Preventing Violent Extremism
Pathfinder Fund

Guidance Note for Government Offices and Local Authorities in England
On 5th May 2006 the responsibilities of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) transferred to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

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Foreword by Rt. Hon. Ruth Kelly MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Britain has a proud tradition as a diverse and tolerant society. Over the centuries, individuals of all backgrounds and beliefs have lived and worked together, enriching the UK in every possible way.

There has always been a tiny minority who oppose tolerance and diversity. From Mosley’s brownshirts, to today’s far right, they represent values that have no place in a civilised society. We reject them outright.

Today we are seeing new tensions in and between our communities, with some individuals preaching hatred and violence in the name of Islam.

This is a relatively new challenge which we are all beginning to come to terms with. It is not the same as a wider concern for community cohesion: the Government is committed to ensuring better relations between our different communities, and equal opportunities for all, not matter what their background.

Instead, this is about the more specific problem of a small minority of young Muslims being attracted to violent groups.

We all share a responsibility to challenge hatred and violence. Security measures can protect us from the most immediate threats. But our long-term safety surely lies in winning hearts and minds.

So today’s challenge calls for a fresh approach. We must find new ways of reaching out to our local communities.

Too often in the past, Whitehall has tried to provide all the solutions. It cannot. It is local communities who understand their areas best. And it is local authorities and their local partners, including the police, who have the experience, expertise and tools to tackle the problems at a local level.

Too often in the past, we have failed to see the diversity of opinion in our Muslim communities. Representative organisations play an important role, but it is the worst kind of complacency to assume they can do justice to the breadth of what 1.6 million people are thinking. We must make sure we hear the voices of those, such as young Muslims and women, who have too often been overlooked.

The new fund will support work the best local authorities are already doing and encourage others to follow their lead – listening to their communities, working with schools and mosques, forging partnerships between police, community and faith groups.
And this fund is a vital part of a wider picture. It goes alongside our work to give better support to the organisations who are serious about tackling terrorism, to look beyond the traditional forms of engagement, and to reach out to groups like young Muslims and women.

Violent extremism seeks to drive us apart. Together, we will overcome it.

7 February 2007
Executive Summary

This document provides guidance to Government Office and local authorities in their regions on the new Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund, from which £5million will be made available for 2007/08 to support priority local authorities, or groups of local authorities, to take forward a programme of activities to tackle violent extremism at a local level. This new Fund has been established as a key element of the PREVENT element of the Government’s counter-terrorism strategy.

The strategic objectives for this programme are to develop a community in which Muslims in our communities:

- identify themselves as a welcome part of a wider British society and are accepted as such by the wider community;
- reject violent extremist ideology and actively condemn violent extremism;
- isolate violent extremist activity, and support and co-operate with the police and security services; and,
- develop their own capacity to deal with problems where they arise and support diversionary activity for those at risk.

Building on the work undertaken since the Secretary of State’s speech of 16 October 2006 to local authority Chief Executives, Government Offices will seek to finalise programmes of local activity with priority local authorities to tackle violent extremism.

It is essential that local authorities involve local partners, particularly the police, and local communities in developing their programmes. This funding is intended to supplement existing funding, as much of this work is intrinsic to existing core work of local authorities. The programmes must demonstrate clearly how proposed activities will specifically tackle violent extremism and show a clear link to the overarching objective of creating a situation where Muslim communities reject and actively condemn violent extremism and seek to undermine and isolate violent extremists.

In line with the recent Local Government White Paper, these additional funds will form part of the resources received in support of Local Area Agreements.
Introduction

1. As part of the Communities and Local Government responsibilities for the PREVENT element of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy, this note provides details of additional funding to support local authorities and their partners in tackling violent extremism.

2. A new Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund has been established which will see some £5 million of funding being made available for 2007/08 for priority local authorities, or groups of local authorities, to take forward a programme of activities to tackle violent extremism at a local level. This funding will be made available from April 2007. Subject to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the intention is that this funding will be available in future years. This funding is intended to supplement existing funding, as much of this work is intrinsic to existing core work of local authorities.

