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Community Reporting Thresholds

Sharing information with
authorities concerning
violent extremist activity and
involvement in foreign conflict

A UK Replication Study

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Executive Summary

Background and scope of the report

The first people to suspect or know about someone becoming involved in planning acts of violent extremism, including planned or actual involvement in overseas conflicts, will often be those closest to them: their friends, family and community insiders.¹

Such individuals are ideally placed to notice any changes or early warning signs that someone is considering violent action to harm others, as well as being able to influence vulnerable younger people away from violent extremist beliefs and settings. The willingness of those close to potential or suspected violent actors to come forward and share their knowledge and concerns with authorities is thus a critical element in efforts to prevent violent extremist action. However, whilst these ‘intimates’ have a vital role to play against potential terrorist threats and offer a first line of defence, very little is known about what reporting of the potential violent extremist involvement of an ‘intimate’ means for community members, particularly their views, experiences and concerns about approaching authorities, especially the police, when they have suspicions or knowledge to report.

‘Intimates’ reporting is a critical blind spot in current Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)/Prevent thinking and strategy internationally. When this research study was conceived, there was no open-source evidence-based research in the UK which investigated the views of either Muslim communities (who are clearly at the forefront of concern for the Prevent Strategy²) or of the local government, education and policing professionals at the forefront of Prevent policy implementation on their experiences of and on the processes involved in community reporting on violent extremism concerns in the UK (or indeed, the European Union). The first study of this kind, conducted with both Muslim communities and government stakeholders, was recently completed in Australia³ through government-supported academic research partnered by the Australian Federal Police. Its findings draw on valuable primary data and insights that have contributed to improving current reporting approaches, developed new

information and engagement models for use with communities, and provided a substantial number of useable insights and key policy and practice lessons for both communities and for Australian government policy and personnel, including first responders. It has formed the basis for a new Australian programme trial on community reporting.

This new UK research project has built on the initial Australian study in order to develop a new, localised and contextually- sensitive understanding of and approaches to community reporting issues in the UK context. The research aims and objectives for this study were as follows:

1. Identifying triggers, thresholds and barriers for when someone would consider reporting;
2. Understanding more from participants’ perspectives about the experience and process of (considering) reporting on an individual or group who may be involved in, or actively supporting involvement in, overseas conflicts, or violent extremism (including far-right extremism);
3. Understanding the experiences and perspectives of professional practitioners – both those involved in the police and Prevent and those representing community organisations – around the current reality of community reporting and what approaches could encourage and facilitate greater community sharing of concerns and;
4. Developing from the data usable insights for government and community agencies in future community-focused policies, strategies and campaigns around facilitating and encouraging community reporting related to violent extremism.

¹Williams, M.J., Horgan, J.G., Evans, W.P. (2015) The critical role of friends in networks for countering violent extremism: toward a theory of vicarious help-seeking, *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8 (1) pp. 1–21.

²Busher, J., Choudhury, T., Thomas, P. and Harris, G. (2017) *What the Prevent duty means for schools and colleges in England: An analysis of educationalists’ experiences*, London: The Aziz Foundation.

³Grossman, M. (2015) *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing information with authorities concerning violent extremist activity and involvement in foreign conflict*. Canberra: Countering Violent Extremism Subcommittee, Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee.

The research evidence base

The research aims, objectives and methodology sought to understand and assess through in-depth individual interviews whether community respondents would consider sharing (based on presented scenarios) concerns with authorities about an ‘intimate’ other (a partner, a family member, or a close friend) in relation to their suspected involvement in violent extremist activity at home and/or in planning to travel abroad to take part in violent conflicts. Experiences and perspectives on community reporting processes and actions were also sought from a range of professional practitioners. This study was designed as a UK replication and development of the earlier Australian project and as such we have drawn heavily on its qualitative design, methods and instruments.

However, the UK study introduces several key refinements to the original Australian research. Firstly, we have **significantly expanded the scale of the original study** by doubling the number of participants from n=33 to n=66. Secondly, whereas the Australian study only drew on individual respondents self-identifying as

‘Muslim’, we have introduced a **new sub-sample of community respondents from marginalised White British majority communities**. This last modification reflects the increasingly varied nature of the extremist threat and the explicitly broad focus of the UK Prevent Strategy on varying forms of extremism. Thirdly, we have **purposely over-sampled young adult community respondents** (18-26 year olds, n=21 or 44%) for a number of reasons. Young adults have been the core demographic group within domestic terrorist plots in the UK and other Western countries, with the age of those travelling to Syria to join ISIS steadily falling; there has also been important academic evidence that young people may be ‘associate gatekeepers’ in spotting the move of peers towards violent extremism. 48 community respondents and 18 professional practitioners were identified through purposive sampling methods and individually interviewed. Respondents were primarily drawn from the West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester metropolitan conurbations, with a smaller number from London.

Key findings and conclusions: Community respondents

The overwhelming motivation for reporting by community respondents is care and concern for the ‘intimate’, even if the act damages the relationship/friendship, a key finding strongly echoing findings from the earlier Australian study.

The **overwhelming motivation for reporting by community respondents is care and concern** for the ‘intimate’, even if the act damages the relationship/friendship, a key finding very much echoing findings from the earlier Australian study. Alongside this are strong moral and ethical rationales about a wider social/ civic duty to report concerns around such a potentially serious issue. For most respondents, the police are clearly the best placed people to deal with such situations. However, given the gravity of reporting someone close to them, **virtually all respondents would first go through a staged process** of attempting to personally dissuade the intimate and/or drawing on others close to them within their community to intervene before eventually, and often reluctantly, reporting to the police.

Within the staged reporting process, threshold judgments are crucial, with respondents willing to report directly to the police once they judge that the situation has passed beyond a certain point of seriousness and/or tangible evidence. However, such **threshold judgments are difficult in the making and often far from clear**.

An overwhelming majority of respondents wanted to report to their local police, not counter-terrorism specialists. Alongside this, an overwhelming majority of community respondents also wanted to report to the local police **through face-to-face means**, so they could judge the reactions of those receiving the report before proceeding further with or hesitating further over their reporting.

The chief reasons for face to face reporting were respondents wanting to assess how seriously their concerns were being taken and actioned, and wanting to have the opportunity for questions about implications (for the reporter, the intimate and others) and what might happen next. Reflecting this **clear and strong preference for face-to-face reporting**, telephone modes of reporting, including the national Anti-Terrorism Hotline, were largely seen as unhelpful or inappropriate for something not defined as an emergency, whilst the security and confidentiality of the internet and social media modes were often not trusted or seen as insufficiently interactive.

Much of the public discourse about community reporting focuses on the lack of community reporting of violent extremism involvement and how to encourage greater reporting.

There is much less consideration of what happens for all concerned after a report is made, particularly about an 'intimate'.

What happens, and what should happen, after reporting is a very significant consideration for most community respondents. Many identified concerns about the negative, collective impacts of reporting, including the different forms of anticipated or experienced backlash against those concerned. The large majority (although not all) of community respondents want to be kept informed of developments after reporting to the police. They understand **reporting to be a two-way process, with a 'feedback loop'** that keeps them informed about what happened, the status of the investigation, and what will or might happen next. Such a feedback loop can have positive impacts on current and future community reporting because it builds trust, accountability and a genuine sense of collective partnerships in countering the harms of violent extremism.

Key findings and conclusions: Professional practitioners

For practitioners, the theme of '*optimising the field*' focuses on **the need to build stronger partnerships and sense of shared responsibilities between communities and the authorities** over the threat of violent extremist involvement. Here, professional practitioners were, by and large, empathetic with and responsive to the complexities and challenges posed by community fears, concerns and conflicts when considering sharing information with authorities about someone close who may be radicalising to violence. For professional respondents, however, this development can only occur if certain challenges are successfully addressed.

One of the major *challenges* identified by practitioners is a clear lack of public trust and confidence in various authorities and agencies. This includes the Prevent programme, Channel, and the police as an organisation in some parts of communities. Practitioner respondents recognise and often sympathise with the very real community fears of reporting consequences, including the potential for overreaction by authorities to tentative expressions of concern that are the domain of 'Prevent', not 'Pursue'. However, practitioners believed there is **insufficient recognition of and engagement with the role of communities in safeguarding** contexts and they thought this directly feeds into a lack of broad community awareness about reporting processes, modes, channels and outcomes. Specific challenges around increasing community reporting identified by professional practitioners included maintaining the protection of those who report from both community-

and media-led forms of social harm, including isolation, ostracism and backlash. The potential for community reporting systems and cultures that work for all parties is hampered, in the view of professional practitioners, by uneven training and awareness by frontline public sector personnel with a Prevent Duty in relation to what should and shouldn't be reported onward. Additionally, respondents recognised the ineffectiveness and inappropriateness of the national Anti-Terrorism Hotline for reports at the early stages of concern about an intimate, as well as the remote, intimidating nature of the Hotline.

Professional practitioner respondents also identified significant *opportunities* to encourage community reporting. These broadly focus on the opportunity to build stronger and deeper relationships with key community leaders and organisations to enhance partnerships in preventing violent extremism, including those that may fall outside the current, formal Prevent framework. Within this, practitioners felt there could be **more explicit and committed policy support for the strengthening of community brokerage models** to enhance reporting channels using trusted local intermediaries. Alongside this could come the fostering of more opportunities and mechanisms for open dialogue and partnerships on the risks and mitigation strategies for violent extremism. For this to be meaningful **there is a pressing need to develop formal support mechanisms for those who report, and identifying early what individuals' support needs may be when they first come forward.**

Common ground: shared community and practitioner perspectives

The project findings make clear that both community respondents and professional practitioners already have a number of shared understandings around existing reporting processes and dynamics, as well as challenges and improvements that can be made to enhance better reporting outcomes. Both groups have acknowledged the significant emotional and social challenges involved in sharing concerns about loved ones and other ‘intimates’ with authorities, and have suggested ways to ensure that trust, confidentiality and minimisation of harmful social impacts associated with community reporting can be pursued. Both groups have also emphasised the value of strengthening genuine community partnerships so that those who come forward feel they are doing so with the recognition, validation and support that is a key ingredient of willingness to share difficult information about others who are close and cared for.

There is a shared understanding that, motivated as it is by care and concern, the more personalised and localised the reporting process is, the stronger it will likely be, and both community and professional respondents expressed reservations about more remote and impersonal methods of

bringing forward concerns during the early stages for someone who may potentially be radicalising to violence.

However, community respondents were more interested in face to face reporting to local police, as well as other community figures and intermediaries, than professional practitioners believed to be the case. There are clear implications here for rethinking the structures and mechanisms that are put into place in local areas that can facilitate face to face sharing of concerns. Professional practitioners were also less aware than community respondents of the importance of post-reporting support and information, and more focused on the dilemmas around post-report information sharing in terms of potentially compromising confidentiality and the legal or investigative integrity of their work.

These common understandings and points of divergence both point towards ways in which the future landscape of community reporting can be further developed and refined, and below we detail some key considerations and potential strategic directions for policy and practice based on the project’s findings.

Future considerations for policy and practice

Strategic direction 1: Consider rethinking the tone, content and targeting of social messaging initiatives around community reporting. Counter-terrorism/Prevent policy and practice can benefit from shifting toward greater recognition that the primary drivers for those considering reporting concerns about an ‘intimate’ will be *care and concern* for their welfare and the prevention of further harms to both the intimate and others in the wider community and society. Therefore, public messaging and policy practice that emphasises ‘safeguarding’ and ‘health promotion’ messaging in tone and content, rather than a focus on criminality and threat, is likely to be more effective in encouraging community reporting concerning intimates who may be radicalising to violence.

Strategic direction 2: Sharing concerns with authorities is a staged process. Preventing violent extremism policy and practice would benefit from applying in greater depth the understanding that a staged process of sharing concerns will be very common for community members, with advice, guidance and support first sought within family and friendship networks and within the local community before reporting to the police occurs. Some individuals will only go beyond this to contact the police with reluctance and with support from others. Community intermediaries and conduits thus play an absolutely vital role in the ‘supply chain’ of reporting processes and pathways.

Strategic direction 3: Localise and personalise the reporting process. A large majority of community respondents expressed a strong

preference to report concerns to local police staff and other community sites through face-to-face interaction. This means foregrounding in policy and practice the role of mainstream neighbourhood policing teams in such community partnership work, as well as dialogue with and training for mainstream front-line policing personnel to ensure that they are ready and feel equipped to positively engage with reports of concerns when they present.

Strategic direction 4: Develop support mechanisms for reporters. Community respondents have very significant worries and concerns about what happens to the ‘intimate’, to themselves, to their family, and to the wider community after they take the grave decision to report someone close to them. They want support and guidance, protection, and to be kept informed as far as possible about what is and will be happening through a ‘feedback loop’ that acknowledges them as partners in keeping people and communities safe.

Strategic direction 5: Clarify reporting mechanisms. There is confusion and uncertainty for many community respondents, and for some professional practitioners, around how reporting processes actually work and what choices people may have in coming forward. Strong consideration can be given to developing both an information protocol around reporting processes for communities, and to standardising the information management of reports to enable effective and efficient cross-sharing of information and also follow-up with those who come forward.

Introduction

The first people to suspect or know about someone becoming involved in planning acts of violent extremism, including planned or actual involvement in overseas conflicts, will often be those closest to them: their friends, family and community insiders.⁴

Such individuals are ideally placed to notice any changes or early warning signs that someone is considering violent action to harm others, as well as being able to influence vulnerable younger people away from violent extremist beliefs and settings.⁵ The willingness of those close to potential or suspected violent actors to come forward and share their knowledge and concerns with authorities is thus a critical element in efforts to prevent violent extremist action.

Considerations of reporting by ‘intimates’, as we call them, differ significantly from what is commonly termed ‘bystander’ reporting. Bystander reporting, first popularised in the late 1970s in relation to crime reporting,⁶ and since broadened out to a range of other social regulation settings, can involve reporting by more casual or remote contact and relationships such as neighbours and loose or general friendship or community networks. Bystander reporting can be influenced by concerns about the impact on self or others of coming forward to authorities, but does not invite the same extent or degree of psycho-social conflicts or dilemmas that it does for people who must consider the impacts of reporting on someone with whom they care for deeply through a close family or personal relationship, as well as the impacts on their relationship with that person.

However, whilst ‘intimates’⁷ have a vital role to play against potential terrorist threats and offer a first line of defence, very little is known about what reporting of the potential violent extremist involvement of an ‘intimate’ means for community members, particularly their views, experiences and concerns about approaching authorities, especially the police, when they have suspicions or knowledge to report. Without an understanding of the barriers and challenges people face in sharing information or cooperating with authorities, as well as what motivates them to surmount these

challenges, government prevention of violent extremism (PVE) strategies, counter-terrorism information campaigns and positive reporting messages will fail to fully engage with members of these communities in the strongest position to help.

‘Intimates’ reporting is a critical blind spot in current Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)/ Prevent thinking and strategy internationally.

When this research study was conceived, there was no open-source evidence-based research in the UK which investigated the views of either Muslim communities (who are clearly at the forefront of concern for the Prevent Strategy⁸) or of the local government, education and policing professionals at the forefront of Prevent policy implementation on their experiences of and on the processes involved in reporting on violent extremism concerns in the UK (or indeed, the European Union). The first study of this kind, conducted with both Muslim communities and government stakeholders, was recently completed in Australia⁹ through government-supported academic research partnered by the Australian Federal Police. Its findings draw on valuable primary data and insights that have contributed to improving current Australian reporting approaches, developed new information and engagement models for use with communities, and provided a substantial number of useable insights and key policy and practice lessons for both communities and for Australian government policy and personnel, including first responders. It has formed the basis for a new Australian programme trial on community reporting that commenced in 2017 (see <https://steptogether.com.au>). Important as this work is, however, the reporting context in Australia differs from that of the UK, and so would the generalisability and transferability of the findings and any resulting recommendations.

⁴Williams, M.J., Horgan, J.G., Evans, W.P. (2015) The critical role of friends in networks for countering violent extremism: toward a theory of vicarious help-seeking, *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8 (1) pp. 1–21; Attorney General's Department (2015) *Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in Australia*. Australian Government <https://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/informationadvice/Documents/preventing-violent-extremism-and-radicalisation-in-australia.pdf>

⁵GCTF Global Counterterrorism Forum (2014) *Abu Dhabi Memorandum on Good Practices for Education and Countering Violent Extremism* https://www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/159880/14Sept19_GCTF+Abu+Dhabi+Memorandum.pdf

⁶See for example Bickman, L. and Helwig, H. (1979) ‘Bystander reporting: The impact of incentives’, *Criminology*, 17 (3) pp. 283–300.

⁷Grossman, M. (2015) *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing information with authorities concerning violent extremist activity and involvement in foreign conflict*. Canberra: Countering Violent Extremism Subcommittee, Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee.

⁸Thomas, P. (2012) *Responding to the threat of Violent Extremism – Failing to Prevent*, London: Bloomsbury Academic; Busher, J., Choudhury, T., Thomas, P. and Harris, G. (2017), *What the Prevent duty means for schools and colleges in England: An analysis of educationalists’ experiences*, London: The Aziz Foundation.

⁹Grossman, M. (2015) *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing information with authorities concerning violent extremist activity and involvement in foreign conflict*. Canberra: Countering Violent Extremism Subcommittee, Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Our UK study has also included a small sub-sample of White British community respondents from marginalised communities.

As a result, this current UK study was conceived by the original Australian researcher, Professor Michele Grossman (now of Deakin University, Melbourne) in collaboration with Professor Paul Thomas and colleagues at the University of Huddersfield, UK. This collaboration arose from connections through the broader and long-standing research involvements both Principal Investigators have around prevention of violent extremism, community cohesion and community-based policy approaches. It led to a successful funding application to the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats' (CREST) 2016 ESRC-administered funding programme. Our application proposed to build on the initial Australian study to gain new knowledge about the dynamics and barriers to community reporting in the UK in order to develop a new, localised and contextually-sensitive understanding of and approaches to community reporting issues in the UK context.

The original Australian study involved a modest purposive sample of study participants (n=33), which was entirely appropriate for a pilot study and the specific contexts of the Australian research base. By contrast, **this UK study has employed a significantly increased sample size (n=66)** to address some of the Australian study's sampling limitations. **In particular, it has extended sampling to over-represent young adults aged 18-26 years old**, both because of the prominence of this age group in domestic terror plots¹⁰ and travel to Syria/Iraq and because of important recent American

academic research evidence¹¹ suggesting that this youth cohort may potentially have an important role as 'associate gatekeepers' in identifying the move towards violent extremism by peers.

Our UK study has also included a small sub-sample of White British community respondents from marginalised communities. The inclusion of White British community members both reflects the varying reality of domestic violent extremism threats and the explicit UK policy focus on extremism and terror threats of all kinds.¹² This wider research focus, alongside research sites in differing metropolitan regions, has helped the study to identify and illuminate both distinctive and overlapping features of the community reporting landscape in demographically-contrasting communities in the UK. This research rationale and our approach is discussed more fully in the following Methodology section.

Whilst this study has sought to develop new knowledge and applications for UK national and local policy makers and academics in its own right, it has also aimed to contribute to comparative analysis between the UK and Australia, thereby enhancing the transnational knowledge base around global best practice in preventing and countering violent extremism. The study has been undertaken by an interdisciplinary team of researchers (combining researchers in education, sociology, cultural studies and criminology).

¹⁰Pantucci, R. (2015) *"We love death as you love life": Britain's suburban terrorists*, London: Hurst

¹¹Williams, M.J., Horgan, J.G., Evans, W.P. (2015) The critical role of friends in networks for countering violent extremism: toward a theory of vicarious help-seeking, *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8 (1) pp. 1-21;

¹²HM Government (2011). Prevent Strategy, London: Home Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011>

Research questions

The research aims, objectives and methodology sought to understand and assess through in-depth individual interviews whether 'community respondents' would consider sharing (based on presented scenarios) concerns with authorities about an 'intimate' other (a partner, a family member, or a close friend) in relation to their suspected involvement in violent extremist activity at home and/or in planning to travel abroad to take part in violent conflicts. Experiences and perspectives on community reporting processes and actions were also sought from a range of 'professional practitioners'.

Research aims and objectives

The aims and objectives for this study were as follows:

1. Identifying triggers, thresholds and barriers for when someone would consider reporting;
2. Understanding more from participants' perspectives about the experience and process of (considering) reporting on an individual or group who may be involved in, or actively supporting involvement in, overseas conflicts, or violent extremism (including far-right extremism);
3. Understanding the experiences and perspectives of professional practitioners – both those involved in the police and Prevent and those representing community organisations – around the current reality of community reporting and what approaches could encourage and facilitate greater community sharing of concerns and;
4. Developing from the data usable insights for government and community agencies in future community-focused policies, strategies and campaigns around facilitating and encouraging community reporting related to violent extremism.

The findings presented below are based on in-depth, individual qualitative interviews with 48 'community respondents' and 18 'professional practitioners' from a variety of professional roles, including counter-terrorism police officers, local authority Prevent and community development staff and Muslim civil society organisation coordinators and community workers. In both cases respondents were particularly drawn from the West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester metropolitan regions, with a smaller number from London.

We draw on the data provided through these interviews in order to develop a stronger understanding of the UK context for community reporting, its dynamics, processes and pathways, and how these may be improved through policy and practice developments. In so doing, we hope to contribute to shared community, policy and practice dialogue on how best to enhance the willingness of people to come forward as early as possible with concerns and information about those radicalising to violence; community members' confidence, clarity, trust and safety when they do, and their support and follow-up needs that can help 'close the loop' on reporting impacts and outcomes.

Firstly, the report provides a brief background summary of the original Australian study, about which more detail may be found in Appendix 4. It then details the methodology of this UK replication study. Data from community respondents are presented and critically discussed under the key stage headings of 'Pre-Reporting', 'Reporting' and 'Post-Reporting'. Alongside this, we present data from the professional practitioners, enabling us to offer a process mapping analysis that draws on insights from both key groups of respondents. Taken together, these data and findings inform our Conclusions and 'Future Considerations for policy and practice', where we identify a number of strategic directions for policy and practice supported by the study's empirical data.

Limitations of the study

The methodological approach outlined above is one of qualitative inquiry, seeking insights, feelings and preferences from individual community respondents in response to the scenarios presented to them, alongside the experiences and insights of professional practitioners. This obviously means that such a study is not generalisable, based as it is on individual respondents in selected key metropolitan regions of the UK. However, our study has a robust sample size for such an in-depth, qualitative inquiry, with triangulation between Muslim and White respondents, between young adults and older members of communities and between community respondents and professional practitioners drawn from a range of roles.

There is also very strong concordance between our rich UK data and our resulting findings and the findings of the original Australian study, detailed in Appendix 4 and briefly outlined overleaf.

Australian Study Background and Rationale

Background

¹³Grossman, Michele (2015) *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing Information with Authorities Concerning Violent Extremist Activity and Involvement in Foreign Conflict*. Canberra: Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee.

¹⁴Wasserman, Robert (2010) *Guidance for Building Communities of Trust*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, p. 13.

¹⁵*ibid.*

¹⁶Lowe, Sue (2003) 'Terrorism Kit So Dumb It's a Winner', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 April, <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/04/09/1049567739732.html>; Grossman, Michele (2015) *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing Information with Authorities Concerning Violent Extremist Activity and Involvement in Foreign Conflict*. Canberra: Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee, p. 39.

¹⁷Tran, Mark (2014) 'Top Counter-Terror Officer asks Public's help Identifying Aspiring Terrorists', *The Guardian*, 27 August, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/aug/26/met-police-ask-public-help-identify-aspiring-terrorists>; Pidd, Helen, Vikram Dodd and Sandra Laville (2014) 'Syria Anti-Terror Plan Slammed by Parents and Community Groups', *The Guardian*, 24 April, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/apr/24/syria-initiative-met-slammed-parents-community>

¹⁸Kern, Soeren (2012) 'Germany: New ad campaign to counter Muslim radicalization', *Gatestone Institute*, 5 September, <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3321/germany-ad-campaign-muslim-radicalization>; Gessat, Rachel (2012) 'Fake "missing" posters to combat radicalisation', *DW (Germany)*, 28 August, <http://www.dw.de/fake-missing-posters-to-combat-radicalization/a-16197519>

¹⁹Bjelopera, James P (2011) *Terrorism Information Sharing and the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Report Initiative: Background and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report for Congress, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service; Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (2012) *A Resource Guide to Improve Your Community's Awareness and Reporting of Suspicious Activity for Law Enforcement and Community Partners*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Goldman, Adam and Greg Miller (2014) 'American Suicide Bomber's Travels in U.S., Middle East Went Unmonitored', *The Washington Post*, 11 October, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/american-suicide-bombers-travels-in-us-middle-east-went-unmonitored/2014/10/11/38a3228e-4fe8-11e4-aa5e-7153e466a02d_story.html

In 2013, the Australian Government's Countering Violent Extremism Subcommittee funded a research study titled *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing Information with Authorities Concerning Violent Extremist Activity and Involvement in Foreign Conflict*.¹³ This study, completed in 2015 and the first of its kind world-wide, was premised on the basis that communities are a front line of defence against threats to national security and social cohesion, particularly in relation to the recent increase of foreign fighter travel and involvement in overseas conflict.

Close friends and family members in particular are often amongst the first to see changes or early warning signs that someone close to them may be heading towards, or already engaged in, violent extremist activity both at home and abroad. A key element of the Australian study design was thus its special focus on what the research team called 'intimates' reporting – that is, what it may mean to bring forward concerns to authorities about a partner, close relative or friend.

However, common practice for law enforcement has been to focus primarily on perceived offenders, and not to prioritise the importance of having strong and trusting relationships with families, peer networks and community members. Yet both community leaders and kinship and social networks are often those best positioned to know who in the community may be at risk of criminal activity, whether terrorism-related or otherwise. When a young man or woman begins a trajectory towards criminality or antisocial activity, such events rarely occur without someone from that community noticing a change in the person's behaviour, attitudes, and/or social networks.¹⁴ Yet communities that do not trust law enforcement are often unwilling to share their observations and knowledge. Without strong partnerships, vital information is likely to be withheld.¹⁵

Moreover, virtually no public evidence-based research had been conducted at that stage about community-based views on or experience of reporting involvement in extremism to authorities, and the implications of this for policy, programme and operational models and approaches by

government, communities, law enforcement or security agencies. This was despite a range of information and persuasion campaigns developed and conducted in countries including Australia,¹⁶ the UK,¹⁷ Germany¹⁸ and the USA¹⁹ that sought to encourage people in communities to come forward with information or concerns about people in their local neighbourhood, kinship or social networks who might be radicalising to violence.

However, these campaigns often focused, especially in Australia, on reporting by the general community of observed activity or behaviour that may be suspicious or concerning from national security perspectives. While certainly valuable as an information, detection and intervention resource, general community reporting is only part of the story, and gaining new knowledge about the dynamics of 'intimates' reporting was thus seen to address a critical blind-spot in current Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) thinking and strategies.

The Australian *Community Reporting Thresholds* project broke new ground in seeking to identify community knowledge and concerns around reporting processes, to propose new understandings and approaches to community reporting based on these insights, and to develop new platforms for community education, awareness and increased willingness to report based on the data it gathered and analysed. Its subsequent impacts have had significant policy and practice outcomes, and further information about the Australian study's research aims, study design, methods, findings and translation into policy and practice is contained in Appendix 4 this report.

Methodology

Overview and research rationale

This study was designed as a UK replication and development of the earlier path-breaking pilot Australian project²⁰ and as such we have drawn heavily on the original study's qualitative design, methods and instruments. However, the UK study introduces several key refinements to the original Australian research.

Firstly, we have **significantly expanded the scale of the original study** by doubling the number of participants from $n=33$ to $n=66$. Secondly, whereas the Australian study only drew on individual respondents self-identifying as 'Muslim', we have introduced a **new sub-sample of community respondents from marginalised White British majority communities**. This last modification reflects the increasingly varied nature of the extremist threat and the explicitly broad focus of the UK Prevent Strategy (HMG, 2011) on varying forms of extremism. Thirdly, we have **purposively over-sampled young adult community respondents** (18–26 year olds, $n=21$ or 44% of the community sample) for a number of reasons. Crucially, this age group have been the key demographic actors in many of the incidents of domestic ISIS/Al-Qa'eda-inspired terrorism, for instance in Britain²¹ and more broadly in Europe.²² Nesser particularly identifies young people as the 'misfits', 'drifters' and 'protégés' of Isis/Al-Qa'eda-inspired plots, who are 'usually young with limited life experience, and are impressionable and quite easily manipulated by senior figures they respect and look up to (such as entrepreneurs, or other mentors, including militant preachers)'.²³ Whilst these young people have often been in their 20s, with some having undertaken higher education, there was a marked shift downwards in the age profile of the youth and young adults who attempted to travel to (and often succeeded in reaching) Syria towards those in late teenage years, with limited education.²⁴ In this context, Britain's Prevent counter-terrorism strategy has focused significantly on young people²⁵ and on the responsibilities of those who work with them.²⁶

Additionally, our research focus on young adults reflects both a finding from the original Australian study and an associated finding from important recent US-based research.²⁷ The latter study suggested that friends were more likely to notice the movement of young adults towards violent extremism than family members or professionals, such as teachers/lecturers, who work with them, and that such friends might be 'associate gatekeepers' for the authorities becoming aware of this through their use of the internet and social media as a means of raising concerns, both on grounds of ease and anonymity. Additionally, this American study problematically suggests that the closer the friend, the less likely they may be to even notice the move towards violent extremism, and that fear of damaging their close friendship may deter them from reporting their concerns. Accordingly, our UK study has focussed much more on young adults than the original Australian study had, in order to investigate the attitudes and dispositions of young adults towards reporting concerns around an 'intimate' being involved in violent extremism. Alongside this research focus on young adults, our study has sought views from adult community members and professional practitioners such as counter-terrorism police officers, local authority Prevent and community work staff, and civil society organisation coordinators and community activists.

Finally, our study covers three major English metropolitan conurbations of the UK (and thus three distinct police force jurisdictions and counter-terrorism policing units) – West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Greater London – that have all been at the forefront of domestic terrorist events and threats²⁸ and of the efforts to counter them through the Prevent Strategy.²⁹ Indeed, during the fieldwork process, major terrorist events occurred in both Manchester³⁰ and London,³¹ with significant impact on our fieldwork plans and the eventual sampling, as discussed overleaf.

²⁰Grossman, M. (2015) *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing information with authorities concerning violent extremist activity and involvement in foreign conflict*. Canberra: Countering Violent Extremism Subcommittee, Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee.

²¹Pantucci, R. (2015) 'We love death as you love life': Britain's suburban terrorists, London: Hurst.

²²Nesser, P. (2015) *Islamist terrorism in Europe: A history*, London: Hurst.

²³Nesser, P. (2015) *Islamist terrorism in Europe: A history*, London: Hurst, p. 15.

²⁴Coolsaet, R. (2015) *What drives Europeans to Syria and to IS? Insights from the Belgian case*, Brussels: Egmont.

²⁵Thomas, P. (2012) *Responding to the Threat of Violent Extremism – Failing to Prevent*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

²⁶Busher, J., Choudhury, T., Thomas, P. and Harris, G. (2017) *What the Prevent duty means for schools and colleges in England: An analysis of educationalists' experiences*, London: The Aziz Foundation.

²⁷Williams, M.J., Horgan, J.G., Evans, W.P. (2015) 'The critical role of friends in networks for countering violent extremism: toward a theory of vicarious help-seeking', *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 8 (1) pp. 1–21.

