

Islamist groups funded by taxpayer, Prevent review finds

From the [Telegraph](#). This is a lot more damning than the report in [The Times](#) this morning.

Taxpayers' money has been handed to groups promoting Islamist extremism, a landmark review of the Government's flagship Prevent programme has found.

Key figures in organisations funded by Prevent are alleged to have supported the Taliban, defended militant Islamist groups banned in the UK and hosted hate preachers, according to a leaked draft of the report seen by The Telegraph.

The [review by William Shawcross](#), a former head of the Charity Commission, is expected to say that the "unacceptable" cases undermined Prevent's ability to "effectively undertake counter-radicalisation" work.

As part of the Prevent de-radicalisation strategy introduced after the 9/11 attacks, groups and charities have been given taxpayers' money to steer young Muslims away from terrorism.

But the review finds that a number of the organisations went on to promote extreme Islamist ideas.

The finding that government-funded groups have promoted extremism is likely to provoke a backlash, with the UK facing steep tax rises in the new year. The report has taken nearly two years since Mr Shawcross was appointed in January 2021 by Priti Patel, then the home secretary, with Home Office lawyers working to counter potential libel action by any referenced groups.

The Times focused on this point

At issue is whether the report should name individuals and groups accused of promoting extremist narratives or whether this would lead to libel suits and halt all attempts to reach out to those responsible for radicalisation. Home Office officials, fearing law suits, want important redactions in the report. Mr Gove insists that it should be published in full to give the best picture of extremism in Britain. A further complication is the recent focus on right-wing extremism, which Prevent's critics say is just as dangerous, and which others say is a distraction – albeit a serious issue – from the original mandate for Prevent.

William Shawcross, the author of the review, is said to be “increasingly frustrated and annoyed” by the delay. So he should be. Until the review is published, important changes to make Prevent more effective cannot be implemented. And the money to fund it, as well as the goodwill of teachers, community leaders and imams so vital to the programme, will dry up. . . Too often teachers are being encouraged to snoop on pupils in a way that is demeaning and insulting. And meanwhile radicalisation continues on the internet, in prisons and among disillusioned or frustrated young people where the real threat is ignored.

I have written before about the ‘safeguarding’ training which is compulsory in one form or another for anybody volunteering to work with young people in a church, a youth club, working in a school in any capacity, or anywhere they might meet a minor. In some form there will be a section on ‘radicalisation’ and in order to pass one must answer ‘yes – I would report this to the safeguarding lead’ to the example of an English boy, Johnny, or Tommy or Jimmy who expresses an opinion which accords with my own, and would have been quite unexceptional 20 years ago, such as “we should be more patriotic and stand up for our own people” In the ‘case study’ this earned poor Johnny a stretch at a multicultural youth club there to mend his ways.

But on Wednesday, government sources denied there had been any “redactions” or that the report was delayed by a row between Suella Braverman, the Home Secretary, and Michael Gove, the Levelling Up Secretary, over removing names. A Downing Street spokesman said: “The review will be published in due course. It remains right that we take the time to prepare and deliver a considered response.”

The Times says Of course right-wing terrorism is also a threat, and must be countered. But sitting on an overdue report will do nothing to protect society.

The Telegraph reports in more detail: The long-awaited review is expected to criticise Prevent for [straying from its “core mission”](#) of stopping people from becoming terrorists by putting too much emphasis on treating them as victims. It is also expected to say that Prevent is “out of kilter” with the rest of the counter-terrorism system by focusing [on Right-wing extremism](#) at the expense of the Islamist threat, which accounts for the vast majority of terror attacks.

In the draft review, Mr Shawcross says he examined some of the hundreds of millions of pounds in funding distributed by Prevent, finding that the money “too often goes towards generic projects” and, in some cases even to organisations that had “promoted extremist narratives”. . . “I found unacceptable examples of some of these organisations promoting Islamist extremist sentiments, or of validating and associating with Islamist extremists.”

he report cites four examples from open source research, including the leader of a Prevent-funded civil society organisation that made public statements “favourable and supportive” of the Taliban. It had referred to militant Islamist groups proscribed in the UK as “so-called terrorists” and “legitimate resistance groups”, and said Muslim members of the Armed Forces should refuse orders.

...At a fourth, senior figures and staff members were found to be connected to Islamist networks.

Mr Shawcross states that officials involved in Prevent may be [focusing on Right-wing extremism](#) “above and beyond the actual threat it poses” in order to “try and fend off accusations” that its earlier focus on Islamist extremists was “stigmatising minority communities”. “It is correct for Prevent to be increasingly concerned about the growing threat from the extreme Right. But the facts clearly demonstrate that the most lethal threat in the last 20 years has come from Islamism, and this threat continues to endure,”