3. This new fund has been created as part of the development of the Communities and Local Government strategy to deliver its priority remit, as established by the Prime Minister in his letter to Ruth Kelly of 9 May 2006, to enable “local communities to be able to challenge robustly the ideas of those extremists who seek to undermine our way of life”, leading this element of the Government’s counter-terrorism strategy.

4. At the core of our strategy to prevent violent extremism is the delivery of local solutions to local problems. This requires the effective integration of our work overseas, nationally and locally, with local leaders and partners systematically engaged with the overall strategy. This enables us to harness the long-established expertise of local authorities and their strategic partners in developing deep insights into their areas, in supporting community cohesion and in managing community tensions in order to meet the new, and difficult, challenge of tackling violent extremism. And it means ensuring the local delivery of activities across the breadth of our overall strategy; not just in engaging with local communities and supporting community development – more traditional areas of local expertise – but in tackling extremist ideology and supporting disruption activities.

Community Cohesion and Violent Extremism

5. Cohesion and integration remains a key Government priority. Since the disturbances in Northern Towns in 2001, we have worked closely with Government Office colleagues and local partners to identify how best to manage tensions and foster interactions within and between groups. The investment of £6m pathfinder funding for community cohesion from April 2003 to October 2004 provided a firm foundation for good practice, and good ideas for ‘what works’. We continue to address disadvantage and discrimination in all communities, through the Improving Opportunities, Strengthening Society agenda.

6. The commitment we continue to make to cohesion is reflected in the establishment of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, due to report in June 2007. And it is also demonstrated in the continuing projects to tackle the key thematic challenges to cohesion that we face five years on from 2001: particularly the challenges of increasingly complex migration patterns and the continuing threat of racism from the Far Right.

7. So it is within that context that we are launching the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund – intended as an addition to our work on cohesion, rather than a distraction from it. And recognising that a shared understanding of the difference between building community cohesion and tackling violent extremism is critical.

8. At its heart, building community cohesion is about building better social relations – this improves wellbeing, reduces disorder, and makes communities more resilient and able to solve their own problems. Cohesive communities help in our efforts against extremism of all varieties, but work on preventing violent extremism in the name of Islam requires something else as well. As assessed by the security services, the main terrorist threat facing the UK currently comes from Islamist extremists. As we know from our experiences of 7/7, even in the most apparently cohesive communities pockets of violent extremists can be operating. Islamist extremism is a particular challenge to cohesion – that is why it demands a particular response.

9. Preventing violent extremism in the name of Islam must, first and foremost, be about winning the struggle for hearts and minds. Winning hearts and minds will take significant efforts by Muslim communities to tackle the pernicious ideology being spread by a small minority of extremists, and will mean local Muslim communities taking a leadership stance against sophisticated campaigning and extremist messages. Our aim is to support that through targeted capacity building.

10. The need for dialogue and more traditional cohesion interventions hasn’t gone away – particularly as the focus on extremism may in itself be alienating, and interaction between communities will be particularly important. But the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund is intended to respond to a priority cohesion challenge without diverting funding from core cohesion work. And without destabilising the communities it seeks to support.

FUNDING MECHANISM

11. We have identified funds as an additional element within the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund to support work on tackling violent extremism. In line with the recent Local Government White Paper, these additional funds will form part of the resources received in support of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and will not be ring-fenced. Because this is a relatively new field of activity for many, where we are all learning together what approaches will work best, we will want to agree as part of LAAs the outcomes and actions that this money will support. We propose settling a set of proposals which can then be agreed by exchange of letters with the Government Office, which can then be an annexed
to the LAA. We recognise that it may well be most appropriate to use this process to enable groups of authorities to work together and for one to act as lead authority, but still working within the LAA framework.

**PROCESS FOR SETTLING LOCAL PROGRAMMES**

12. For 2007/08, the first year of the Fund’s operation, it is important that funds are carefully focused on key activities in areas of greatest need. This will ensure that best practice can be developed on which to build future activities, rather than spreading resources too thinly – both geographically and across different activities.