²⁸Pantucci, R. (2015) 'We love death as you love life': Britain's suburban terrorists, London: Hurst

²⁹Her Majesty's Government (HMG) (2011) *Prevent Strategy*, London: The Stationary Office

³⁰Pidd, H. (2017) 'Manchester Arena bomb was designed to kill largest number of innocents' *The Guardian*, 9th June, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/09/manchester-arena-bomb-designed-kill-largest-number-innocents?CMP=share_btn_link

³¹Booth, R., Dodd, V., O'Carroll, L. and Taylor, M. (2017) 'Police race to establish if London Bridge attackers were part of network', *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/03/london-bridge-closed-after-serious-police-incident-reports?CMP=share_btn_link

Research aims and objectives

What factors might encourage or discourage people to share their concerns, and what channels/conduits and modes of reporting would be seen as helpful or unhelpful

The research methodology and questions sought to understand and assess through in-depth individual interviews whether community respondents would consider sharing (based on presented scenarios) concerns with authorities about an 'intimate' other (a partner, a family member or a close friend) in relation to their suspected involvement in extremist activity at home and/or in planning to travel abroad to take part in violent conflicts. Experiences and perspectives on community reporting processes and actions were also sought from a range of professional practitioners, many involved in delivering or working with aspects of the Prevent strategy. The research aims and objectives for this study focused on:

1. Identifying triggers, thresholds and barriers for when someone would consider reporting;
2. Understanding more from participants' perspectives about the experience and process of (considering) reporting on an individual or group who may be involved in, or actively supporting involvement in, overseas conflict, or violent extremism (including far-right extremism);
3. Understanding the experiences and perspectives of professional practitioners – both those involved in the police and Prevent and those representing community organisations – around the current reality of community reporting and what approaches could encourage and facilitate greater community sharing of concerns and;
4. Developing from the data usable insights and tools for government and community agencies in future community-focused policies, strategies and campaigns around facilitating and encouraging community reporting related to violent extremism.

Key themes explored in interviews were:

- The reasons community members might feel motivated to share concerns with the authorities about those suspected of involvement in violent extremism and/or violent overseas conflict;
- What they would want to know or be reassured about before deciding to share their concerns;
- What factors might encourage or discourage people to share their concerns, and what channels/conduits and modes of reporting would be seen as helpful or unhelpful;
- Expectations, if any, about the kind of support people might need or want at various stages of the reporting process, including after they make a report;
- Expectations, if any, about the outcomes of the reporting process;
- Concerns and fears, if any, about the reporting process and its impacts (personal, family, community);
- Views on what agencies who listen to community members' concerns during reporting need to know from a community point of view when dealing with members of the public on these issues;
- The experiences and perspectives of professional practitioners from a variety of professional roles on what the current reality of community reporting is, what the barriers/blocks currently are and what approaches would facilitate and encourage greater community reporting and sharing of concerns about 'intimates';
- Strategies for improving existing approaches to community reporting;
- Strategies for strengthening public awareness and knowledge about the process of coming forward with information to the police/authorities.

Sampling

In-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 66 participants (see Table 1 below). These were made up of two primary groups:

- 1. **Community respondents (community members and community leaders) (n=48):** Recruitment of this sample comprised both Muslim respondents (n=40) and a smaller sample from economically marginalised White British respondents (n=7).
- 2. **Professional practitioners (n=18):** Recruitment of professional practitioner participants included police counterterrorism officers and local authority staff working on Prevent who were involved in developing and implementing reporting mechanisms and channels that enable information brought forward by community members to be analysed and operationalised, as well as front-line community/youth workers and teachers and coordinators/key activists of Muslim civil society groups.

Table 1: Project Sampling Across the Three Study Sites

West Yorkshire	Greater Manchester	Greater London	Total
17 x Muslim community participants (8 youth)	22 x Muslim community participants (9 youth)	2 x Muslim community participants (Adult)	41
4 x White community participants (4 youth)	3 x White community participants (1 youth)	0 x White community participants	7
11 x key state professionals	4 x key state professionals	3 x key state professionals	18
Subtotal: 32	Subtotal: 29	Subtotal: 5	N=66

Field study sites

Community and professional practitioner respondent groups were drawn from three major English metropolitan conurbations at the forefront of UK counter-terrorism policy efforts through the Prevent Strategy and the associated Channel scheme. Those areas were: West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester (with coterminous policing authorities) and Greater London (Metropolitan Police). Our rationale for selecting these areas is based primarily on their counter-terrorism priority status (borne out by recent terrorist attacks in Manchester and London in the summer of 2017) as well as their accessibility of the two regions in the north of England for the research team. In addition, the University of Huddersfield research team has strong and long-established research links with youth work, community work and education provision, as well as with police, local authorities and community organisations in West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester.

Research ethical procedures

This research project underwent comprehensive ethical scrutiny to ensure that the research was carried out safely and with considered consent and respect for the privacy and autonomy of the research participants and to ensure data security. This was a dual process. First, ethical approval to undertake the study was gained by the two participating universities’ institutional Human Research Ethics Panels: Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia (where Professor Grossman worked when the CREST grant was awarded) and the University of Huddersfield in the UK. Second, the research proposal also underwent additional ethical scrutiny from CREST’s Security Research Ethics Committee (SREC) to ensure that rigorous ethical processes were in place. These ethical approval processes included scrutiny of draft research instruments, participant consent forms and arrangements for the safe storage of data.

Recruitment

A range of professional practitioners were purposively sampled in the three research areas. This process was facilitated by the research team’s existing established research links with statutory agencies and community organisations.

Recruitment of suitable community respondents presented some challenges, not only due to the sensitivity of the topic but also because our inclusion criteria sought people able to offer real insights on a difficult and often confronting issue. This meant we did not pursue a general ‘call-out’ approach across the two main target populations in order to invite participants.

Instead, we relied on snowball sampling through our existing community networks to selectively identify relevant potential participants who aligned with our inclusion criteria. For instance, we wanted to recruit Muslim-background respondents from neighbourhoods and situated peer-group networks where ISIS/Al-Qa'eda-inspired radicalisation and violent extremism was, or had been, a live issue, and/or where participants were politically engaged and where they may have views and insights on how grievances and frustration can go in a worrying direction for some people in their localities or peer groups/networks. Equally, in selecting socio-economically marginalised White British participants, we looked for candidates from local communities where far-right activism and violent extremism was present, or where participants had political views on these matters. Whilst this approach made the recruitment process more deliberative, it provided the research team with stronger and richer data in terms of insights and validity. Thus, the sampling approach did not involve explicitly seeking people who had any direct personal or family experience of violent extremism, terrorism or contact with authorities on these issues, but rather people who could offer insights into peer groups/communities where such risks of extremist involvement, and the political and social positions that may underwrite these risks, were genuine and relevant.

Working with trusted 'gatekeepers' to both identify such suitable respondents and gain their willingness to be interviewed was the key to successful recruitment across Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire, emphasising the importance and strength of the University of Huddersfield's reputation/credibility and its pre-existing relationships of trust with such 'gatekeepers'. Similarly, the University's ongoing collaborations with local authorities, police forces and community organisations facilitated successful recruitment of suitable professional practitioners. The project's Advisory Group included a senior regional counter-terrorism police officer, local authority Prevent and community development officers and a retired police Chief Constable. The Advisory Group played an important role in aiding respondent recruitment through signposting and vouching for the research team. They also played an important advisory role in commenting on early versions of the research instruments and on the meaning of the emerging findings.

Within these sampling cohorts, the majority of community respondents were everyday community members, with an emphasis on young adults aged 18-26 years. Initially, our strategy was to avoid the 'community leaders' who had featured prominently in the earlier Australian study. However, emerging data emphasised that most, if not all, community respondents would utilise the help and advice of others, firstly family and friends but then often 'community leaders', prior to

formally reporting. For this reason, the later stage of fieldwork saw a decision to boost the sampling of 'community leaders' who had overarching awareness and knowledge of community concerns and dynamics. This, and their recruitment through the channels outlined above, was one of the key reasons why the original intention to sample equally across all three regions became a sample heavily focussed on the two north of England Regions. The other reason was that the London site proved more challenging for recruitment, emphasising the importance of known relationships of trust and credibility in recruiting respondents to research around such a sensitive issue. This decision was supported in part by the two terrorist attacks in Manchester and London discussed above. The Manchester attack prompted a number of 'community leaders' and other community members to volunteer to be interviewed by researchers they were already familiar with, whereas the London attack seemed to 'chill' further attempts to recruit from distance. A small number of community respondents were interviewed from London, though, alongside interviews with London-based professional practitioners.

For community respondents, sampling aimed for an even gender split across the cohorts, which was achieved in practice, $n=M24/F24$ (see Table 2 below).

All community respondents were compensated for their travel and time commitment to the project with a £15 Amazon gift voucher at the end of the interview.

Table 2: Community Respondent Sex by Region

Region	Male	Female
West Yorkshire	8	13
Greater Manchester	14	11
London	2	0
Total	24	24

Instruments

For community respondents, the research design employed semi-structured, face to face individual interviews that offered participants a choice of hypothetical 'scenarios' (adapted from actual cases; See Appendices 1, 2 and 3 for Scenarios used) portraying a person considering or planning involvement in violent extremism or foreign travel to a conflict zone as stimulus material for community members to respond to. This technique proved highly successful in the Australian pilot study in gaining rich data from community participants whilst simultaneously helping manage complex ethical and legal challenges and risks. The original scenarios from Australia were adjusted to reflect UK conditions and challenges and we introduced a new third scenario for the White British participants that dealt with a case of involvement in violent far-right extremism.

The two interview schedules (one for professional practitioners and one for community respondents) were closely based on those developed for community participant and government stakeholders in the Australian study, with minor adjustments in language appropriate for a UK audience.

Procedure

Data collection was conducted between October 2016 and August 2017 across the three study sites. All interviews were conducted individually by members of the research team, face to face and digitally recorded (unless any participant objected³²) and were transcribed verbatim. The rationale of the project and its ethical procedures to ensure confidentiality were explained to each participant at the outset. All interviewees received an information sheet about the research project and signed a consent form prior to being interviewed. Interviews lasted between 40 minutes to 1.5 hours with an average interview duration of approximately 50 minutes.

Interviews involving community respondents were largely conducted in a variety of local community centre facilities and offices. Some local West Yorkshire respondents were interviewed at the University of Huddersfield premises. All interview sites offered rooms for participants to speak in undisturbed privacy. The only exception to this were several interviews conducted opportunistically in public venue locales affording quiet and adequate privacy at the respondents' own request for convenience, and did not compromise the quality or validity of the interview. Professional practitioners were asked a series of semi-structured interview questions to guide their thinking on the key themes of the study identified above. This included asking these participants to detail their knowledge of current reporting processes and structures and how well they thought these were working. Professional practitioners were usually interviewed at their workplaces, in suitable quiet private rooms available on site. Several interviews for local professional practitioner participants in West Yorkshire were conducted at University of Huddersfield premises.

Following from the experience of the successful Australian study, and given the sensitivity of the topic, each community respondent was asked to read through a hypothetical but realistic

'scenario' or vignette, which told a story about someone who was presented as close to them becoming involved in violent extremism. Muslim respondents were presented with two scenarios ('Adam' and 'Sophia') and after reading both were asked to choose one, and White British respondents were presented with one ('Conor') scenario. (These scenarios appear in full in the Appendices to this report.) Participants were then asked to respond to the interview questions as the close friend of the 'at risk' fictional character presented in the scenario. This approach of 'thinking through' the scenario had the advantage of allowing participants to respond to the interview questions without fear of disclosing sensitive, personal or confidential information that might place them or others at risk, as well as helping to generate trust and confidence in the research process. A further advantage the scenarios brought was an often imperceptible shift during the course of the interview. Respondents would start off discussing the fictional character but gradually morph into situating the story more within the context and concerns of their own lives – 'if this was my friend, I'd...'. As with the original Australian study, at the end of the interview each respondent was given the opportunity to speak, if they so wished, about actual events or experiences where they may have been involved or had knowledge of reporting a concern about someone radicalising or involved in violent extremism. It was made clear to them that this was in no way a requirement of the research but rather an opportunity for them to discuss such issues or experiences at their own discretion.

As with the original Australian study, at the end of the interview each respondent was given the opportunity to speak, if they so wished, about actual events or experiences where they may have been involved or had knowledge of reporting a concern about someone radicalising or involved in violent extremism. It was made clear to them that this was in no way a requirement of the research but rather an opportunity for them to discuss such issues or experiences at their own discretion.

A minority of participants (n=11) took up this opportunity. Some discussed cases where they had had a concern about someone they thought was radicalising or involved in violent extremism, whereas others spoke about reporting instances of suspected volume crime, including serious volume crime.

³²Only one professional participant did not want the interview recorded, and short hand notes were therefore taken by the interviewer.

Coding procedure

All interview transcripts for both groups of participants were anonymised and synoptically coded using thematic and process-based codes developed iteratively by the research team. Inter-rater reliability was checked with a sample of coded transcripts, showing good concordance.

Emerging results prior to the more formal end of project dissemination events (see section below) were shared in a number of fora to enable discussion and challenge as to the meaning of the findings being highlighted by the research team. As well as this process taking place in our Project Advisory Group meetings, early emerging findings were presented to and discussed in sessions with Home Office staff and senior UK counter-

terrorism policing colleagues in February 2017, and with Greater Manchester local authority Prevent colleagues in July 2017. The purpose of these sessions was to invite comment and challenge from people with professional experience and expertise relevant to this study. Anonymised field notes were made at each of these sessions. These have subsequently been used to critically evaluate our framework for analysis and identify assumptions underlying our interpretations of the data. Emerging findings were also shared with policing and academic colleagues (through Public Safety Canada and the Terrorism, Security and Society (TSAS) network) in Toronto, Canada in May 2017, with the strong resonance of the findings for participants leading to interest in a further Canadian replication study.

Involvement of Users in the Research

Project Advisory Group

The project established an Advisory Group comprised of five members. The group met with the research team in Huddersfield three times during the lifetime of the project. The Advisory Group had three core functions. Firstly, to provide technical and operational advice throughout the life of the study. Secondly, to act as an expert forum to discuss the project's emerging findings, both to act as a source of cross verification for findings and to advise how the information from the research should be most usefully employed for end users. Lastly, to help identify opportunities to exploit the findings emerging from the research.

Project dissemination plans

The project has planned a comprehensive and varied dissemination strategy to communicate our research findings across a range of different audiences and channels. These have included:

- *Two dissemination seminars*, in London for CREST funders, government departments and national policing/CT agencies, and in Huddersfield for local authorities, regional policing/CTU staff and civil society groups;
- *Targeted policy presentations* by invitation at key national government, civil society and policing agencies;
- *Presentations to government, policing and academic colleagues* in other countries interested in the policy challenge and research findings, including in Canada and Australia;
- *Community Dissemination Forum events* in Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire to present our research findings and recommendations to local/regional civil society groups, including those acting as 'gatekeepers' for research respondents;
- *A publications strategy:*
 - Targeted dissemination through a range of practitioner publications and articles in academic journals;
 - A comprehensive final research report, made available via the websites of CREST and the participating universities.

Pre-Reporting

This section of the report will consider what we have termed the ‘pre-reporting’ phase. This refers to that period in which family or community members consider what they are seeing or hearing that is causing them to be concerned that someone close may be radicalising to violence; where to find out more information or seek assistance, and what decisions they will make with regard to sharing concerns with others, including authorities.

For this study, we asked community respondents to consider their response to the events supplied in the vignette, where a course of action (or inaction) is mulled over and thought through. Each of the scenarios place the respondent in a dilemma with more than one possible course of action. We examine the deliberative reasoning and sequential thinking which accompanies the scenario in four ways: First, we explore the experiences and feelings generated by the vignette that have a bearing on the reporting decisions. Second, we look at what behaviours and actions respondents

say they would undertake in response to the scenario. Third, we examine the conflicts and dilemmas that the vignette raises, including how decision making is navigated, how respondents recognise thresholds within the scenario and how they consider the anticipated impacts (consequences of reporting or not reporting) and then identify the barriers and enablers are for reporting. Lastly, we examine what support respondents said they needed or desired in the pre-reporting phase in order to make a decision to share their concern or suspicion with authorities.

Experiences and feelings bearing on whether or not to report

There was a broad consensus amongst respondents that the scenarios were authentic and raised serious concerns. In response, respondents expressed a range of often conflicting emotions and feelings when considering whether or not to report the concern to the authorities. For some, their emotions would see-saw between loyalty to the (fictional) friend and a sense of responsibility to wider society to prevent any future harm, including the dangers of spreading a violent ideological message. As one community leader noted:

Even sat here I'm already feeling a sense of guilt, so betraying a friend, even if it's for the greater good, would stoke emotions of guilt and betrayal. So I'd have to think very hard about passing on the information about a friend to the authorities. But I like to think I'd do the right thing and look for the greater good, whether it's the good of him or the wider community. [...] I think the welfare of the wider community that he might affect would be a major concern. I'd be concerned about his welfare [as] a close friend. I can't dismiss the fact that I'd be concerned about his physical, mental, emotional welfare, but again, I'd be concerned about how much of this rhetoric is spreading out to other people and not just him. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

The overwhelming majority of respondents found the scenarios disturbing and complex. They often experienced some degree of conflict when deliberating on what to do given their knowledge of the escalating events described in each. A range of other feelings and emotions to the scenario included being shocked, worried, apprehensive, scared, stressed and fearful, for the intimate or about the situation:

I've never been into a situation like this and I wouldn't like to. Never. [CR09 Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

These emotions were often complex and highly personal, with some common elements (almost always involving degrees of worry and concern for the intimate) along with other more distinctive feelings. One respondent discusses how she felt burdened by both the unwelcome knowledge she acquires through the scenario, and uncertainty about the consequences of sharing this knowledge for both the intimate and also herself:

Like it's just your friend and even if it is serious it doesn't feel serious, but once the authorities are involved a lot of people are going to be up, like might want to talk to me or talk to my friend. And then if they want to talk to my friend and it's because of me it's just, like, a bit awkward [...] It's the fear of the unknown and I don't like this uncertainty. I think I'd feel scared about it all because, like scared for my friend and everything, but scared for myself as well. I think all around I'm more thinking about myself in this situation, not my friend.
[CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Actions and behaviours in pre-reporting

Some respondents said the first action they would want take is to find out more information to try and satisfy themselves that their concerns were warranted. This was one of the most frequent responses to the scenario [CR30; CR28; CR26; CR25; CR24; CR16; CR17; CR20; CR21; CR02; CR09; CR10; CR12; CR03]: wanting to talk to the person in an effort to determine the veracity of what they had learned by researching the topic independently, and also gauge how seriously involved the intimate was, or as an opportunity to challenge or reason with the views and beliefs they were espousing. Throughout, the overwhelming concern was to try and help the person at risk of radicalising to violence. This early avenue of inquiry was often a first step, the outcome of which was central in formulating a decision about whether to proceed to report to the authorities.

First I'll try and find out what [Sophia's] position is, I'll try to find out more about [the boyfriend in the scenario]. Try and get more about his background. I'd try and find out as much as I can through Sophia, and if not I'll see if there's any other link. [...] first of all I'll see if I can do it directly. If not then I'll get the third party involved, a close friend, yeah. Another close friend. [CR26, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

First step, I'd talk to him, listen to him, not cut him off straight away [...] See what he's got to tell me first, and then work through that. I wouldn't give him that long after I've spoken to him, I would monitor him within a few days, and I will know [through my own] instinct, you know your own child.[...] [Then] I would speak to my husband. I would sit down With [my child again], if in a few days it hasn't worked I would contact people where, on internet they are given numbers where to contact people if you need help. There are sites where you can contact them, you can contact police or you contact engagement.
[CR10, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I'd talk to her first, because it's like, if she thinks she's got an issue, an actual problem or she's just generally 'oh, I don't want to hang out' or something. So I feel like it's wrong of me to go around first and be like 'oh I think this is going on with her', because it's like spreading rumours isn't it, and it could just be completely false and not even true. I think I would be reluctant to tell other people, like I said not unless like I, maybe I saw something that was like, oh this is really serious. [CR03, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I'd speak to him. I wouldn't go to like authorities just yet. I'd speak to his other friends, I'll speak to his family members as well, to see what's going on, but like I wouldn't take, you know, anything official just yet. [CR20, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

In keeping with this cautionary impulse, some simply wanted to see if there was an innocent explanation for the behaviour, for example, a misunderstanding or a joking comment. Most respondents said it was important to them to find out more information before deciding how to proceed:

She's being withdrawn and I don't understand why but I need to find out, so I'm going to be looking into it. I won't give up until I get my answers. [CR27, Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I think you've got to be really sure that the difference between maybe a joke to a difference between the seriousness or, or how serious, depending on the evidence that you have, that might hold me back. Because I'm the kind of person who needs to be pretty sure, but not leave it too late for it to become, you know, dangerous. [CR25, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

This information seeking could also include actively questioning and contesting the ideas and beliefs the person held in an attempt to change their mind or to deflect or divert them from the radical path they appeared to be on:

So you'll exhaust your personal friendship, you'll try and counsel, you'll sit down and talk to him, and then when you think that it's gone to a certain level then you'd, you know, you'll actually take it further or take it higher. [CR17, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

If Adam was a close friend I'd want to speak to him in the first instance. I'd like to think I'd try and counsel him and understand where he was coming from and trying to persuade him that it's not the best course of action, and try and undo some of the corrupt thinking that's entered his head. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

I think talking to her about the consequences of, first of all, getting her to open up about it [...] trying to explain to her the consequences of her actions, which is hard, not just in this situation, but just in relationships in general, trying to explain that she may have been manipulated. So she's only doing what she's doing for her boyfriend and questioning her own beliefs and whether she thinks that this is the right thing to do, whether she thinks her boyfriend is doing the right thing, whether she fully believes what he believes and if she's supporting him, does she truly support him, does she believe in that support that she's giving him, or is she just giving it for like I said before, because that someone that she's in a relationship with, for that sense of security. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Several Muslim respondents stressed that the course of violent extremist action outlined in the scenarios misrepresented the tenets of their religion, and argued they would want to also try to enter into theological discussion to persuade the intimate that they have misunderstood their religion:³³

First of all, I would try and talk to my son. About what's going through his head, and then secondly as a mother I would tell him our religion, it doesn't teach us that. [...] Then I would contact people who can get involved and who can help the young people.
[CR10, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

First, because I'm his friend, I'd keep it to myself, but I'd tell somebody who's got good knowledge on the religion that could help change his ideas away from being extremist. [CR21, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

There were some differing views on the likely outcome of this information-seeking venture. Whilst several respondents noted that they didn't think they would be able to change the mind of the intimate, they would nevertheless want to be better informed about what was taking place, hence the inquiry. However, another respondent's reluctance to share information with the authorities resulted from overconfidence in the friendship, which then became willingness to divulge 'everything' if the friendship did not meet her expectations at a later date:

I wouldn't share it yet – obviously I'll do my little investigation to see if she's mentioned it to anybody or she's talked or if her behaviour's like that around other people. But obviously I know Sophia because I know she'll confide in me. All she needs to know is I'm there for her. So eventually she will open up. I'd keep it to myself. I wouldn't share with my friends. The thing is obviously, like I said, me and her are close and I want her, obviously she confides in me in everything and she'll know that I'm there for her. One day she is going to confide in me because she knows she can trust me. And I won't share anything.
[CR27, Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Others spoke about needing to discover how deeply involved the intimate was in the group or to gauge the intensity to which the intimate held the radicalising belief. For some, whether the matter was reported appeared to be dependent on this information seeking and checking process.

Depending on his response, the actual response. If he's well involved in that group and gives that sort of argument too, saying that 'no, they're right' and everything, so then obviously I would report, after I've spoken to him and get some information out of him, and then report it. [CR12, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

For some such as the respondent above, the threshold for reporting a concern to the authorities remained high, based on their struggle to balance their need to feel fairly confident in their assessment before proceeding, on the one hand, with the potential consequences of not reporting their concerns in a timely way on the other.

³³The 'Adam' scenario dealt with someone who was a recent convert to a religious faith that became the source of grievances and a decision to conduct violent action. There was no specific faith group identified in the scenario itself.

Conflicts and dilemmas in the pre-reporting phase

The difficulty of establishing the right threshold for sharing a concern was a key issue which was explicitly raised or touched on by many respondents. This was a difficult issue of which the earlier information seeking is only one feature. Other features included anxieties about reporting 'false positives' for the individual intimate, and the burden this might create for authorities who would investigate only to find nothing of consequence:

I think maybe I'm getting a group of people into trouble when they don't deserve to be in trouble. It'd be that, it's that whole uncertainty about it, like I'm just not sure like what's going on. [CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

What would worry me most is just kind of jumping the gun and thinking oh, it's really important when it turns out that it's not that big of a deal or anything and wasting [authorities'] time, maybe. [CR19, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

For some respondents, the reporting threshold for going to the authorities involved crossing the line into active law-breaking or imminent violence:

Once I've satisfied myself that it's genuine, the threat is genuine, and potentially likely to be carried out, you know, I'd want to kind of involve people pretty much straight away. [CR15, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

I think the only time that I would consider reporting it is if, like you said, it got to a level where I thought, this guy's made his mind up, and I know him quite well and this isn't like him. [...] In a situation where I can't get anybody to try and help him, and I've used all my resources up, and if I've thought that he's genuinely going to do something I'd do it. Obviously to prevent him from carrying out or doing anything that he was going to do, because he's sort of like got his thoughts set on that. [CR18, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Maybe if I could speak to them, if they were to come, or maybe her brothers, or if, worst case scenario, I felt like it was something that's life threatening, maybe call the police, and keep it anonymous, so as like our friendship wouldn't be on the rocks. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I don't necessarily think I'd do that because obviously he's my close mate and I don't want to get him in trouble. So I'd just take him aside, talk to him and be like 'what you are doing is not right', you know, 'go home, think about it and come back to me and then tell me what you think'. If he doesn't listen to me, then I don't think I'd go to the authorities yet. Like that would be my last option. Like first of all I'd go to his family members, his mum and dad, tell them that, you know, 'Your son's doing this, I don't think it's right', you know, 'can you talk to him about it?' and all that. But obviously if he's still going to do it then I'd go to the authorities with it and tell them like, 'My close friend Adam is doing this and that', because I don't want anyone to get harmed. [CR16, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

For some of these respondents reporting the concern to the authorities is a last resort, undertaken only after they have exhausted all other avenues of action, including pursuing informal sources of help. Other respondents referred to wanting to rely upon some form of evidential proof in reaching a decision about sharing their concerns with authorities.

For me it would just be a matter of working out whether he's genuine about what he's planning to do and once I'm pretty satisfied that he does mean it, then it's at that point that I would go and approach his family, I'll raise it within my community and so forth. [...] Yeah, but if I had more proof that he was leaning towards doing something illegal, or supporting any extremist activities, then I'd go forward [immediately to the authorities]. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Whilst this did not entail a legal burden of proof threshold, it was not unusual for respondents to discuss the role of evidence when deciding whether and when to share their concerns with authorities. The status of an act being 'criminal' presents one clear dividing line in any justification, here the move from informal solutions in the community to shifting the issue to the authorities.

The threshold issue demonstrates one aspect of the challenging nature of reporting such concerns. Considering the gravity and implications of reporting for the person of concern is another:

So because my experience, not my personal experience, but me observing the news, the media and how things are handled in this country in terms of when things are reported to the authorities, or when a crime is committed, I wouldn't want to report anyone for what is seen as quite a large crime [...] because of how it would get handled afterwards, until I knew for definite that they were definitely involved. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Other information seeking-activities were more dependent on the content of the scenarios. Some respondents [CR25; CR11; CR03] said they would try and find more information about the political organisation itself featured in the Sophia scenario (including trying to attend meetings, etc.) before making a decision to report. Two others would talk to the two older men (in the Adam scenario) to garner more information on their intentions:

In terms of the brainwashing or whatever you want to call it, or training secretly that they may be undertaking to prepare themselves, then I may go talk to people who may know of the organisation. So whether it be friends or people in different networks that may have heard of this type of organisation [I'd try to] find out what it's about, which is, I suppose what you would do naturally anyway. And then maybe escalate it up to faith organisations that may be aware of what's going on. [CR25, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

For several others [CR29; CR27] this information seeking enterprise extended to being prepared to violate the privacy of the intimate by covertly investigating their online activities (this was most notable in relation to the Sophia scenario) through subterfuge:

I'd be looking for some clues. Well obviously she's on her Internet and every time I do, like it says on the scenario she's very secretive when she's around the computer. I might even ask her can I borrow her computer now and again, just to see, just to do my own investigation. [CR27, Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

A number of behaviours were identified as particularly concerning in the scenarios that would act as early warning signs and motivate respondents to consider reporting their concern. These included acting in a secretive manner; self-isolating and withdrawing from existing friendships; spending extended time online, and the partner in the Sophia scenario attending a training camp.

She's being really secretive, she's always around a computer, and I'm just picking behaviours up from her that don't seem to – according to the scenario – be naturally like her, so it just raises an alarm as to what's going on; something's definitely going on. [CR03, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

What would motivate me? The fact that she is so secretive and like after meeting her boyfriend, and with the political group that he's in, by this it seems like it's not a good influencing group. [CR29, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Because, you know, her behaviour, like when you go and see her she's not actually responding to what we're saying as well, and she's telling us that, you know, 'Can you just leave me? I'm busy', or she just turns her computer off as well when you walked in. So we can tell that there's something which is not right. [CR09, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Barriers to reporting

During this pre-reporting phase, a range of barriers and considerations were found to influence respondents' reluctance to come forward and share their concerns with authorities. These barriers involve several key themes including: harming the friendship or the welfare of the intimate; the reporter getting into trouble; and an insufficient knowledge about when to report and how to go about sharing a concern or suspicion.

