

Don't ask terrorists about their mental health, check their motives, Prevent review to recommend

Counter-extremism efforts should focus on terrorists' dangerous ideology rather than their mental health, a landmark review of the Government's flagship [Prevent programme has found](#).

The review, which will be published this week, is expected to advocate a "back to basics" approach for the UK's anti-terror strategy.

It will say that those who have been radicalised should be assessed in terms of their ideology rather than their pastoral needs. *I didn't think it had anything to do with their 'pastoral needs', rather a desire by the authorities to underplay Islamic terrorism to the public. This is also common on the continent; after the murders on the train in [Germany 2 weeks ago](#) I saw several tweets from Germans cynically saying 'oh the mental health excuse will come out any minute now' or words to that effect.*

The Prevent programme will be criticised for straying from its "core mission" of stopping people from becoming terrorists by putting too much emphasis on treating them as victims.

Officials will be warned against assuming that extremists are vulnerable and focusing on whether they suffer from a mental health problem. Instead, they should examine their motivation and the threat they pose to society.

The review by William Shawcross, a former head of the Charity Commission, will also call for a renewed focus on Islamic

radicalisation rather than [drawing a false equality with far right terrorism](#).

It will point out that the threat of Islamic terrorism makes up the [bulk of MI5's work](#) and the majority of attacks, and that this should be the priority of country-extremism work.

It will also call for more focus on anti-Semitism, suggesting that this may have been overlooked previously.

... concerns among supporters of Mr Shawcross that the review could be watered down for fear of provoking claims of Islamophobia and stirring community tensions. One said: "Home Office officials are terrified of looking like they are [picking on Muslims](#)."

[The Telegraph revealed last month](#) that the review had also found that taxpayers' money had been handed to groups promoting Islamist extremism.

The review will also change Prevent's first objective to tackling the ideological causes of terrorism.

Suella Braverman, the Home Secretary, is expected to accept all the report's recommendations.