13. Since Ruth Kelly’s speech to local authority Chief Executives and the follow-up event on 15 December, Government Offices have been working with local authorities in their regions to work up sets of proposals for new activity in this area. It is intended that the Fund will provide additional resources, to supplement mainstream funding, to give effect to these locally developed plans.

14. Following the issue of this guidance, Government Offices will continue the existing dialogue with local authorities in their region to finalise these programmes, with support from the Preventing Extremism Unit at Communities and Local Government. It is important that this dialogue should involve local police, as well as other local partners. The aim is that this process of dialogue should culminate in an agreed set of proposals in each region, with agreement as to the funding necessary, over February and March. *These programmes must make clear how they will specifically tackle violent extremism.* These programmes, once agreed, will be formalised through the LAA process, with funds flowing from April 2007.

**FUNDING ELIGIBILITY**

15. In this first year of funding, it is important that funds are focused on those areas of highest priority. As well as directing resources at those areas of highest need, this will ensure that we can identify the most effective use of such resources, in terms of the effectiveness of different approaches, for the future. Agreeing where funds might most sensibly be directed will be a matter for Government Offices to consider in negotiation with local authorities in their regions and in line with the Government’s security assessment.

16. Our aim is to develop resilient British Muslim communities as part of our response to this threat. The fund will therefore be focused on local authorities with sizeable Muslim communities. As a starting point, authorities with populations of 5% or more should be considered for funding. We are aware, however, that there are areas that fall below this level that should be considered for funding (and, indeed, areas that meet this criteria where funding is not necessarily warranted). For example, there are authorities with significant Muslim communities concentrated in a few wards that fall below the threshold that should be considered.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

17. The strategic objectives for this programme (including national, regional and local dimensions) are to develop a community in which Muslims in our communities:

- identify themselves as a welcome part of a wider British society and are accepted as such by the wider community;
- reject violent extremist ideology and actively condemn violent extremism;
- isolate violent extremist activity, and support and co-operate with the police and security services; and,
- develop their own capacity to deal with problems where they arise and support diversionary activity for those at risk.

18. To deliver these objectives requires concerted action in partnership across central Government, local government, the police and the security services, the Third Sector and, vitally, local communities themselves. That action needs to be focused at a number of levels:

- at the general population of our Muslim communities, helping them to build their resilience to violent extremist messages and to voice their condemnation of violent extremism;
- at those who are most at risk of being groomed into violent extremist ideologies, developing specific interventions to help individuals counter such messages; and,
- at those justifying and/or glorifying violent extremist ideologies and terrorism, and thereby create an ambiance and atmosphere of toleration of extremist ideologies and terrorism, where we will work vigorously to prevent their efforts to indoctrinate vulnerable members of society.

19. Local proposals must therefore be aimed at furthering one of more of the objectives above and make clear how they connect with the national strategy whilst reflecting particular local circumstances.

20. The additional resources currently available are limited so local activity will need to be prioritised and links made where possible with other programmes. It is therefore welcome that authorities have expressed enthusiasm for working together in many areas as this will enable expertise and effective practice to be developed and shared cost effectively. Support and management costs should similarly be shared where possible.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

21. The key measure of success will be demonstrable changes in attitudes among Muslims, and wider communities they are part of, locally and nationally. Communities and Local Government wishes to continue to work with local partners to ensure the strategic objectives for this programme are compatible with proposals in Strong and Prosperous Communities, the Local Government White Paper. Understanding and mapping current local attitudes will thus be important and local partners will be invited to take part in developing, piloting and rolling out surveys that provide baselines for future progress. While it will
be important that such surveys contain a common core so as to enable aggregation and comparison they will also be a means by which local authorities and their partners can identify key local issues. Local partners are invited to indicate in their programmes their interest in such work, building on any local data already available and any issues of particular local importance in such work. Those places interested in piloting such work will want to consider allocating some of the local funding to this.