Many respondents worried that reporting a concern would damage their friendship as well as the many possible negative implications that reporting might carry for the individual seen to be at risk:

My friendship with Sophia, my concern about her more than anything. [...] Obviously my concerns for Sophia would hold me back because I'd be like really worried about what it could do to her future. So I would hope that it would be dealt with sensitively. I wouldn't like to think that I'd put her future, her career, in danger because I've misread the situation. [CR11, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Some worried that sharing the information would lead the authorities to a punitive response and prosecution rather than diversion and rehabilitation. Almost always the impulse was to want to get help for those heading towards violent extremism, rather than seeing them punished. For one respondent, the perception that the criminal justice system would pursue 'joint enterprise' considerations was an added concern:

Obviously the friendship with Adam. [...] Knowing that he'll be getting in trouble as well, for getting the involvement in, because obviously when they prosecute they prosecute the whole group as some involvement in there, even though he [might be] innocent and groomed into that group, not knowing his past life and how they've actually groomed him. [CR12, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

The acute vulnerability of the persons at risk in the scenarios was a recurrent theme throughout respondents' navigation of decision-making about reporting. For one interviewee, maintaining the friendship (here, with the Sophia character in the scenario) was seen as critical in providing an alternative avenue of a support outside the boyfriend and radical group's influence. The impulse was not to risk closing down the friendship that reporting might entail, but to maintain the friendship as a potential route out of the group:

The fact that she is my friend and she might not be able to trust me again, and say if she doesn't have anybody else, doesn't want to speak to her family and only has this boyfriend that seems to be leading her onto the wrong path, then what can I do? [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Some respondents cited a concern that reporting would result in stigmatising the intimate or indeed further stigmatise a wider Muslim community already under pressure in relation to perceptions about Islam and violent extremism [CR01; CR30; CR25; CR15]:

I mean when you're associated with the police it's, well, it's negative isn't it? I don't think I'd want to. So that's why it'd take me something, like something really serious to get to that stage. [CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Friends and family falling under suspicion, the media getting hold of the story [...] and running with it in very negative ways and stigmatising the family. It's about protecting the community, about protecting Sophia, about protecting myself, about protecting their friends. I think because the Muslim communities are tarnished enough as it is. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

The potential negative reactions from family or from the wider community was a very common worry for respondents:

The other concern would be from my family or whoever, or relatives, [who might] say, 'Why are you concerned about this? Just leave it, you don't know anything about it', you know? Maybe they might stop me. [...] That's the real concern I would [have] with the family and that, you know. [CR09, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

As well as me being concerned about him, and him being stigmatised by the system and the authorities I'd be concerned about the community and the way they viewed me and saw me as somebody who's colluding with the authorities against a fellow citizen. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Other barriers to reporting included being seen as disloyal, betraying a confidence, or being labelled a 'rat' or a 'grass':

Adam might be annoyed with me. He might be angry or he might say, 'Why are you doing this?' or 'I've spoken to you secretly about what I'm going to do or what I'm thinking, and you shouldn't be telling anybody my business'. [CR14, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Grassing is a massive thing, right? Because obviously it shows that there's no loyalty, there's no trust, you can't rely on that person. So obviously [what people] normally say is 'snitchers get stitches'. [CR18, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

I don't want to be seen as a rat. So in some cases, it is, but there's so many things to consider. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Grassing is a massive thing, right? Because obviously it shows that there's no loyalty, there's no trust, you can't rely on that person. So obviously [what people] normally say is 'snitchers get stitches'. [CR18, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

A friend, somebody who other people no doubt will be aware of and be friendly with, and people might see me as someone who's betrayed that trust and gone to the authorities. People will be asking the question, 'Why didn't he come to us first? Why didn't he go to the community people first? Why didn't he speak to him first? Why have you gone straight to the authorities?' [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

The possibly concrete reality of a backlash following reporting is discussed further in the later 'Post-Reporting' section. Several other respondents raised the added difficulty of maintaining confidentiality if they were to report a concern in some close-knit Muslim communities, expressing anxieties about intra-community surveillance that provides currency for gossip and rumour:

If you live in an Asian area there's an awful lot of, how can I put it? It's not busy-bodyness, but... It's going to sound really bad, but they've nothing else to do, so it's keeping an eye, it's ultra-neighbourhood watch [...] Sometimes I think it's very intrusive. So it's the repercussions of local gossip, of anything out of the ordinary, other people seeing this would question that, and then obviously, that's why I'm saying her future [would be compromised within the community]. So you don't know who's watching, to be honest. [CR11, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

The concern that neighbours would notice anything unusual in the area and make this the subject of gossip added to concerns about police officers visiting the person of concern's address ('door-stepping'), even where officers might attend in plain clothes to be more discreet.

Another respondent worried that reporting would incur an uncertain longer-term impact on the intimate:

Well, from what I know about Prevent and things like that, the whole kind of game...it's like, say for example if a kid in school is identified as somebody and then they go on that watch list and then it's on their record for a very long time. So even if they've not done anything they could be being watched all their lives, and even getting jobs and things, or going on holiday or making a contribution to society becomes harder for them because of something that was picked up in school which probably was innocent. [CR25, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

A number of respondents had had previous negative contact with the police and consequently did not like the police as an organisation (CR18; CR20). Several other respondents mentioned the difficulty that some non-native English speakers have in some Muslim areas in reporting a concern due to the language barrier.

Moving toward reporting: Process considerations

When considering the decision to report, some respondents either expressed degrees of confusion about the process of reporting, or did not understand where or to whom they should speak [CR12; CR09; CR07; CR12; CR24; CR26; CR29; CR30]. Typical comments from respondents included:

That would be my main concern, knowing who to speak to actually.

[CR12, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

So I think I'd probably have to tell someone, but I don't know who I would go to.

[CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Well, when you say authorities it's like who is the authorities, where do I go? I wouldn't even know. I've never been like involved in stuff like that, so I wouldn't even know where to go or who to tell. Or I feel like there's like specific people you go to about things, like who do I tell about this? Who's actually going to take it seriously?

[CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Like I said, I wouldn't know who to kind of contact in situations like that because I've obviously never dealt with anything like that. [CR24, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Even when this information was known regards the suitable agency to approach it would still be a cause of apprehension and some confusion:

I think, yeah, because you hear all of this stuff on TV and news and things like that, so people are aware of the problem. You hear now and again it's happening everywhere, so I suppose there is like, like a certain number that you can get in touch if something like that does happen. I don't know what number, really. [...] I'd be worried because it's like, personally if it was me and if I were doing that it's something that I've never done before, so I don't know what the answers are going to be and what to do about it and how to approach people, or where to go about it. [CR26, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Several other respondents argued that there needed to be greater community awareness about reporting processes, with several suggesting more advertising to achieve this, whilst others wanted to see more directly engaged community education work being undertaken [CR07; CR29; CR28; CR27; CR26; CR11; CR14].

A further barrier to reporting raised by several respondents concerned the lack of trust amongst some community members towards the wider Prevent programme, with long-standing concerns about authorities 'spying' on the Muslim community that have been exacerbated by negative media coverage. As one respondent put it in an extended comment:

Because the communities are not hearing it. All they're hearing is the negative connotations of Prevent and agendas like that. They're hearing about the wrongful arrests, they're hearing about the wrongful identification, they're hearing about the terrorist houses, etc. around the clock. The main thing here is about trust. I think the communities are very mistrusting of the authorities and until that trust is built, until the relationships are built and communities further understand why information is collected, what happens to that information, what happens to the individuals and groups of people that are made aware to the authorities, that trust will never be built. I know people who vehemently support the Prevent agenda, people who work for the government and understand the agenda, and they've become more and more critical of the communities who are critical of the agenda. But the halfway point has to be if the Prevent agenda has good intentions and goodwill, that isn't being communicated or marketed to the communities. [...] The community haven't got full information about what the processes are, what the systems are, what the government's intentions are, and I think that leads to a lot of the distrust, and I wouldn't want to be part of that machine of distrust.

[CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Reporting

Motivations and rationales for reporting

This section analyses community respondents' motivations, feelings and preferences once they have decided to report their concerns about the 'intimate'. Amongst virtually all respondents there was a preference for a staged process of reporting using various avenues to informally share their concerns before taking the grave step of formally making a report to the police. For some respondents, this staged process would be protracted and only continued with reluctance. The data is discussed under a number of sub-headings, focussed around motivations, processes (including channels/conduits and modes), experiences/feelings and support needed or desired.

Respondents offered a number of distinct rationales and shared various motivations for their decision to report the intimate. These rationales and motivations very much echoed the findings from the earlier Australian study, including the primacy of respondents' **care and concern for the intimate**:

She is a friend and if that happened to any of my family, I wouldn't want that to happen to my family, so that's probably why I would try to help. [CR26, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

It's my responsibility to make sure that Adam is safe, and his family's safe away from all these violent things that are going on. [CR14, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

For Adam's safety, to safeguard him, to go further, nobody can stop me to go to the authorities. It's for his own benefits, to go further. [CR08, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

This focus on **care and concern** meant that respondents would report even when they recognised that doing so may well damage or even break their relationship with that person:

I probably will [report]. Because I would say to her 'I'm being cruel to be kind. I'll have to do something', but throughout I'll be honest. I'll tell her 'this is what I'm doing'. The thing is either way I'm going to lose her, so I might as well help her. [CR27, Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I would rather report it and find out that it's not true rather than leave it and find out that it is true and then I've lost my friend because he's decided to do something stupid. [CR32, young White female, West Yorkshire]

Obviously the health and safety of Adam would be put before me. I feel like especially if he was younger than me then I would think, you know, this child needs to be saved or needs help, and I would put him before myself just to, in order for him to get help and get that attention that maybe he needs. [CR17, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

One of the key enablers for respondents deciding to report was the calculation that the likelihood of damaging their friendship by getting their friend into trouble was outweighed by the risk of a greater future harm from occurring if they did not report their concerns.

I would rather him getting in trouble with the authorities rather than do something really, really big that would affect lots and lots of people. [CR14, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

But, once again, I'd rather tell them than have like everybody's lives at danger if, if it was that serious, and if it wasn't then I'd just apologise. I'd be like, 'Well, you've been acting up. What do you expect? You've been closing your laptop as soon as we all walk in, you don't want to go out when we all do, so what do you expect?' [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

If it is indeed something bigger well what if they're planning to, you know, do another terrorist attack on, I don't know, the buses or the trains or whatever, and then something happened? I would feel so guilty that I was, you know, that I knew, or possibly knew, and could've stopped it. So I think I would, I would rather report it and be wrong than not report it and my suspicions are proved right, because the consequences would be worse. [CR11, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

This **care and concern** motivation for reporting even extends to recognising that an ensuing criminal investigation, even one resulting in imprisonment, represents a preferable outcome for the intimate than the alternative of staying silent and their involvement in violence going forward:

At least she'd be saved, the family would have her, because I've heard some children... you see it on TV, don't you? They've all gone away, they've had, you know, the bombings, self-bombings... And they've passed away, so they've lost them now, haven't they?...if they were maybe just put away and taught them a lesson or something or whatever, then at least they'd have them back...At least they've, at least she's still alive. [CR09, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

It is important to note this care and concern for the intimate expressed by respondents was not at the expense of the concern they also had for other citizens who might be harmed by the actions of the intimate. Here, respondents offered moral and ethical rationales for the social duty to report and how this was the best course of action for all concerned:

My first response is, it's just wrong, isn't it? It goes against my own moral beliefs and any normal person's moral beliefs. So the right thing to do would be to tell the authorities, but I wouldn't do that initially as he's my friend. So I'd tell him that it's wrong and then I'd tell him that he needs help...It might be snitching but it's still the right thing to do. [CR21, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Let's say like he's gonna do it and I hadn't reported him or anything like that, it's just like the guilt and the remorse like, I know I'll wake up every morning and it'll chew away at me and break me down, you know, and the fact that I could've done something... It'd eat away at you 'cos you'll just constantly thinking about it, there's no escaping it and then to think of about the, the many others that've been affected, like the families and the friends and so on and so forth, like. [CR07, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

One way of reading the scenarios presented to community respondents is as a question, namely, what is the right thing to do given this set of events? It is perhaps then not surprising that personal morality featured in respondents' deliberations about reporting, generally taking a utilitarian form [CR15, CR11, CR02, CR07, CR10, CR29, CR28, CR14, CR18, CR21, CR12, CR20, CR08]. Within this focus on the moral responsibility to report is an overt utilitarian rationale around the 'greatest good of the greatest number' that outweighs any personal or communal loyalty the reporter might feel:

In the situation I would be helping them, and I wouldn't be thinking, oh Adam's my friend or so-and-so and no, no, no he's a Muslim and I've got to be with him and whatever he does is right. I wouldn't do that. [CR14, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

His safety and other people's safety because, you know, like you can see some unforeseen circumstances, you know? If you do this like a hundred people might get hurt, he might get hurt, and obviously Adam might be, he might go like to jail and all that, prison. So basically everyone's safety. [CR16, Young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

In a similar vein, having to live with the knowledge that they had suspected the person might harm others but failed to act in time served to prompt willingness to report:

For me the important thing from the very beginning would be not so much my allegiance to him. It would be kind of what impact his actions would have on people. Now if he was to carry out a bomb threat say, if people were to die, if I was not kind of, if I did not report that I would have to live with the conscience that, you know, I could have maybe prevented that from happening right at the source. So although he might be a friend and what have you, you know, at the end of the day, you know, he's made a choice about what he's going to do. [CR15, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Some respondents had painful personal experience of what extremist violence can lead to if it is not prevented:

When I think about this I think about something, and it is ISIS, you know, it makes me really angry that many people join that group. They go to my country and they kill my people [respondent becomes tearful], and my people, including my own brother, are fighting against them. Why would someone here go back to my country and kill my people there? [CR13, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Alongside these motivations was a clear rationale that **the police are the best placed people to act** before the intimate moves forward with their plans:

The police would have, or the government would have, more of informed knowledge on people who have extremist views and they can offer safety to those who they're going to attack or cause a threat to. [CR21, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

I'd alert the authorities really, because obviously they'd know best... My main priority would be to tell the authorities that would be able to deal with that sort of situation. Because somebody's going to get hurt. [CR32, young White female, West Yorkshire]

I would physically call the police, I'll call the police and I will inform them that I am concerned about somebody, and, you know, that person needs to be stopped. [CR36, Muslim male, London]

For many respondents, this recognition of the need to involve the police would follow initial attempts to either personally, or through family and community resources, **dissuade the intimate from their course of action**. Many respondents spoke about seeking support from another close friend, a family member (their own family or the family of the intimate), or a community leader to help them come to a decision about whether to report their concerns. Turning to a family member or a community leader [CR28; CR25; CR24; CR16; CR20; CR21; CR02; CR09; CR10] was the second most cited support seeking avenue (although not mutually exclusive from talking to the intimate). Who to approach in the family could depend on the quality of the relationship or how serious the incident was viewed:

I think I'd go to a family member. So maybe her mum. [...] Or maybe her siblings, because like sometimes people are like, if you go straight to the parents it's a bit too serious. But if you go to siblings, maybe you can kind of sort it out amongst yourselves first. [CR24, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

This strategy also reflected the cultural values and the relative importance of the family structure and the immediate community for some Muslim respondents, one which further distanced them from external institutions:

Adam is, in this context, is somebody that's close to me or close to thing, so in that sense I would try to handle this within our sphere of, you know, it's like, you know, like if you've got a matter that develops within your own home you wouldn't go, you know, you wouldn't necessarily, going to the police wouldn't be your first course of action. You try to handle it within the framework of your family structure. So in the same way I would look to try to handle this within the structure of say either his family or the close network of people that we might both know, like let's say the mosque or within our communities for that, you know, without kind of involving the outside thing. [CR15, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

The motivations to initially attempt to use intra-community resources before formal reporting are grounded in the individual and community experiences highlighted in the 'Barriers' element of the 'Pre-Reporting' section above:

The way I've been brought up is just when matters, internal matters occur we try to resolve them first within ourselves before seeking the outside help. I'm not, that's not to say, you know, the outside help, you know, everything can be resolved within that structure, you know? Sometimes you do need that outside help but I guess it might partly be to do with, maybe a bit, you know, the stigmatisation of, you know, this one person who comes from your community, your family, your close... So for that reason, you know, we would try to kind of resolve the situation amongst our wider network of people before kind of involving the authority. [CR15, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

You would first go to the family; you'd go to your friends before anyone else. You would just see what the problem is and why he's coming about that. [CR20, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Thresholds for reporting

Given the gravity of the act of formally reporting an 'intimate', some respondents were initially adamant that they would not report to the police:

I wouldn't go to the authorities. I don't think, I think they'd just straight, just put him into a circle and just, just to get him in trouble for it or something, yeah. That's how I feel anyway. [CR18, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

However, underpinning the motivation and rationale for reporting for all community respondents was their identification that **the 'threshold' of seriousness or concern had been crossed by the intimate:**

I'd like to think I'd know when it was more serious rather than just talk and bravado, and I think if it was genuine that he was intending something I would have to contact the authorities. I think if someone is so serious and they're that far gone, I don't know if I would have the influence to undo what, the path he's gone down... it looks like, in this scenario, Adam is quite advanced in his thinking and it's getting to a scary point where we need to put a stop to it. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

As a friend, I couldn't come forward and go to the authorities. But as soon as I think I did find something, some form of evidence, or something that was more alarming than what we have in this scenario, that then I would go to the authorities... If I found any evidence... I could see it happening, that's definitely something that, that I would alert the authorities about. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Given the reality, discussed above, that most respondents would first attempt directly or indirectly to dissuade the intimate from their apparent path, for many this threshold was where **the intimate refused to listen or clearly stopped engaging** with attempts at dissuasion:

If I spoke to Adam and explained that what he is doing is wrong, you know, if I explain everything and try to make him think that what he is doing is totally wrong... If he didn't listen then I would report him. [CR13, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

When he's reluctant in changing, when he just doesn't listen, just doesn't listen to what I'm saying and he just goes forth with it. [CR21, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

If she's like threatening about it or just completely puts her guard up and doesn't want to talk about it, then maybe I'd have to go as serious as in going, talking to the police. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

For most respondents, once that threshold had been reached, they would not be dissuaded from reporting:

I've got a really strong personality. And if I've got a concern ... it's a concern and I will raise it and I don't think there would be anything holding me back from raising my concerns. [CR03, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

However, the **identification of the threshold was far from straightforward** for a lot of respondents, with concerns expressed over how to judge the seriousness of a situation. Here, respondents were acutely aware of the ramifications for all concerned once a report is actually made:

I guess timing is more how you interpret it in a way, like... It's more personal and it's more based on an individual and how they interpret when's the right time to report this. [CR07, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

I suppose because there's no evidence at this moment in time, I can't see that she's actually done anything, apart from being secretive, I don't think there's, there's much else I can do at that point...if I physically saw or if I definitely knew that she was actually committing an act that was supporting this group and their beliefs and what they intend to do, if I had sort of hard evidence. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Processes of reporting

This section discusses respondents' feelings and understandings around the process of reporting concerns to authorities, including their preferences over the conduits/channels and modes of reporting. It presents both individual views and a summary of the respondents' scale responses, from 'most preferred' to 'least preferred', regarding the conduits and modes of reporting.

Community respondents clearly identified that reporting concerns about an intimate to the authorities would be a **staged process**, whereby they would only contact the police after first trying to positively influence and alter the apparent intent of the intimate, either directly or through utilising family or **trusted figures within the local community**:

So in the first instance I'd definitely speak to [Sophia] myself. And then possibly the parents, and then, if nothing's happened from there, then the police would be the last. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I'd go to the people I know first, maybe talk to the family priest or whoever who'd keep the confidential, go to these ladies here who I know, the social workers, to the ladies who work here. And then take their views, what is happening, they'd actually ask me that question as well, make sure first, a hundred per cent, if we're really sure about something, and then we report it, then they'd help me, wouldn't they? [CR09, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Whilst there was a clear and consistent response of using a staged process in reporting, there was also **significant uncertainty over how to actually report**:

I don't even know what the process is. [CR19, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I honestly don't know who, I think I'd have to do a bit of research to be honest. Because I don't really know who I'm supposed to approach regarding issues like this. So I'd definitely have to research into that. [CR24, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Conduits/ channels for reporting

Respondents explained their preferences around who they would first attempt to share their concerns with within the staged process by commenting on specific people and roles/agencies. Here, there was a strong focus on first utilising **family members, friends and trusted 'community leaders'**. Yet there were also strong views on which professional roles and agencies were preferred or not as sites of sharing concerns.

Sharing their concerns with family members of the intimate was a favoured approach for many respondents:

I think the first person I'd probably go to is, you know, either Adam's parents, or if I couldn't approach them, you know, another person who could be a person, you know, like an intermediary to, you know, so you could actually go to them.
[CR15, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

I'd go to family members, his family members... somebody that I can speak to in confidentiality with, trust, who would listen to what I've got to say, try and advise me.
[CR18, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Family knows you more than anyone, I guess, do you know what I mean? They know how you behave and they know when something's wrong. They could see that change, it's someone who's consistent in your life. [CR20, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

This stress on family included the desire of community respondents, especially young adults, to **take advice from their own family members or close friends** before they decided how to proceed with their concerns:

[My dad would] probably tell me how to deal with it, or if I should tell someone. So level of comfort... yeah I could easily speak to my dad. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I'm close to my mum, let's say, or my siblings or whoever, so in terms of support I'd obviously go to the person I'm closest to, I'd go to my best friends, my family.
[CR07, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

I would go to the people who I know, talk to them first...I wouldn't just report it.
[CR09, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

The idea of sharing concerns with mutual friends of the reporter and the intimate provoked more mixed responses. Some favoured this – 'I think first it would be a friend.' [CR14, Muslim female, West Yorkshire] – but others were more sceptical:

A friend? A friend I'd be comfortable with as well but it depends what they know about her, and it depends which friend because you sort of know what other friends think about other friends. I wouldn't go to one that didn't like her in the first place, but then I wouldn't want to go to one that was like completely like, I don't know, her best friend or something like that.
[CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

It depends how well-informed the [friend] is about the situation, about the politics, about something like this. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

In addition to friends, there was a significant focus on **'community leaders' as a conduit**:

Someone in the community who's like a community leader, just because their motive is to, you know, protect the community, definitely. [CR17, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I would probably give our community elders, you know, the mosque leaders the first chance of trying to resolve it. [CR15, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Because community leaders would be strong influences and he's got a tendency to have his views changed and he seeks advice from strongly influential people. [CR21, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

However, the existence and reality of the **'community leader' role was contested, particularly by some female respondents:**

[Community leaders?] I'm not bothered about them... Sometimes they're okay but sometimes you just think, I don't know. [CR14, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

To be honest I don't really know one, but if I were to know where he or she would be how comfortable would I feel? [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I wouldn't know who the community leader is to go to for support. Obviously if it's a male I won't feel comfortable. They're all male. You haven't got really a female role model though, have you, or a community leader? There isn't anybody that you can go to if you've got any problems, there isn't anybody. [CR27, Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

For some Muslim respondents, a 'community leader' was likely to be an Imam, partly because of the standing they have and partly because their religious authority may be helpful in assessing violent extremism:

My community leaders are generally like, you know, the imams or the mosque men or somebody that represents the community... They've all been sort of, like mine have all got qualifications in this country, they work in prisons, they've worked in hospitals, they work in schools. So they work in professional sort of settings, do you understand? So they've already got that understanding and they're on that level of how to speak to a young person. [CR18, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

If he's an imam he's religious isn't he, and he'd probably have a lot of knowledge about this stuff. [CR16, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Not all respondents, however, saw 'community leaders' as simply religious figures:

A community leader is, I don't know, just an ordinary person in the community who's got some sort of a leadership role and has a representative leadership role within an organisation or generally, who has influence over community matters. They could be a youth leader, a youth worker, could be a community leader from a community organisation, could be a mosque leader, could be an imam. Could be an individual, doesn't have to be associated with any groups, but somebody who's kind of an inspirational charismatic person who has, who when he or she speaks or has some sort of a strong closeness to people and people would listen to them if they had something good to say. [CR25, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

The potential role of state professional practitioners and their agencies in preventing violent extremism has been underlined by the 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which placed a legal duty on professionals such as teachers, lecturers and GPs to spot and report any signs of radicalisation amongst their clients. Respondents discussed **their likely willingness or otherwise to confide in education and health professionals** over concerns about extremist involvement. Given our research focus on young adults, the potential role of school, college and university staff was discussed and many younger respondents were positive about confiding in educationalists:

I'd definitely go to a teacher. [CR18, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

I'd ask for a teacher's help to ask who to report it to when I think the situation's gone a little too far and he's not, just not taking in what I'm saying. [CR21, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Speak to one of... my social policy lecturers. I feel very comfortable speaking to them. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

A minority of respondents were less sure about confiding in teachers:

A teacher?...I don't think they're equipped or well enough informed to deal with the situation. And also if it's a friend I don't think the teacher would talk to me about their behaviour or any behavioural changes in the classroom, unless I was a governor or some other way attached to the school. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Respondents were ***much less positive about confiding in their GP/doctor*** about a concern over violent extremism in someone they were close to:

My local GP? Would I talk to them about it? No, definitely not. (laughs) Because I feel like what have they got to do with this? I don't see the connection, that's all. But in my head as well I see the doctors as like physical problems, not even mental. Like I know people go for like other issues, but personally I'd only go for like, I've got this thing wrong with me. [CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

No, I wouldn't contact the GP. [CR10, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

A few respondents acknowledged that GPs could have a role to play:

If it's causing me distress and like, you know, stress and stuff, like sometimes you just go to the doctor's and then you tell them all your life story eventually. It just comes out doesn't it? [CR20, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

The other non-criminal justice agency that respondents were asked to consider the likelihood of sharing concerns with was local government – their local authority. This also provoked uncertainty from some respondents:

I'd just be completely confused with [the local council]. I'd feel like, I don't know, I don't think I'd be uncomfortable but I wouldn't know how to reach them. [CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

However, other respondents were ***more positive about the potential role of local authorities***, seeing them as part of the staged process of help-seeking before the last resort of the police:

[The local council authority] Maybe, they're on the same kind of level. You know?...To an ordinary person it probably seems like, I'm not going to a uniform first, I'm going to a non-uniform body. [CR25, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

It's less scary [reporting to a local council than to police]...because it doesn't have that like persona of like they're all going to lock you up. So it's not as daunting. So it would be more comfortable to approach them but I think that they would have less power in the solution, like in sorting it out, so. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Seven respondents stated they would benefit from having some pre-reporting support in the lead up to making a decision about sharing their concerns. These respondents spoke of turning to both informal sources and formal statutory services. In part this reflects earlier points to do with uncertainty about the current reporting procedures and practices, as well as the loneliness and burden of the imagined experience of reporting. For instance, several respondents wanted signposting to the best person to initially speak to by a duty holder [CR30; CR12].

Maybe a little group or something, you know, like that's from the authority. Go and speak to them and then they'll tell you what kind of next step to do. [CR12, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Before or, I guess I'd like, I don't know, like people that feel that they're in my situation, like is there something that would help you, to be like 'oh this is your best place to go to'. [...] And it's like who is out of them places the best person to go to? Because it's alright like saying I'm comfortable talking to a friend or my mum but it's like that's not, that might not get us very far with the helping my friend out. [CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Based on the preference for a staged process of reporting discussed above, any consideration of sharing their concerns with professionals such as teachers, GPs or local authority staff was seen by some respondents as a possible staging post before the much graver decision to **report formally to the police**:

Police? ...obviously it's going to be my last resort isn't it? And I don't think they're going to treat Adam fairly towards that. [CR16, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Here, **wider scepticism about the police and policing culture** influenced the views of a minority of respondents:

[On police/authorities] I think firstly, like I said, they might not be able to have the skills and be able to understand the situation. Secondly, because they haven't experienced it or gone through it they haven't been a victim of it... I mean sometimes, you know, the police have got targets and stuff, and it is a big problem, so for them to clamp down they could get Brownie points. [CR18, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

However, other respondents wanted to **immediately contact the police once they judged the 'threshold' to have been breached**:

My first one would be the police. [CR10, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I'd want to firstly go to the police...I think I'd be concerned and go to the police and see what they can do. [CR24, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I'd just go to the police in a confidential way. I wouldn't talk to anybody else. [CR08, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Here, community respondents had very **clear preferences for reporting to local police**:

Walk into the police station probably, like tell them everything that I know so far. [CR19, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I feel like it would be better to go to [police] locally because they would be more concerned because they live in that community or they work in that community and they will be focused on that community and the people within it, and they will be focused on Adam. [CR17, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

This **preference for local face-to-face reporting** emerged despite respondents seeing engagement with the police as somewhat daunting:

My local police station looks scary. I mean I don't even know like, what, do you just walk in? Like I don't know like how you would, I don't know what you'd do to go to a police station. Or like would I ring up [the police]? I don't know. [CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Never got in trouble with the authorities, so [going to police station to report] would be daunting, but if something had to be done it needs to be done, so I would do it. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

This preference for contacting local police was in contrast to contacting national counter-terrorism police or security and intelligence agencies such as MI5:

MI5? I wouldn't know what that is, MI5. Is that some sort of secret agents or something? No, I'd probably say that's the least really. Because, I don't know, that sounds scary. [CR26, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

MI5? No, definitely not. I wouldn't even know how to contact them. I think in the first instance it could go to the local police and if they deemed it necessary to go to the MI5 I think that's their job not mine, yeah. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

The **preference for talking to the local police rather than security/counter-terrorism specialists** also extended to a reluctance to contact Prevent for some respondents. As the preventative arm of counter-terrorism policy and operating in the pre-crime space, it is a moot point as to whether Prevent at the local level should welcome or be equipped to receive local expressions of concern about possible violent extremist activity or recruitment:

I know the police are there for crime prevention, I know where the police station is. I know you don't necessarily need to know who the Prevent officer is within the police station, they'll all deal with it as another crime. Well, I think it's the most direct organisation to go to in terms of dealing with criminal activity and criminal behaviour. I think it cuts out all the bureaucracy that's surrounded with Prevent that we don't necessarily understand. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Underpinning these preferences of community respondents for both a staged process of sharing concerns and local contact with reporting channels was a focus on the **desired attributes and skills of those receiving the report**:

I'd like to think it's someone who has like the attributes and skills, like knows how to lead, knows how to listen to the people, knows how to deal with the problems, can like pick out what needs to be sorted, what needs to be done, and does it. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

You've got to feel comfortable about who you're going to talk to, but I suppose depending on what authority means then you would, I would probably try and figure out somebody I know within the authorities that I could confide in, in raising an issue. [CR25, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

This desire obviously connects closely to the discussion above around the preference of some respondents to first share concerns with a 'community leader' but also the scepticism of others about the suitability or even the reality of the existence of such figures. For some respondents, this focus on the attributes of those receiving a report extended to the personal background of that figure, with the perception that someone of the same cultural background might understand this concern better and/or respond more helpfully:

So that's why I said either someone in authority that's been through this or that'll understand the situation, so somebody of the same background that's had similar experiences that could try to understand, okay. I mean there's no excuse for terrorism or anything like that, but I mean sometimes you've got to take a step back and think, what's going on in the community? [CR18, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Modes of reporting

Alongside questioning community respondents about their preferences over the processes and conduits/channels for sharing concerns and making reports, interviews also probed respondents' preferences for the mode of reporting (see also Table 3 below). This data highlighted **a clear preference for face to face reporting and a distrust of internet and social media methods of reporting**.

