

Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) is funded by HM Government to deliver the law enforcement elements of its [‘CONTEST’ Counter Terrorism strategy](#). We deliver this as a collaboration of the 43 police forces of England and Wales, alongside the police services of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### How does CTP contribute to the delivery of CONTEST?

The Government’s CONTEST strategy splits the protection of the UK against terrorism into four ‘missions’ – Protect, Prepare, Pursue and Prevent. These are known as the ‘four Ps’.

CTP and wider policing contribute to the delivery of CONTEST by:

- **Pursue:** The covert surveillance and criminal investigation, alongside MI5, of subjects of interest for their suspected involvement in terrorism.
- **Prevent:** As one of the statutory partners in the delivery of Prevent, contributing to efforts to stop people from becoming radicalised, or supporting terrorism.
- **Protect:** Providing security planning and advice, and physical and armed security to the potential targets of terrorism.
- **Prepare:** Training, testing and exercising plans to prepare the UK for terrorist attacks.

CTP’s mission also includes responsibility for protecting the UK against state threats, using the National Security Act and other legislation to counter hostile actions from parts of states such as Russia, China and Iran. We are also the agency responsible for investigating war crimes on behalf of the UK, and a small number of officers are engaged in those investigations.

### What is the terrorist threat facing the UK?

The [threat to the UK from terrorism is SUBSTANTIAL](#), meaning an attack is likely. This has been the case since February 2022.

Our core mission is to keep the public safe, and we work tirelessly alongside local police forces, and security and intelligence services to confront a rapidly evolving terrorist threat. DG MI5, Ken McCallum, recently revealed that [since March 2017 CTP and MI5 have together disrupted 43 late-stage plots](#).

#### **Pursue: Investigative scale and focus**

Alongside MI5, CTP is working on more than 800 live investigations, involving thousands of ‘subjects of interest’ who are suspected of being directly involved in terrorism. These investigations range from those suspected of creating or sharing terrorist material, providing financial support to terrorist groups, or planning terror attacks in the UK or overseas.

Investigations cannot be kept open indefinitely. Choices have to constantly be made about prioritising our investigative, surveillance and digital resources. This means that alongside our partners in MI5 we have to make difficult decisions every day about which investigations need to be prioritised – meaning there are tens of thousands of closed subjects of interest alongside current investigations.

[CTP arrests, on average, around 250 people every year on suspicion of terrorist offences](#). The largest single focus of our investigations is Islamist extremist terrorism, in many cases inspired, and in some enabled, by groups such as Islamic State (Da-esh) or Al Qaeda.

[Of the 254 people in prison for terrorism and terrorism-connected offences, around 60% were convicted as Islamist terrorists. Nearly a third \(30%\) are white-supremacists, neo-Nazis – Extreme Right Wing Terrorists \(ERWT\)](#). Of those remaining, some have less clear ideologies, often related

## Counter Terrorism Policing: Our mission

conspiracy theories. This split reflects the reality of our investigations with MI5, which is roughly 75% Islamist terrorism, 25% ERWT, with a small number of left wing and single-issue ideologies.

Working with police forces and emergency services across the country, CTP leads the law-enforcement response to acts of terrorism when they happen. This includes incident response, leading the post-incident investigation, supporting victims, survivors and their families, and bringing those responsible to justice where possible.

### **Prevent: scale and outcomes**

While our Pursue work focuses on managing the threat posed by the thousands of people described above, CTP also delivers policing's contribution to the Prevent programme – the preventative arm of the Home Office-led CONTEST strategy designed to stop people becoming terrorists.

CTP carries out risk and vulnerability assessment and management on behalf of the rest of the system, and works alongside other agencies - from health and education, to local authorities and others – to deliver multi-agency case management.

[Every year, around 7,000 people are referred for initial assessment](#). Each one of these cases is assessed by specialist officers and staff, who decide whether a vulnerability to radicalisation exists, what multi-agency support – if any – an individual might require, and how best to manage any risks that are identified. More than 31,000 cases have been assessed by officers since 2019, meaning our Prevent teams play an integral role in the fight against terrorism, as well ensuring the thousands referred each year are getting any support they need.

In around 65% of those 7000 cases, it is decided that other services such as mental health, education, policing, local authorities and others are better placed to support these individuals. In these cases, officers revisit decision-making after six and 12 month periods to re-assess whether any other action is needed to be taken.

In around 500 cases every year, individuals are assessed as being at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and are offered bespoke support through the 'Channel' programme. This consists of a multi-agency panel of specialists from policing, health, education, local authority and other services, who identify people at risk, assess the nature and extent of that risk, and develop the most appropriate support plan for the person concerned.

Channel has supported 5,000 people to move away from terrorism since the introduction of the statutory Prevent duty in 2015.

### Public contact

The public have a critical role to play in our counter-terrorism response, and information from the public remains key to helping disrupt terrorist activity. In the last year, the public have contacted the Anti-Terrorist Hotline and its online equivalent, [gov.uk/ACT](https://www.gov.uk/ACT), around 22,000 times. After being reviewed, one in five reports are passed to our officers – meaning the public are providing information that is relevant and important to our investigations.

The UK's Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) works to identify, and investigate, those responsible for the proliferation of terrorist content online. Specialist officers work with platforms to stop harmful material being posted, remove it when it appears, and divert people away rather than towards it. The unit receives thousands of referrals each year, many of which come from members of the public who have reported concerning content they've seen being shared, or published online.

- 2024 saw over 11,000 referrals to the CTIRU.
- Since the start of 2025, there have been over 1,800 referrals made to the CTIRU.