EVALUATION

22. Success in delivering the agreed programmes should be monitored by GOs, as part of the general LAA review process. Given that this is a relatively new area of activity for many areas, it will be important to ensure that processes are in place to monitor the success of projects, but also to ensure that best practice is identified and shared across the country. It will also be important to identify good practice and share learning across local government and with partner organisations. IDeA will work with councils to capture learning and disseminate best practice. IDeA will also discuss with you which issues require national support and how best to support councillors to deal with issues of extremism. It is important therefore that local projects are able and willing to share their experience.

TIMETABLE

23. Since Ruth Kelly’s meeting with local authority Chief Executives on 16 October, Government Offices have been working with local authorities in their areas to develop programmes of activity in this area. The intention is that these programmes should be finalised by the end of February, following which we would expect funding to be support the programmes to be agreed by mid-March so that funds can be released from April 2007.

PARTNERSHIP

24. Programmes will be developed in partnership with other agencies locally – including the police, third sector and local Muslim (and perhaps other faith) organisations. Local authorities will want to consider whether they need to develop a more detailed understanding of the range of local Muslim and other organisations and key individuals with whom they can work. Resource might be used to broaden the range of contacts and networks particularly those engaging young people and women for whom opportunities to express views and participate can be limited. Such networks can and should provide a valuable means by which opinion and input about the nature and delivery of a wide range of services can be obtained supplementing the information already available to local authorities and providers. They might also be the basis on which a Local Forum on Extremism and Islamophobia can be built. Resourcing the development of a Forum would be a welcome part of a local programme as would proposals to support specific activity by a Forum to offer for example avenues for young people to come together or Mosques offer access for wider community activity.
Funding Priorities

Below are the principal areas for which funding support is intended, along with examples of the sorts of activity that might address this priority and case studies of the sorts of activities that have been funded to date. Projects that have a focus on Muslim youth and women will be particularly valued. *Projects must have a link to the overarching objective of creating a situation where Muslim communities reject and actively condemn violent extremism and seek to undermine and isolate violent extremists.*

**Responding to concerns and ideology**

- Activities that provide effective local campaigns to confront extremist ideologies.
- Activities that promote local role models that can counter negative imagery and comment.
- Activities that promote understanding of the benefits that Muslims and Islam have brought to local areas.
- Activities that promote understanding and acceptance of key shared values and that promote dialogue and engagement between communities in support of those values.

**CASE STUDY: ‘THE STREETS’ PROJECT**

This programme works with young Muslims who feel that they are unaccepted or unable to access the environment and support of their community and mosque. Very often these young people tend to be further excluded from schools or colleges, and by default are seen as bad role models or ‘trouble makers’ within their community.

The project engages with these young people to empower them to make their voices heard on a wider societal level. It relies on regular small scale meetings, in which young people can discuss issues of relevance to their lives from a religious and cultural perspective.

**CASE STUDY: TACKLING EXTREMISM ROADSHOW**

The focus of these roadshows will be on community engagement and tackling extremism by a team of charismatic community leaders and professionals. The roadshows will take place in venues across the regions and will focus on issues such as community leadership, involvement of women, identification of extremist groups in communities and practical solutions to tackle extremism. Work has already been undertaken to identify potential charismatic speakers that have successfully overcome challenges in these areas of work and can share examples, experiences and support to local people.
Supporting and nurturing civic and theological leadership

- Activities that support local community leaders, organisations and role models working to tackle violent extremism and which equip them with the skills necessary for these roles.
- Activities that support local mosques, imams and madrassahs in activities to prevent violent extremism.
- Activities that promote democratic participation, engagement and civic involvement.
- Activities that enable members of communities to debate and question political and social issues in safe environments and to enable their voice to be heard locally.
- Activities that provide support networks for at risk and vulnerable groups within local communities.
- Activities that promote interfaith dialogue and joint working, focussed on preventing violent extremism.
- Activities that promote volunteering opportunities for local members of communities, particularly on work relevant to tackling extremism but also to foster greater engagement in community voluntary activities.
- Activities that promote Islamic awareness amongst Muslim communities and local communities more widely.