Table 3: Ranked Community Respondents' Preferred Mode of Reporting (%)

	Face to face	Phone	App on mobile phone	Secure website	Letter sent by post
Most preferred	79.2	10.4	4.2	4.2	0
Second most preferred	8.3	50	0	6.3	6.3
Third most preferred	2.1	12.5	10.4	31.3	18.8
Forth most preferred	8.3	10.4	20.8	25	14.6
Least preferred	0	8.3	37.5	10.4	29.2
Rejected as reporting mode	2.1	2.1	22.9	18.8	20.8
Missing data	0	6.3	4.2	4.2	10.4
Percentage Total	100	100	100	100	100

This **preference for face to face sharing of concerns** was shared by a large majority (more than four out of five for those respondents who answered this question) and mirrors the findings of the earlier Australian study:

It is just so much better to talk to somebody face-to-face. I'd be more comfortable. And open probably. Especially compared to a phone call. [CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I'd probably go for face-to-face because then I know who I'm actually talking to [CR32, young White female, West Yorkshire]

I just feel as though if I see them face-to-face I can give a more detailed account and be able to write down whatever it is that has happened and give a full report. [CR19, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

To a very significant extent, this preference for face to face reporting is about being able to gauge the reaction of the police officers receiving the information and assessing how seriously the report is being taken:

Yeah, I just think in general, just in terms of communication, talking to someone and, and being able to trust someone and you can also see their body language as well... if I am saying something and they may be concerned about me and they may, they may have suspicions about me, I might be able to see that through their body language.. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

I feel like when it's face-to-face you can kind of suss out where it's going, you can see by the, like not, more than tone of the voice, like their body language, their responses, what they're saying, what they're doing, and then even at the end of the conversation you'd be like, keep saying, 'Oh, okay, is something going to be done about this?' [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I prefer face-to-face. There's so much, like body language is so important when you're talking to someone and how they, like how they're actually like taking what you're saying on board. You can tell through things can't you? [CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

For some respondents, this preference for face-to-face reporting was to enable them to both explain their concern fully and to have the opportunity to ask questions about what might happen next:

If you're talking to someone face-to-face you'd probably feel more comfortable, you can ask more questions ... you'd probably have more time to, you know, talk to them. [CR32, young White female, West Yorkshire]

[With face to face reporting] at least then you know who you're talking to, you get more, like for example if you're taking face-to-face you'd probably feel more comfortable, you can ask more questions. [CR26, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

When you're face-to-face you're talking to somebody and if you don't understand you can ask again or they can change the question or word it differently and you understand more. [CR14, Muslim Female, West Yorkshire]

This preference for face to face reporting even extended to some respondents suggesting that they would take the opportunity to share their concerns if they physically encountered a police officer, such as on neighbourhood patrol:

If I saw them on the street I would tell them. [CR13, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Not everyone was comfortable with the idea of face to face reporting, partly because of their own lack of confidence or social awkwardness:

If it's face-to-face it's kind of more awkward and you won't give the full story because they've seen your face and then, you know, you might feel ashamed. [CR16, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

This meant that **some respondents favoured initial use of the telephone** (10.4% as a first choice) partly because of its perceived initial anonymity:

You can be a little bit anonymous and you don't have to be nervous about facing somebody and you can make the call from anywhere. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Some people aren't comfortable with talking to the police, so the hotline would be preferable for them. [CR32, young White female, West Yorkshire]

I would do a telephone hotline because, as long as they kept it like, if I got told that it'd be confidential and, because obviously you're ultimately getting advice from them, and I'm sure that they've managed or experienced many cases similar to it, so they'd probably be able to give you certain guidance of which way to go or what approaches to take. [CR18, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

This even extended to one respondent having used such a hotline number to report concerns about a member of her local community:

I think I just reported, I just went on Google, and I think I Googled something like, I honestly can't remember. It might've been something like 'security services' or 'reporting your concerns' or something, and I found a number and I phoned it in and I gave them the information, and it was actually his wife that had told me some information. [CR11, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Such views were outweighed, though, by **considerable scepticism about the use of the telephone to report concerns**, partly based on wider experiences of using telephone call centres for other aspects of life:

On a telephone you might just be like, whoever's on the other line would probably be... putting the phone down. [CR26, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I wouldn't use a telephone...because people, they just don't really know the answers and it'll just be a waste of my time and their time. So I'd rather go to somebody that knows what they're doing. They don't have the experience, they don't have a qualification, they're just reading off a screen. And anybody can do that. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Anyone could make a phone call and do it in a malicious way. [CR13, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

This doubt over phone use to report included specific **negativity about the role and purpose of the 'Anti-Terrorism Hotline'**:

It just doesn't seem like the right place to go to, a telephone hotline. [CR21, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

I wouldn't be averse to maybe getting some initial advice from the telephone hotline. So if it was a hotline for advice and information rather than just, as I said, dobbing people in and reporting people I think it might be good idea. I think for a hotline to be effective it would have to be marketed and advertised effectively, but I also think that, depending on how it's advertised and marketed, it can further stigmatise communities, because as soon as you get out there there's a hotline to report certain kinds of behaviour the wider community will think there's more of a problem than there actually is. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

For some, this doubt around the hotline was based on a belief that calling it would be the equivalent of phoning '999' when the reporter is not necessarily sure yet of the seriousness of their concern:

I'd be a bit worried because that would be connected to the authorities possibly. I don't know who they're connected to, the police or the, or MI5, and maybe it'd be just too much, you know? So there's very little difference between a hotline and MI5 or the police as I see it..., it may be something or nothing but they'd be acting like a sledgehammer to a small nut and it could ruin his life. [CR37, Muslim male, London]

Alongside this rejection of the telephone as a medium for reporting concerns were very considerable **doubts about the utility of the internet and social media** as a mode of reporting. The latter is perhaps surprising, given both its ubiquity in everyday life and the American research evidence that young people may favour this mode in reporting the potential extremist involvement of friends and acquaintances. However, the rejection of the internet and social media modes by our respondents was shared by Australian participants in the original study, and partly reflects the lack of effective interactivity shared by the telephone as well as concerns about digital traceability:

Normally people take ages to reply to their emails, even whether it's with work experience or if you need to sort things out. I just don't think I'd get the support or feedback as quick as I need it. So I'd do it, to give it a shot, but I just don't think it'd get anywhere. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

A secure website? Not really, no, because you'd be waiting for your answers. Obviously if it's serious you want to sort it out straight away. [CR27, Muslim Female, Greater Manchester]

Respondents' negativity about digital reporting modes also reflected, perhaps in part as a consequence of the revelations stemming from the Snowden leaks, **broader social concerns about the security and privacy of any internet and social media communications:**

I wouldn't trust that at all because an app, although it might be secure and all that sort of stuff, every single app might claim to be, but obviously people can always find ways to bypass that and find ways to get information or maybe steal information or ...hacking into it. [CR02, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

You can't trust them, these websites, can you? [CR16, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

I don't feel like you'd be able to trust and express your concern over social media. What if that person were to screenshot the information and send it to someone else? [CR17, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

This scepticism might reflect the marginally greater support we found in the data for a secure website than reporting through an app on a mobile phone. Nevertheless, such digital modes were also not seen as proportionate to the seriousness of the issue:

I feel as though the app itself would be something that concerned neighbours would use for like somebody knocking down dustbins or something, I don't think it would be anything serious. [CR19, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

In order to utilise an app you have to have it downloaded onto your phone. The likelihood of someone having a Prevent app downloaded into their phone in case they report somebody is a bit of a stretch. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

A policy focus on using the internet and social media to report also makes a lot of assumptions about the technological confidence and competence of the family members, especially parents and grandparents of 'intimates' at risk:

Mobile app? Not really, no. Me personally I wouldn't know how to use one. So I wouldn't know how to go about it. I'm not all that familiar with social media and things like that. [CR26, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Well, I don't use computers anyway. [CR09, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

As with the telephone, **a minority of respondents did see some utility in digital modes of reporting**, possibly as part of the staged process:

Accessible information on the Internet to allow me to report it. I think some people would want to be anonymous, so I think that option should be there.
[CR09, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Respondents very largely rejected the more traditional option of writing and posting a letter.

I don't trust letters. Yeah. Just because in the past...I once posted like these documents to some place and they were like 'no we never received them' so I just don't trust post now.
[CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I just find it very impersonal, even though it's something I would be writing. I don't think I'd want to put anything in writing, which sounds awful but I wouldn't...Also snail mail, you know? Why send something and then sit and wait for god knows how long.
[CR11, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Some respondents saw a possible role for letters, either as an initial anonymous report or as a last resort if other modes had failed to gain a response:

The only thing about letters is as much as I'd like to write a letter, so again you can anonymise things a little bit, if you need a response you need to give an address so it gives less anonymity. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

A letter? Yeah, I'd try it...it wouldn't be the first thing on my agenda. If I felt like nothing else was working and nobody else was replying then possibly, but it wouldn't be my first means. [CR29, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Experiences and feelings during reporting

This section discusses the experiences and feelings that community respondents felt they would go through during the process of reporting. Unsurprisingly, the emotions and feelings identified are mixed and even contradictory. Some emotions were negative, focussing on feelings of betrayal and guilt, anxiety and fear, and anger, whilst others were more positive and centred on relief, alongside pride and happiness that they had taken action and reported their concern.

Feelings of **betrayal and guilt** are inevitable in reporting someone close to you to the authorities, not matter what the focus of concern:

It would definitely make me feel guilty. [CR27, Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I may feel a bit guilty because of what that could, what could happen to her after that.
[CR19, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I'd feel guilt, because I'd feel like I've cheated him. [CR21, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Alongside this guilt came feelings of **anxiety and fear** about what the act of reporting could lead to all for all concerned, including the reporter:

I would be anxious and fearful, both...I don't know what the outcome's going to be and if her boyfriend finds out that, you know, I'm involved, if it comes back to me.
[CR26, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I would feel like there is a bit of concern for my safety, like have I done the right thing, is this going to, you know, turn out to be something, have I expressed my concern for something that's not even... [CR17, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Some of this anxiety and fear related to a concern that the report would further damage the intimate that they are concerned about:

I don't know what the implication of that may be, on the, on Sophia and people directly, directly involved with her. So that's a worry for me, about what my actions may have done to her. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Above all, anxiety and fear of reporters focussed on the personal **ramifications** for them in relation to the intimate, their family and the local community:

I would be kind of afraid...I lost the friendship, not too much but, you know, it's not nice to lose your friend. [CR13, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

It might sort of, might sort of have an impact on the way people look at me, or people think of me. [CR02, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

I guess I mentioned it before in terms of being labelled... one person's freedom fighter is another person's terrorist, it's all about like perception and, you know, you can't win everybody, you know, not everybody's gonna go, that was the right decision and so on and so forth...that sort of judgement I'm, I'm gonna expect that, I really am, I know I'm gonna expect that because I've lived with it so long. [CR07, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

For some respondents there is **anger** at the situation they are having to navigate:

I would feel also angry, someone twenty-four years, why would he think this way? I would be angry. [CR13, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Many respondents identified **a determination to report** despite the ramifications and fears discussed above:

I don't think anybody can hold me back. If I want to report it, I'll report it. Nobody can stop me...If I have to report it I'll report it. [CR08, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I don't think anything will hold me back, no. I'm worried that it may lead to violence that harms her and others around her. So if something like that was to happen I don't think I'd be able to live with it 'cos I'd feel as though I were in a position where I could've spoken, I could've prevented it. [CR03, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Underpinning this determination to report for some was a feeling of **responsibility to act**:

You do know that it's a responsibility, that you need to do something...I know that you need to do something and you'd go to somebody that could help and say 'yeah, this is right' or 'this is wrong' or 'yeah, we should be worrying and we need to take action', and you'd do that. [CR14, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

He was going down a wrong path and you stopped that. [CR07, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

In contrast to the negative feelings discussed above, many respondents expressed the view that reporting the intimate would lead to **feelings of relief**:

I think I'd feel relief that it's, well for one part that it's out of my hands, so there's somebody with more control, more experience to know what they're doing. [CR19, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

I think it'd make me feel like, it's a big thing, I'd feel as though it's a massive burden on my shoulders and [after reporting] I just think it'd make me feel relieved. A lot more comfortable that I know something's being done and action's gonna be taken. So, all good feelings. [CR03, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Well I'd be relieved, yeah, yeah. If it was, if the situation was that like I've saved a girl why not? Yes. If I've saved her and the family, at least she'll only be put away and she won't be, she won't have died or anything. [CR09, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Alongside this sense of relief following the act of reporting was happiness and even pride for some respondents:

You could say it's a good thing as well, if I'm looking at it not from a personal perspective, because if they do report that a friend raised concerns, then it might encourage more people to come forward to say look, this is the result of people who, of a person who had concerns about their friend and they weren't afraid to come forward, they have come forward. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

I'd feel happy as well, as I'm benefiting his safety and others. [CR21, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

It would also make me feel proud of myself that I'm being able to try and help someone. That I've actually tried to help someone, and if the outcome comes out really good then it's going to be - I'll be more pleased that I've actually helped someone. [CR26, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Support needed and desired during reporting

This section discusses the support community respondents felt that they would want and need during the difficult act of reporting their concerns about an intimate. Some of the support identified was about **how to report**, whilst other aspects focused on wanting to be **guided, protected, counselled and supported through the process**. The context of such needs is obviously the **unease and even trepidation** many would feel in actually approaching the police, as discussed above:

Police - they'd probably just make me feel more uneasy... It's just that whole stigma around it isn't it? Just police. Just saying the name, police, just makes me feel a bit ooh, police... [CR30, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Many community respondents identified the **need for personal support, reassurance and protection** as they reported:

Reassurance that I wouldn't be getting into trouble. [CR11, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

If they had a non-judgmental approach or they did help you and support you and they didn't, the fact that just because you're a Muslim and this is the situation, or just because you're black. [CR20, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I would need some sort of support in terms of understanding the journey of what's going to happen next and just getting to know what's going on really. [CR25, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

This desire for support meant that for many community respondents their preference for a staged process of sharing concerns discussed above would extend to wanting **support from family or community during the process of actually reporting**:

Well, I wouldn't go on my own, I'd have to have support from a higher person who is, you know, who would actually help me, you know?...I'd have to have somebody to do it for me. [CR09, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I think the accusation as a whole would make me really uncomfortable so I think I would need help and support hence the reason I'd speak to like someone in a senior position at a university that maybe knows a little bit more... [CR03, young Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

For some this suggested **a need to build reporting capacity within communities:**

A lot more awareness required in the community because I myself, if I was put into this position it would be very tough, so I think we need to be taught what to do in these occasions, how to react to it, because some people will make the wrong decisions, they'll just let it pass and keep quiet. [CR21, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

A government thing where they should be trained and knowing, telling us where to, how...Helping me go through the stages of reporting it and knowing how to do it. [CR12, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I think the community needs some more support in terms of advice and information about the processes and what to look out for beforehand. I think during the situation, so in the situation that Adam's been identified, it'd be very useful to have that ongoing support whilst you're dealing with a person...There's that presumption that the whole community needs to be experts in everything. That isn't what happens. So in a situation like this where Adam has become involved in a dubious area there's a presumption that the community will know about what to do, will be interested in what they do, and want to support him. The community generally speaking are getting on with their lives in terms of work, prayer, shopping, looking after their kids, whatever, and they're not necessarily involving themselves in this agenda. [CR28, Muslim Male, Greater Manchester]

The data presented and discussed in this section has highlighted a number of important findings around how community respondents would both approach reporting and how they would feel about it.

Key reporting findings

Respondents will report to the police once they believe that the 'threshold' of seriousness has been reached but virtually all would do so through a staged process that would involve seeking advice and guidance from family members, friends and trusted community figures and 'community leaders' before taking the significant step of approaching the authorities. Here, the overwhelming preference is for local reporting to the local, (rather than specialist) police and to do so through face to face means, with very considerable scepticisms about telephone, internet and social media-based means of reporting.

This suggests a number of 'Future considerations for policy and practice', which we discuss in greater depth in the 'Conclusion' section.

Post-Reporting

Much policy and public debate about community reporting of an intimate's extremist involvement focuses on whether or not community members *will* report. There is much less focus on *what happens after people do report*, both for those who share information and those identified as being of concern. Consequently, this 'post-reporting' phase is an under-examined yet important stage in the reporting process. Previous research³⁴ shows that if the authorities get the 'post-reporting' phase wrong in terms of the feelings and experiences of community reporters and those close to them, this will deter others from considering sharing their concerns.

This section considers what our community respondents said about this post-reporting phase – what their expectations were about the impacts of the broader community and society as well as on themselves, what they hoped and thought would happen next, and their views on issues such as being kept informed of subsequent developments and on confidentiality and anonymity for them. Underpinning all this were their views on how they would feel and what they would be likely to experience after the very difficult decision to formally report someone close to them.

Most respondents considered this phase of post-reporting an important element of their thinking about sharing concerns with authorities and had clear expectations

of what could and should happen after reporting, with those expectations involving being guided, supported and protected, and varying views around whether they would want to be kept informed.

This section will focus on the importance of the post-reporting phase, first by exploring perceptions of the likely collective impacts for reporting on the family, the wider community and even the broader society. Second, it will highlight the anticipated impacts on the individual doing the reporting. Finally, it will examine the hopes and expectations community respondents have about the communication, support and guidance they would want to receive after reporting.

³⁴Grossman, M. (2015) *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing information with authorities concerning violent extremist activity and involvement in foreign conflict*. Canberra: Countering Violent Extremism Subcommittee, Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee.

The collective impacts of reporting

Most respondents recognised the importance and the gravity of sharing concerns with authorities. However, Muslim community respondents in particular were concerned that reporting had particular consequences not only for the person coming forward, but also **collective impacts on his/her immediate family and close friends and the wider local community**. These consequences were overwhelmingly seen as negative in part because they opened the door for different types of backlash from a range of different groups, including the media, police and extremist groups.

The fear of backlash from extremist groups or individuals with whom the intimate at risk was involved led some respondents from both Muslim and White communities to feel anxious and nervous about what such extremists might do to them – in such cases respondents felt that total confidentiality or even anonymity in reporting was the best option available for them. This is clear from the following:

If it came back to the group, if somebody had got away with it and the group knew that, there was like somebody like myself reporting it obviously I'll be risking my family, myself, thinking that something might come back to me as well. So obviously that would be that fear of knowing, because as far as you're concerned you don't know how large that group is. It might be just based in a little thing, but the main, actual main thing might be somewhere else, and obviously if they find out who actually has reported it and the information has got out to them then obviously risking my family and myself, my children, for just reporting it. [CR12, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

I wouldn't want that information to get back into the hands of people in the community or such as this political group. I guess as somebody who lives in the community as well, any sort of, repercussions for me or my family or people that I know from this group that Conor's a part of because, say, if he is arrested and he's not around then that leaves us vulnerable, I guess. I guess even with confidentiality there's always the possibility that information can be leaked out. I'm aware of plenty of cases when, you know, certain information has got back to people and so on. [CR04, young White male, Greater Manchester]

There was also a clear **tension between fulfilling one's civic duties in reporting potential violent extremism and the negative impacts** this might have for both self and others. This is evident in the following observations:

I would be anxious and fearful, both, but like I said I don't know what the outcome's going to be and if her boyfriend finds out that, you know, that I'm involved, if it comes back to me. [CR36, Muslim male, London]

I imagine if it did come to court and I'd have to give evidence, you know, then Conor or co could easily find out that it was me, I think I would want to remain anonymous all the way through, basically. [CR04, young White male, Greater Manchester]

But if it was something so serious I would kind of be scared because I wouldn't want those people coming after me. But if you think about, if everybody had that kind of attitude of being scared or not doing, you wouldn't get all the positive movements or the things that have happened today. [CR29, Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Despite these intra-community concerns, some Muslim community respondents who served in leadership roles within their communities felt the need to challenge the perception that Muslims are reluctant in reporting because they wanted to protect their own communities from wider media and political backlash. For these respondents, it was important to lead by example as well as by statement through demonstrating behaviours aligned with active citizenship:

There's also, I fear, generalisations of a community not coming forward at a time because they're protecting one of their own, in inverted commas. And I don't want to be part of that reinforcement of negative stereotypes of a community. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester].

Following the 2017 terrorist incidents in London and Manchester, the question of Muslim community reporting of fellow community members featured even more prominently in public and political debate, with allegations that community members were not reporting what they knew. The data discussed above under 'Reporting' strongly challenges such claims, with the vast majority of community respondents willing to demonstrate 'active citizenship' and report even someone close to them about whose welfare they cared deeply.

In addition to demonstrating active citizenship for its own sake, many respondents were also mindful of the potential for social backlash against their wider community and the possible impacts on community relations between Muslim and non-Muslim communities if they failed to do so. This was especially so given perceptions in some quarters that acts of terror are not individual criminal acts but rather a collective community problem. This puts considerable stress on how the police handle a community report of violent extremism:

I think from the police's point of view they, you know, they have to make sure that it's kind of ideally reported in a way that doesn't kind of marginalise the community, you know, make, you know, [pause] it doesn't kind of create a, you know, tensions across the things, you know? Ideally, you know, it's reported in a kind of a non-judgemental way, you know, and in a way which is not going to kind of make people from other communities want to, you know, have more hatred or anything towards, you know, towards us. [CR15, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Partly because even if it is true and it is going to be dealt with, the stigma doesn't need to be [increased] amongst the communities or even in the media; it needs to be dealt with subtly and sensibly. [...] The issue is so loaded, you know? The stigma attached to it is so massive. Maybe it doesn't need to be but that's the way it's become now. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

In order to prevent or perhaps minimise this type of backlash, respondents felt that it was crucial that community members receive the **correct, appropriate up-to-date information on how and to whom to report**. As one respondent argued:

First and foremost, I need to make sure confidentiality is maintained, that there are no repercussions, there is no backlash on the people reporting, because that will then stop people from coming forward and reporting incidences. What is also important is information, advice and guidance, because a lot of people might not be aware of who to contact, how to contact these people. We've all got mobile phones, you know, and the vast majority of the mobile phones these days cost you nothing to make calls. [CR36, Muslim male, London]

The individual impacts of reporting

Because of the kinds of concerns expressed above, respondents wanted maximum confidentiality, and often anonymity, to prevent anyone outside of the authorities that they might have come forward:

The other type of support is keeping the anonymity. [CR25, young Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

Anonymity, that's important, yeah, especially if some serious stuff were going down. I don't want to be involved. I just don't want to be like connected to something. That scares me. [CR30, Muslim Female, West Yorkshire]

Anonymous and no one can know who's saying it. Very important. Because then no one knows it's me, no one can like say that I've done it, no one can, like, say names to me, call me a grass for telling people. [CR06, young White female, West Yorkshire]

Fear of retribution against themselves or their families was another concern raised by community respondents when thinking about sharing a concern with authorities. However, this was raised more of a consideration than a deciding factor in any decision to report.

If the other guys find out, if he knows where I live, if he knows my details and everything like that then I'll try and hold back a bit. [Because then I'll be] involved. I'd want to get involved to help her but not get directly involved with her boyfriend. [CR12, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

You know, going out, like you're on your own and somebody might, you know, if you talk to the authorities and like terrorism and things are, they just frighten you sometimes, you know? So you want to be safe when you go out. So when you've talked to somebody you feel a bit frightened, isn't it? [CR08, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Most community respondents were aware of the fact that withholding sensitive information regarding potential terrorist related cases could get them into legal difficulties, as both White and Muslim respondents confirmed:

That, the fact that it's not going to get stopped if I don't, it will just carry on and if someone gets hurt, and then there's, I think if, I think with the law if you know about terrorist activity you can get arrested for it as well... But then something happens and all of a sudden you're locked up as well (short laugh) because you knew about it. It's one of those, 'Well, I didn't actually think he was being serious.' [CR32, White female, West Yorkshire]

Yeah, criminal justice consequences, like what may happen if you don't go forward, for you, and how this situation could escalate if you don't go forward, I think people need to be informed on that. Yeah, those type of consequences. [CR01, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Community respondents felt that **recognition or acknowledgment by authorities** for their act of reporting an intimate would give them clear acknowledgement that they have **done their civic duty** in sharing concerns about their friends or family member/s. For some respondents, this reflected the desire for confirmation that they'd done something helpful or protective of others; as one respondent put it, to know that they'd done **'something positive and good, to make him change his mind'** [CR13, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]:

I don't want to just report something and then it go into the ether and I never know what's going on, and I'd like to know that I've done something good. [CR11, Muslim Female, West Yorkshire]

For most community respondents, however, the concern that those reporting could face backlash from their local community and/or the media, as well as possible criminal investigation because of their association with the 'intimate', helps to explain the very considerable focus on navigating 'thresholds' of seriousness and threshold dilemmas explored in the 'Reporting' section above:

On certain situations and I wouldn't necessarily feel comfortable putting myself in that situation unless there was an imminent need and there was an imminent danger lurking that we need to go down that route. [CR28, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Expectations following reporting

A relatively small minority of community respondents were not interested in being kept informed after a report:

Irrespective of the outcome, it could be good, it could be bad, I don't want any further information 'cos then I'd feel it would be a selfish decision, if something good happened out of it then I'd feel it would be a selfish decision. Like, oh yeah, I'm just an amazing person and this and that, it was 'cos of me only and, you know, I wouldn't want further information. [CR07, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

I don't care [about being kept informed], you know what I mean, I wouldn't care. I've done what I've done, I've told them what I have to tell them, I don't care. [CR05, young White male, West Yorkshire]

However, the majority of the respondents felt that **post-reporting communication from the authorities is a vital stage within the reporting process**, which may actually assure community members with concerns about an intimate that reporting them to the authorities will best serve the interest of their loved ones. Many respondents were adamant that reporting was critical to their own sense of wellbeing and engagement as an extension of their initial decision to come forward, as these representative comments suggest:

Before, during and after, [so that I can have the maximum amount of confidence] to report and to have Adam's interests at heart, to be able to understand what's happening at the time so that, you know, I can still assist Adam in another capacity, and afterwards so that I can again assist Adam after the process. [CR37, Muslim male, London].

I would just like to know the outcome and be kept informed. Just what is actually happening, the steps that would be taken and will or have been taken with Conor. I think it would just be for like sort of my own mental wellbeing and just for like, not closure but understanding of what is actually happening. [CR04, young White male, Greater Manchester]

Accordingly, a key theme present within the large majority of community respondent interviews is the idea of **information sharing as a two-way process** – this is clear from the following observation:

No, I'd rather be like that where I've give you the information and that, but, like still want them to be in touch to let me know what's going on. [CR3 1, White male, West Yorkshire]

Many community respondents felt that it is important that information shared with the authorities does not simply enter a black hole, with no idea for the reporter of what will happen next or what the ramifications for all concerned will be. To prevent this from happening, many community respondents felt the need to be kept informed:

I'd want to know what the end result is obviously. I can't just go there and be like 'okay my job is done and I'm going to go home'. I want to know everything that's going to happen to Adam. I want to know everything that's going to, you know, affect him, affect me, affect everyone around. [CR16, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

Being kept informed about what's happening afterwards – well, it'd be important because obviously I'd like to know what's happening, I'd like to know if he's been released, I'd like to know if he's gonna come back out and do it again or I'd like to know if he's gone to jail or wherever, been prosecuted and everyone's safe. [CR06, young White female, West Yorkshire]

A number of respondents recognised that this **two-way flow of information was difficult to achieve**, especially given protocols associated with confidentiality and also the potential that sharing sensitive information may have for compromising future investigations:

But then again half of the time, thing they're not going to let you know because it's private and confidentiality isn't it? They're just going to release the information that they want you to know. Well, I work in a school don't I, so I know, if there's a child protection issue or whatever they only tell us the relevant... they don't, they're not going to tell us anything else. [CR27, Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

In light of the complexities associated with policies, procedures and legislations, the following community respondent demonstrates the need for better information, transparency and education as part of a feedback loop associated with sharing sensitive information:

What's actually happening and what the procedures are and how far the information's got and if the group, if they got hold of the people and if they got punished and things like that. Actually the whole of the procedure, really, I would like to know. Because obviously knowing that you've done such a big thing as well, obviously I need to know what's happening, the outcome of it. [CR12, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

From this respondent's point of view, information which is shared with authorities such as the police or the local authority not only should be acted upon but a **regular feed-back loop should be established** so that that the person who is doing the reporting is kept informed at all stages. Community respondents felt that there were **four potential benefits for the community and also the authorities with establishing such a feedback loop**. First, they felt this would help with building trust and confident in the system. **Respondents argued that tackling extremism should be a partnership process** and that tackling violent extremism involves the importance of sharing information between the following: 'Communication should be between me, him and the authorities, so three like a chain and we would work together'. [CR19, Muslim female, Greater Manchester]

The importance of dialogue and greater communication between the police and Muslim communities to improve police-community relations more generally was also touched on by respondents:

My experience has been in terms of – it's not fully Prevent; it's that the society that we do live in, the British society, there is a perception that young Asians, young black people are vulnerable to stop and search in society. You know, they're treated as criminals. The perception is you're guilty before you're proved innocent rather than the other way round, and that is holding a lot of people from talking to the police. So it's really important that the training and support that the police receive allows them to work better with communities so that that perception is justified, whether it's stop and search, whether it's engagement that young black or Asian and Muslims have with the police. There needs to be better dialogue between the groups, better understanding, and again, you know, overall I think should be there's better race relations education in the UK. [CR28, Muslim male, Manchester]

Secondly, the feedback loop is crucial from a practical point of view. It is important to keep informed so that the person in question knows that they have **given the information to the correct agency or person**:

Yeah, absolutely it's important because say they take that information, how do I know that I've given it to the right body or the right people, if they don't tell me what they've done with that information. So before they actually take Adam away or speak to Adam or whatever they're going to do with Adam, I want to know what it is they're going to do. [CR02, young Muslim male, West Yorkshire]

Thirdly, feedback is crucial so that the person sharing the information will have an idea of the **treatment and welfare of the person being reported**, which was considered of paramount importance. This is another example of respondents' depth of feeling about the 'care and concern' of their intimate during the whole reporting process. For example, the following observations note how sharing information is predicated upon the hope that the authorities in question will demonstrate a **duty of care in helping the individual** in question, a view shared by many Muslim and White respondents:

It'd be very important. That's my friend, I want to know what's happening to him, whether he's being treated right or, and whether the incident is being looked into, whether other people are getting help as well, and it's, the incident's been sorted out, because I'm sure other people will have a friend like Adam who will be going through the same thing. So it'd be good if the issue gets stopped before it gets out of hand basically, so other people don't have to go through it. [CR21, young Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

I'd like to be kept in the loop of what's going on, like what's going on with my friend, what actions were being taken. Support for myself, I think I'd like more information about like terrorism and stuff like that so I know what to do maybe quicker. [CR32, White female, West Yorkshire]

However, other respondents from White communities were less concerned with feedback on the welfare of the individual and more concerned with feedback on the action taken against both the individual of concern and the extremist group their friend had become involved in:

I wouldn't want no support but I'd want information back if like, they've like arrested I'm or if 'e's going to court or stuff like that. [CR06, young White female, West Yorkshire]

I would like to know maybe what they plan on doing about the actual political group. I would want some sort of assurances that something is gonna be done about the group as a whole, and I think that would actually be part of a condition I would set in actually reporting and agreeing to go through the reporting process. [CR04, young White male, Greater Manchester]

Finally, the feedback loop provides a sense of **accountability that police and other authorities are acting proportionately and appropriately** in dealing with the concerns that community members bring forward. This was motivated, especially for Muslim respondents, by the fear that police or related authorities may be harsh or inappropriate in their responses:

Because they're reactionary. They don't understand the person, they just understand from a very technical point of view. So they wouldn't necessarily...it may be something or nothing but they'd be acting like a sledgehammer to a small nut and it could ruin his life. [CR37, Muslim male, London]

Speaking to his college or school or university, I don't know if I would be able to trust them to understand where he's coming from. Health authority, I don't see anyone over there who I could turn to. They'd just be reactionary and go straight for the jugular so there's nobody who I'd really be able to trust. [CR15, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

[I'd have] concerns that they wouldn't be able to de-radicalise him, that they would just lock him up, that would be a concern. [CR16, Muslim male, Greater Manchester]

The feedback loop also plays a wider role of **educating both the community and the broader society that tackling terrorism is a complex issue** that involves a partnership between a number of agencies and positive contributions by community members:

Currently my view is that it is the Muslim community that they're after, right? They need to have a better understanding and be able to identify potential criminals, whatever you want to call them, terrorists or whatever it is, using reliable information rather than 'yes we are a Muslim house and we've made an arrest because somebody has made a call'. They need to be able to do the background checks and have valid information before going ahead, but then if you don't act on the information and something does happen, then the authorities have a high risk stake as well. So it's really important that we educate the media to be able to portray and report sensitively and accurately rather than headline grabbing stories that looks good but it actually plays communities against communities. And that's not been helpful for Muslims. [CR36, Muslim male, London]

Several respondents spoke of more emotionally targeted forms of support, including some reassurance that reporting their concerns was indeed the best course of action, as well as those concerns being taken seriously and actioned:

Reassurance that what I'm going to say is going to be taken seriously, that I'm not going to be sort of ridiculed, as in 'oh', you know, 'you're over-reacting, it's just your mate stressing out over her uni work. What's up with you?' So I'd want, I would want the reassurance that it would be taken and investigated. [CR11, Muslim female, West Yorkshire]

Key post-reporting findings

What happens, and what should happen, after reporting is a very significant consideration for most community respondents. Many identified concerns about the negative, collective impacts of reporting, including the different forms of anticipated or experienced backlash against those concerned. The large majority (although not all) of community respondents want to be kept informed of developments after reporting to the police. They understand **reporting to be a two-way process, with a 'feedback loop'** that keeps them informed about what happened, the status of the investigation, and what will or might happen next. Such a feedback loop can have positive impacts on current and future community reporting because it builds trust, accountability and a genuine sense of collective partnerships in countering the harms of violent extremism.

