

Press release: New Counter-Extremism Taskforce to help tackle extremism behind bars

The specialist taskforce will analyse intelligence compiled by about 100 counter-terrorism experts working across the country to assess the threat posed by radicalisation in prisons.

It will advise prisons in England and Wales on how to deal with specific threats, as well as instruct and train prison and probation staff on how best to deter offenders from being lured into extremism.

The unit – jointly formed between HM Prisons and Probation Service and the Home Office – is being brought forward as part of the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper. It will work closely with the police and other enforcement agencies, and builds on progress already made in addressing extremism.

This includes increased training for prison governors and staff, more resources to identify and remove extremist literature in prisons and holding the most dangerous extremists in specialist units in the high security estate instead of within the general prison population.

Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah said: > > Extremism is a danger to society and a threat to public safety. It is right we come together to bolster our response to the threats posed by radicalisation behind bars, and give our hard-working staff the skills and knowledge they need to keep our prisons and communities safe. > > This new team will lead this strand of important work to help combat and defeat terrorist threats posed by offenders in the prison estate and in the community. By countering the poisonous and repugnant activities of extremists, we will help ensure the safe running of our prisons and keep the public safe. >

The taskforce is being launched on 3 April 2017 and boosts the current team carrying out work in this area. It will be the nerve centre for all counter-terrorism and counter-extremist work across the prison estate and probation service.

Specialist staff will gather and exploit evidence gleaned from frontline staff – work essential to the safe running of prisons and fundamental to public protection.

Experts will also advise on the management of dangerous and high-profile extremist prisoners, and train frontline prison and probation staff so they are equipped to deal with extremist behaviour.

A strategy centre based in London will be supported by specialist regional teams across the country – ensuring resources are focused on addressing the

most serious risks.

The new unit will build on last year's formation of a new directorate for Security, Order and Counter-Terrorism – responsible for monitoring and dealing with this evolving threat.

Governors have also been instructed to ban extremist literature and to remove anyone from communal worship who is promoting anti-British beliefs or other dangerous views.

A new training package to identify, report and combat extremism is being rolled out to all prison officers and new pre-employment vetting checks for chaplains were introduced in February 2017.

[News story: Civil news: updated mental health guidance published](#)

Revised mental health guidance for use with the 2014 Standard Civil Contract.

Updated guidance has been published which helps providers with questions about mental health work under the 2014 Standard Civil Contract.

Development of this update follows constructive discussions with the Mental Health Lawyers Association and the Law Society.

The updated document clarifies a small number of provisions in the 2014 Standard Civil Contract. For example, the requirements for triggering a Level 2 (Mental Health Proceedings) Fee.

The questions covered in the document are the most common ones raised by providers since the introduction of a standard fee scheme for this work in 2008.

[Standard Civil Contract 2014](#) – to download 'Legal aid guidance: mental health 2014'

[Press release: PM dedicates £1bn in](#)

aid money for Syrian refugees and host countries

The Prime Minister will today set out the details of a £1 billion jobs and education package to support the most vulnerable victims of the Syrian conflict.

The overseas development funding, an allocation of £840 million pledges made last year at the London Syria Conference along with £160 million of new money, will provide vital support for refugees and the countries hosting them across the region.

This includes Jordan where there are currently over 650,000 registered Syrian refugees. The Prime Minister will witness the challenges facing Jordan first-hand today as she visits a school in the country educating young Syrian refugees and Jordanian children.

Today's announcement comes ahead of a UK co-hosted Syria conference in Brussels later this week and builds on the UK's leadership at the London Syria Conference last year, where the UK made education for children and the creation of jobs in the Middle East the main focus. At the event – following extensive UK lobbying – more than £9.6 billion was pledged in total by the international community, bringing hope to millions of people across the region.

The package of UK support will focus on creating new incentives for refugees to remain close to home so they don't feel forced to make the perilous and potentially life-threatening journey to Europe.

It will focus on providing more education, skills and jobs for refugees and others in countries like Jordan that border Syria, bringing them the stability and resilience to cope with the ongoing influx of people seeking shelter and giving those people the chance to build themselves meaningful long-term futures in the region.

