

1. Purpose

This Policy sets out how the Health Sciences University (HSU) meets its statutory responsibilities under the Prevent Duty, as part of its wider safeguarding framework. It applies to all staff, students, governors, contractors, and visitors.

The Policy defines the principles, governance, and statutory context for Prevent at HSU. It is supported by the HSU Prevent Procedure, which provides the operational steps to be followed when a concern is raised.

This Policy should be read alongside the Prevent Procedure, the Safeguarding Policy, and other related policies (including the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice, Equality and Diversity Policy, IT Usage Policy, and Student Disciplinary Policy). Taken together, these documents ensure a consistent safeguarding-first approach to Prevent, where concerns are managed proportionately, supportively, and in line with statutory guidance.

2. Introduction

HSU recognises that some people may be vulnerable to harmful influences, including radicalisation. Our Prevent duty is part of our broader safeguarding responsibilities and is approached with the same care, compassion, and commitment to wellbeing.

3. Legal and Policy Context

The Prevent duty arises from Section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA 2015), which requires higher education providers to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. For universities, the Office for Students (OfS) monitors compliance. At HSU, we implement Prevent within our safeguarding framework, alongside our Safeguarding Policy, Freedom of Speech Code of Practice, Equality and Diversity Policy, and IT Usage Policy.

4. HSU's Prevent Guiding Principles

The following values guide our approach to Prevent:

- **Safeguarding first** – Prevent is delivered as part of our wider duty of care.
- **Proportionate** – actions are measured and appropriate to the level of concern.
- **Supportive** – the focus is on early help, pastoral care, and wellbeing.
- **Inclusive** – we foster an environment of respect, diversity, and belonging.
- **Protecting freedom** – lawful academic debate and free speech are upheld.
- **Collaborative** – we work with students, staff, and external partners.
- **Transparent** – processes are clear, open, and communicated effectively.

5. Definitions

Radicalisation: the process by which a person comes to support terrorism or forms of extremism leading to terrorism (*Prevent Duty Guidance, HM Government, 2021*).

Extremism: vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It also includes calls for the death of members of the armed forces (*Prevent Strategy, HM Government, 2011*).

Vulnerability: circumstances that may increase the likelihood of a person being susceptible to harm, exploitation, or undue influence (*adapted from Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, 2023*).

6. Local Context

HSU operates across Bournemouth and London. We remain alert to the differing local contexts, risk profiles, and safeguarding partnerships in each location. We engage with Dorset and London Prevent teams, as well as local safeguarding boards, to ensure proportionate and relevant responses. HSU receives regular updates from Dorset and London Prevent teams, as well as local safeguarding boards. These updates inform the University's annual safeguarding risk assessment and ensure that Prevent arrangements remain responsive to the changing local and national risk environment.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Academic Registrar is HSU's Prevent Lead and reports into the Deputy Vice Chancellor who is the Principal Safeguarding Officer. The Students' Union & Engagement Manager acts as Deputy Prevent Lead. All staff, governors, and contractors share responsibility for noticing and responding to safeguarding concerns. The Prevent Steering Group oversees implementation and reports to the Board of Governors.

8. Risk Assessment

HSU conducts an annual safeguarding risk assessment, which considers radicalisation and harmful influences. This is reviewed regularly and updated in response to new guidance, intelligence, or local circumstances. An action plan accompanies the assessment to address risks.

9. Training and Awareness

All staff complete Prevent training relevant to their role during induction, with refresher courses at least every three years. Frontline staff and managers can receive enhanced training, and additional sessions will be provided in responses to changes in the Prevent landscape. The People Team maintains training records, and the effectiveness is reviewed.

10. Integration with Other Policies

Prevent is not treated as a standalone duty at HSU but is aligned with our broader policies and procedures. These include the Safeguarding Policy, which provides the overarching framework for protecting students and staff; the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice, which safeguards lawful debate and academic discussion; the Equality and Diversity Policy, which promotes respect and inclusion; the IT Usage Policy, which helps maintain a safe online environment; and the Student Disciplinary Policy, which sets behavioural expectations. Positioning Prevent alongside these frameworks ensures that it is delivered in a proportionate and consistent manner and understood as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities rather than as a separate process.

11. Information Sharing and Data Protection

Information will only be shared when necessary to protect someone from harm, and always lawfully under the Data Protection Act 2018. HSU follows principles of necessity, proportionality, and confidentiality.

12. Governance and Oversight

The HSU Board of Governors holds ultimate accountability for compliance with the Prevent Duty. Prevent is a standing annual item for the Board, which considers and approves the Prevent risk assessment and associated action plan each year, alongside the Prevent Annual Report. This provides assurance that the University is meeting its statutory duty and gives governors the opportunity to scrutinise the effectiveness of arrangements.

Day-to-day oversight is delegated to the Prevent Steering Group. The Group reviews the University's risk assessment, monitors implementation of action plans, and ensures that Prevent remains aligned with wider safeguarding responsibilities. It reports quarterly to the Executive Leadership Group and provides an annual assurance report to the Board of Governors.

All governors receive induction on their safeguarding and Prevent responsibilities, with refresher updates at least every two years or sooner if statutory guidance changes. Governors are encouraged to challenge and question assurance reports, ensuring that oversight remains active and well-informed.

HSU also meets its external obligations by submitting the annual Prevent accountability and data return to the Office for Students, which the Board of Governors approves.

13. Example Scenarios

Scenario 1 – Student Distress Linked to Political Events

A lecturer observed a student becoming increasingly distressed during discussions on international political issues in class. The concern was reported to the Prevent Lead via the safeguarding concern form. The Prevent Lead reviewed the case within 24 hours, consulted the Safeguarding Team, and determined it was a wellbeing issue rather than a Prevent risk. The student was referred to counselling and given additional academic support. The case was closed once the student reported improved wellbeing.

Learning: not every concern is Prevent-related; early referral to wellbeing support can prevent escalation.

Scenario 2 – Staff Wellbeing Concern

A colleague observed that a staff member had become withdrawn and isolated, with changes in mood and behaviour. The concern was communicated verbally to the Safeguarding Team and documented on the safeguarding portal. After review, the Prevent Lead determined there was no link to radicalisation but recognised the need for pastoral support. The staff member was offered access to HSU's Employee Assistance Programme and referred to occupational health.

Learning: Prevent processes can identify vulnerabilities early and guide individuals towards suitable support.

Scenario 3 – Escalation to External Partners

A student's online activity raised concerns among peers, who reported it to a tutor. The tutor shared the concern with the Prevent Lead, who reviewed the information and consulted with the Safeguarding Team. Given the nature of the material, the decision was made to refer the case to the local Prevent team through the established Channel process. Multi-agency discussion determined that the risk was low, and the student was instead supported through HSU's wellbeing services.

Learning: Clear referral routes and partnership working ensure that concerns are considered proportionately, with external escalation only where necessary.

Scenario 4 – Event and Speaker Management

An external speaker was proposed for a student society event. During the approval process under the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice, potential concerns were identified about the speaker's past affiliations. The Prevent Lead reviewed the information, consulted with external partners, and decided that the event could proceed with mitigations, including a chaired Q&A and clear behavioural expectations. The event was successful and well-attended.

Learning: Prevent does not restrict lawful debate; proportionate mitigations can protect both academic freedom and community safety.

14. Version Control & Document History

Version:	3.0
Ratified by:	ELG
Summary of Changes	Full rewrite to align with revised Prevent Duty guidance; expanded narrative; safeguarding tone; compliance mapping updated and separate from procedural detail.
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