Practitioner Perspectives on Community Reporting

For this project, we individually interviewed 18 professional practitioners involved in UK policy, community organisations and services, local authorities and policing agencies across the three field sites of the study (West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and London). The questions posed to professional practitioners corresponded in general to the key themes explored with community respondents. The table below summarises the range of organisation and agency types involved in professional practitioner interviews.

Table 4: Professional Practitioner Sample

Total number for category	Professional category	Gender (M/F/Other)	Project Region
6	Police Counter-Terrorism Units	1 F, 5 M	GM, WY, GML
2	Prevent Police	2 M	WY, GML
4	Local Authority Prevent Coordinators	2 F, 1 M	WY, GM
5	Community organisations and services (youth work, social cohesion, housing, community development)	1 F, 4 M	WY, GM
1	Unspecified professional practitioner (respondent request)	–	–
Total: 18			
WY = West Yorkshire; GM = Greater Manchester; GML = Greater Metropolitan London			

We sought state and community professionals' perceptions and understandings on topics including:

- The barriers and enablers for community reporting;
- How community members handled the reasoning, navigation and decision-making aspects of whether or not to share their concerns with authorities;
- To whom and how people might choose to report;
- Anticipated and actual impacts of coming forward;
- Support needs and existing support mechanisms for those who come forward;
- The scope and limitations involved in providing follow-up on reporting outcomes for those who share concerns or information with authorities.

We also gained rich data from professional practitioners – and especially from respondents in counter-terrorism policing and Prevent coordination roles – on concerns, dilemmas and suggestions for improvement related to the general operating environment in which efforts to encourage communities to share information with authorities take place. We begin with these views and suggestions because they provide useful overarching context for the key insights shared by professional practitioners across the board regarding specific aspects of community reporting processes and dynamics discussed in greater detail below.

The operating environment for community reporting

Professional practitioners (abbreviated hereafter as PPs) raised a number of contextual points concerning the general operating environment in which efforts to encourage and manage community reporting take place throughout the UK. These points generally fell into four categories:

1. The impact of the Prevent strategy on practitioners' operating environment and context
2. The relevance of working with cultural diversity in community engagement and reporting contexts
3. The impact of mainstream and social media on reporting dynamics, and
4. Communication issues and strategies.

Prevent

For those PPs who raised general issues around the role of Prevent in the context of community reporting, there was little consensus around the impact of the Prevent strategy on community willingness to come forward and the ease with which Prevent facilitates the sharing of concerns by intimates. Some PPs felt that Prevent had become such a 'toxic brand' [PP03, PP06] that conducting professional outreach on community reporting through the Prevent framework was now very challenging; as one PP put it: *'Because of that toxic brand labelled as Prevent, it's quite difficult'*. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

Other concerns included a perceived shift in what one PP termed 'ownership' of Prevent, one that moved away from empowering community efforts to address issues around violent extremism toward tighter government management and control with negative impacts for community buy-in:

I think a lot of it is to do with the way the Prevent agenda was handled. There was some community ownership given, I think, to begin with, and then that spiralled downward. I think those communities were capable of finding resolutions to their own problems until it got taken away from them and became more of a dictatorship. [PP14, West Yorkshire]

However, others felt that despite Prevent's generally poor reputation within communities, the strategy was badly underestimated. They argued for greater public-facing explanation of its achievements and successes in preventing the take-up of violent extremism, and stronger efforts by government policymakers to rehabilitate perceptions of Prevent's effectiveness. One PP called for more: *'pride in Prevent and what it actually is. But across the board that is the downfall of Prevent, negativity and a lack of a robust response to it'*. [PP09, London] Indeed, some PP respondents were quite bitter about the resistance to Prevent they perceived from some community organisations and legal practitioners, which they felt resulted in failed opportunities to encourage people to come forward early enough with information that might save someone at an early stage of radicalising to violence from arrest, prison or death.

Specifically, in terms of reporting and the Prevent Duty, PPs raised concerns about whether Prevent sufficiently educated and empowered front-line education, health and welfare practitioners to deal with the phenomenon of misguided or overzealous community reporting. These respondents argued that poorly targeted or malicious use of the Prevent Duty had a chilling effect for future willingness by intimates to share information reporting because of the adverse consequences it created for individuals, families and community groups more broadly. The comments of one PP on this issue are representative and offer keen insights into the dilemmas this can create for both community members and practitioners:

[People in communities and workplaces are] saying, 'Right, you told us to look out for this and look out for that and this person is exhibiting those behaviours'. One example was a lady who'd become more religious and started wearing very religious dress at work. The Prevent Officer's gone along and had a look and said, 'All she's done is get more religious, it's not for us'. He sat her down and said, 'You were referred to us but I can see that there's nothing in it. Thanks for your time'. The story was that she had to give her job up because of the stigma. [PP02, Greater Manchester]

These PPs also emphasised the importance of using discreet methods of assessing the validity and authenticity of information reported in order to minimise impacts on communities and avoid further alienating those who might come forward in future:

[As police] we need to be careful about what we demand. We need to accept that we can't go back down the chain [of the original report] to find out the root of the information. Otherwise, that [source] will close off. It's a massive ask. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Cultural diversity and community contexts

PPs identified a core element of their operating environment around community reporting as knowledge and understanding of cultural and religious diversity in all three of the study's field sites. In some of these locales, practitioners noted they were working with a very significant diversity of cultures and languages: *'There's a hundred and seventy-odd languages spoken in my area'* [PP03, West Yorkshire] – and they felt this created particular challenges (educational, cultural, financial, logistical) in terms of how messaging around community reporting processes could be successfully developed and implemented.

However, there was very broad agreement across the PP cohort that understanding and working with cultural and religious diversity and sensitivities was of crucial importance and can either encourage or (if done badly) inhibit timely and relevant community reporting:

If I go in ham-fisted [regarding cultural or religious awareness] at that job we'll probably still manage to get somewhere with it, but it's the next one. The next one [comes along] and somebody doesn't report it, and then that fourteen-year-old lad who's looking at ISIS videos goes on to be a nineteen-year old-lad who's got knives, and that's the thing that you try and stop. You're always looking down the line really, at what's the next thing. [PP02, Greater Manchester]

And they identified training and handover skills from more experienced to newer practitioners as an essential element in the sustainability of cultural awareness:

There's quite a few [staff] here now might have come to the job in a position of ignorance, but what helps is some of the Prevent leads know all this stuff and then they educate us, so we know too. [PP07, London]

Understanding cultural contexts was considered vital not only for creating more effective practice skills, but also for strengthening intelligence-led assessment of the nature and quality of information provided through community reporting:

Taking further detail [during a report] is always important, and that detail might include the cultural relevance of this. You get a job and it's a fourteen-year-old boy who says, 'The Taliban are alright', okay? Now if I said that that was a kid who's always lived in Manchester, spends a lot of time online and he thinks the Taliban are alright, you've got a higher degree of concern there. But if I say to you this was an Afghan kid who'd been in the country three weeks, having previously come as a refugee from a remote area of Afghanistan, it puts a totally different slant on it, because if that's where he's lived all of his life. Make no mistake, I'm not trying to say the Taliban are alright here [but it provides a different context for information assessment]. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

Mainstream and social media

The perceived impact of both mainstream and social media dynamics and influences on the operating environment for PPs was integral to their sense of the challenges faced in relation to community reporting. Most compelling for PPs who commented on media matters was the perceived hostility, stigma and imbalance of mainstream media reporting on issues relating to Muslim communities and terrorism. They were frustrated by what they saw as the failure of news media to take responsibility for the accuracy of and choices about reporting on terrorism issues, and particularly about the imbalance they observed when it came to reporting on jihadist versus far-right violent extremism. They felt such imbalanced reporting could dampen community willingness to come forward when most needed to detect or disrupt potential terrorist actions:

[Muslim communities] are absolutely right that there is unfairness in how things are reported. It's quite clear, you know, the right-wing trials might get a [bit of attention] but anything that's Daesh [Islamic State]-involved... The comparisons [in media handling of] a right-wing trial and an Islamist-inspired or influenced trial, it's significantly different. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

It's about facilitating the dialogue, but it's also about being clear on how the process [for dealing with this] is no different to what we do on some of our other safeguarding agendas. [PP15, Greater Manchester]

People are now more savvy with regards to the thirst the mainstream media have in order to sell newspapers, how things can get blown out of proportion, misrepresented, etc. People are fearful that their particular group - irrespective of which extremist sect you are looking at - will get clumped all together for the actions of one or a small number of people. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

PPs also noted the challenges of keeping up with the volatile influence of social media, which they saw as tilting heavily in favour of supporting violent extremist rhetoric rather than opposing it. While recognising that social media was a 'powerful tool' [PP03] to promote community education and awareness about the importance of reporting to authorities, some practitioners felt this was overwhelmed by the sheer volume and sophistication of social media products devoted to promoting violent extremist ideology and narratives. They also noted the limitations for an agile, audience-tailored social media response created by government agencies' needs to project a unified image and messaging strategy:

You look at the extremist rhetoric that's being promoted and it's really fancy, really attractive and it draws young people in. It's difficult for us to kind of match that because we're a quite stiff corporate organisation, and we're only really touching a small percentage of communities. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

Communication issues and strategies

However, practitioners also recognised that despite these limitations, stronger and more innovative communication strategies remained a key imperative. As one PP noted: 'As an organisation we do try our best, but we're not necessarily reaching all audiences. We've tried everything, putting things through doors, leafletting, but is that enough?' [PP03, West Yorkshire]

Whatever the communication strategies adopted, PPs were adamant that a central improvement needed would involve creating an operating environment for engagement between authorities and communities that was more transparent, more geared toward facilitating open dialogue on sensitive and difficult issues, and much clearer about both the nature, limitations and risks of community reporting processes. A key concern for PPs around the current operating environment for reporting was the risk of shutting dialogue and transparency down rather than contextualising community reporting as part of a continuum of safeguarding approaches:

I think we need to be open and transparent, and we need to talk about the [reporting] processes. We need to be confident, I think, as practitioners to have that conversation, not shut the conversation down. It's about facilitating the dialogue, but it's also about being clear on how the process [for dealing with this] is no different to what we do on some of our other safeguarding agendas. [PP15, Greater Manchester]

In doing so, however, PPs were also keenly aware of the need to 'make sure that we're not targeting a certain area, which just causes hostility and suspicion' [PP03, West Yorkshire], emphasising that 'the delivery and terminology are very, very, very important when you're talking to the different community groups, making sure it's collective and the language is reflective.' [PP01, Greater Manchester]

In this context, many PPs noted that more work was needed on communicating effectively about the spectrum of violent extremist threats faced within the UK and disabusing people of the idea that terrorism was a feature only of certain groups:

We've got to be really careful when we're talking about a target audience because we do get right-wing referrals. When we're out there presenting, I've had people [in local communities] say, 'Well, we don't have any Muslims in our area' and you're thinking, hang on a minute, we're missing the point here, you know? We were talking about terrorism. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

Practitioner perspectives on pre-reporting behaviours and actions

For community members, pre-reporting is the point at which people may voice private concerns (sometimes only to themselves) and/or start exploring the issue and thinking about the pros and cons of coming forward with worries about someone close to them without yet taking the next step of formally reporting to authorities. For professional practitioners, pre-reporting is the space in which issues around knowledge, preparedness and judgment in dealing with often incomplete or tentative information or concerns from family, friends and others are considered, assessed, managed and acted on. This section is in two parts: professional practitioners' perspectives on their own behaviours and actions in the pre-reporting space, and their perspectives on community behaviours and actions prior to making a decision on whether or not to come forward to authorities.

Practitioner perspectives on own pre-reporting behaviours and actions

As we saw above, PPs consider cultural awareness and the ability to tailor behaviours and actions when interacting with different cultural groups as essential to best practice approaches in encouraging community reporting. These include cultural awareness of specific practices and sensitivities relating to language and gender in particular.

Beyond this, however, the main theme to emerge from PP interviews on their own behaviours and practices in the pre-reporting space relates to two issues: 1. The importance of discretion and privacy in dealing with those who are considering reporting, and 2. The relevance of real-life scenarios in training frontline staff involved in aspects of delivering on the Prevent Duty.

Discretion and privacy in dealing with those considering whether or not to report

Practitioners noted that whatever the initial point of contact may be for people who explore the possibility of reporting to authorities, ensuring that family members, intimates or other members of the community feel both as comfortable and as protected as possible from unwanted or unwelcome scrutiny and attention when following up on a contact is essential.

Some of these issues are easy for practitioners to identify and manage: for example, driving to someone's house in an unmarked car and parking a few streets away, or meeting in an area outside that where the person who may report lives. Failing to observe the need for discretion and privacy can stifle or inhibit further contact with a potential referrer, and respondents suggested these lessons are now changing behaviours and approaches in pre- or early-reporting contexts:

Obviously the police have to act on any information they get, but sometimes the police turning up on somebody's doorstep without enough evidence wasn't the best way [to gain community cooperation]. Whereas now, if [community reports or concerns] are coming through us [as a local authority], we can vet the information, get further information and make the judgement on whether it does need action from police or whether we can do early intervention, unpick some of the concerns and work with the individual in that way. [PP06, West Yorkshire]

Other issues require more in-depth consideration of the risks and sensitivities that may be involved: for example, where language translation is required for a person to explore the possibility of reporting, it was important to source an interpreter who does not live in the same area or move within the same community networks to avoid potential community leaks or backlash.

Real-life reporting scenarios when training frontline workers

The second key theme relating to PP's own behaviour and actions in the pre-reporting space concerned approaches to training frontline staff involved in making referrals to Prevent or Channel coordinators. This was helpful as a reminder of the fact that not only intimates and other community members, but also those with responsibilities for making judgments under the Prevent Duty, are all potentially involved in reporting decisions and processes. Respondents talked about the shift toward using de-identified real-life cases, rather than hypothetical or theoretical examples, to develop expertise in when and how frontline staff with responsibilities under the Prevent Duty should respond:

When we deliver training to schools or other frontline staff we've started using real cases that we've worked on coming through the Channel process, and we ask them, 'What would you have done in this [real-life] scenario?' Question, don't just take for granted what somebody's saying. Research, ask somebody else, speak to somebody about it. It's about developing those skills, really. [PP06, West Yorkshire]

Practitioner perspectives on community pre-reporting behaviours and actions

As this practitioner goes on to note, the main concern revolves around developing better skills in critical, knowledge-based, non-stereotypical judgment and assessment of what is and isn't important in generating a referral. This was particularly so when it came to misguided or potentially harmful assumptions about the link between religion and violent extremism: *'Somebody who started going to a local snooker centre could be more at risk of being radicalised than attending a faith centre, so it's just raising awareness'*. [PP06, West Yorkshire]

When it comes to perceptions around what family and community members do in the pre-reporting space, there is a reasonable concordance between practitioners' and community respondents' understanding of this phase of the reporting process, as well as specific points raised by PPs on pre-reporting issues for communities.

Seeking further information on radicalisation to violent extremism

As did community members, PPs identified doing initial background research both online and offline as a common action by those considering reporting, largely to help confirm, contextualise or assuage their intuitive concerns about someone who may be radicalising to violence: *'I think generally you ask someone who you think's more knowledgeable on the matter than you are. We like to think we're covering those networks as best we can ... but I suppose if you're not affected by it you might not necessarily have [taken much notice]'*. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

'Known faces in known places'

However, what PPs saw as the most probable course of action – also according with data from community respondents – was the seeking of information, reassurance and help with decision-making from what one community practitioner pithily referred to as 'known faces in known places'. People within familiar, trusted and localised networks were seen by PPs as critical sources of influence and support in the pre-reporting phase who could move people either forward or away from the reporting continuum. Practitioners identified local service providers and community figures such as community leaders or elders, teachers, the local authority, local police and others with whom community members interact on a regular basis or are familiar with in their local area:

I think when you're talking about that next level of reporting, you know, the mother reporting, that's far more likely to come via personal engagement with a GP, teacher, local cop, that sort of thing. So we've concentrated on those professional people and key community contacts that can facilitate that on our behalf. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

If people in communities have got concerns, they can go along and speak to some of the hub members. The hub is made up of health professionals, ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour team) people, so it's a range of services. Police pop in. It's a real hub where people can go and ask questions, raise any concerns and get advice. These early help hubs are probably the first point [of contact] if we were looking at generic reporting or advice. And they act as a real triage. [It's about] known faces in known places, as we call them. [PP15, Greater Manchester]

However, PPs stressed that these background sources of guidance and support in the pre-reporting phase are organic and informal networks generated by practice and relationship building rather than policy or strategy:

So we do end up getting some reports that come [directly] from members of the community, but it's more people coming through those specific routes. There's not specifically community reporting. There's no specific community reporting process, though that's not to say that some community groups might not provide a route for that on an informal basis. [PP13, Greater Manchester]

Other PPs saw merit in developing stronger structures and messaging around pre-reporting networks through contact between neighbourhood police and communities:

[Encouraging early reporting] has to be regular, it has to be consistent and it has to be at grassroots level. It has to be delivered with our neighbourhood policing teams. Those people are already in the community, have already got the contacts, have already got the understanding of the specific local and cultural issues, whatever they may be. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Building capacity: lessons learned from other community reporting contexts

An intriguing element of PP thinking about the community pre-reporting space for violent extremism was what models and practices from non-terrorism related reporting contexts could offer. Some practitioners cited the changes witnessed by police and service providers around reporting domestic violence, for example, *‘that you would never have had maybe ten years ago’* [PP08, London], and greater awareness of safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable community members more generally:

That’s what we preach a lot on, that when it comes to any kind of safeguarding, whether it’s grooming or exploitation of any kind, young people or vulnerable adults, people with mental health needs, older people – that we all have a responsibility and duty of care to these people. [PP06, West Yorkshire]

Others referred to the normalisation of reporting in the area of hate crimes, where those communities that had long experience with prejudice and discrimination had developed both robust community reporting systems as well as the confidence to bring information forward because they believed it would be taken seriously and acted upon by authorities.

In this regard, however, a number of practitioners suggested that not all communities have the same confidence that reporting systems will demonstrate efficacy or be responsive to their concerns:

I think in the Muslim community we’ve said, ‘Oh, it don’t matter. What’s anyone going to do?’ Or people will say, ‘You don’t go and report it’ for this reason and that reason, ‘nothing ever happens’. [PP15, Greater Manchester]

However, the same respondent also felt that Muslim communities’ lack of confidence in the efficacy of reporting on hate crimes had started to change: *‘We have seen increasing reporting [about Islamophobia] over the last two years with organisations like MEND and others who work in that real network space and engage at a very grassroots level.’* [PP15, Greater Manchester]

Nevertheless, despite perceptions of recent shifts toward increased reporting on matters like Islamophobia, reporting on concerns relating to violent extremism can still pose significant ethical and practical challenges for various faith-based and community organisations. These challenges persist despite these organisations’ ability to handle information brought forward with cultural care, awareness and sensitivity, as this practitioner expands on:

Mosques don’t want to lose credibility within their own communities where they’re viewed as snitches [because] they’re the ones reporting. They don’t want to take on that responsibility because they feel they don’t have the support. There are structures within our own communities, but people are either afraid to use them or to be the sounding board for other people’s concerns. So what is the only avenue left? The police. But there’s a feeling that the police and authorities will do what they want to do [regardless of our willingness to contribute]. So really, us reporting, will it bring any resolution? Will it bring more harm to the Muslim community? There is already a lot of anti-Muslim sentiment in the community. [PP14, West Yorkshire]

Practitioner perspectives on thresholds for community reporting choices

Navigating the decision-making process for community members

Professional practitioners had great depth of understanding regarding the internal and social conflicts experienced by intimates such as family and close friends when it comes to navigating the decision-making landscape for reporting to authorities.

Reading the signs: lack of certainty and confidence for families

A critical issue for PPs was how well people understood the signs they were seeing, and – even when they did – how confident they were to take the next step of contacting someone with their concerns. Most PPs felt that, especially in the case of families, it was extraordinarily difficult for those close to someone who may be at risk to link a change in behaviour – especially for

adolescents and young adults – with receptiveness to or involvement with violent extremist ideology, particularly if the family was not familiar with early warning signs of radicalisation to violence:

I think [the family] just sensed a change of behaviour – perhaps not having dealt with this type of thing before they didn't really want to raise false alarms, and they didn't want to jeopardise a relationship with their son. Where's the line between just reading on the Internet and being naturally curious to going out and acting on that? You know, he was a young man who was recently married. [PP10, West Yorkshire]

Being unsure or unfamiliar with how to identify and filter the differences between harmless and harmful changes in people's behaviour and attitudes means friends and families can remain at a disadvantage in being able to read the signs and intervene, and early reporting or assistance-seeking suffers as a result:

The London bombers from Leeds, there must've been so many people who thought, God, he's got some views, him, but he won't do anything. Then off they go and do it. It's difficult to think, 'This might be the one and I've seen it, I am the person who can stop it.' Your average guy in the street probably just thinks, 'Oh, it'll go away', and that's a big blocker, that people just don't see the seriousness of [potential indicators for violent action]. [PP02, Greater Manchester]

[Having to distinguish between] 'Is that something you would report, or is that just community gossip?' is expecting an awful lot from the community. [PP08, Greater Metropolitan London]

Practitioners also noted that even where intimates are closer to believing that something is wrong, however, the decision to come forward can be agonising, particularly in terms of worrying about the multi-layered consequences of reporting, and this makes the identification of what 'crossing the line' might mean even more difficult to assess:

What is the point at which you feel, okay, this is becoming dangerous now and I need to report this? And would you do that to somebody that's close to you? I'm not sure if you're a parent that you'd know how to deal with that, or whether you would want to believe it. There was a case where I'd worked with the family quite closely, and they didn't know where the line was. [PP10, West Yorkshire]

They're torn. They're concerned about the ramifications of what they say, insomuch they want things to stop but they don't necessarily want to see somebody go to jail for a long period of time. Or if that person or family's identified as being of concern, I think people are more aware nowadays of the impact of Prevent. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

There are also the additional stigma and risks associated with being seen as a 'grass' or a 'snitch', involving yet more negotiation of implications and consequences by reporting decision-makers (and as confirmed by community respondent data):

They don't necessarily want to be involved because of the ramifications of getting caught up in the process and being exposed as a snitch, a snout, a grass, with the potential threat [this involves] to them personally, to their families, and potentially to their community. They think about the huge impact it could have, not only on them and their local community but the wider community, the north of England potentially. They get a bad name for breeding terrorists and extreme violent people. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Navigating the decision-making process for professional practitioners

In turning to how practitioners themselves navigate the decision-making process about whether or not to refer or report on concerns they may have, PPs with experience in law enforcement or Prevent coordination were sympathetic to the difficulties of making these judgments by inexperienced frontline personnel involved with the Prevent Duty, as they were for community

members more generally. However, they were also critical of what they saw as reluctance to jump the gun or draw on available expertise (and at times common sense) in how frontline services interpreted the signs that informed their decision to report on to Prevent or Channel authorities.

Reading the signs: lack of validation and crosschecking

The most prevalent concern for PPs in this context was failure to crosscheck the legitimacy and validity of concerns brought forward through local intermediaries such as schools or health services. While Prevent coordinators were careful to point out that they regularly ask frontline personnel to ‘get the full picture, not just a snippet of an information - where’s that information come from? What’s the source? How legitimate is it?’ [PP06, West Yorkshire],

There is often a failure to challenge or even discuss the issue with kids prior to completing the [Channel referral] forms. There is the example of a Muslim boy saying out loud at school that ‘lots of Muslim people were dying in Syria’, whereupon the school saw this as a red flag, creating the problem of false positives. [PP05, West Yorkshire]

Lack of confidence or being overwhelmed by the subject matter helped explain this gap in good practice for at least one frustrated practitioner:

They weren’t checking, they weren’t putting things into context, because they didn’t feel confident to do their own piece of work in order to put things into context. But it should be no different to doing this [in relation to violent extremism] if a fifteen-year-old is coming in and they smell of drink. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Others, however, felt that locally based frontline personnel needed a better understanding of their role in the reporting ‘supply chain’ and the importance of validating the accuracy of information received through various reporting channels:

You can’t expect people giving this information to know everything that we want. What you hope is that the person receiving the information is saying, ‘Look, you’ve given us information. We just need a little bit more, can I just talk to you about it?’ and getting the rest of the stuff. It’s making sure that they know that you value the information that they’re giving and you want to speak to them because you want to make sure that what they’re giving you is accurate, it’s up to date, it’s valid. [PP09, London]

PCSOs and frontline police officers and neighbourhood teams are the people that perhaps the police service need to work better and more regularly with to up the ante with regards to this specific message. It’s about making sure they’re geared up to what’s happening in the world, what’s relevant, and if they’re in doubt about anything at all just make sure that goes through the system to our office where you’ve got people with a bit more expertise. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Most compellingly, there was a view amongst PPs that the Prevent Duty needed to become better integrated within broader safeguarding policies and procedures

both to accelerate cross-harms understanding of when and how to refer and report, and also to reduce the stigma and anxiety of terrorism as opposed to other kinds of harm-prevention reporting duties. One professional offered detailed practical advice on how this might be achieved within school settings:

The key thing for the schools is, don’t write a separate policy for Prevent. Just put in a Prevent section within all the different elements of your safeguarding policy. If you think, this is beyond our understanding or our capability to put this into context and manage it, the ‘share’ is to come to the Prevent team and have the professional conversation as to what the school knows and, bearing in mind the safeguarding concern for the person, what’s the best form of action? [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Practitioner perspectives on community barriers to reporting

Practitioners commented extensively on a range of issues they saw as actual or potential barriers to community members coming forward to share information with authorities. Major themes to emerge from this portion of the practitioner data were *fear and uncertainty about reporting channels, processes and consequences; loss of control during the reporting process; fatigue and mistrust in relation to authorities; perceived cultural influences, and chilling conditions for dialogue and partnerships between practitioners and communities.*

Fear and uncertainty about reporting channels, processes and consequences

Police are the last port of call for community reporting

PPs focused overwhelmingly on what they saw as community fears relating to dealing with police – whether locally, through Prevent or through the national counter-terrorism hotline – when it comes to sharing concerns with authorities about someone close radicalising to violence:

I would imagine [reporting] would be the last thing people would want to do, because immediately they will equate raising a concern with [their report going to] terrorism police and terrorism police will then start the investigation. I would imagine that would cause quite a bit of blockage. [PP08, London]

Identical to the Australian study, there was broad consensus amongst practitioners that police would be a 'last port of call' [PP14, West Yorkshire] because police are rarely perceived by communities as playing a central safeguarding role:

People will not perceive the police as being the people who are going to adopt a safeguarding approach, who are actually going to try and help. [PP09, London]

They see the hard edge of policing, they don't equate it to just somebody coming along and wanting to have a chat just to clarify something. So we're turning up with people who have preconceived notions as to what may happen. [PP08, London]

And some practitioners acknowledged that police themselves were in some instances still grappling with the shift toward safeguarding and support rather than traditional detection and investigation approaches:

Realistically, it is very new to us as police officers to sit down and help people and say, 'How can we support you?' instead of, 'We want to nick you'. It's very new to us, and I think maybe the public are still trying to get their head around that as well. People are scared. [PP09, London]

Many practitioners felt that this created serious problems for early intervention and diversion options, with communities attempting first to resolve challenges themselves and only resorting to police when all other efforts have failed:

It's a shame, because what ends up happening in those instances is that they end up reporting it at the last minute after they've tried themselves, they've got family members to try, and as a last resort they tell us. At that point perhaps [the person at risk has] moved down the line six months and they've committed offences, and they end up getting locked up and going to prison for ten years. Whereas if [those reporting had] told us six months earlier it might have been in that pre-crime space that we can [initiate] safeguarding and help divert them away before they get there. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

When things are really, really wrong, that's when you ring the police as a last measure, but [first people try to] take ownership of their own problems and resolve them themselves. And in this current climate police are not the first port of call. PP10, West Yorkshire]

Fear of consequences for those being reported

The theme of exposing loved ones to harsh consequences, including arrest, imprisonment, damaged reputations and alienation of intimate relationships also preoccupied practitioners. PPs felt that the ‘anxiety’ [PP01, Greater Manchester] and lack of ‘assurances’ [PP03, West Yorkshire] from police about what the potential or likely outcomes of a report might be was a major barrier to coming forward; as one PP remarked:

You could make [reporting] the easiest thing in the world to do, that everyone has access to, but it's not the process that's the barrier, is it? It's the mental leap to say, 'I'm going to report this' [which invokes] all those concerns about getting the person into trouble, wrongly labelling them as a terrorist. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

However, other PPs thought the absence of any clear articulation by authorities of feedback or information about what happens during and after the reporting process did in fact create another layer of barriers to reporting:

So I think there's that blur around 'if I report something nothing's going to happen anyway, and I don't get no feedback'. Or else, 'What are they going to do? They don't do anything'. I think it is about that [lack of] confidence in communities [about the process] and also their understanding of the process. [PP15, Greater Manchester]

No one's going to report anything to you while they've got the anxiety of not knowing what happens to that report. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

Fear of consequences for the reporter, their families and their communities

PPs were generally highly empathetic with community fears and concerns relating to the spectre of reputational damage, unwanted media attention and shame (for oneself, one's family and one's community) as well as fear of backlash, isolation or ostracism by others in the community for those who are considering coming forward. This could include the impact of being associated with those identified as radicalising to violence – ‘The fear of being labelled as a family member or a loved one or an associate of a terrorist and the impact that has on the wider family and friends’ [PP03, West Yorkshire] – and also the wider ripple impact that reporting can have for others within family, social or community networks:

[There is] the impact that [reporting] has on even smaller siblings who are going to primary school, who potentially will end up getting bullied. There is the fear of going to work and people then sending you to Coventry, not talking to you, through no fault of your own. And being isolated by other family members not wanting to know [the person who's come forward]. So there's all sorts of ramifications, really. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

Practitioners thought that the fear of ‘dropping your own family in it’ could lead those with concerns to practice denialism or wishful thinking: ‘You know, [thinking] maybe it'll go away, maybe a bit of a naïve thought process – but what mum wants to report her own son if she thinks he's going to start getting convicted of offences?’ [PP02, Greater Manchester]

Community distrust of Prevent and the Safeguarding agenda

As we saw in the opening section on ‘Practice-related concerns’ above, many PPs focused on the ‘toxic’ nature of the Prevent ‘brand’ and the extent to which this was hampering their efforts to build community trust and confidence both in the Prevent duty and in police and local authorities more generally. Lack of trust in authorities for reporting purposes was directly linked by these respondents to mistrust of Prevent more generally including safeguarding initiatives, as these representative observations suggest:

Everybody's paranoid at the moment, and when you deliver [a programme] they're thinking, so whose agenda are we delivering on and who's watching us? Even if the mosques would like to help, how genuine and sincere is that partnership with the government or with other organisations? I think there's a feeling that Muslim institutions have been cornered. The government will do what the government will do, so, and I think there's a sense of fatigue in the Muslim community. [PP10, West Yorkshire]

People really don't trust us. They really don't trust us because there's so much misinformation and bad publicity out there [about Prevent] that we really don't counter. So getting that message out [about being here to help those with concerns] is incredibly difficult, because the people don't trust us. You can say it but people don't hear it. [PP02, Greater Manchester]

Although we promote [Prevent] as safeguarding and we say it is everybody's duty to safeguard and protect communities I think that buy-in is still not there, you know? We're not quite there with it yet, there's still suspicions. [PP07, London]

Chilling conditions for open dialogue and partnerships

Closely related to these concerns were statements by practitioners on the difficulties of facilitating open dialogue and partnerships between communities and authorities on the importance and processes involved in coming forward. From the vantage point of community organisation practitioners, the closing down of dialogue on violent extremism, in part due to the imbalanced sensationalism whipped up by media reporting, was having a notable chilling effect on willingness to share concerns or information:

Even the dialogue around extremism has been shut down a lot, so people are afraid to talk about extremism. So even if you were to suspect that perhaps your daughter or son's involved in something, you'd have a heavy concern that if you did go and report this, what would be the ramifications, not just for your child but for the family as a whole? What would you be labelled as? We've all seen what's happening in the media at the moment, so people are even afraid to have this dialogue or to approach anyone. [PP14, West Yorkshire]

Police practitioners agreed, citing devolution and 'detachment' from the neighbourhood policing model that informed earlier iterations of the Prevent strategy [PP10, London] in which police were more firmly embedded within community networks and consciousness, as well as community perceptions that Prevent was fundamentally opposed to Islam as a religion rather than to violent action on behalf of ideologies or beliefs across the political spectrum: 'They don't want to be seen to be associating with something that's this beast, something that's against Islam'. [PP09, London]

One consequence of this is to make practitioners: 'a bit wary about actually actively promoting Prevent publicly' [PP04, West Yorkshire], which in turn makes promoting dialogue and the use of Prevent strategies in safeguarding contexts more difficult to implement and manage when trying to encourage reporting by community members.