The UK support includes:

- humanitarian aid including food, vaccinations, shelter and basic health care for millions of vulnerable people inside Syria and across the region
- education for tens of thousands of children in Jordan and Lebanon over the next 3 years, along with work to improve standards and provide vocational training for pupils in Jordan, making it easier for families to build a future in the region
- new funding for infrastructure in Jordan and Lebanon potentially creating thousands of new jobs, providing refugees and host communities with opportunities in the region while supporting vital building work potentially including waste water plants, schools and roads
- new support and advice to small and medium-sized businesses in Lebanon

- to create more jobs for host communities and Syrian refugees
- British expertise and technical advice to the governments of Jordan and Lebanon to accelerate private sector-led growth and job creation

Speaking ahead of her visit to Jordan, the Prime Minister said:

Hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives and millions more have been forced to flee their homes by the barbarity of the Syria conflict. The UK has led the international response to the defining humanitarian crisis of our generation, and will continue to set the pace.

The ambitious approach agreed in London last year is delivering real results and giving refugees what they want – opportunities and education close to home that provide a meaningful alternative to risking their lives trying to reach Europe. This is clearly in the UK's national interest.

I will be urging the countries attending the Brussels Conference to follow Global Britain's lead and deliver on the promises we made in London by stepping up assistance to the millions of people affected by the ongoing Syria conflict and helping to build resilience across the region.

We are a kind and generous country that will never turn our backs on those who so desperately need our support.

The [London Conference on Syria](#) and the region took place on 4 February 2016 and was co-hosted by the UK, along with Germany, Kuwait, Norway and the United Nations. It brought together more than 60 countries and organisations, including 33 heads of state and Governments. In excess of £9.6 billion was pledged by the international community – the most that has ever been committed for a humanitarian crisis in a single day.

Historic 'Compact' agreements struck with Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan as part of the London Conference aimed to create at least 1.1 million jobs in the region. Refugee-hosting countries agreed to ensure that no child missed out on the chance of an education as a result of the conflict, including a pledge to deliver education to all refugee and host community children in countries neighbouring Syria.

Tens of thousands of Syrian refugees have now received new training and job opportunities and nearly half a million Syrian refugee children are now in quality education in both Lebanon and Jordan.

The UK committed £1.2 billion in new funding at the London Conference, taking our total commitments at that point to more than £2.3 billion. By the end of 2016, the UK had delivered £550 million in new funding, £40 million more than the £510 million it had pledged for 2016.

Total UK funding for the Syria crisis now stands at £2.46 billion.

The Brussels Conference will take place on 4 and 5 April and will bring ministerial representatives from a large number of delegations, including the EU and the region but also the wider international community, the United Nations, major donors and civil society, humanitarian and development organisations. The UK is once again co-hosting the Conference, along with the European Union, Germany, Kuwait, Norway, Qatar and the United Nations. The Foreign Secretary and the Development Secretary will jointly represent the UK.

Press release: UK and Iraq signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

On 5 March, Frank Baker, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Iraq, and Prof. Dr. Abdul Razak Abdul Jaleel Al- Essa, the Acting Minister for Finance, signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Under this new agreement, UK Export Finance (UKEF) will work closely with the Iraqi authorities to identify suitable infrastructure development projects to utilise UKEF's export finance support for UK companies.

This landmark agreement reaffirms the UK's commitment to its friendship with Iraq, and its support for continued economic cooperation and development. This particular MoU will support investment in critical infrastructure in Iraq. This infrastructure, like water and electricity, will improve the lives of millions of Iraqis. It will also help reinvigorate the private sector in Iraq, and may lead to new jobs for Iraqis.

UKEF is able to consider applications to support eligible infrastructure development projects in Iraq where the project sources goods and services from the UK. The support can take the form of loan guarantees or direct loans.

UKEF and the Government of Iraq are already exploring a number of projects for support under the MoU which will benefit from high-quality goods and services from the UK, and improve quality of life across Iraq.

Press release: New support to help

workless families and improve children's lives

[unable to retrieve full-text content]New plans to help workless families break the cycle of disadvantage have been announced, as part of building a fairer society.