back to Section 4 where you mapped your criteria for measuring success. You created criteria for measuring the success of the actions taken and short-term outputs. You also created criteria for measuring the success of interim outcomes and long-term impacts.

A	B	C	D	E	F
If...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...
Initial issue / context	Rationale for intervention	Actions taken	Short-term outputs	Interim outcomes	Long-term impacts

A	B	C	D	E	F
If...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...	Then...
Initial issue / context	Rationale for intervention	Actions taken	Short-term outputs	Interim outcomes	Long-term impacts

These criteria should be used as the basis upon which to analyse your data.

EXERCISE

Analysing the data collected against the criteria for measuring success

For each of your short-term outputs, list the criteria you set to measure success on the left, the data you have collected, and on the right (from the data) your analysis of whether or not these criteria were met.

Short-term outputs	Criteria for measuring success	Data collected	Analysis

Do the same exercise for each of your interim outcomes and long-term impacts. This will provide a framework and structure for the analysis of your data.

Ways to analyse your data

There are a number of ways to analyse your data and draw conclusions.

For **quantitative data**:

- Coding the data according to categories: for example, activities undertaken, number of attendees, partners involved, changes in perceptions, and increased knowledge
- Summarising the totals for different categories: for example, how many and what types of activities took place, who attended and for how long, how many participants changed their perceptions or increased their knowledge, and to what extent
- Undertaking statistical analysis if appropriate: for example, it may be useful to calculate percentages such as the percentage of sessions attended by participants, or the average number of participants attending an activity
- Producing tables and charts.

For **qualitative data**:

- Drawing out the key themes that emerge from your data: for example, effectiveness of an intervention, how the programme was implemented, sensitivity issues around PREVENT
- Outlining key comments that were made for each theme (both the majority and minority comments)
- Selection of quotations and examples that match the key comments for each theme
- Compiling the information into summaries that can be fed into the final report.

7. What will we do with the results?

Most people decide to communicate evaluation results through writing a report.

Reports are a useful way of ensuring that all the data is together in one place, but might not be the best way of communicating with those who can learn from your programme. It is important to feed back the results of your evaluation to those that have helped you or taken part in the research.

It is also worth considering:

- A **presentation** – with discussion – to different groups (community and faith groups, voluntary sector organisations, networks of voluntary organisations, relevant statutory bodies)
- A **PowerPoint presentation**, which could also be put on a website
- A one or two page **information sheet**, which is good for easily communicating the main points emerging from the evaluation
- **Tailored reports**, focusing on particular issues of interest to different audiences
- An **article** in an organisation-wide journal, a professional journal or a newsletter
- **Outreach and visits** to relevant community and faith groups are an effective method of reaching key community stakeholders.

EXERCISE

Writing a report

Before you start it is always useful to spend a little time on asking:

- Who is going to read it?
- What are the points they are most interested in?
- How long a report are they likely to read?
- What kind of presentation of data would be most helpful to them?
- Will they be expecting recommendations as well as evaluation results?
- Looking back at the original evaluation questions, does your report address them all?

 **RESOURCE PACK**

STRUCTURE OF A TYPICAL EVALUATION REPORT

It is also worth considering the benefits and drawbacks of translating your findings so the evaluation is more accessible to some community members and stakeholders. Guidance for local authorities on translation of publications to help you in your decision can be found here: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/translationguidance

8. What resources do we have available?

You and your stakeholders might have quite ambitious ideas about what kind of evaluation you should undertake, but you, and they, have to be realistic. Before drawing up a detailed plan for your evaluation, it is very useful to review what resources you have available. These include money, staff (time, experience and skills) and software for collating and analysing data.

Money: If there is a budget for evaluation, then it might be possible to commission an external evaluator. You may also need money for surveys (printing, postage), or to cover interviewees' expenses, if you are doing an evaluation.

Staff: What experience and skills do you and your staff hold which might contribute to the evaluation? How much time is available for evaluation activities? In some cases there may be staff elsewhere in your organisation, or one of your partner organisations. Do you have an academic partner? Are there researchers – or research students – who might be able to help with the evaluation? Are there people elsewhere in your own organisation, or in a partner organisation, who can design a questionnaire, undertake some interviews, or analyse qualitative or quantitative data for you?

EXERCISE

Evaluation skills and experience

What skills and experience do you and others bring to the evaluation?
What gaps does this leave? How might you be able to fill these gaps?

Who	Time availability	Skills/experience

Software: You do not necessarily require fancy software for collecting and analysing your data. Some of the Microsoft windows software (Excel, Word, Access) will get you a long way and there is also some free software available on the web, for example, for undertaking and analysing surveys.

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