Social influence can inhibit willingness to report

Finally, PPs explored their perceptions of some of the social and cultural issues that might create barriers for intimates coming forward to share concerns with authorities. They cited concerns about 'grassing' – 'Reporting often is seen as grassing or backbiting in communities' [PP05, West Yorkshire] – and about fear of being involved or being seen as unable to solve their own problems as key influences that could inhibit timely reporting:

Partly there's a fear of getting involved and about repercussions within the community. And there's huge cultural barriers about the methods people can go about reporting in a safe way. Either it's because they want to remain anonymous or that they just think it's none of their business, let other people do it. [PP08, London]

You've also got a degree of fear in that you don't want to be seen as a grass, particularly in certain communities that have a tradition perhaps of dealing with things in-house and not bringing shame on yourself or on your community by making things public. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

Although [the risk of violent extremism is] real, [some] communities just want to sort things out for themselves. They don't want authorities coming in and sorting their problems and issues. [PP06, West Yorkshire]

However, other PPs identified problems with who is seen as a potential violent extremist and who isn't in the eyes of community members. This was brought home by practitioners who observed that when it comes to far-right violent extremism, potential violent actors were more likely to go unremarked as possible threats in the eyes of their local communities because they had been culturally normalised within British cultural discourse:

For example, you've got a concern about a neighbour because he's openly racist, he's got a swastika tattoo on his arm or something like that. People don't report it because traditionally that's just so-and-so who lives next door, he's just an old racist, you know? They don't report it because it's almost ingrained as part of the community. Everyone knows that he's a bit of a racist, a bit of a nutcase but nobody reports it because they don't look at the bigger picture; they don't think that this person could then become the next attacker. [PP09, London]

This suggests that as long as 'terrorism' and 'violent extremism' are framed as issues relating primarily to Muslim communities, under-reporting of right-wing threats by community members would continue to characterise the reporting landscape, inhibiting early intervention and safeguarding opportunities as well as detection and investigation down the line.

Practitioner suggestions for addressing community barriers to reporting

Practitioners made a number of suggestions for how to address or improve issues related to barriers for community reporting. These focused largely on making much better use of existing community networks, organisations and platforms to try to bypass the credibility issues besetting Prevent and police [PP07, London; PP06, West Yorkshire; PP14, West Yorkshire], and thinking about how to promote greater confidence, awareness and understanding amongst community leaders and groups to respond proactively to issues as (or before) they erupt into media and police consciousness. Critically, this also involved thinking about where and how to invest in local community initiatives around reporting so that they become sustainable and do not come and go within a short timeframe; as one practitioner said,

What messaging and what process can you put in place to make it strong, and once you've put in all that work and effort, how do you maintain it? Because funding some initiative for twelve months then that's it, as soon as you step away it'll weaken. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

The same practitioner also spoke about the importance of not merely bypassing but attempting to rehabilitate public confidence in government initiatives around preventing violent extremism, especially in relation to policing:

The main thing – and it's an ongoing quest – is confidence in the police service, first and foremost, as to what we do. The word 'service' suggests we are there to serve and protect the public. Protect and save life is our highest priority and it has been since Sir Robert Peel. But we've become somewhat militarised with the equipment that we've got and some of the functions that we have, such as riot control, and [people therefore] see us as a force as opposed to a service. We need to reinforce and pursue that [service] approach we have with the public [in order to regain] public confidence. Specifically, we need people to understand what Prevent is, and just as importantly what it isn't. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Practitioner perspectives on enhancing enablers for community reporting

Practitioners identified two key issues in relation to their understanding of why people might be willing to come forward to share concerns or information with authorities about those who may be radicalising to violence: 1. *Heightened awareness of risks and impacts of terrorism* and 2. *Care and concern for loved ones who may be radicalising to violence*.

However, they also had a range of suggestions and ideas about how to further enhance community willingness to report, in particular around 1. *Messaging on the importance of early reporting for effective safeguarding interventions* and 2. *Personalising and localising the reporting process*.

Heightened awareness of risks and impacts of terrorism

Some PPs spoke of increased willingness to report concerns, including ‘spikes in reports’ when major attacks occur ‘because these issues have become more prevalent’ [PP03, West Yorkshire] in public consciousness, especially when they hit close to home in local regions or neighbourhoods:

A lot of work that we do we uses anonymised real life case studies, and when we tell them that these are people that we know, that we’ve worked with, it makes it a little bit more real for them than just seeing a photograph on the television or in the newspaper. [PP06, West Yorkshire]

However, such reports are often driven by general community reporting that reflects cultural bias or stereotyping: “Oh, I saw two Muslim males walking down the street with a rucksack” [PP03, West Yorkshire], rather than information provided by intimates. For those close to someone radicalising to violence, however, PPs thought the trigger was most often: ‘when loved ones have fled [overseas]. Or parents have caught young people online looking at extremist right-wing stuff and become really concerned, and they’ve tried to tackle it at home [without success]’. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

Love and concern for those at risk

The willingness to come forward for these reasons is related directly to love and care for the person of concern. As one practitioner recalled,

I dealt with a family where it was the father who reported their loved one going off [to fight in Syria]. For him it was – he had no option. Straight away he contacted police because he knew that if he didn’t, then that loved one would have eventually gone off to Syria. Luckily, we stopped that and [the father is] eternally grateful for that. On the other side, I’ve had families who have reported a loved one that was potentially getting more involved in extreme right-wing activity, so they reported it out of love, because they wanted that stopped and they needed that support. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

Messaging considerations to enhance community reporting

However, practitioners also felt that much more could be done to enhance willingness to come forward by focusing on improved communication strategies on these issues. There was a broad sense that the key messaging around reporting needed to be ‘the earlier, the better’ in terms of promoting the safeguarding aspects of preventing violent extremism and reducing the risk of arrest, imprisonment and potential death for those at risk. Over and over, practitioners emphasised the importance of stressing safety, protection and early intervention as the core elements of the messaging strategy:

Remember: report early because then we can safeguard. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

The fact that we would deal with it in a common-sense safeguarding manner, certainly if it’s early enough and they’ve not already committed offences, would help. [PP02, Greater Manchester]

One practitioner broadened this further to the issue of safety not only for the person at risk and the community, but also for those doing the reporting, saying it was vital to develop messaging about reporting that would create trust and: ‘confidence that they can submit the information and it will not come back on them, ever. That could be one way we can get information from somebody who would otherwise be fearful of ever contacting us.’ [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Remember: report early because then we can safeguard. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

PPs also called for a communication strategy that involves lifting the curtain on reporting processes in order to demystify safeguarding approaches:

I think when you see behind the scenes, when you draw back the curtain and show the possible response to [a report], people will believe it and buy into that a lot more. People will be far more likely to make a referral once they've seen what people are going to do with it. This demystifies the [referral] process and I think that that's where we need to be at. I think it's only by seeing behind the curtain as to what goes on that they have that confidence that actually it might be worth doing this early and getting them some help and support. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

Other concerns with messaging related to getting the balance right between offering safety and support during the reporting process on the one hand, and being transparent and honest about the possible outcomes of the process on the other. As in the Australian study, PPs spoke of the challenges of getting this balance right. In terms of safety and support, practitioners thought the messaging needs to be:

'Anything that you say will be treated in confidence. But we will support and protect you'. You just want the communities to know, 'We're actually there to help you as much as we are to, we're not there to get you, we're there to help you.' [PP03, West Yorkshire]

People will lose confidence in the system if they can't get a good response when they have got up the courage to share something or say what their concern is. The call might not even be that important from the CT point of view, but the key here is that it is important for the caller, and we need to recognise and respond to that. This is all part of building trusting relationships with community members. [PP05, West Yorkshire]

On the other hand,

It's about having increased awareness and understanding of the ramifications of the reporting and we can't be dishonest about it, because if the reporting leads to serious offences they've got to be managed and if they've crossed the criminal line in a serious way they're going to jail, if we can prove the offence. It's a fact we can't get away from. But this means that a key message to create confidence in people in the world of Prevent is geared up to early reporting. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Personalising and localising the reporting process

Practitioners demonstrated keen awareness of the importance of personalised, face to face contact as a method of enhancing reporting confidence and comfort, and their comments reflected strong alignment with both UK community respondent reporting preferences and also with data from the Australian study. As PPs put it, the importance of being 'a friendly understanding face' [PP06, West Yorkshire] or a 'known and trusted face' [PP04, West Yorkshire] reinforces the understanding that reporting is most likely to occur in local contexts with 'known faces in known places'.

Instead of giving somebody the counter-terrorist hotline number if you've got information, actually going there and saying, 'Well, I'm so-and-so, I'm Scottish and bald, I've got a beard. You know who I am, I've got a face', I think it makes it that bit more intimate and easier to report stuff. [PP09, London]

[As a community practitioner I'd want to report in the context of] a relationship with someone, because these things can go terribly wrong. You wouldn't just walk into a police station and say, 'This is what I would like to report'. It has to be handled with sensitivity because there's a real conversation to be had around whose agenda this is. [PP10, West Yorkshire]

Practitioner perspectives on community reporting channels

Practitioners' comments above relating to localising and personalising the reporting process as a means of enhancing community reporting are borne out by their perceptions of how reporting channels function in terms of community reporting preferences.

Local reporting channels: community brokerage

A significant number of PPs referred to the relevance of what may be termed *community brokerage* in facilitating the transmission of concerns or information about someone radicalising to violence. Given the perception above that family and community members are less likely to go to the police at earlier stages of concern, community brokerage emerges as a key element in understanding and working with community perspectives on the ways in which reporting preferences and channels actually play out.

Community brokerage is a model of reporting transmission that allows those reporting to share concerns while retaining some sense of agency, trust and confidence in both the people and the informal processes they are using to bring their concerns forward, simultaneously 'keeping it within the community' while enabling information to be passed on from within the community to authorities at some degree of personal remove and through a staged process:

They may speak to a trusted member of the community rather than coming to the police. A trusted member could be an elder, it could be the coach of a football club, or somebody who's seen within that community as a person who can be trusted, somebody who knows things, seen as probably quite intelligent and has got maybe more exposure to the outside world than [the person reporting] would feel [they have]. [PP08, London]

There are some good unofficial routes, and I know that my colleagues have similar experiences on other [police] divisions. You know, where there are people who are trusted. They'll come through community leaders, or if there's somebody that they can trust who's working with the local authority. You don't get reports direct through a community and they are very unlikely to use official routes. So we get them through the back door. [PP02, Greater Manchester]

The next channel of reporting discussed by PPs is at the level of local services and authorities. These reporting channels were widely commented on as being the most common sources of reporting from practitioner points of view, albeit the greater proportion of these are likely to come in through 'professional bystander' reporting rather than through staged community reporting per se:

Speaking personally, I think a majority of our [Channel] referrals will come from education, schools, primary schools, and frontline workers in the social services or the local authority. [PP09, London]

[As police] we get the reports from partners. A little bit from the community but it is more from partner agencies, whether it be social care or through a local authority or through health. So although the police have a formal [role in receiving reports], there are different mechanisms. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

As part of the Prevent Duty now there are an awful lot of specified authorities such as education, the NHS. All those sorts of people are Prevent-trained, certainly in Greater Manchester, to make referrals into Channel. You would like to think people would be able to ask for advice from their local neighbourhood police officer or a local teacher at their kid's school. Or their GP or someone on the committee at the local mosque perhaps, who would've had more involvement with the Prevent team and know how to put referrals in. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

Some PPs within local authorities spoke positively about having Channel Officers embedded within their local Safeguarding Hub, which they saw as helpful in creating more meaningful and efficient flow-through and assessment of information that can come from diverse locally-based reporting channels. However, not all practitioners were as sanguine about the image of Channel in the eyes of those who may want to come forward, noting: 'When we talk to communities we don't mention

Channel because we recognise it comes with a loaded set of media [coverage] where Channel might not have been as great as it could have been or where it's been misrepresented in the media. ... What we say is just get it through to the local authority'. [PP15, Greater Manchester]

Concerns with reporting channel functionality

However, while community brokerage and local authority brokerage were seen as reasonably effective in general, some practitioners raised concerns about a number of aspects concerning the functionality of various reporting channels. As we have already seen, some practitioners have doubts about the efficiency of information flow-through when it comes to frontline personnel who are charged under the Prevent Duty with bringing information forward to authorities for further assessment and follow-up:

Sometimes [someone with a statutory Prevent Duty] is aware of the process [through previous Prevent training] but they perhaps wouldn't know what to do to refer somebody directly. They think, well my boss is the safeguarding lead. If I go and tell my boss that there's something going on at least I know it's gone in. So stuff does come through, but it's not the open door that you want it to be. It's stuff sneaking round the edges, a trickle-through. [PP02, Greater Manchester]

Others wanted to see greater standardising of processes for reporting concerns to combat 'different protocols in different boroughs' [PP09, London] and variations across different local government areas that can make reporting channels less timely or reliable. Yet others called for simplifying and streamlining reporting processes to help enhance community awareness and understanding of what the reporting process actually involves and to strengthen confidentiality:

I think [we should be] simplifying the process, with more information in communities on reporting and how they will be protected when reporting. [This includes] using established community groups or faith organisations [as points of contact] because a lot of people have a lot of trust in faith organisations and will access those. Then to streamline things it's easier just to pass everything onto the Channel Officer rather than everybody filling in various forms and keeping information. [It's a better assurance of] confidentiality at the end of the day as well. [PP06, West Yorkshire]

PPs also raised the challenge of measuring the effectiveness of various reporting channels and mechanisms given the importance of anonymity to many people when bringing information forward, suggesting that reporting channels can be opaque even to those receiving the information in various agencies: 'We don't know how many people use [particular channels] because we don't know how many people don't use them, is what I'm trying to get at. So we don't know the answer [as to how well they are working]'. [PP02, Greater Manchester]

Bringing the local and the national together

Ultimately, practitioners felt that the array of reporting channels available to community members for reporting on concerns about someone radicalising to violence was helpful. The key for many was the combination of broad national awareness through online or media campaigns about the importance of early reporting alongside local, accessible, face to face contact for those taking the first steps in coming forward to explore concerns:

You've got nationally marketed [reporting mechanisms] such as Crimestoppers, the anti-terrorism hotline, and obviously reporting via standard police systems like 101 or 999. You've also got the national campaigns which we all promote, such as the Prevent Tragedies, Syrian mothers, etc. There is a contact officer film that people can go to online. But I think possibly more likely is that face-to-face ask for some advice that ends up coming in. I'd say those two things hand in hand, really [PP01, Greater Manchester]

The bottom line is that even if somebody reports through an app or through the web, somebody's going to have to follow that up and have a conversation with them because, as with our children's safeguarding [processes], you'd never get all the information you need from [the online referral form]. It needs more discussion, 'Well, what do you mean by that?' and so on. [PP13, Greater Manchester]

Practitioner perspectives on community reporting modes

The mode of reporting generated lively discussion amongst PPs. While there was a strong emphasis above on the importance of face to face community and local services brokerage in enhancing the likelihood of community reporting, most comments on mode related to the ins and outs of telephone and web-based reporting mechanisms.

Face to face reporting modes

The key theme to emerge across PP views was the extent to which different reporting modes encouraged or inhibited community perceptions of trustworthiness, safety and confidence in the process. For this reason, face to face reporting was seen as highly desirable by some practitioners because it means those reporting are:

In a position to be able to ask some of the key questions that will help then the inquiry further down. It's all packaged in a safeguarding context, that this is a safe space, you can do this reporting here. And this takes out [concern about] the notion of a terrorist hotline altogether, it takes out the fear that you may have police arriving round at somebody's door or your own door because they want to ask you more questions, which is what [those reporting] don't want. [PP08, London]

The national Anti-Terrorism Hotline

On the subject of the national Anti-Terrorist Hotline (ATH), practitioner views were mixed but tended towards more negative assessments of its efficacy in the context of intimates reporting. Strong concerns were articulated by practitioners around the intimidating or traceable nature of the hotline and the likely chilling effect this would have on people's willingness to use the service, particularly at the critical point of facilitating early intervention:

The counter-terrorism hotline is anonymous but people are not confident that that's the case, because people know if you use your mobile phone then you leave a digital print. If anybody wanted to really know who's made that call it's possible. So if we want to encourage more people to be confident they can tell us something with it being totally anonymous, then electronic devices are a challenge. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Who would you rather report something to? The counter-terrorism hotline where you're thinking, 'My god', or instead, 'I know so-and-so from the police, I know that PCSO, actually I'm going to give them a call or email them.' [PP03, West Yorkshire]

When you give this counter-terrorist hotline number I think it's probably seen as this beast that perhaps people will be scared to phone. I mean people are scared to phone 999 at the best of times, let alone a number that says 'counter-terrorist hotline number'. [PP09, London]

Practitioners were much more supportive of working through **local reporting mechanisms that allow for staged responses to avoid unnecessary escalation** to a formal counter-terrorism response. This view was underwritten by the perspective that counter-terrorism and Prevent are two different strategies and that Prevent efforts require different tools for both communities and practitioners. As one practitioner observed, this can help enhance trust and confidence for callers without compromising safety or risk:

We advise people about our [local authority] hub number, which is a local number. It's a non-threatening option for a lot of people because it's a landline number and they know that it's going to be one of us at the end of the phone, so they can have an informal discussion with us before it goes any further. If there is an immediate threat, we advise people to ring the police. [PP06, West Yorkshire]

Other practitioners questioned whether complacency or misunderstanding about the role of the national counter-terrorism hotline undermined the early prevention work with which Prevent initiatives are centrally concerned:

I think there's an expectation that people will use the counter-terrorist hotline, but people will not equate [early or intuitive concerns or suspicions] to terrorism, so why would you contact the terrorist hotline? I think we're expecting a lot from communities and we're not giving them the right tools that they can use to do this: through safe contact places, through appropriate telephone lines that people can ring in to with concerns, through just understanding what it actually means to make a phone call or raise a concern. The stuff we're talking about around Prevent is not about stopping a terrorist attack. What we're trying to do is disrupt that journey at an earlier stage and we need people to have the confidence to do that at a much earlier stage. [PP08, London]

Police telephone reporting lines 999 and 101

Beyond the issues raised about the national counter-terrorism hotline, practitioners also had mixed views on the efficacy of reporting using crime reporting lines such as 999 and 101. While some practitioners said they felt that both 999 – ‘if it's urgent’ – and 101 ‘if it's non-urgent but people would still like the police to be aware of something’ – were the most likely ‘route if people are going to report’ [PP04, West Yorkshire], others felt that the variable quality of information and the absence of capacity to probe for further information or develop trusting relationships rendered these services problematic:

The information we get through can be pretty poor and not give a complete picture because [over the phone] we haven't had the opportunity to press the person giving the details for more information or for some kind of corroboration or further evidence as to what their concerns are. A lot of the time it will just be, 'This is my concern and that's it, that's all the information I wish to give'. Sometimes with the 101 operator as well, there will be limitations to what the information has been. And the 101 operator is more likely to be primed to deal with an ongoing criminal incident [rather than a preliminary or tentative reporting contact]. [PP08, London]

Whatever phone line was used for reporting, however, practitioners stressed that it must be available on a 24/7 basis; avoid using automated call routing to prevent the ‘leaky pipeline’ of people second-guessing their decision to report while they are waiting for an actual person to answer the phone, and should preferably be a Freephone number staffed by well-trained non-police personnel that facilitates streamlined community sharing of early, non-imminent concerns:

You've got Crimestoppers but you're not saying this is criminality, you've got the counter-terrorist hotline which is terrorism, but this is in a pre-criminal space, so I always thought there was a benefit in having a central hotline number [in the pre-crime, early intervention space] that wasn't CT, wasn't terrorism, wasn't criminality. [PP08, London]

Online and social media reporting

Online reporting was seen as relevant primarily for young people and with the potential to exclude those from different language backgrounds or levels of knowledge and confidence with digital technology. Some practitioners were wary of online reporting because they thought it would unnecessarily ‘complicate the issue’ of how to report; as one practitioner put it, ‘If somebody came up with a good idea I'd consider it, but I can't think of anything adding to the methods already there.’ [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Only one practitioner mentioned a potentially ‘big role’ [PP06, West Yorkshire] for social media apps aimed at young people and connected to reporting, situated within a broader array of app-based information and services related to keeping young people safe in relation to radicalisation to violent extremism.

Practitioner perspectives on support needs for those sharing concerns

The major theme to emerge from practitioner interviews on the question of support before, during and after reporting for those who come forward with information or concerns revolved around the absence of any identified formal support mechanisms either within or outside the Prevent framework.

Some practitioners spoke of ad-hoc support measures undertaken by individual Prevent Officers, depending on practice orientation, capacity and willingness to offer this:

I know the investigating officer and the family liaison [officer] would be quite supportive and making sure that there's no media attention and that it be kept confidential. So we would probably go [to the family involved] and [we'd ask], 'Are you okay? What support do you need? What agencies are involved with you at the moment?' It might be that we have to draw on our colleagues from different agencies because we've thought, 'Actually, mum needs support here really', and I will make a referral or [source] a contact and find out what support mum can [access]. Although there's nothing formal, it's something that we would do anyway. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

[In terms of support for those who have reported], it's more of an informal unstructured thing that we're talking about, not a formalised process; it would be down to the individuals and the relationship and the strength of the information. ... But it isn't part of a formal process, and it doesn't always happen. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Other PPs mentioned home visits to explain reporting processes [PP06, West Yorkshire] new training for Prevent contact offers to help deal with 'sensitive family issues' [PP04, West Yorkshire], and the development of already well-established family liaison officer roles with a 'specific edge on Prevent' [PP04, West Yorkshire] in terms of assessing the impact of reports and consequent investigations on families.

However, as some PP contributions suggested, the line between offering support to individuals or families who may be vulnerable as a consequence of coming forward, and offering support in aid of further intelligence-gathering as a technique for gaining trust and cooperation, can sometimes be murky. This occurs when genuine concern for the support needs of those who share information about intimates cannot be distinguished from strategic efforts to gather more information – for example, when families are given 'day and night' phone numbers on which to ring investigating officers not only if they need support but also to pass on intelligence about contact made with loved ones at risk or involved in violent extremist activity. As one PP said, 'The honest answer is I would try to get as much out of them as I possibly could'.

Validation and reassurance

Most PPs, however, felt that genuinely empathetic and reassuring support from investigating police was crucial and should be offered right 'from the outset' to those coming forward with concerns. This included both validating their coming forward regardless of the 'quality' of the report and also reassuring people that the response to their concerns would not be disproportionate:

People should be reassured that they are doing the right thing by reporting their concerns, and that they will be taken seriously, even when what they are reporting is 'rubbish', because it might not be rubbish the next time that they report. [PP05, West Yorkshire]

People should be reassured that they are doing the right thing by reporting their concerns, and that they will be taken seriously, even when what they are reporting is 'rubbish', because it might not be rubbish the next time that they report. So there is a need to build the relationship. It is about the right personality, and the need to show empathy. Officers need to 'chill out' and not to be thinking about the points to pressure in a statement or legal points to pursue, but rather to just chat with the person and to go slow. [PP05, West Yorkshire]

[You need] to reassure them that we are very grateful for the information, that they've done the right thing and we will act appropriately and in context with the situation, as opposed to smashing a door in because somebody's been looking at something on a video. [PP04, West Yorkshire]

Tailoring support for individual circumstances

They also pointed to the importance of tailoring support for specific circumstances, including being mindful of practical as well as emotional support relating to the need to protect those reporting from exposure to others in the community; for example: *'If it is a family member that is being reported then you may have to deal with [support in relation to] the house being searched, the street being closed'*. [PP05, West Yorkshire]. Other practitioners commented:

So the support might be different [depending on each individual] but [the political orientation] wouldn't make that much difference [i.e. whether they were reporting on jihadist, far-right or other violent extremist concerns]. The support would be tailor-made for that individual. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

Some PPs observed, however, that not everyone will welcome such support and that this depends heavily on the individual case or circumstances of the report:

If the subject engages with you and they [accept] a degree of support, e.g. they have the parent in, they get extra mental health support, you get them better accommodation and what they need to put their lives right, then great, they're going to think that it was a positive process. If, however, the subject tells you to sod off – in the end it's voluntary. So if they tell you to sod off and we're not [able to be] involved, it's going to be quite difficult to do too much with the person. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

Support means protecting those who come forward

Most of all, however, a critical element of support for many practitioners meant putting a premium on the protection and confidentiality of those who report. The professional obligation to provide support through 'protecting a source' was highly important to many practitioners, whether this meant protecting them from backlash and ostracism by other family or community members; protecting them from media attention and intrusion; protecting them from shame and exposure to neighbours, or protecting their relationships with the intimates on whom they were reporting. The commitment to manifesting support through protecting those who share information from various forms of social harm was a dominant and deeply held concern for many practitioners, as the following statements indicate:

If somebody comes to you and they want to report and they say, 'They cannot know it's me that's made this report', and there's no way we can disguise the fact – say it's someone's mum who knows he's keeping something in his bedroom, okay? Then we can't act upon that. We will not drop her in it. [PP02, Greater Manchester]

For instance, if it was a daughter reporting her father who was involved in extreme right-wing activity, we'd obviously have to consider her safety, because they're living within the same family home or the same dynamic or the same area as the person at risk. We'd have to make sure that the daughter was definitely protected. Sometimes we have to make that call in terms of the information that we get. We have to be quite sensitive as to how we can [avoid] identifying the source so there's kind of no leakage. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

Practitioner perspectives on actual and anticipated impacts of reporting

Impacts for those reporting

Continuing the theme of protecting those who report from various social harms related to coming forward with concerns about an intimate's involvement in violent extremism, most PP comments on the actual and anticipated impacts of reporting focused on similar issues. Practitioners recognised the potential trauma and vulnerability that can emerge as a consequence of reporting, particularly for people unused to contact with authorities:

It's really hard because if you've got somebody that's never had any contact with the police, then all of a sudden this happens, you know? Their world is absolutely turned upside down. I've seen families where they've suffered from mental health, sleep deprivation, exhaustion [in the aftermath of a terrorism investigation], and I wouldn't want anyone to go through that. [PPO3, West Yorkshire]

PPs also spoke of the importance of minimising reporting impacts through reducing, where possible, potential exposure of those who share information and also impacts on the broader community by behaving with tactical discretion and confidentiality:

We are very conscious of the impact of our actions as police. If we have to go and arrest somebody, it may just be one member of the family but when you've got masses of police in uniform, you've got the street closed off, you might have the helicopter in the sky, then the impact on that family, that street, that community, is massive. If we can get in, do what we need to do and get out without anybody realising the police have been in, that is the number one preferred option because it has less impact and it gives people more confidence that we are only doing what we have to do because we have no choice. Then that [police-community] barrier is more likely to have been broken down, because they can go out on the street that day and people are not saying, 'Why are the police at your house? Are you a terrorist?' which is a massive thing. [PPO4, West Yorkshire]

And they were highly aware of the negative impact on future reporting if people felt they had been unnecessarily or carelessly exposed as bringing concerns or information forward:

[There is the impact of] exposure if it came out that it was them who actually reported, the consequences and repercussions for themselves as well. You know, what are the safeguards for them? That not only stops that person from ever doing it again, but other people will think, oh no, I don't want to get involved in anything. [PPO6, West Yorkshire]

However, PPs also acknowledged that sometimes, the impacts of reporting cannot help but realise people's worst fears about the consequences for the loved ones on whom they are reporting:

We may have to arrest people. They may end up going to jail. But that may be necessary to stop somebody else getting hurt or somebody else travelling to a location where they'll end up ultimately dead. That's what we're there to do, to stop bad things happening. [PPO4, West Yorkshire]

Practitioner perspectives on community expectations post-reporting

Confidentiality versus transparency

The final section drawing on practitioner data involves their views on how to handle the issue of what family and community members expect in the aftermath of sharing information with authorities.

How do practitioners reconcile the need for protecting the confidentiality and integrity of investigation and case management processes on the one hand (which includes protecting these processes but also the confidentiality of people identified as being at risk) with the need to keep those who share information out of care and concern as informed as possible about reporting outcomes and consequences? This emerged as the major issue when PPs considered the issue of what communities expect in the aftermath of coming forward, and how they are best able to respond to these expectations.