**CASE STUDY: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**
This project seeks to develop the leadership skills of imams and Muslim women, by contributing costs and support to a programme of leadership programmes run by a high quality provider.

**CASE STUDY: WOMEN’S VOICES**
A steering group is developing an event to bring together local Muslim women from all communities to share experience and agree how they might take a bigger role in their own community empowerment.

**CASE STUDY: BRADFORD CITIZENSHIP MADRASSAS PROJECT**
Project to develop a citizenship curriculum to supplement traditional Koranic training for 8–13 yr olds, promoting British citizenship and acceptance of key shared values. Last year funding was awarded to develop and test educational materials and techniques to teach citizenship in young people’s madrassas. This year further funding has been made available to help roll them out the curriculum to further mosques across Bradford. Among the modules that have been developed is one on ‘staying away from groups preaching harm and hatred’.
Increasing the resilience of key organisations and institutions and supporting early interventions

- Activities that improve intelligence gathering and sharing at a local level, to create systems in their own services/institutions (or with partners) for enabling concerns/intelligence to be reported and acted on and to promote effective working with local police/regional security services.
- Activities that seek to provide mechanisms to identify vulnerable communities, groups and individuals in local areas and strategies by which to address such at risk groups.
- Activities to develop targeted programmes of counter- and de-radicalisation work in local areas, particularly in key institutions – such as universities, colleges and schools – and key locations.

CASE STUDY: HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE GUIDANCE

A guidance document on radicalisation on campus has been produced. The guidance sets out what constitutes radicalisation, how this applies in the context of universities and colleges, how radicalisation can be identified and what interventions are available.

CASE STUDY: NORTH LONDON CENTRAL MOSQUE

Project to communicate valuable first hand experience and skill in combating extremism and terrorist propaganda in mosques and communities across the country. Through the prolonged presence of Abu Hamza and his extremist supporters at and around the Finsbury Park Mosque, which has provided a rich seam of valuable information, the management in NLCM has worked to make much of the valuable knowledge – what extremism looks like, how extremists operate, how to protect and divert susceptible youth from it – available to other Muslim community groups in London. The NLCM, with the Metropolitan Police Service’s Muslim Contact Unit, have also agreed to produce a booklet for distribution to mosques and community groups. This will include advice on warning signs, extremist tactics, responses, good practice and partnership activity.

CASE STUDY: SCHOOLS’ TWINNING

Bradford schools are building on a strong history of cross-school working by twinning schools across the borough to learn from each others’ perspectives issues relevant to violent extremism.
Capacity and skills development

• Development and support of local Forums on Extremism and Islamophobia, in line with the Local Government White Paper. We would expect to see some mechanism by which local communities and partners are engaged in this work and the Forum model is a strong one that has received significant support.

• Sharing, learning and development programmes relating to violent extremism for local leaders and members.

• Provision of guidance and awareness-training for front line staff and managers in organisations providing services or community support.

• Research and attitudinal surveys of local Muslim and other communities – using shared methodologies to which local partners have contributed.

CASE STUDY: DUDLEY FORUM ON EXTREMISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

Dudley was one of the first areas to hold a forum on extremism and Islamophobia, with a focus on engaging the community and discouraging the radicalisation of young Muslims. Dudley’s event in July 2006 also established a new ‘Community Cohesion Advisory Group’, which is part of the Dudley Community Partnership.

The forum is part of the Dudley Muslim Association’s wider strategy for the area. This also includes work with the ‘Green Light Muslim Forum’, a group founded by young Muslims which aims to dispel misconceptions about Islam and promote tolerance and understanding between different faith and ethnic groups. Activities include: interfaith and cultural exhibitions; theological, empowerment and tolerance lectures; and, drop-in and organised group discussions – used by all faiths, not just Muslims.