Many practitioners indicated both understanding of and sympathy for the anxiety that can beset those who report on intimates, and the vulnerability they experience after they have ceded control of the information or concerns they have shared with authorities. PPs returned to the theme of respecting the implied social contract between those who report and those who receive reported information for both ethical and pragmatic reasons, even when this is done informally:

Personally, if somebody does tell me something and I know who they are I would endeavour – maybe not immediately but at some point – to say, ‘Thank you very much. We did take it on board, you might not see anything happening but please be aware that we do take your information seriously. You might think we’ve just ignored it; we haven’t, but there’s other things we have to consider’, to try to put things into context for them. [PPO4, West Yorkshire]

People do need to know [the outcomes of the reports they make]. Sometimes there’s nothing in it but we would then like to tell them why they were right to refer it anyway. We always say, ‘There’s no such thing as a wrong referral’, because there is always the next one. We don’t want the next one to not happen. So it might be, ‘We’re not going to take this any further but this is why’, and we’ll tell them what we can. Sometimes it might be, ‘You know what, we’ve had to get this person involved with an intervention provider to give them a new narrative, thank you very much.’ [PPO2, Greater Manchester]

Because if you don’t give them any feedback the likelihood is that they’ll think, well there’s no point in me reporting things because it doesn’t go anywhere anyway. So I think that communication needs to be there, whatever decisions get made, whether or not it goes any further. To give them that confidence, ‘Oh yeah, they’re alright, them, if I need to make another referral I’ll do it again’. Whereas if they were just ignored and don’t know what’s happened... [PPO6, West Yorkshire]

A number of practitioners also mentioned formal feedback mechanisms when Prevent and Channel personnel are involved in the reporting chain. These involved systems including case management mechanisms such as six-monthly case reviews designed to allow Prevent and Channel coordinators to provide those reporting with general updates on where things are at:

You tell them, ‘These are my details, I’ll keep you as informed as I can. If you think you want to know something ring me and if I can answer your question I will, but I promise I’ll get back to you’. We do get on to our investigators and ask, ‘Can we speak to our informant yet? Can we let them know what’s happening?’ There’s got a little box [within the case management system]: ‘Have you got back to the person who referred it and let them know?’ [PPO2, Greater Manchester]

There is a six-month review [following an initial referral to Prevent/Channel]. The referrer will then be invited in again to receive an update on where we’re at, for example ‘the case is closed’ or ‘this is the intervention that’s being provided. So they’re kept informed in that way. [PPO6, West Yorkshire]

However, PPs were also clear about the limitations that govern what they can and can’t share with those who have initially brought forward concerns. As PPs from different regions described the feedback process:

We wouldn’t go into any in-depth conversation about the intervention that somebody on the Channel programme has been given, or about an investigation, because that information’s confidential. But at least we would get back to the reporting person, and say thank you for allowing us to do our jobs and credit to you, you’re the reason that person’s been stopped, so we really, really appreciate that. But that’s about it. [PPO3, West Yorkshire]

Sometimes there might be good reason why we can’t tell people [about outcomes], and that is life. So [we could use] a general improvement in feeding back to people, but with a recognition that we might not always be able to do it, especially in our line of work. [PPO1, Greater Manchester]

These practitioners recognised that such constraints could prove highly frustrating for those who come forward and suggested there could be some improvement in how these limitations were handled: *‘The difficulty is people always want to know what exactly has gone on, and we can’t do that. Because you don’t give them the ins and outs, they’ll say, ‘Well, we never got to hear anything’, and actually maybe our responses could be a little bit more encouraging. But we can only give limited information and I know people get frustrated’*. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

Some who report on intimates: *‘are perfectly happy [with being contacted after sharing information]. We keep them as informed as we can’* [PP02, Greater Manchester]. However, several practitioners noted that not everyone who reports is interested in or even receptive to being kept up to date by authorities, particularly if they are feeling raw or remorseful about their role in relation to a reporting outcome such as arrest or imprisonment for an intimate. PPs also connected the likelihood of receiving information about reporting outcomes to the *mode* of reporting that people have chosen, noting that those who report anonymously to a hotline or online cannot be informed of the impacts or outcomes of their report unless they are *‘reading it in the paper, maybe’*. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

Improvements to the process of sharing reporting outcomes with those who come forward

However, police-based practitioners had several ideas for how they could improve responsiveness to community desires for reporting outcomes after coming forward. The most concrete of these was the suggestion that those who receive concerns or information shared by family and community members are explicit in asking people what their expectations about follow-up information and also support are, for example: ‘I want to be kept as informed as possible’, ‘I don’t want to be contacted again’, ‘I want confidentiality but I’m willing to stay involved as long as no one knows’, ‘I want support for the person I’m concerned about, I do/don’t need any support for myself’, and so on. Practitioners canvassing this approach felt there was room to improve the protocols used in Prevent, policing and local authority responses to information shared by families and community members by factoring these kinds of questions in to their recording systems.

Community Reporting Process Mapping: Community and Practitioner Understandings

In this section we offer a condensed flow-chart of how both community respondents and professional practitioners understand the processes and dynamics involved in community reporting. We have clustered the various ‘activity’ types and preferences of reporting processes and pathways for community respondents as *individual activity and interaction, networked activity and interaction, informal activity and interaction and formal activity and interaction* to help better identify some of the key relational dynamics that occur in reporting stages and pathways.

We can see from the community respondent process mapping below that *individual informal* activities are the most prevalent features of reporting pathways in the pre-reporting phase, whereas *networked informal* activities and interactions are most prevalent in the reporting phase, whilst *networked formal* activities become more important in the post-reporting phase. These accord closely with the staged process identified in the discussion of community reporting data above.

Correspondingly, professional practitioners had a similar understanding of how community reporting behaviours and actions develop and proceed with some variations, mostly involving the ‘back of house’ roles in reporting chains

and relationships between those under the Prevent Duty and the Prevent Strategy more broadly. Practitioners identified a similar movement from individual informal activities through to both networked informal and networked formal interactions, culminating (if warranted) in formal reporting activity either by community members or front-line professional practitioners and their organisations to Prevent Coordinators. Their understanding also reflects the forking pathways that different community respondents may take within the ‘networked interactions’ phase of sharing concerns about intimates with others.

Community respondent mapping of reporting processes

Pre-reporting

1. Conducts independent research/intelligence gathering online or through private conversations to learn more about specific groups or ideologies with which intimate appeared to be aligned (**individual, informal**)
2. Attempts to personally dissuade the intimate from course of violent action (**individual, informal**) and/or
3. Mobilises intimate-focused family and intra-community resources (peers/friends, parents and/or other relatives, religious or community leaders or influencers) to help dissuade the intimate (**networked, informal**)

Thresholds for reporting

1. Intimate refuses to listen or engage, respond to others’ interventions; attempts to dissuade are unsuccessful (**individual and/or networked, informal**)
2. Respondent believes can no longer cope with knowledge/concerns on own and seeks assistance/support from authorities (**FROM individual TO networked**)
3. Respondent assesses risk or harm to intimate and/or to others as imminent and/or severe and proceeds directly to authorities (**individual, informal**)

Reporting conduit preferences

- A. **Most likely 1:** A relative (own and/or the intimate's) *(individual, informal)*
- Most likely 2:** Friends of the reporter (but not mutual friends of both reporter and intimate) *(individual, informal)*
- Most likely 3:** tied preferences
- 3a.** A trusted community leader/figure *(networked, informal)* (but Muslim women less likely to turn to a community leader due to perceived lack of representativeness for women)
- 3b.** Local police *(networked, informal or formal)*
- B. **Somewhat likely 1:** Local authority/council *(networked, informal or formal)*
- Somewhat likely 2:** A teacher *(networked, informal)*
- Somewhat likely 3:** A community leader *(networked, informal)*
- C. **Least likely 1:** MI5 *(networked, formal)*
- Least likely 2:** Local GP *(networked, informal)*
- Least likely 3:** Telephone hotline *(individual, informal or formal)*

Reporting mode preferences

- Most preferred:** Face to face with local police, not counter-terrorism specialists *(networked, formal)*
- Somewhat preferred:** Specialist telephone hotline for advice and support, but NOT the Anti-Terrorism Hotline or 999 *(individual, informal or formal)*
- Least preferred:** Online and social media apps *(networked, formal)*

Post-reporting

1. Majority of respondents clearly want and expect to be **kept informed of reporting outcome and impacts** for intimate – this is seen as a form of support and validation through a feedback loop instigated by authorities *(networked, formal)*
2. Almost all respondents place a high premium on **confidentiality** by authorities relating to their reporting role *(individual, formal)*
3. **Validation, reassurance, respect, honesty and empathy** are the key modes of support behaviours most valued by respondents *(networked, informal, formal)*

Reporting pathways

1. **Local train reporting:** majority of respondents, especially with no imminent threat of violent action. This is a **local reporting pathway**. Main stops along this route include informal sharing of concerns with relatives (own and intimate's), trusted community leaders/figures, local authorities, teachers, then potential formal reporting to local police. *(Individual, networked, informal, formal)*



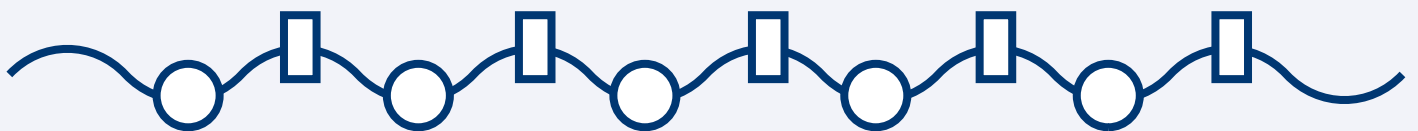
2. **Express train reporting:** minority of respondents, but especially where threat is deemed imminent or where high level of confidence in police efficacy to intervene exists. **This is likely to be a local pathway but in some instances may be a nationally supported pathway.** This route goes directly, possibly after an initial stop to seek family/ community guidance, to local police contacts. *(Individual, formal)*



Professional practitioner mapping of community reporting processes

1. Self-directed research on the internet and through trusted local information sources **(individual, informal)**
2. Networked interactions to address or resolve concern
 - a. Information, advice and support seeking from 'known faces in known places' (local authorities, social workers, schools, GPs, child welfare, community leaders) **(networked activity, informal), OR**
 - b. Share concerns indirectly through local community brokers or intermediaries **(networked activity, informal), OR**
 - c. Share concerns directly with local or national police channels, bypassing local networks **(reporting activity, formal)**
3. Information relay by Prevent Duty personnel and/or community intermediaries to local Prevent Coordinators **(networked activity, formal)**
4. Formal report to police by Prevent Coordinator if deemed warranting further investigation **(reporting activity, formal)**

3. Local bus reporting: minority of respondents, may get on and off the reporting pathway at various points. **This is a local reporting/pause in reporting pathway characterised by both boarding and disembarkation at various stages** depending on: perceptions that local social influence has succeeded in deterring intimate; doubts about validity of concerns; lack of clarity about to whom to report or share concerns; doubts or anxiety about consequences for intimate, self, family or community, and/or unease with accountability or trustworthiness of local processes for reporting. This pathway may still ultimately result in formal reporting but is less likely to do so compared to local train or express train reporting above. **(Individual, networked, informal, potentially formal)**



Conclusions and Future Considerations

Aims and objectives of the research

In this final section we identify learning points and conclusions identified from the data relating to each of our research aims and objectives. This enables us to focus on a number of areas for future consideration and direction in relation to effective policy and practice that can better encourage, enable and support community sharing of concerns around intimates to prevent them becoming involved in violent extremism.

The research aims and objectives for this study were as follows:

1. Identifying triggers, thresholds and barriers for when someone would consider reporting;
2. Understanding more from participants' perspectives about the experience and process of (considering) reporting on an individual or group who may be involved in, or actively supporting involvement in, overseas conflicts, or violent extremism (including far-right extremism);
3. Understanding the experiences and perspectives of professional practitioners – both those involved in the police and Prevent and those representing community organisations – around the current reality of community reporting and what approaches could encourage and facilitate greater community sharing of concerns and;
4. Developing from the data usable insights for government and community agencies in future community-focused policies, strategies and campaigns around facilitating and encouraging community reporting related to violent extremism.

With regards to **identifying the triggers, thresholds and barriers for when someone would consider reporting** a person 'intimate' to them, it is clear that each of the research scenarios raised authentic, troubling and serious concerns for all respondents. Here, considering what to do and whether to share their concerns with the authorities raised difficult, burdensome and often conflictual feelings and emotions for almost all respondents. One of the first responses to the scenarios often involved respondents' need to collect further information, usually through talking to the 'intimate' in an effort to determine the veracity of what they had learned and gauge how seriously involved

they were, or as an opportunity to challenge or reason with the views and beliefs they were espousing as a first step in deciding how to proceed. Here, community respondents were overwhelmingly motivated by care and concern for the welfare of the intimate, suggesting that this can act as both a push and pull factor towards or away from reporting.

One key issue for many respondents was deciding the threshold upon which they would raise the alarm and share their concerns with authorities. This often presented difficulties in thinking through the implications for community respondents, particularly in balancing the need for confidence that their concern was valid, whilst avoiding the potentially grave consequences brought about by failing to act. For some, this threshold remained high and involved a consideration of whether the actions under consideration were illegal (active law-breaking) or presented an imminent threat of violence. For others, however, earlier reporting was considered in an effort to seek help and support from authorities to stem further escalation or harm both by and for the intimate.

There were a number of barriers for community respondents as they considered reporting a concern to the authorities. These included concerns about harming the friendship with or the welfare of the intimate; the reporter getting 'into trouble' or somehow implicating themselves; and an insufficient knowledge about when to report and how to go about sharing a concern or suspicion. For all these reasons, many respondents said they would first want to seek advice on making a decision to report from a trusted close friend or relative. However, the utilitarian calculation of preventing potential greater harms to wider society by failing to act was a key consideration in preparing to report.

The overwhelming motivation for reporting by community respondents is care and concern for the 'intimate', even if the act damages the relationship/friendship, a key finding very much echoing findings from the earlier Australian study.

Our data and conclusions around **understanding more from participants' perspectives about the experience and process of (considering) reporting** covers two distinct stages. First, we explored the likely experiences, concerns and expectations for respondents as they made the significant step towards reporting to the police (or deciding not to), alongside the channels/conduits they would choose to use and their preferred modes of reporting. Following this grave step of formally reporting someone 'intimate' to them, what would their expectations be about what could and should happen next, and what impacts did they expect their act of reporting to have?

The overwhelming motivation for reporting by community respondents is care and concern for the 'intimate', even if the act damages the relationship/friendship, a key finding very much echoing findings from the earlier Australian study. Alongside this are strong moral and ethical rationales about a wider social/civic duty to report concerns around such a potentially serious issue.

For most respondents, the police are clearly the best placed people to deal with such situations. However, given the gravity of reporting someone close to them, virtually all respondents would first go through a *staged process* of attempting to personally dissuade the intimate and/or drawing on others close to them within their community to intervene before eventually, and often reluctantly, reporting to the police. The assistance sought from others within the family, friendship group and community took varied forms, including advice on what to do as well as bringing into play emotional aspects such as receiving reassurance that could mutually reinforce and validate the seriousness of the behaviour or intentions they were worried about. As part of this *staged process* of reporting, many community respondents would first draw on family members and/or close mutual friends, sometimes followed by trusted figures in the community ('community leaders'), to get further support, advice and guidance on how to proceed before reporting formally. However, the existence and reality of who is actually included in the category of 'community

leaders', and how genuinely representative they may be, is disputed by some respondents, particularly women.

Within the staged reporting process, threshold judgments are crucial, with respondents willing to report directly to the police once they judge that the situation has passed beyond a certain point of seriousness and/or tangible evidence. However, such threshold judgments are difficult in the making and often far from clear.

Community respondents were also asked whether they would consider sharing concerns with or drawing advice from professionals. Young adults expressed willingness to consider talking to teachers or lecturers, but all respondents were dubious about sharing concerns with GPs/Health staff, whom they saw as inappropriate or lacking subject matter knowledge about these issues. They were also uncertain about the practicalities of approaching local government.

In approaching the police (which virtually all respondents would be willing to do at some point, and which would be the first option for some), *an overwhelming majority of respondents wanted to report to their local police, not counter-terrorism specialists.* Alongside this, *an overwhelming majority of community respondents also wanted to report to the local police through face-to-face means*, so they could judge the reactions of those receiving the report before proceeding further or deciding not to continue with their reporting. The chief reasons for face to face reporting were respondents wanting to assess how seriously their concerns were being taken and actioned, and wanting to have the opportunity for questions about implications (for the reporter, the intimate and others) and what might happen next.

Reflecting this *clear and strong preference for face-to-face reporting*, telephone modes of reporting, including the national Anti-Terrorism Hotline, were largely seen as unhelpful or inappropriate for something not defined as an emergency, whilst the security and confidentiality of the internet and social media modes were often not trusted or seen as insufficiently interactive.

What happens, and what should happen, after reporting is a very significant consideration for most community respondents.

Despite this overwhelming willingness to report an 'intimate' to the police, if the situation appeared to be serious enough, many respondents would feel guilty about reporting. It was often seen as a betrayal of someone close to them, even though respondents are clear that reporting would be for the intimate's own good, a decidedly preferable outcome for someone they care about than turning a blind eye and not reporting. They would also be anxious and fearful at the possible ramifications of reporting for the reporter themselves, the intimate, the families of both the reporters and the intimate, and their wider local community because of concerns about stigma and shame. However, many respondents said they would also feel relief that their concerns had been shared, alongside pride at doing the 'right thing' by reporting to the police.

Much of the public discourse about community reporting focuses on the lack of community reporting of extremism involvement and how to encourage greater reporting. There is much less consideration of what happens for all concerned after a report is made, particularly about an 'intimate'—what do those reporting experience, what do they hope for and need? What happens, and what should happen, after reporting is a very significant consideration for most community respondents.

This preference suggests a partnership approach to community reporting that treats and supports community reporters as equal partners, not as one-off informants.

Many identified concerns about the negative, collective impacts of reporting, including the different forms of anticipated or experienced 'backlash' against those concerned. Some respondents were concerned that if they reported, such backlash might come from the extremist group or network themselves, although the more common concern was about receiving a negative reaction, open hostility or even ostracism from wider members of their own community. A different but important concern for a significant number of Muslim respondents was a backlash from the wider society and the media, adding to negative stereotypes enveloping entire Muslim communities. Here, the concern over the impact of bringing a further case of violent extremist involvement to potential public attention was a social, collective one, based on the fear that it would be a further stick to beat Muslim communities with.

This means that how the police and the authorities handle reports of violent extremist involvement and/or activity and talk publicly about these can play an important role. Despite these concerns, countering societal stereotypes is one of the motivations for Muslim respondents to do their 'civic duty' and report. Respondents wanted both reassurance and protection as they reported, highlighting

the need for *genuine confidentiality and good communication from the authorities*. Respondents had additional concerns about the individual impact of reporting to authorities, the potential risk of they themselves being criminalised for their association with the intimate reported (or some other similar act or omission). Here, being given official recognition (on a private basis) and credit for their role in reporting would assure respondents that they won't face accusations, or suspicions by association, in the future.

The large majority (although not all) of community respondents want to be kept informed of developments after reporting to the police—they want reporting to be a two-way process, with a '*feedback loop*' to them about what happened; the status of the investigation and what will or might happen next. Such a feedback loop to community reporters would be effective in a number of ways: it would assure the reporter that they had reported to the right place, that their report was not inappropriate, and that despite their personal turmoil they had done the right thing; it would reinforce the reporter's dominant motivation of care and concern for the intimate, and these things in turn can further bolster and positively develop community/police relationships of trust through the embodiment of partnership and respect. This preference suggests a *partnership approach to community reporting* that treats and supports community reporters as equal partners, not as one-off informants.

These findings confirm many aspects of the Australian study's original results. In terms of community perspectives, the primary reporting motivation of care and concern for an intimate; the strong preference for face to face reporting; the initial seeking of counsel advice from friends, relatives and community figures as part of the decision-making process; the antipathy to nationally delivered, terrorism-focused hotlines and the mistrust of digital reporting mechanisms; the relevance of trust and accountability when dealing with authorities; and the expectations and needs regarding information-sharing and feedback in the post-reporting phase are all virtually identical to the views expressed by Australian community respondents.

However, a key difference from the Australian data is the greater willingness shown by British respondents to reporting directly to local police, whereas Australian participants ranked local police as a low preference for sharing initial concerns. Another obvious difference is the structural and procedural scaffolding that is in place through implementation of the Prevent Strategy, the Channel programme and

the Prevent Duty's focus on safeguarding, with little equivalence in the Australian context at the time the original study was conducted. A final shared perspective, however, across both countries relates to the damaging impact of negative or biased media coverage of Muslim communities and of Islam more broadly, and this presents continuing challenges for both nations in terms of strengthening community cohesion and resilience and demonstrating leadership and reassurance on these issues.

Our in-depth interviews with 18 professional practitioners in varying relevant professional roles sought to help us develop ***an understanding of the experiences and perspectives of professional practitioners' around current dynamics of community reporting and what approaches could encourage and facilitate greater community sharing of concerns.*** This process provided rich data around three key themes: how to 'optimise the field' of community reporting relationships between authorities and communities, how best to address existing challenges and barriers, and how to leverage opportunities created through identifying areas of improved policy and practice. There were somewhat fewer similarities between the British and the Australian data from professional practitioners compared to the similarities between community respondents in each country, and this may reflect the different policy and operating environments in which each group of professionals work. However, both British and Australian practitioners acknowledged that key improvements needed to be made in relation to community reporting around, first, public communication strategies, and second, the design and delivery of more formalised and consistent support mechanisms for those who do come forward with concerns about an intimate. There was broad agreement with Australian professionals that more needs to be done to understand the unique and difficult position in which family members and friends find themselves when it comes to sharing early concerns about someone they care for who may be radicalising to violence.

For UK practitioners, the theme of '*optimising the field*' focuses on the need to build stronger partnerships and the sense of shared responsibilities between communities and the authorities over the threat of violent extremist involvement. Here, professional practitioners who shared their knowledge, views and expertise on community reporting issues with us were, by and large, empathetic with and responsive to the complexities and challenges posed by community fears, concerns and conflicts when considering sharing information with authorities about someone close who may

be radicalising to violence. For our professional respondents, this development can only occur if certain challenges are successfully addressed.

One of the major *challenges* is a clear lack of public trust and confidence in various authorities and agencies. This includes the Prevent programme, Channel, and the police as an organisation in some parts of communities. Professional practitioners detailed their perception of a sense of community fatigue over the long-running public focus on violent extremism and terrorism, and a mistrust and sense of 'us and them' in relation to the controversial Prevent agenda. Professional respondents feel that there is an overemphasis by both communities and government on the security rather than the safeguarding elements of Prevent and Channel strategies. This has not been helped by what was perceived as some biased and imbalanced media reporting, especially concerning the disproportionate reporting on Islamist versus far-right violent extremism and threats.

In this context, there was significant recognition of challenges and problems with current policy and practice approaches to encouraging community reporting. Practitioner respondents recognise and often sympathise with the very real community fears of reporting consequences, including the potential for overreaction by authorities to tentative expressions of concern that are the domain of 'Prevent', not 'Pursue'. Here, practitioners believed there is *insufficient recognition of and engagement with the role of communities in safeguarding* contexts and they thought this directly feeds into a lack of broad community awareness about reporting processes, modes, channels and outcomes.

Specific challenges around increasing community reporting identified by professional practitioners included maintaining the protection of those who report from both community- and media-led forms of social harm, including isolation, ostracism and backlash. While all practitioners were fiercely committed to these protections, they acknowledged that the diffusion of responsibility for reporting through the Prevent Duty could potentially compromise these efforts. Alongside this are tensions between disclosure and confidentiality when sharing reporting outcomes for family and community members. The potential for community reporting systems and cultures that work for all parties is hampered, in the view of professional practitioners, by uneven training and awareness by frontline public sector personnel with a Prevent Duty in relation to what should and shouldn't be reported onwards.

Additionally, respondents recognised the ineffectiveness and inappropriateness of the national Anti-Terrorism Hotline for reports at the early stages of concern about an intimate, as well as the remoteness and intimidating nature of the Hotline more generally. While it remains a valuable resource for reporting imminent threats and dangers in relation to terrorist action, it was considered unlikely to be used in early reporting contexts concerning intimates radicalising to violence, and the community respondent data reinforced this perception.

Despite the significant challenges outlined above, professional practitioner respondents also identified significant *opportunities* to encourage community reporting. These broadly focus on the opportunity to build stronger and deeper relationships with key community leaders and organisations to enhance partnerships in preventing violent extremism, including those that may fall outside the formal Prevent framework. Within this, practitioners felt there could be more explicit and committed *policy support for the strengthening of community brokerage models* to enhance reporting channels using trusted local intermediaries. Alongside this could come a fostering of more opportunities and mechanisms for open dialogue and partnerships on the risks and mitigation strategies for violent extremism. A number of practitioners, however, warned that merely saying these things were desirable without investing resources in their practical implementation would leave communities – and practitioners themselves – frustrated at the lack of practical follow-through and potentially more alienated from efforts to foster such partnerships in future.

This greater emphasis on community partnership could enable the encouraging of early community reporting of concerns by highlighting the benefits for intimates of preventing further harm. *This could be done by strengthening training and awareness for face to face reporting channels in local contexts.* Such processes could use real-life, de-identified scenarios in community awareness and training to help personalise and localise the issues. Respondents saw the potential for greater involvement of neighbourhood police teams in reducing divisive community sentiment, of promoting the ‘safeguarding’ message and being available face-to-face to hear individual concerns in a supportive and contextualised fashion.

Such a development, however, would need to avoid confusion between genuine police support for the community on the one hand, and strategic intelligence-gathering on the other. Conflation of these agendas would propel further mistrust and suspicion for communities, rather than reducing this.

For this to be meaningful there is a *pressing need to develop formal support mechanisms for those who report, and identifying early what individuals’ support needs may be when they first come forward.* Within this, there is now the opportunity to re-think how best to maximise telephone-based advice and support services for those who are reluctant to share concerns face to face, and to develop more streamlined and standardised reporting processes across local authority areas and across regions.

Overall, professional practitioner data suggest that worthwhile improvements in the general operating environment around community reporting should focus on enhancing three core dimensions of practitioner awareness and attitudes towards communities:

1. Demonstrating greater trust and confidence in the desire of communities to stay safe and keep others safe.

We have to take it as read that people want the best for their communities as well, they want people to remain safe. We need to trust them, engage with them, and when we speak to them [show that] we understand what their concerns are, listen to those concerns and try to answer them. [PP02, Greater Manchester]

2. Affirming that preventing violent extremism is a shared responsibility for all and not just a ‘community’ problem.

We’ve all got a responsibility. Some staff don’t get it because they think it’s such and such a community’s problem. Well, actually it’s our problem. [PP03, West Yorkshire]

3. Acknowledging the role of ordinary community members in promoting safeguarding through better communication and feedback by authorities when families and community members do come forward with concerns or choose to report.

We probably should be better at feedback [and advice] to people [who call in with concerns]. I’ve absolutely no doubt there’s improvements to be made there, if we’re honest. [Ordinary] people do have a role to play within safeguarding. [PP01, Greater Manchester]

Common ground: shared community and practitioner perspectives

There is a shared understanding that, motivated as it is by care and concern, the more personalised and localised the reporting process is, the stronger it will likely be.

The project findings make clear that both community respondents and professional practitioners already have a number of shared understandings around existing reporting processes and dynamics, as well as challenges and improvements that can be made to enhance better reporting outcomes. Both groups have acknowledged the significant emotional and social challenges involved in sharing concerns about loved ones and other ‘intimates’ with authorities, and have suggested ways to ensure that trust, confidentiality and minimisation of harmful social impacts associated with community reporting can be pursued. Both groups have also emphasised the value of strengthening genuine community partnerships so that those who come forward feel they are doing so with the recognition, validation and support that is a key ingredient of willingness to share difficult information about others who are close and cared for.

There is a shared understanding that, motivated as it is by care and concern, the more personalised and localised the reporting process is, the stronger it will likely be, and both community and professional respondents expressed reservations about more remote and impersonal methods of bringing forward concerns during the early stages for someone who may potentially be radicalising to violence.

However, community respondents were more interested in face to face reporting to local police, as well as other community figures and intermediaries, than professional practitioners believed to be the case. There are clear implications here for rethinking the structures and mechanisms that are put into place in local areas that can facilitate face to face sharing of concerns. Professional practitioners were also less aware than community respondents of the importance of post-reporting support and information, and more focused on the dilemmas around post-report information sharing in terms of potentially compromising confidentiality and the legal or investigative integrity of their work.

These common understandings and points of divergence both point towards ways in which the future landscape of community reporting can be further developed and refined, and below we detail some key considerations and potential strategic directions for policy and practice based on the project’s findings.

Future considerations for policy and practice

Our fourth and final research objective was to develop from our data **usable insights for government and community agencies in future community-focused policies, strategies and campaigns around facilitating and encouraging community reporting related to violent extremism**. As outlined above, the professional practitioners involved in this study bring considerable professional experience and insights to the focus of this research. As a result, they are able to offer informed critique and comment on current policy and practice around community reporting of violent extremism, and whether existing approaches and policy settings are helping or hindering individuals with a concern about an ‘intimate’ to come forward.

From a different vantage point, community respondents involved in the research were able to provide, based on their responses to hypothetical scenarios, detailed reflections and considerations as to how they would feel and what they would do if the person at risk of violent extremist action in the scenario was ‘intimate’ to them. This method worked very well, with respondents ‘thinking through’ the scenario in order to reflect on aspects of their own lived experience that are relevant to community reporting dynamics and contexts.

The data from both community respondents and professional practitioners shows a very high degree of consistency and congruence around key issues explored during the research process. This has enabled us to propose some clear areas for strategic future consideration in terms of policy and practice. Moreover, the fact that key insights from both sets of data are strongly consistent with the data and findings from the earlier Australian study gives us further confidence that the directions canvassed below are based solidly on evidence derived from comparative primary research streams.

Strategic direction 1: Consider rethinking the tone, content and targeting of social messaging initiatives around community reporting.

Counter-terrorism and Prevent policy and practice can benefit from shifting toward greater recognition that the primary drivers for those considering reporting concerns about an 'intimate' will be care and concern for their welfare and the prevention of further harms to both the intimate and others in the wider community and society. Therefore, public messaging and policy practice that emphasises 'safeguarding' and 'health promotion' messaging in tone and content, rather than a focus on criminality and threat, is likely to be more effective in encouraging community reporting concerning intimates who may be radicalising to violence.

Moreover, there is clear evidence that the 'safeguarding' dimension of the Prevent duty in schools and colleges is accepted by educationalists³⁵ and is perceived by them to be largely working. Policy messages and practice approaches that foreground a safeguarding message and approach and which can actually deliver safeguarding activity and support within communities can be effective in encouraging greater community reporting.

Strategic direction 2: Sharing concerns with authorities is a staged process

Preventing violent extremism policy and practice would benefit from applying in greater depth the understanding that a *staged process* of sharing concerns will be very common for community members, with advice, guidance and support first sought within family and friendship networks and within the local community before reporting to the police occurs. Some individuals will only go beyond this to contact the police with reluctance and with support from others. Community intermediaries and conduits thus play an absolutely vital role in the 'supply chain' of reporting processes and pathways.

There is an opportunity here to strengthen considerably the awareness of communities, through education and community partnership models, of their role in safeguarding people and communities that they care about. This is best achieved through developing and strengthening a 'working partnership' model between police, local authorities and credible community organisations and community influencers. Such community organisations and individuals need to be shown trust and respect by being treated as equal partners in the process of taking educational messages out to communities about warning signs, understanding and defining thresholds of concern, and avenues available for seeking help.

Alongside this, auditing and where necessary improving the skills, confidence and understandings of front-line professionals in education, health and social services with the responsibility of the 'Prevent duty' needs to be continually supported and developed. The data suggest that more emphasis should be placed on education and training for education and social service workers, with less emphasis on health services whom community respondents see as playing only a minor, if any, role in the process of sharing concerns.

Strategic direction 3: Localise and personalise the reporting process

A large majority of community respondents expressed a strong preference to report concerns to local police staff and other community sites through face-to-face interaction. This means foregrounding in policy and practice the role of mainstream neighbourhood policing teams in such community partnership work, as well as dialogue and training for mainstream front-line policing personnel to ensure that they are ready and feel equipped to positively engage with reports of concerns when they present.

There is also scope to consider establishing local community forums that promote open dialogue and discussion about the reporting process, its implications and its risks and benefits that will itself create greater opportunities for further face to face interaction between locally based authorities and communities. These discussions may not be easy, but they are important and can help develop trust and mutual understanding so that when reporting dilemmas do arise, there is a stronger sense of where and to whom to turn for advice and support.

³⁵Busher, J., Choudhury, T., Thomas, P. and Harris, G. (2017) *What the Prevent duty means for schools and colleges in England: An analysis of educationalists' experiences*, London: The Aziz Foundation

Strategic direction 4: Develop support mechanisms for reporters

Community respondents have very significant worries and concerns about what happens to the 'intimate', to themselves, their family, and to the wider community after they take the grave decision to report someone close to them. They want support and guidance, protection, and to be kept informed as far as possible about what is and will be happening through a 'feedback loop'.

There are currently existing mechanisms within Channel reporting and follow-up to indicate whether family or other community members have been contacted with updates.

However, similar mechanisms do not exist within police services at present. It would be highly beneficial to consider developing a formal system of feedback and updating when community members come forward with concerns and information. An essential part of this system should be making clear from the outset the limitations of what can be disclosed to those who report, and why.

Support mechanisms need to be established at the local level for those who come forward. Again, at the outset of taking information, police and those operating under the Prevent Duty should be asking people who come forward what if any kind of support they feel they need, and have in place mechanisms for accessing this support in culturally and socially appropriate ways that respect privacy and confidentiality.

Strategic direction 5: Clarify reporting mechanisms

There is confusion and uncertainty for many community respondents, and some professional practitioners, around how reporting processes actually work and what choices people may have in coming forward. There are also different local practices across local authority areas and policing regions for managing the information and follow-up elements of information and concerns received. Strong consideration can be given to developing both an *information protocol around reporting processes for communities*, and to standardising the information management of reports to enable effective and efficient cross-sharing of information and also follow-up with those who come forward.

Appendix 1

Scenario 1: Adam

Adam is 24 and was born and raised in the UK. As a teenager he wanted a stronger connection to a religion that he felt met his needs. Through friends he became involved in a religious group that fitted his sense of the kind of person he wanted to be. Adam's identity is now strongly grounded in the beliefs and activities of this group.

Adam has become especially close to two older men in the group, who give him advice and guidance. One of these older men has become a father figure for Adam and he often seeks advice from this senior figure, who is also the religious group's leader. However, Adam is also strongly influenced by younger men in his group. He shares common interests with them and several have become good mates.

Recently, Adam's view of the world, influenced by both his friends in the group and what he reads on the internet, has led him to see violent conflict as necessary and inevitable. He has also started to view large amounts of extremist literature, instructional manuals and material from overseas conflicts. Adam has started to advocate for the use of violence to change government policy, and to idolise as heroes those who use violence for political ends. He is eager to take violent action that he sees as advancing the cause of justice. He understands the risks of this and has not told his older mentor about his plans, fearing his disapproval. But he has told in confidence one close friend and one relative outside his religious group about the plans he is making to take violent action which he believes is the right and necessary thing to do.

You are close to Adam. While you don't share his world view or beliefs, you have been supportive of his religious development and think in many ways it has done him a lot of good. He tells you, in confidence, about his plans to commit acts of violence in the service of his beliefs. You know he is sincere and that he has struggled a lot in his life up until now. But you are also very worried for Adam's safety if he becomes involved in violence either overseas or at home. You care about him as a person, and about the impact his choices may have on his family.

Appendix 2

Scenario 2: Sophia

Sophia moved to the UK with her parents when she was a small girl. A shy person, she sometimes found it hard to develop close friendships at school but enjoyed being with smaller groups of people who did the kinds of things she liked. She is close to her parents and her two brothers and continues to spend a lot of time with her family. At university, Sophia met a young man whom she liked a lot. This young man asked her to come to a group he was involved with who believe that direct political action was the most effective way of protesting against various social problems and injustices.

The young man became Sophia's boyfriend and Sophia now spends most of her social time with her boyfriend and his friends in the group. Some members of the group argue that to achieve their political goals at home, they need to learn skills in armed combat. The group is planning a training camp for this purpose. While Sophia does not want to go overseas or involve herself in any direct action, her boyfriend asks her if she can help organise financial and other practical support to aid the group in their plans for action.

Sophia becomes very secretive when working on her computer at home, shutting it down whenever any of her flatmates come into her room. She sounds angry when news items come on TV or radio dealing with various social issues and conflicts. She visits her family less than before.

You are close to Sophia. You have noticed her secretive behaviour around her computer when you are nearby, her withdrawal from casual conversations and her rising anger about various world events. You feel something is very wrong, but when you ask Sophia about this,

she tells you it's just stress from her studies. You don't believe her and think there is some other problem that she is not telling you about. You have met her boyfriend and are aware of the political group he is involved in. You know Sophia engages with this group but you are not sure how involved Sophia herself is. You believe it's a free country and people are entitled to their opinions, but you are worried that Sophia has become involved in something that may lead to violence that harms her and others.

Appendix 3

Scenario 3: Conor

Conor is 24 and was born and raised in the UK. As a teenager he became interested in politics and as this interest grew Conor got introduced to more politically active people in online chat rooms and other social media. This led to Conor being invited to attend some day trips to beauty spots with other young people organised by a small British political group. On these trips the young people would pose with the movement's banners and symbols as well as enjoying sightseeing and having political discussions with older members of the group. After these trips Conor expressed heightened grievances about foreigners and immigrants taking jobs and housing from white British people.

Over time Conor's identity has become strongly grounded in the beliefs and activities of this political group, including regularly attending some political meetings and demonstrations. He shares their belief in the importance of patriotism. Conor is especially close to two older men in the group, who give him advice and guidance. One of these older men has become a father figure for Conor and he often seeks advice from this senior figure. Conor is also strongly influenced by younger men in his group, and has become good mates with many of them.

Recently, Conor has started to view large amounts of extremist literature, which includes instructional manuals and associated material from other far right political groups. Conor has started to advocate the use of violence against minorities whom he believes pose a threat to the culture of the nation and who do not belong in the UK. He has experimented with some chemicals in his garage and has openly discussed targeting a religious establishment. He has told in confidence one close friend and one relative outside his political group about the plans he is making, which he believes is justified in defending Britain against this perceived threat. Some of Conor's friends have also started to plan spectacular acts of violence against minorities as well as those who they support.

You are close to Conor and you care deeply about him despite not sharing his political beliefs. He tells you, in confidence, about his plans to develop a weapon to target a nearby religious establishment. You know he is sincere and that he has struggled a lot in his life up until now. But you are also very worried for Conor's safety if he becomes involved in violence. You care about him as a person, and about the impact his choices may have on his family.

Appendix 4

Australian Community Reporting Thresholds Study

³⁶Grossman, Michele (2015) *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing Information with Authorities Concerning Violent Extremist Activity and Involvement in Foreign Conflict*. Canberra: Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee.

³⁷Wasserman, Robert (2010) 'Guidance for Building Communities of Trust', Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, p. 13.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Lowe, Sue (2003) 'Terrorism Kit So Dumb It's a Winner', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 April, <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/04/09/1049567739732.html>; Grossman, Michele (2015) *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing Information with Authorities Concerning Violent Extremist Activity and Involvement in Foreign Conflict*. Canberra: Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee, p. 39.

⁴⁰Tran, Mark (2014) 'Top Counter-Terror Officer asks Public's help Identifying Aspiring Terrorists', *The Guardian*, 27 August, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/aug/26/met-police-ask-public-help-identify-aspiring-terrorists>; Pidd, Helen, Vikram Dodd and Sandra Laville (2014) 'Syria Anti-Terror Plan Slammed by Parents and Community Groups', *The Guardian*, 24 April, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/apr/24/syria-initiative-met-slammed-parents-community>

⁴¹Kern, Soeren (2012) 'Germany: New ad campaign to counter Muslim radicalization', *Gatestone Institute*, 5 September, <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3321/germany-ad-campaign-muslim-radicalization>; Gessat, Rachel (2012) 'Fake "missing" posters to combat radicalisation', *DW* (Germany), 28 August, <http://www.dw.de/fake-missing-posters-to-combat-radicalization/a-16197519>

⁴²Bjelopera, James P (2011) *Terrorism Information Sharing and the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Report Initiative: Background and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report for Congress, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service; Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (2012) *A Resource Guide to Improve Your Community's Awareness and Reporting of Suspicious Activity for Law Enforcement and Community Partners*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Goldman, Adam and Greg Miller (2014) 'American Suicide Bomber's Travels in U.S., Middle East Went Unmonitored', *The Washington Post*, 11 October, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/american-suicide-bombers-travels-in-us-middle-east-went-unmonitored/2014/10/11/38a3228e-4fe8-11e4-aa5e-7153e466a02d_story.html

Background

In 2013, the Australian Government's Countering Violent Extremism Subcommittee funded a research study titled *Community Reporting Thresholds: Sharing Information with Authorities Concerning Violent Extremist Activity and Involvement in Foreign Conflict*.³⁶ This study, the first of its kind world-wide, was premised on the basis that communities are a front line of defence against threats to national security and social cohesion, particularly in relation to the recent increase of foreign fighter travel and involvement in overseas conflict.

Close friends and family members in particular are often amongst the first to see changes or early warning signs that someone close to them may be heading towards, or already engaged in, violent extremist activity both at home and abroad. A key element of the Australian study design was thus its special focus on what the research team called 'intimates' reporting – that is, what it may mean to bring forward concerns to authorities about a close relative or friend.

However, common practice for law enforcement has been to focus primarily on perceived offenders, and not to prioritise the importance of having strong and trusting relationships with families, peer networks and community members. Yet both community leaders and kindship and social networks are often those best positioned to know who in the community may be at risk of criminal activity, whether terrorism-related or otherwise. When a young man or woman begins a trajectory towards criminality or antisocial activity, such events rarely occur without someone from that community noticing a change in the person's behaviour, attitudes, and/or social networks.³⁷ Yet communities that do not trust law enforcement are often unwilling to share their observations and knowledge. Without strong partnerships, vital information is likely to be withheld.³⁸

Moreover, virtually no public evidence-based research had been conducted at that stage about community-based views on or experience of reporting involvement in extremism to authorities, and the implications of this for policy, programme and operational models and approaches

by government, communities, law enforcement or security agencies. This was despite a range of information and persuasion campaigns developed and conducted in countries including Australia,³⁹ the UK,⁴⁰ Germany⁴¹ and the USA⁴² that sought to encourage people in communities to come forward with information or concerns about people in their local neighbourhood, kinship or social networks who might be radicalising to violence.

However, these campaigns often focused, especially in Australia, on reporting by the general community of observed activity or behaviour that may be suspicious or concerning from national security perspectives to law enforcement and security agencies. While certainly valuable as an information, detection and intervention resource, general community reporting is only part of the story, and gaining new knowledge about the dynamics of 'intimates' reporting was thus seen to address a critical blind-spot in current Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) thinking and strategies.

The Australian Community Reporting Thresholds project broke new ground in seeking to identify community knowledge and concerns around reporting processes, to propose new understandings and approaches to community reporting based on these insights, and to develop new platforms for community education, awareness and increased willingness to report based on the data gathered and analysed here.

The **key research aims for the Australian Community Reporting Thresholds study** focused on:

1. Identifying triggers, thresholds and barriers for when someone would consider reporting;
2. Understanding more from participants' perspectives about the experience and process of (considering) reporting on an individual or group who may be involved in, or actively supporting involvement in, overseas conflict, and
3. Developing from the data usable insights and tools for government and community agencies in future community-focused policies, strategies and campaigns around facilitating and encouraging community reporting related to violent extremism.

Study design, methods and sampling

Design and methods

Community Reporting Thresholds was designed as a qualitative research study, with data collection conducted between July–November 2014, at a time when significant numbers of Australians had attempted to travel (many with success) to join and fight with ISIS forces in Syria/Iraq. The research methodology and questions sought to understand and assess the experience and views of those who have shared, or considered sharing, concerns about others with authorities in relation to suspected involvement in violent overseas conflict. The study also sought to elicit views from government stakeholders involved in developing and implementing reporting mechanisms and channels that enable information brought forward by community members to be analysed and operationalised. Both community- and government-based project participants were asked interview questions covering the following general topics:

- The reasons Australian Muslim community members and leaders might feel motivated to share concerns about those suspected of involvement in violent overseas conflict with authorities;
- What they would want to know or find out more about before deciding to share their concerns;
- What factors might encourage or discourage people to share their concerns;
- Expectations, if any, about the kind of support people might need or want at various stages of the reporting process, including after they make a report;
- Expectations, if any, about the outcomes of the process;
- Concerns and fears, if any, about the process and its impacts (personal, family, community);
- Views on what authorities who listen to community members' concerns during reporting need to know from a community point of view when dealing with members of the public on these issues;
- Strategies for improving existing approaches to community reporting;
- Strategies for strengthening public awareness and knowledge about the process coming forward with information to authorities.

Because of the sensitive nature and risk elements of the research topic from community perspectives, community-based participants were offered both semi-structured interview questions and also two detailed scenarios to 'think through' in responding to the questions posed by the research team. These hypothetical yet realistic scenarios were based on aspects of validated scenario modelling included in the Australian Multicultural Foundation's 2013 TRIM (The Radicalisation Indicators Model) community education resource. However, the research design also introduced new scenario elements appropriate to the *Community Reporting Thresholds* project's focus. The scenarios were slightly revised following initial pilot interviews and were thereafter commended as highly realistic by community-based participants, who felt able to respond candidly to questions without fear of disclosing sensitive, personal or confidential information that might place them or others at risk. This was a successful strategy, generating trust and confidence in the research process as well as very rich data and findings.

At the end of each interview, community participants were given the opportunity to speak, if they so wished, about actual events or scenarios in which they may have been involved or had knowledge of. It was made clear that this was in no way a requirement of the research, but rather an opportunity to be taken up at their discretion. A small number of participants took up this opportunity, while the majority chose to stay with the scenario throughout the interview.

Participant sampling

Research participants across three cohorts (community members, community leaders, and government stakeholders) were engaged in individual, in-depth face to face (n=27) and telephone-based (n=4) interviews of approximately 1.5 hours each. A total of 33 participants contributed to the study (slightly in excess of the 24–30 participants anticipated in the study design). Of these, 16 participants were Australian Muslim community members (including community leaders) and 17 were Australian State and Commonwealth government stakeholders. The gender distribution of male to female participants was approximately 2/3 male (n=22) to 1/3 female (n=10) across the combined cohorts.

Community-based participants were sampled purposively and through snowball techniques in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Canberra, while government stakeholders were drawn from Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland policing jurisdictions; Australian Federal Police; Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO); Department of Immigration and Border Protection; Attorney-General's Department; federal

and state-based government service providers, and the National Security Hotline.

Recruitment of participants on a sensitive and confronting topic for Australian Muslim community members presented some challenges, but the project was able to slightly exceed its community and government target sample populations for the study as a whole.

Australian Community Reporting Thresholds findings

A number of cross-cutting themes emerged from data analysis across the three participant groups that helped researchers understand more clearly the key factors influencing the rise or fall of triggers, thresholds and barriers for community members as they are considering reporting to authorities.

Based on the data, five core 'landscapes' of influence on reporting thresholds were grouped into the *psychological, informational, communication, support, and education and outreach* dimensions of community reporting experiences, and the impact of each of these on thresholds for decision-making around whether and when to come forward to authorities with information and/or concerns.

The psycho-social landscape of community reporting

The threshold for reporting by Muslim Australian community members to authorities in cases of suspected or known involvement in foreign conflict or other aspects of violent extremist activity was high at the time of the study, with significant psycho-social and structural barriers and blockages described relating to individual and community sentiment; impact on social networks and relationships; flawed or confusing reporting processes and channels; lack of trust in government; lack of confidence in protective rather than punitive reporting outcomes; lack of support following reporting, and – most prominently – *fear or anxiety* about the personal, social and legal impacts and consequences of reporting.

Reporting is a last resort

Reporting to authorities is a *last resort* for an overwhelming majority of community members, who will seek to deploy a range of other intra-community strategies before choosing to come forward. This means that particular attention needs to be given to understanding the reasons why reporting is so challenging and difficult, what different levels or dimensions of challenge may emerge within particular communities, and how best to encourage and facilitate greater ease of the reporting experience and process from the vantage point of diverse individuals who may be thinking about or in the process of sharing information with authorities.

Reporting is deeply personal and motivated by care and concern for intimates and the broader community

Both community and government stakeholders affirmed that when people do decide to come forward, they do so because reporting is deeply *personal*. While the main psycho-social barrier to reporting is fear or anxiety, the main trigger for people who are able to overcome or tolerate feeling conflicted or uneasy is because they care deeply about an individual, because they are frightened of the consequences of someone's actions, or both. This suggests that people are more likely to report on someone they know than as a bystander.

Yet the deeply personal nature of reporting also means that special care and consideration needs to be given to how front-line personnel are trained to handle and address the concerns people may articulate about close or intimate others in their lives. Empathy, respect, trust and sensitivity and integrity are vital characteristics of the reporting encounter, and these need to be evinced within the first moments of a conversation involving person-to-person encounters. This is linked to the fact that reporting is motivated overwhelmingly by *care and concern* (for individuals, families, communities) on the part of those who are willing to report. Government stakeholders and community members agree that failure to recognise and capitalise on the central motivators for those who report will result in lower rates of reporting now and in the future.

Reporting is complex and conflictual

Reporting is also a *complex process*, rather than a single act or moment in time. It involves a range of stages in decision-making, comparison, judgment and sometimes consultation that need to be better understood in order to support people who think they may need to come forward and avoid their dropping out part way through the process. As well as being complex, reporting is also highly *conflictual* for those who contemplate or have already come forward. It can be isolating, frightening or intimidating, and arouse a range of intensely conflicting emotions, loyalties, anxieties and fears. It invokes deep-seated issues and feelings concerning betrayal, responsibility, duty, shame and remorse, and can be a volatile see-saw experience for those who share information or concern with

authorities. All of these represent significant psycho-social barriers to why people may be reluctant to come forward with information, or may only progress part-way through the process even after taking initial steps to do so.

People who have considered or imagined reporting emphasised the loneliness of this experience because it is so difficult to share the decision-making process with others whom they would normally turn to for support. Coming forward requires courage, fortitude and strong belief in the rightness of one's actions, even when there may be negative consequences for others. The psycho-social vicissitudes of reporting need to be expertly considered and built into training and operations for those who receive information on behalf of government and law enforcement.

The information landscape of reporting

Australian reporting processes and mechanisms were *not well understood at the community level and lack a clear framework and guidelines* that could be used to educate communities about what reporting involves. There was no clearly established reporting process that had broad purchase in terms of community knowledge, and in many cases government stakeholders also identified a lack clarity and expertise in their own grasp of reporting processes and channels.

Existing channels were either poorly understood or else seen as inappropriate or undesirable (e.g. telephone reporting) by community members because of concerns about lack of agency, where the information goes and how it is used, surveillance and monitoring of those who report, negative consequences for those reported on even where concerns prove to be unfounded, and anxiety about confidentiality.

For government stakeholders, the lack of clear guidelines, consistent information and messaging, appropriate training and the ability to share information and intelligence across inter-agency boundaries were priority areas for improvement in the information landscape around community reporting.

The leaky pipeline

As a result of this, participants described perceptions and experiences of a reporting processes as involving a *leaky pipeline*. The reporting pipeline leaks as people drop out of the reporting process before they share relevant information because they are bounced back and forth between different agencies or personnel who may be unsure of the right

protocols or channels. This included directing people straight to Australia's National Security Hotline even when they were seeking face to face reporting. This applied in particular to people who approached local law enforcement in person or by phone. The more initial 'non-starter' or dead-end encounters people experience when trying to make a report, the more disheartened and disengaged they become from carrying through. The first 30-60 seconds of encounter between someone trying to report and the person taking the information are the critical point at which those reporting can become encouraged or discouraged to continue with the process.

The expectation gap between communities and government authorities

The most significant informational *disconnect revolved around community expectations*, and the lack of fit between why people report to authorities (out of care and concern) and what happens after they do (loss of power, control, information). Because people overwhelmingly report on intimates out of care and concern, they harbour in many cases a clear expectation that authorities will use the information reported to *help those heading towards or engaged in violent extremism* and prevent them from continuing down this path.

However, participant fears and experiences centred on the fact that, once they share information, they believe authorities are more likely than not to use this instead to prosecute or punish rather than diverting or (if too late for prevention) rehabilitating those involved.

This is particularly the case in relation to *foreign travel to participate in overseas conflicts*, and some participants spoke with great bitterness about government failure to use information provided to stop family members and friends from traveling. This bitterness was compounded by lack of community understanding about limitations and constraints inherent in where information they provide may be taken and how it may be used by authorities.

Both government stakeholders and community participants agreed that more transparent and accessible information about the limitations and constraints involved in sharing information by authorities once a report is made is essential in ameliorating community confusion, distrust and frustration about this aspect of the reporting process.

The communication landscape of reporting

Multichannel approach

Reporting was seen to require a *multichannel approach* for Australia to leverage its capacity to encourage and support community members coming forward by allowing them to share information through a number of different channels that may vary according to circumstances and experience. These channels may include community and/or faith-based leaders or elders, local police, telephone advice and support services, or web-based channels.

Clarity and transparency

There was a strong identified need for **clear, consistent, easily accessible** information about the processes involved, the benefits and risks involved, and clarity about the limitations of what law enforcement and security agencies can share in the aftermath of a report being made. Participants repeatedly stated they would be more accepting of limitations on what they could be told following a report if they *knew from the beginning* that constraints on information sharing were in place, and why. The same multichannel information sources that apply to direct reporting, above, should be mobilised in relation to providing information

about the reporting process itself, using the internet, social media, print, television, radio, community-based publications and community languages outlets.

Social media

Social media was seen as a mixed blessing by government participants in the campaign to encourage and increase community reporting. While recognising that social media now dominates communication and peer network dynamics for young people in particular, the slightly more dominant view was that social media should be considered more of a guide or pointer to other resources, rather than serving as a destination point itself for community reporting information campaigns. This related in part to concerns that government will never be sufficiently well resourced to compete effectively in this space. Community participants shared this view but for different reasons, citing concerns about monitoring, targeting and surveillance due to the relative ease with which digital footprints can be traced and stored, undercutting the anonymity and/or confidentiality that is seen as essential for confidence in the reporting process.

The support landscape of reporting

Reporting was found to highlight the need for a *continuum of support options* at various stages of the process. This included immediate validation that the person reporting is doing the right thing; empathising and validating the difficulty and courage involved in coming forward; follow-up on the outcomes of a report within the confines of security or investigative requirements; clear understanding of the process at the initial point of making a report; and, for some (but not all), individual counselling and debriefing, including ongoing confidential liaison.

The experience of reporting was seen by many to be about the *loss of power and control* for those who come forward. Careful thought needs to be given to the critical transition when a person who has the capacity to report

and holds all the cards in their hand cedes power to authorities through delivering information to them that the reporter then no longer controls. This is a deeply unsettling and threatening, even traumatic, process for most people, and reassurances, to the extent they can be given, need to be prioritised in relation to how the reporting process works, what the range of outcomes may be, and where the person reporting may seek support and help after they report. Included in this is the importance of telling people that some information may not be able to be shared with them as an investigation progresses, and helping law enforcement and service providers to develop skills and strategies for communicating effectively and empathetically about *information and disclosure limitations*.

The trust landscape of reporting

Relationships

At its core, successful community reporting is about *relationships* – with government, with law enforcement, with community leaders and with family and friends. Coming forward to authorities needs to gain legitimacy at community level when other, community-led measures to prevent someone heading toward or engaging in extremist violence fail. Building key relationships not only between communities, government and law enforcement, but also within *communities* about the risks and benefits of reporting was considered essential.

Mode of reporting preferences and capacity-building

Reporting is also about the specific relationship between those who make reports and those who receive information. The strong preference for *face-to-face* reporting expressed by community participants highlighted the ways in which trusting relationships at the local level are essential components of a successful reporting model. Capacity to *improve the ability of front-line local law enforcement* in particular, as well as community leaders and service providers, to engage appropriately and supportively with those providing information, and to pass this information on effectively, was seen as vital. Enhanced education and training to make more visible and accessible the support and face-to-face channels preferred by community members, particularly for local law enforcement, was a key imperative from both community and stakeholder viewpoints.

The education and outreach landscape of reporting

Education and awareness

Effective approaches to community reporting were seen to depend on *education and awareness campaigns* that focus on what reporting achieves, how it works, why early intervention is important, and what it means for everyone involved. There was broad agreement amongst both government stakeholders and community members that a new campaign approach to community reporting was needed that moved away from campaigns targeting general community awareness toward more nuanced, community-specific campaigns that *personalise and humanise* the process of talking to authorities about concerns.

This included the importance of designing campaigns using strategies shown to be effective in *public health outreach initiatives* that balance a focus on the ‘negatives’ of violent extremism itself (multi-level harms, consequences, impacts) with the ‘positives’ of coming forward as early as possible with concerns and/or information (care, support, resources, prevention and intervention).

Accessible, personalised, multichannel and multimodal approach

To minimise reporting barriers, information and outreach campaigns need to ‘talk the language’ of communities in order to encourage and demystify reporting; *personalise the approach* by demonstrating understanding of the very personal concerns and worries that bring people and information forward to

begin with; *foreground better outcomes through early intervention*; avoid fear-mongering and punitive registers of communication; allay fears and anxieties and provide reassurance where possible, and validate them when not; provide *clear direction toward resources for support, further information and assistance* as required; demonstrate respect, sincerity and empathy; be transparent about the purpose, limitations and outcomes of reporting from government points of view, including what can’t be shared by authorities as well as what can; and socialise reporting as much as possible to make it less of a social and cultural taboo.

These campaigns must be carefully informed by deep community consultation and meticulously tailored and targeted to reach *segmented audiences* (parents; young people; community leaders; peers). Like reporting avenues themselves, education and awareness campaigns about reporting must be *multichannel*, including both government and non-government education and information portals, platforms and personnel. They should move toward interactive rather than passive modes of information sharing and exchange around community reporting processes, and employ *multimodal* (image/text/sound) as well as multichannel strategies in order to maximise use of contemporary communication media and technologies in order to reach and impact people’s ‘hearts’ as well as their ‘heads’ when they are making difficult decisions and choices about what actions to take when they are concerned about someone close who may be involved in violent extremist activity.

Community reporting messaging strategies for government and community agencies

Based on these findings, the project developed a prototype messaging strategy based on the five 'reporting landscape' elements summarised above:

- Talk to someone ... because you care
- You have choices about who you can talk to, when and where
- We know it's hard, but you are not alone
- The earlier you say something, the better – for everyone
- If you share your concerns with others, you will be supported

Post-project impacts and outcomes

The Australian *Community Reporting Thresholds* study has had a number of impacts and outcomes since it was delivered to the Australian Government in 2015 and shared with other academic researchers. These outcomes include:

- Endorsement by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) of the study's findings for new policy and programming initiatives in the Australian CVE environment, 2015.
- Delivery of a range of community-focused awareness and dialogue initiatives around community reporting in various Australian states and communities, 2015-2016.
- A national pilot telephone hotline and web-based Community Advice and Support Service, 'Step Together' (<https://stepttogether.com.au>) being trialled in New South Wales in 2017. The trial will be evaluated and the evaluation findings used to support the national roll-out of this service in 2018.
- Replication of the Australian study through CREST-ESRC funding in the United Kingdom, with expanded sampling and the addition of a new cohort of White British youth, 2016-17.
- Support for programme and policy recommendations on community reporting in the USA through work conducted by the START Consortium (Horgan and Williams), 2016.
- Discussions with Public Safety Canada and Canadian universities within the Terrorism, Security and Society (TSAS) network interested in replicating the *Community Reporting Thresholds* study in Canada, 2017.

About the Research Team

Paul Thomas is Professor of Youth and Policy and Associate Dean (Research) in the School of Education and Professional Development at the University of Huddersfield, UK. Paul's research focusses on how multiculturalist policies such as Community Cohesion and the Prevent counter-terrorism strategy have been understood and enacted by ground-level policy-makers and practitioners, particularly educationalists such as youth workers, community workers and teachers. It has led to the books *Youth, Multiculturalism and Community Cohesion* (Palgrave, 2011) and *Responding to the Threat of Violent Extremism – Failing to Prevent* (Bloomsbury, 2012), as well as articles in many leading journals. Paul gave oral evidence to the UK House of Commons Select Committee Inquiry on Prevent in 2009 and has given key note presentations at national and international policy and academic conferences. His recent research projects include the first national empirical research around implementation of the 'Prevent duty' in English schools and colleges (with Joel Busher, Coventry University and Tufyal Choudhury, Durham University) and a current book project on the policies and practices of 'multiculturalism' in the north of England from the 1960s until the present day.

Michele Grossman is Professor of Cultural Studies and Research Chair in Diversity and Community Resilience at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia, where she convenes the AVERT (Addressing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation to Terrorism) Research Network. Michele researches the intersection between communities and countering violent extremism theory and practice, with special interests in the role of gender, cultural diversity and community resilience in preventing and diverting the appeal of terrorism. She is the lead author of *The Stocktake Research Report on Social Cohesion, Community Resilience and Violent Extremism* (2016), with articles in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, *Social Inclusion* and a range of book chapters and research reports. She has held five consecutive ANZCTC competitive research grants since 2012

on community support for children and families of returning foreign fighters; the roles of women in violent extremism; Australian community reporting thresholds; cultural resilience to violent extremist ideologies, and community understandings of extremism and radicalisation.

Shamim Miah is a senior lecturer at the School of Education, University of Huddersfield. He is the author of two books: *Muslims, Schooling and the Question of Self-Segregation* (Palgrave, 2015) and *Muslims, Schooling and Security: 'Trojan Horse', Prevent and Racialised Politics* (Palgrave, 2017). Shamim's book '*Muslims, Schooling and the Question of Self-Segregation*' was nominated for the British Sociological Association's Philip Abrams Memorial Prize. This book also received the 'Highly commended' book award by the Society for Educational Studies' in 2016. Shamim's research is concerned with the framing of race and religion in public policy. His research interests draw upon both empirical and theoretical approaches to the study of public policy. Shamim has contributed towards chapters in books, reports and various peer reviewed journals, including articles for: *Journal of Race and Class*, *Identity Papers: Journal of British and Irish Studies* and *the International Studies for Sociology of Education*. Until recently he was the co-convenor (Race and Ethnicity) for BERA (British Educational Research Association). Shamim is also a research-fellow for The Centre for Post-Normal Policy and Futures Studies (CPPFS).

Kris Christmann is a Research Fellow at the Applied Criminology Centre at the University of Huddersfield. Kris has conducted research in the area of prejudice related offending and victim needs, including research to better understand Hate Crime victims' reporting decisions. Kris has also examined the nature and aetiology of violent extremism amongst young people, and (with colleagues) evaluated the National PVE Programme run by the Youth Justice Board/ OSCT and formulated policy recommendations for future programme development in light of current leading edge PVE innovation. Other work includes a national evaluation of programmes within the youth justice system aimed at preventing racially motivated offending.

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